

Dal Profile BY TIM RICHARD

Aaron Spanik, Studying Philosophy and English, 19

At the end of Grade 12, you were offered a four year scholarship (full tuition, room and board) to Washington and Lee University, in Virginia. You dropped out before you even finished your first year. What happened?

First, let me give you a slight bio of the school option: 2,000 students, only co-ed for 10 years, small Southern school, 60% guys, one of the top three most conservative schools in the United States, one of the top three school's for alcohol consumption per capita in the United States. So it was basically a big drink party. It was old Southern style, so there was a lot of racism, a lot of sexism, stupid stuff like that.

So how did you fit in the picture?

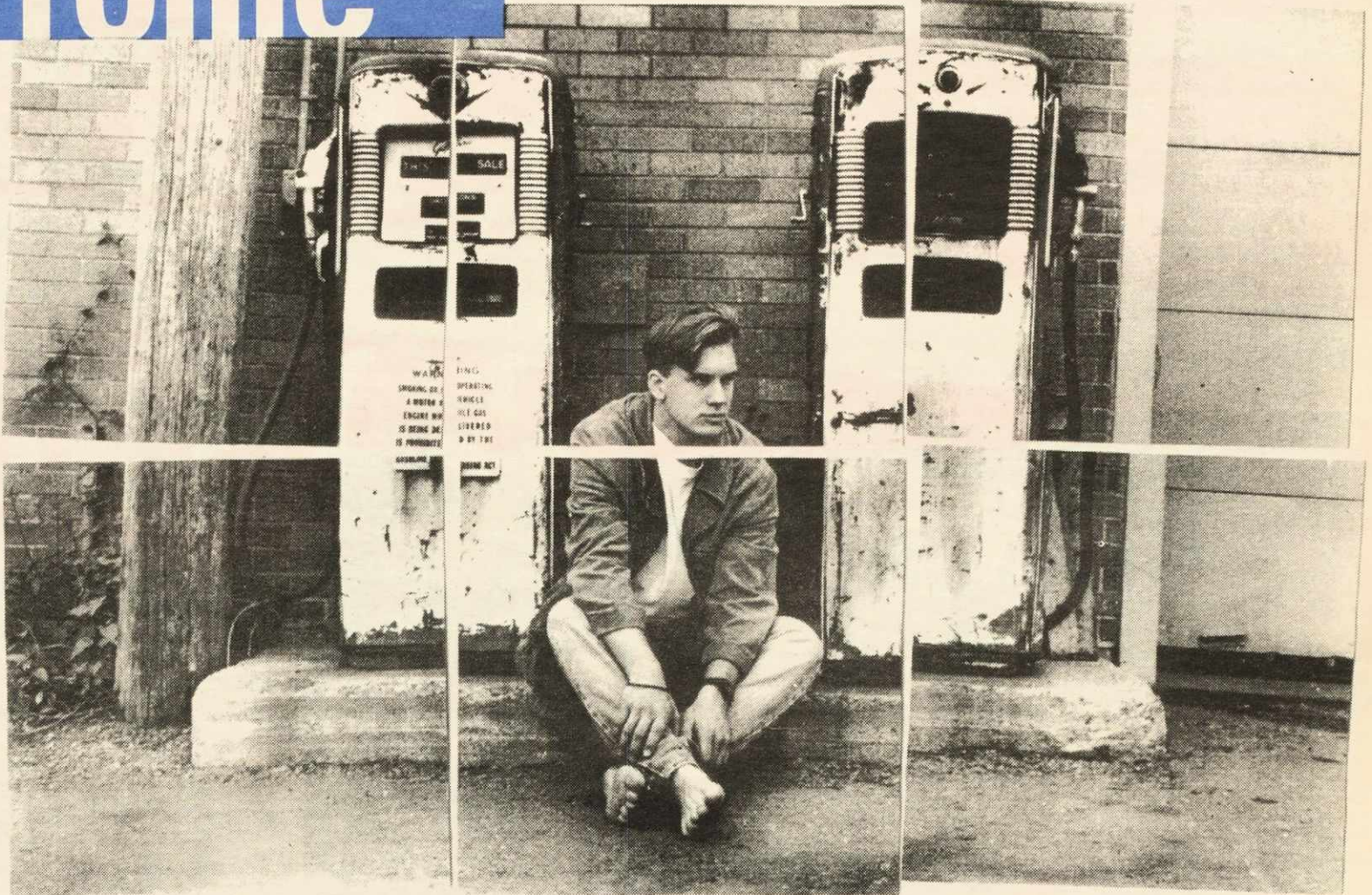
I didn't. I think they offered me the scholarship because they were trying to go for a more diverse population instead of getting guys from the same 20 different prep schools. The admissions/scholarship guy who was trying to implement diversity left before I got there and the school was reverting back to the days before him; supporting sameness. They wanted you to be like them and it was really hard for me because I didn't have the money that they did. I mean, there were five BMWs in the freshman parking lot. There were a lot of pompous, racist bastards.

Did you witness any of these racist attitudes first hand?

Yeah, one of my pledge brothers in my fraternity got in a fight with a black guy one night and the next day our pledge trainer went up to him and said, "Mr. —, I'd like to shake your hand. I hear you got in a fight with some niggers last night." It was at that point I decided to leave the fraternity.

How do the fraternities down there compare with Dal's?

The pledge period down there is 8 months long, so you spend your entire freshman year as a pledge. And it was hell. But I don't think my fraternity was as bad as some of the others. One of the big men on campus fraternities apparently fed their pledges acid. You couldn't pledge unless you had received a black eye at the hands of one of the brothers. Stupid stuff. They made you drink and drink and drink. One time they forced us to drink until we threw up over the balcony and then they put us at the top of the stairs and threw us down the stairs into the mass of our pledge brothers. Then they ripped off our shirts and put on the fraternity shirt. At Washington and Lee, fraternities were part of the culture. A lot of guys joined fraternities to buy friends and meet chicks. There were five girl schools within an hour's drive of the university and one of the goals of the fraternity members was to become



a "five star general" by the end of the four years.

Were you involved in any extra-curricular activities at Washington and Lee?

I played football. That was probably the most school-related fun I had all year.

How would you sum up your experience at Washington and Lee?

I learned how to smoke pot and drink. I missed home. I missed being around people I liked. I had turned into a total pothead. I was dabbling in acid and mushrooms, just making a mess of things, I didn't go to class. Sometimes I do think I should have stuck it out though.

Can you recall your worst drinking experience?

18 beers, 30 minutes.

What do you hope to get out of your time at Dal?

A piece of paper that I can put on my wall. By taking English, you learn to read other styles and I don't think anybody who writes has that much natural ability that they can go without reading what other people are writing and getting ideas from other people. Phi-

losophy helps you learn to think in ways that you're not used to thinking in. So far the professors I've had here at Dal have been top notch.

Where do you see yourself in 20 years?

Either really successful, with book contracts and stuff, or wasting away in a gutter.

What ticks you off?

People who refuse to think for themselves. People who don't take credit for what they did. I can't stand racism.

I ask a couple of Aaron's friends to sum him up for me. A friend commented "He's brilliant, but he likes to think he's this fucked up, crazy, drug and drinking man. He likes to play the counter-culture."

What do you never leave home without?

My little blue book. I'm always writing down ideas for stories, song lyrics, poetry.

Aaron pulls the book out of his pocket and tells me he is often described as a sketchy person. He then reads the *Elements of Being Sketchy* from his journal.

1. Come from two places at once.
2. Scream randomly. Remain silent.
3. Grow unsuccessful facial hair.
4. Sing along with different words.
5. Question everything.
6. Refuse to share your food.
7. Share everything else.
8. Kiss very well, converse poorly.
9. Torture yourself over nothing.
10. Bare your soul, hide your body.
11. Ask who threw that chicken.
12. Two words, tighty whities.
13. Be excessive in a minimalistic way.
14. Be pretentious with integrity.
15. Devalue yourself, then brag.
16. Resist definition.
17. Be everyone's one and only.
18. Resist temptation for the wrong reasons.
19. Compare it to a fall day.
20. Claim nothing as your own.

Vegan, meat eater break bread

Lots of meat to eat

BY JOHN CULLEN.

Last night, in our neverending search for story ideas, my editor and I went out for dinner to do a critique on food. Since she is a vegetarian, I naturally decided on Hogie's Kick-a-Boo, the only restaurant in Halifax with a huge neon cow on their sign. This is a steak house *par excellence*—meat and testosterone. We ordered two of their specialty drinks, the 'kick-a-boo,' fruit punch with vodka. A fine beverage to start the meal, although beer always goes well with steak. I ordered the Celebration Special which contained salad, a 12 oz. rib eye steak, a baked potato, and fresh sourdough bread. Quite a meal for the hungry human, but that is what you must expect at a place like this; huge portions and waitresses who call you dear. My editor ordered a baked potato. The waitress laughed and called her dear.

The bread at Hogie's is perfect — fresh out of the oven with two different types of butter. It's hard to stop eating it, but I advise against filling up before the main course. The steak is not the best cut of meat, and the salad doesn't contain the freshest lettuce, but students shouldn't be too picky. All that food for \$11.45 is a steal anywhere, even if it isn't the best in the world.

If you're looking for a place to go that doesn't cost too much and doesn't have someone asking "would you like fries with that?" then check out Hogie's on Quinpool across from McDonald's. Mind you, this is a place that has no alternative food items from meat. For all you vegetarians, it does serve very large potatoes.

Ambient Sizzling

BY SHELLEY ROBINSON

The first year of my vegetarianism I relished the exclusivity, the self-righteous zealotry. Quite a few years later, most of my friends are vegetarian, and I miss, not so much the meat, but the meat culture. Rest assured Hogie's is just such a place, with pizza being the most continental of their dishes. I'm not sure what kick-a-boo means, but I liken it to hideaway, and it serves its function well. With bogus windows that add to the chalet/lodge atmosphere, the perception is one of being able to look in, and being shielded from being looked at.

So supposedly, the most important part of any meal is the food. The bread was incredible, neverending, free, and stayed warm for a staggeringly long period of time. The potato was enormous; in fact, I didn't even finish it all, having chowed on so much bread. Finally, the kick-a-boo punch was largely punch with, to my taste buds, not so much as a hint of vodka. My entire meal was \$3.50, with only a dollar going towards the baked potato. Think of it, they'll charge you \$5.95 at some places — that on closer inspection probably also have primavera something or other on the menu — just for cutting it in half, drizzling a bit of cheese and sprinkling a couple of soy bacon bits on top.

By far, the best part of the meal was when our waitress brought us a complete set of 'designation cows.' They're these little, differently coloured, plastic cows that stick in the steaks — although they didn't come to the table with John's, so maybe they're for kitchen purposes only — to designate if the cow is cooked rare, medium rare, and so on, right on up the range of charbroiled-ness.

Not to cast aspersions on the frequenters of such steak houses, but the clientele seemed blissfully unaware of the outside world as we know it. There was a line up to get into the smoking section and a parking lot full of pickups. I liked it, there was none of that New Country, chicken fajita thang going on. Honest people, chowing down with relish on their cow.