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## Bard Free Press, Vol. 18, No. 1 (November 2016)

Bard College

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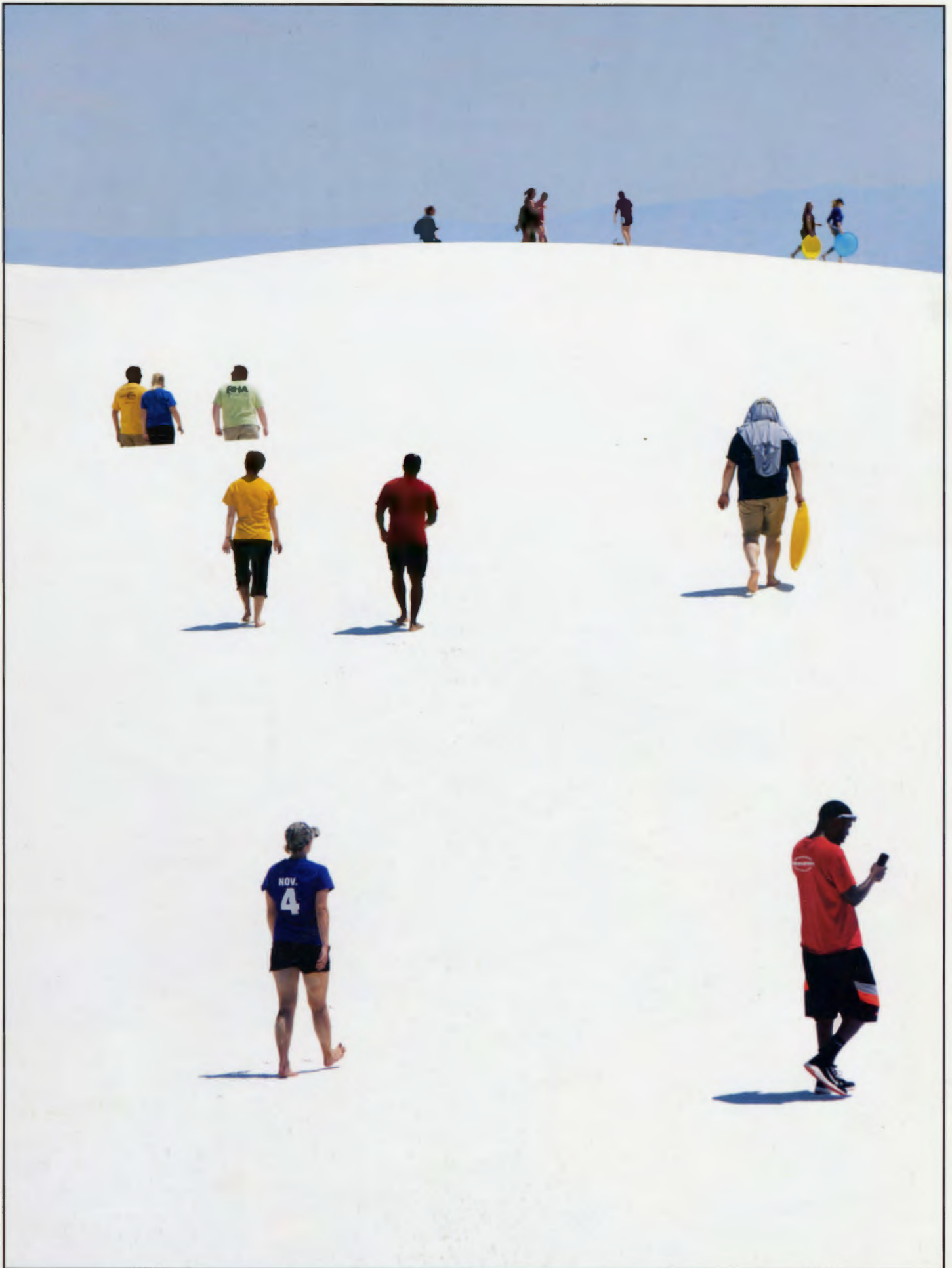
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# BARD FREE PRESS

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this photo by shulan hilton  
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photo by keegan holden

## editor's letter

Dear Readers, Welcome to the Free Press.

Dear Readers,

Dear Readers, Welcome to the Free Press. This is my first issue as editor-in-chief and above all I want to thank everyone who has submitted to and worked on this issue. This issue is broadly dedicated to people— to you and your peers and to others who have only passed through our community. In the following pages you'll find various reflections on identity and personhood, submitted by the people of Bard. These only represent a fraction of what has been going on here in the past two months but keep in mind that the Free Press is not just one thing; it is a mercurial publication, constantly adapting to the voices of the student body and the capabilities of its editors. Admittedly the latter has been negatively affected this year, due to staff changes and budgeting issues, and resulted in postponing the printing of this semester's first issue. But we'd like you to keep looking for the Free Press in the coming months, and urge you to take part in its production.

To freshman and other newcomers, welcome to the Free Press, to everyone else, welcome back. This is my first issue as editor-in-chief and above all I want to thank everyone who has submitted to and worked on this issue. This issue is broadly dedicated to people— to you and your peers and to others who have only passed through our community. In the following pages you'll find various reflections on identity and personhood, submitted by the people of Bard. These only represent a fraction of what has been going on here in the past two months but keep in mind that the Free Press is not just one thing; it is a mercurial publication, constantly adapting to the voices of the student body and the capabilities of its editors. Admittedly the latter has been negatively affected this year, due to staff changes and budgeting issues, and resulted in postponing the printing of this semester's first issue. But we'd like you to keep looking for the Free Press in the coming months, and urge you to take part in its production.

Here's to the year to come.

pansy schulman



illustrations by hans dehaas



## SLD's Worker Experience Survey

olive kuhn

I am writing this article in a considerable hurry, after waiting half an hour for Bard Security to let me into the Sawkill computer lab. When the friendly Security Guard finally arrived, he thanked me for "hanging in there" and advised me not to shut the door behind me, as it might lock again. There was a clear understanding in our brief exchange; he had not wanted this request to take half an hour, but the bottom line was that Security (like so many departments at Bard) is understaffed. Understaffing, mismanagement, and underfunded departments are some of the most common complaints which the Bard Student Labor Dialogue (SLD) hears from Bard workers. Historically, the SLD has worked mostly with the unionized workers (Buildings and Grounds, Security, and Environmental Services) on campus, as unions provide an effective framework through which to reach large groups of workers. Last semester, we staged a successful campaign in conjunction with Buildings and Grounds pertaining to the bargaining unit's health care situation; the college signed a satisfactory contract of winter intercession, and our campaign methods raised awareness and interest of workers' rights at Bard to a level that I had not personally experienced before here. So basically, last semester was rad and this semester the SLD has been, apparently, dormant. In truth, we've been rethinking. Working in conjunction with the on-campus unions is great, but what about the non-unionized workers, those who can't be reached through a meeting with the shop steward? Librarians, administrative assistants, postal workers, shuttle drivers, and employees that are harder to classify (what do you call someone who is neither administrative assistant nor management?) work in disparate locations, often in close proximity with management (whereas B&G, Security, and ES) work around campus, away from management. This means that if non-unionized workers want to discuss workplace problems, they may not feel at liberty to do so. The SLD has historically worked most closely with unionized employees because a union eliminates barriers to student-worker communication. In order to address the above-mentioned barriers, the SLD has spent most of the semester creating and circulating the Bard Worker Experience Survey, an anonymous online survey which addresses personal issues (economics and job security) as well as workplace issues (resources, environment, etc). We also met with the Vice President of Administration in order to run the survey by them before sending it out. After weeks of circulating campus buildings and handing out surveys (or, often, links to the survey), we feel comfortable sharing some of our findings: First of all, many of the staff who participated expressed concern for the funding and management of their department. Of our 21 respondents, 6 said that their department "sometimes" has sufficient resources to fulfill its mission, 3 said "often not" and 1 said "never." Librarians stated that the budget for purchasing new books was prohibitively low.

Other workers voiced concerns disorganization costs their department extra money; that their department is spread between three offices; that they felt difficulty in communicating with other departments or with administration. Another, perhaps surprising, theme which comes through in the surveys is that some staff desire more structure and accountability in the workplace. Better job training, accountability, and supervision are all key terms which occurred multiple times throughout the responses. One person asked for firmer deadlines. A stereotype of an office environment might feature tight deadlines and a boss breathing down your neck, but the surveys present a different image of how these jobs can be difficult. Throughout, we found a common thread that the non-unionized staff want the ability to do their jobs better. In regards to the personal economics of working at Bard, what comes through in the surveys is a wide array of problems which are contextual as well as numerical. When asked, "what are the economic concerns that you face in your job?" staff pointed out that, while living costs in the Hudson Valley are increasing, as is the New York State minimum wage, their salaries are stagnating. One respondent stated that their department requires more skill and talent than it can pay for. Furthermore, two participants pointed out that new employees in their department are hired at a higher hourly rate than that at which experienced employees are already paid. Such a practice raises issues of respect as well as financial security. When staff do not receive recognition for the work they do, when they find themselves holding the same job title and salary but twice the responsibility that they did five years ago, this is an issue of respect. Salary raises and benefits are important to workers' qualities of lives but also to creating a sense of appreciation. From talking to staff and reading the surveys, I got a sense that many workers are devoted to, but do not feel appreciated by, the college. The Bard Worker Experience Survey remains open and can be accessed by emailing [bardsld@gmail.com](mailto:bardsld@gmail.com). Students and workers can also contact us confidentially at this address. We see it as a continuous resource by which any employee can, at any time, express a particular thought or concern about their life at Bard. For the SLD, the next step is thinking about what problems we can address as students and how we can address them. In the meantime, we are pleased that the survey has served as a learning process as well as a tool. Visiting offices across campus was, for many members including myself, surprisingly difficult because it is not common practice for students to chat with office workers. Starting conversations is awkward. Continuing them? Not so much. The SLD looks forward to expanding upon the conversations we have begun next semester.

## ccs workers intend to unionize

olive kuhn

By unanimous petition, the Center for Curatorial Studies (CCS) security guards have expressed their intent to unionize. The CCS employs twelve security guards, all of whom are part-time employees and some of whom are casual hires. The guards cited as reasons for unionization issues such as job insecurity and having little agency over their schedules, not to mention no health care or benefits. Most are paid under \$15 an hour. The guards refused to work on Labor Day in order to express their solidarity, and their dissatisfaction with the aforementioned conditions. Since the CCS only employs twelve guards, forming a separate union would not make much sense for any party involved; rather, the CCS guards and the Bard Security Union have agreed that the CCS guards should join the existing security union. There is language in the Security Union contract which prevents this merge, but members of the Bard Security Union have contacted Bard's Administration requesting to meet and negotiate this language. If the CCS guards are included in the Bard Security contract, the administration will not have to negotiate an extra contract, and the CCS guards will have the opportunity to collectively bargain for their pay and benefits and to resolve their scheduling issues. A November 3rd meeting date between the administration and the Bard Security Union has been set to discuss this change. In the meantime, however, a CCS administrator threatened the guards with job loss over their unionization efforts - a violation of labor law.

Bard Administration has redacted the threat - apparently the administrator who issued the threat was acting autonomously and did not have the authority to fire the guards. Nevertheless, the incident is concerning in that it reveals the anti-union attitude and blatant scare tactics of certain administrators on campus. The Bard Student Labor Dialogue staged a small action on Saturday, October 15th, handing out pamphlets outside of the opening of "We are the Center for Curatorial Studies," a CCS retrospective exhibit. The purpose of the action was to inform the CCS administration and the Bard community of the guards' efforts and to demonstrate the SLD's solidarity with the group. Separately, the B&G and Environmental Services Unions have also expressed their solidarity with the CCS Guards and the Bard Security Union. The SLD will follow with additional information and actions.



photo by ella gibney



## nadia murad, isis survivor and nobel peace prize nominee

maeve lazor



photo from [www.nadiamurad.org](http://www.nadiamurad.org)

On Friday, September 23rd, Nadia Murad Basee Taha, a 23-year-old Yazidi woman who escaped ISIS sexual enslavement, spoke at Bard College about her captivity and journey to spread awareness about the Yazidi Genocide. Nadia's visit to Bard, sponsored by the Hannah Arendt Center, Bard's Human Rights Project, the Center for Civic Engagement and the Bard Model UN Initiative, was her first visit to an American college as a human rights activist.

Murad has been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize and was appointed as a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador. International Human Rights lawyer Amal Clooney has also supported her in seeking justice before the International Criminal Court.

Murad is a Yazidi, a minority religious group of Northern Iraq who have experienced a long history of discrimination. Yazidis have wrongfully been labeled "devil worshippers" by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, otherwise known as ISIS.

In August 2014, ISIS overran the town of Sinjar, Iraq and systematically killed around 5,000 Yazidi men and boys who refused to convert to Islam, and captured about 7,000 Yazidi women and girls who were subsequently sold as sex slaves. 400,000 Yazidis in total have been forced from their homes.

Murad was twenty-one when ISIS militants took her and her sisters from their home village of Kocho, Iraq, on August 3rd, 2014 and brought to Mosul, where they were enslaved. Six of her nine brothers were executed; her mother, considered too old to be sold as a slave, was also executed.

In Mosul, Murad witnessed girls as young as six sold off to ISIS fighters as "gifts." Every morning, the women were required to line up so that the militants could pick and choose the women they found attractive. Murad recalled some women smearing battery acid on their faces to look less appealing to their captors. Several women killed themselves while in captivity. Said Murad: "ISIS gives no value to women and girls, what they want is to own them and to use them in whatever way." Facing unbelievable cruelty in Mosul, Murad attempted to escape but was caught, and endured severe physical and sexual assault by six ISIS members. At this point she no longer feared death and was even begging her captors to kill her. Three months later, she saw another opportunity for escape and this time succeeded. She fled out of the country and made it to Germany where she received medical attention. Both of her sisters survived and found asylum in Germany.

The women and girls who are in refugee camps or who have found asylum in European countries still suffer everyday from psychological trauma and most are not receiving the treatment that they need. As a survivor and human rights activist, Murad founded Nadia's Initiative with support from the Yazda Organization, a non-profit organization which strives to provide long term approaches to healing sexually traumatized

victims by developing and supporting field programs in health care, psychosocial support and education for women and children.

Nadia's message is one of unity: "When you want to help someone, you don't have to be a president or the head of a state. Once there is collective willingness then you can do it. Many girls like myself are at the refugee camps. Maybe if you just go and sit with them and look them in the eye maybe that is good enough support for them," she said. "It's important for them to be sitting with you and have them tell you what has happened to them."

Visiting refugee camps in Greece and Germany, Nadia spoke to countless Yazidi women and children. She discovered that many Yazidis are facing violence from Muslims in the camps, who view them as infidels. The camp police have still not properly addressed the problem.

"[The combined refugee camps] are a problem especially for the women and girls—for example when they hear the prayer 'allahu akbar' they think they will be enslaved again so for that I ask the government to give them separate camps so they can feel safer but that's something that hasn't happened," she said.

What is most frustrating for Murad in her endeavors to help Yazidi refugees is the lack of action on behalf of the UN. "For two years we've been trying to get in an inquiry and an investigation going in Iraq, and there has been no investigation against the crimes. This week we've met with the UN and many world leaders and we ask them for the proper investigation to take place. And this is a bad situation because we have there is no accountability for the crimes committed," Murad said.

I spoke to Roger Berkowitz, professor and academic director of the Hannah Arendt Center about the event and its significance.

"Simply having someone like yourself, an American student, come and hold their hand or look at them in the eye can mean an enormous amount to a refugee who feels like they have been forgotten by the world" he said, "...simply to look at them can be a powerful statement." Berkowitz also mentioned talk of recruiting Yazidi students at Bard College and its global campuses. This year Bard College Berlin awarded five Syrian refugees receiving a full scholarship, and while there has not been nearly as much focus on Yazidi refugees, Bard would like to make something similar happen at any of its campuses.

"These people have been raped, enslaved, and over time their memories will fade. By the time the UN gets around to investigating, these people may be dead or have forgotten, but one of the things that needs to happen is we need to take witness," said Berkowitz, "These are the kinds of things they need volunteers for—I don't know what Bard can do along these lines—there are safety issues, but there is no reason we can't send students to camps in Germany and Greece that are safe, which we've already done. We'd like to help them in any way we can."

Murad can't do this alone. She needs all the help she can get—from the UN, presidents, prime ministers, and now, students. The weight of her ordeal could be seen when she began to tear up answering audience questions, reliving the memories of her time in Mosul:

"As Yazidis we do not know what our future is. We still have 3,500 women and children in captivity. As a person I've lost a lot: I've lost my mother, my brothers, and as a girl I've lost my life. I've lost many people close to me but also the question is I don't know who I'm going to lose next." She continued, "I do this because of the suffering of others. These people have no future, they have no life, they have no voice. Everyday that goes by it is taking something from me—it's taking my soul and my heart but I do this because of others and I don't know how much more I can do this but I am."

## artist trevor paglen speaks about surveillance: a response

niall murphy

On Tuesday, September 20th, Trevor Paglen spoke to a cluster of Bard students and professors packed into the black box theatre in Bard College's Fisher Center for the Performing Arts. Paglen's talk revolved around his artistic response to the modern surveillance state. According to the artist, writer, and geographer, the United States is embroiled in an "everywhere war"—that is, a networked, ubiquitous conflict that is often understood to be taking place without ever achieving any real transparency.

Paglen's practice, then (specifically as a photographer) is fairly straightforward. The artist's aim is to uncover the inner workings and modus operandi of governmental intelligence agencies that have (as Edward Snowden has taught us) become increasingly beholden to secrecy as they aspire to collude against American citizens. To enact this project, Paglen often seeks demystification. As he told the crowd, web-based metaphors such as "the cloud" are misleading, implying networked communication happens in an ethereal capacity—that somehow our data dissipates into thin air and then comes back down again to land in our coworker's inbox or the bitcoin account of a Russian arms dealer.

In actuality, networks are much more physical beings than we often care to remind ourselves. Thousands of miles of fibre optic cables line the floors of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. While the average citizen may be misguided, the physicality of the internet is something the NSA is well aware of. Paglen's powerpoint contained maps kept by the agency carefully detailing intricate cable routes across the world—'wirelessly' connecting the US to Brazil, Nigeria to Greenland, Korea to Mexico and so on. With a careful understanding of how exactly our communication is networked, the agency has been able to establish data centers around the world aiming to mine massive amounts of raw, unfiltered information as means of implementing programs of mass surveillance.

In most of his work, Paglen establishes the US government as the adversary while he dons the cape of the hacktivist folk hero. For a recent series, Paglen hired a group of scuba divers to accompany him to the depths of the ocean to photograph a multitude of undersea cables that were or currently still are being hacked into by the NSA. The point here is transparency; Paglen reveals to himself what systems of power don't want "us" to know—that what we conceive as the vaporous internet is actually a series of physical things that the NSA has the extraordinary means to tap into. A fairly unambiguous thesis. On the other hand, another series of Paglen's seems to stand opposed to this methodology. For his photographic series accompanying Potrias' Citizenfour, Paglen photographed NSA data centers across the world, only the photographs often seem to be of little more than an attractive landscape or idyllic oceanside viewpoint. The photos articulate just what the NSA aims for—a presence so insidious it borders on near invisibility.

Thus, the two series referred to above seem to operate through different mechanisms: on one hand Paglen shows us what the powers that be don't want us to see, on the other he shows us what the powers that be don't want us to see, but through the lense with which they'd like us to see them.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with having points of divergence in one's body of work. What was more troubling though, was the question that seemed to hang in the rafters above the theater but was never quite brought down to the artist's podium. The question of ethics is one that is deservedly assigned to governments that implement mass surveillance, but that doesn't negate it from also being assigned to those government's critics. While privacy is a legitimate concern, so is national security. While it may not always be the sexiest point to defend on a liberal arts campus, it is one that is nevertheless crucial. As Paglen identifies, in 2016 our society is astoundingly networked and global. But with these new freedoms of communication, doesn't this liberation also warrant some regulation and perhaps even oversight? Since the advent of the world wide web, the police have killed far more American citizens than radical terrorism has. But the threat is always imminent and is one that should be taken seriously. Does Paglen ever consider whether the information he's worked so diligently to unmask may do more harm than good in its unmasking? Perhaps some secrets are just that for a reason. What's more, the issue of police brutality focuses Paglen's work in an interesting lense. While the average citizen hasn't yet felt the effects of having their data tapped into and stored as a means of building a global system of intelligent analytics, there is always the concern that such technologies could fall into the wrong hands—that the government could become a handicapped Jimmy Stewart peeking into our windows at night. While these fears are sinister and looming, they're also a bit dystopic and Huxleyian—they seem a bit far off. Ultimately, the real impediments of mass surveillance haven't quite been felt yet and tend to fall under the branch of paranoia and speculation. Meanwhile, the government commits atrocities that take place far closer to the homeland than England and Germany and reveal themselves in much plainer sight—so much so that scuba teams, high powered microscopes and drones aren't a prerequisite for seeing them. Perhaps, then, it's no coincidence that so much of the hacktivist community is comprised of white men—groups of typically educated, higher income bracketed programmers, hackers and artists whose rights have (and I'm only speculating) never been truly infringed on—so much so that they can only ponder and live in fear of the day a government algorithm cracks open their email inboxes.



## being nancy

josh gachette

John Howard Griffin was born a white male in Texas in 1920. Then he turned his skin black, with a regimen of Methoxsalen and a tanning bed. He took a six-week trip through the Deep South in 1959 once he could pass as Black.

I dressed as Nancy Drew for Halloween, and I think I've learned a lot from that. After a weekend of sleuthing, I took off my auburn wig and looked at my afro underneath. I'd never seen my hair go from straight red to kinked black before.

Race and gender identities interact in ways more perniciously discrete than I am wise to. But I felt the complexity of that milieu as I performed feminine in public, though I would be remiss to claim clairvoyance — I'm sure as all hell not. My weekend was by no means indicative of what it is like to inhabit a femme-presenting male body on a day that is not Halloween. But navigating public space as Nancy Drew (a convincing one at that, if I may say so myself) was the farthest and longest I've ever deviated from presenting masculinely. I'll cherish this weekend as a woefully abridged learning experience in that regard.

I think it's telling that I kept my magnifying glass in view. I think I used it as an alibi for the skirt and makeup and wig, explaining away the costume via context clues. (Perhaps that's problematic.) But were I presenting as a Black man as I do in my day to day, I would be very leery of walking around Tivoli at night with a dark, six-inch-long, nondescript object in my hand. Implicit association tests show that officers are statistically more likely to shoot an unarmed black target than an unarmed white target, and with less hesitation too. I don't suspect that there are too many good of boys on the police force, but I'd rather not find out firsthand. I didn't feel a need to check the temperature of the room and make sure that my blackness wasn't being intrusive. Normally I have to make a comment about the Carpenters or kale to assuage a white audience that I'm one of the "good" ones. And even after that icebreaker they still seem leery sometimes. The wig was plenty neutralizing enough, to the point where I felt comfortably anonymous.

Nancy was a free-er person than I, if we're measuring "freedom" as the number of fucks given, and that really surprised me. I've been thinking a lot about that in the days since. "The Secret of the Old Clock" was the opening salvo to the series. That dropped in the heyday of Classical Hollywood cinema. Whenever a white feminine character felt stifled, she'd assert her agency and say "I'm free, white and 21!" (Punctuated with an implied "goddamn it!") A lot of movie studios used that punchline.

Sleuthing seems nosy, almost "asking for trouble." If Joshua Gachette the Negro tried solving a mystery in the 1930s, I'd get called "uppity." Nancy got commended by her peers and benefitted from her father's professional connections. The original Nancy Drew stories had to be revised twenty years later, to cull all the racist tropes — and that was in the Fifties, mind you. The Fifties were a wicked, base time. Nancy Drew is a product of white hegemony. Its one of its better yields for sure though, up there with the Hardy Boys franchise. But that doesn't negate it's homogenous, milk toast, exclusionary predilections.



Growing up, I trick-or-treated in Queens. Autumn was always a stunner on the city's grassy hinterlands, with "country living in the city" courtesy of the MTA, CIA and 1492. A lot of my neighbors are east Asian, and one year I remember getting a Hi-Chew with a green wrapper in front of a colonial brick facade pasted onto a modular ranch house. Unbeknownst to me it could have come out of a Sears and Roebuck catalog, so I said "thank you," walked off the stoop, and back to my friends. It was a lucid time. Crunching leaves and swirling winds abide.

I was a fireman that year, and I'd made a backstory for myself: I was a union man who sometimes went a bit above the speed limit from time to time, but only when in peril of being late for a meal. Another year, I was a NASCAR driver. The irony of a Black child from the north emulating a franchise that holds the most purchase among white, midwestern and southern crowds, was not lost on me. Another year I dressed up as George Washington. Technically, it was a "colonial boy" outfit. That came with a brown-and-peach shirt that had billowing sleeves and a ruffled ascot. Brown-gold fastens ran up the belly. I borrowed my mom's black raincoat for it. It was a mid-length trench. I also had a black hat. It was a tricorn, left over from my stint as Captain Hook in our fifth grade production. It had a white feather sticking out of the top. I really got a kick out of the stockings and breeches too. I would have been Mister Jefferson, but I didn't have a red wig. Admittedly I looked much more like Toussaint L'Ouverture, but I insisted that I was George Washington. I knew that he was a political genius, and a mediocre general who purchased human flesh. And I figured that it took a really sick son of a bitch to buy someone. But Massa Washington was a brilliant thinker; few among us could steer a nascent country. Nationalism is a synthetic construct

that stills feels hard and real, which makes Halloween a great plane to parse it out on. Halloween is all synthetics, after all! High fructose corn syrup adds synthetic flavor to candies piled in plastic pumpkins, held by trick-or-treaters in synthetic fabrics built to come apart at the seams the day after. Decorations made in China can turn your suburban lawn into a graveyard, and your school cafeteria "spooky" for \$19.95. Most holidays are affiliated with some tchotchke or another: like Christmas trees, fireworks or Easter eggs. "The costume" is Halloween's patron saint. Costumes are all about semiotics. They're a window into ideologies. Quotidian clothes are too, albeit to a lesser degree. That's because a Halloween costume amplifies a shitty sense of humor. Dressed as Nancy Drew I descended a flight of stairs in Robbins, when on my left I was passed by two white boys in rasta wigs.

For the record: I think Jamaica made a mistake of dire proportions when her delegates jettisoned the West Indies Federation in 1962, to the consequent demise of the entire West Indies. All the while those costumes weren't the right way to poke fun at the island nation; I took them to be unimpressive at best. All the while I relished how ironic it was for our bodies to meet in that corridor. I mimicked a literary character as white as they were, at the same time they lampooned my Caribbean heritage. (Not to draw an equivalency.) My parents were born abroad, as were 40 percent of Queensboro residents. Dominant (white) American culture is a well spring of tropes from which these 40 percent and their children can interpolate this American life. I look for the same groove pocket in classic country as I do in reggae. Diaspora brought me here, and that's taught me to relish the gulf between points A and B where culture gets discretely transmitted.

Predictability loses its purchase on Halloween, and that opens up a discursive space unlike any other. I love my country (whatever that means), and I'm prepared to sacrifice my well-being for its well-being (to a degree). But I also think that America is a place with internal contradictions bubbling under the surface. America is thesis and antithesis in one, when it affirms itself and then denies that it ever did. It's a country of "known-unsaid" where loose lips sink ships, lest we forget that the Pilgrims haven't always been here. I pledged allegiance to its flag daily, until middle school. Most every classroom had a thumbtack strip that ran parallel to the flag, above the chalkboard and below some presidents' portraits. I sang "My Country 'Tis of Thee" fully aware that "my fathers" had not "died" for this tract, and that I mightn't hear freedom ring quite the same as other Americans — and that my white peers who sang "land of the pilgrims' pride" without mention of Indian sovereignty were complicit in a historical conspiracy. Some of them were making an alibi for their patriarchs, well aware that when the legend becomes truth print the legend, and then lather, rinse, repeat. But their colony built my home, here and then. Queens smells like petrichor in the morning, cut grass at noon, and curry at night. Lunchables next to seaweed in the cafeteria, paisley hijabs rising for the color guard after 9/11. I can't vouch for American exceptionalism everywhere, but it seemed real in Queens County. The Nancy I know is a sleuth. She's inclined towards secrets and mysteries — uncovering the obscured. "The Secret of the Old Clock" set a formula for titles that's stuck around since then: "The Secret," followed by a preposition / conjunction, followed by an adjective, followed by a noun. Nancy sleuthed out a couple cases this Halloween weekend. The Secret of the Missing Phone was an open-and-shut case. As was The Secret of the Hidden Toothbrush. I'm really pleased with how those turned out. Unfortunately she's got one left to solve: "The Secret of the Two-Faced Colony." That still eludes her and I both.





**featured artist:**  
**hugh hopkins**

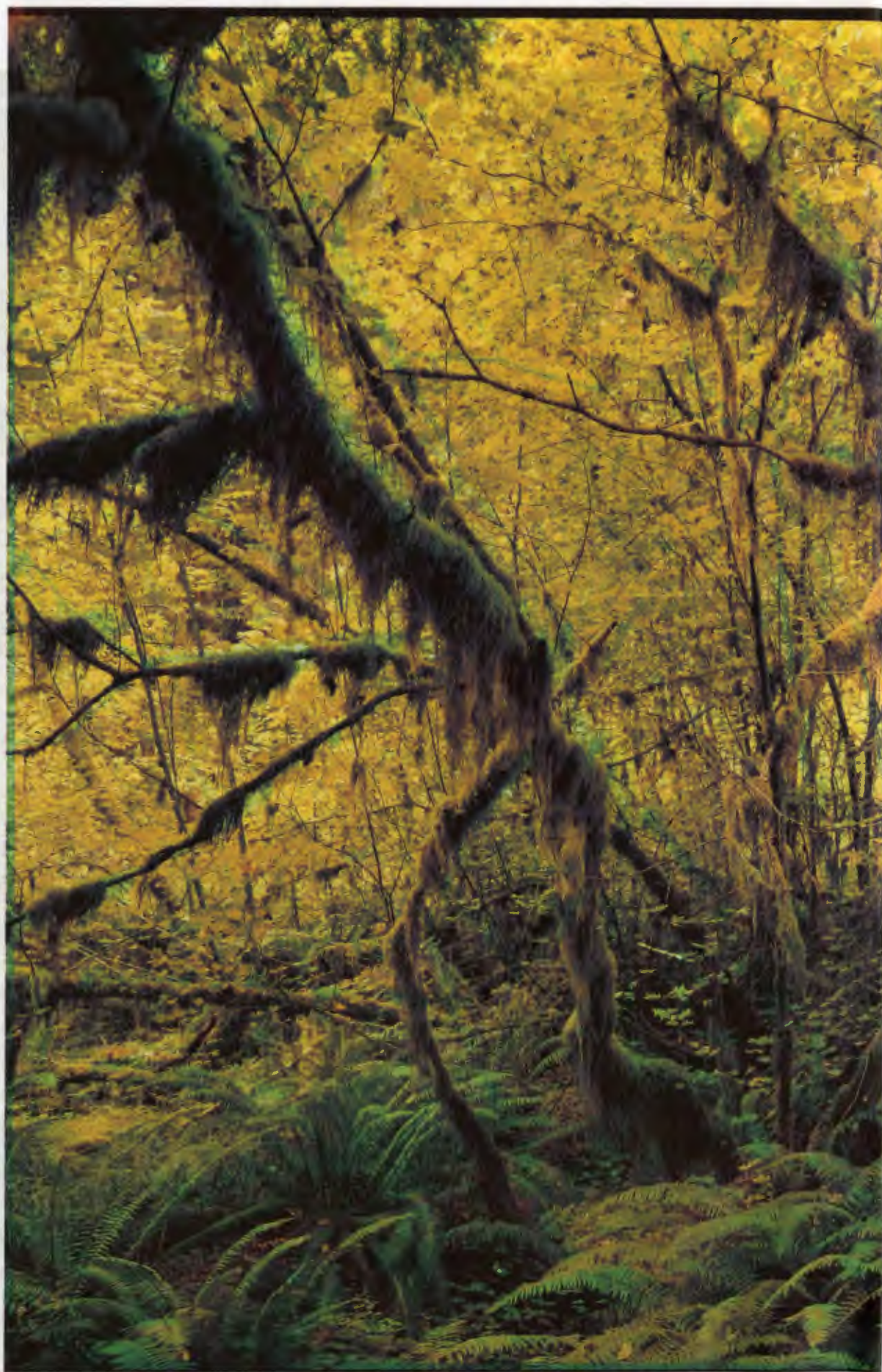
I work with and manipulate expired film because it produces a unique specimen, like a microscope slide or a petri dish. As film ages, the dyes disintegrate and colors shift based on how it was stored and treated. This gives each box of old film its own story to tell, resulting in a totally unique interpretation of what is exposed on it.

I attempt to manipulate my photographs at all levels: during the exposure, during processing, during printing, and wherever else I can integrate my hand and steer the photographic process away from the intentionality embedded in its design. It is in this

process that I can get lost in all the possibilities and chance events that transform the resulting image, which I take as an allegory for all randomness and chance that makes up reality. I treat each piece of film as an alchemical object in the way it simultaneously condenses and expands time and space into a static image. By recording its own existence it becomes a record of existence itself. My goal is to make photographs that if studied by the right person might unlock some kind of mystery or answer an unanswerable question.













## the bard aesthetic

marisa bach

With a new year comes 500 new students and, subsequently, 500 personal identities to be cultivated on Bard's campus. Freshman Olive Werby and Senior Brandon Acton-Bond open up about their own opinions, as a newcomer and a soon to be departing senior respectively, on the aesthetics of Bard and whether or not there really is a "Bard Look."

photo by ella gibney

Name: Olive Werby  
Year: Freshman  
Major: Maybe Film

Tivoli Tastemaker: So, what are you wearing right now?

Olive Werby: I'm wearing a kids bathing suit top and some of my favorite jeans and I accidentally wore slippers out of my dorm because I forgot I was wearing them. It's too hot to wear anything else.

TT: Do you think your style has evolved?

OW: Yeah, I definitely think it's pushing me to pay more attention to what I'm wearing. I used to be around people that didn't really pay attention or care about what they wore but it's different at Bard and I feel more pushed to pay more attention to and be more articulate about what I'm wearing. It's more fun!

TT: How would you define the "Bard Look"?

OW: For the majority of people there might be one look they lean towards which is alternative, eclectic and sometimes retro, it's certainly hard to pinpoint in words, but visually its coherent.

TT: Do you think that the "Bard Look" translates both aesthetically and socially?

OW: I think it does, I think there is a similar way we talk about how people dress and how people interact. I think it's similar a little snobby and I feel like people have the right to be pretentious in the way they dress and the way they talk, not the right but it's hard to explain.

TT: Do you notice a difference between the aesthetic choices of your class compared to the upperclassman?

OW: I'm not too familiar with everyone yet, but I feel like upperclassman seem to be more sure of their styles and more selective of what they wear so it looks more polished.

TT: Do you feel like you dress or act differently at Bard than at home or in another social setting?

OW: I feel like I'm probably more sloppy at home because I'm not pushed to look my best. My friends at home aren't as fashionable.

TT: Why do you think being at Bard pushes you to dress a certain way?

OW: Well, because at Bard everyone is also doing that, it's a really creative environment, where we're learning and pushing ourselves creatively. We do it in all ways which includes how we portray ourselves in addition to what we write and other academics.

TT: Do you feel like choices in appearance are more important for yourself or your peers?

OW: I would definitely say for myself, most of the time, maybe a little bit is for my peers because I'm dressing to feel comfortable around people.

TT: Is there a lot of pressure to fit into a certain mold?

OW: I don't feel a pressure, because how I express myself is accepted here. I think they're some people that don't fit into it and that fine, but I don't feel a pressure.

Name: Brandon Acton-Bond  
Year: Senior  
Major: Art History and Studio Art

Tivoli Tastemaker: Ok, so what are you wearing right now?

Brandon: I am trying to deal with the heat right now so I'm just wearing a pair of burnt orange short shorts and this vintage weird hemmed t-shirt and some Nike Blazers.

TT: I feel that, do you think your style has evolved since coming here? How have you transformed?

BA: I think I've just become more aware of my own identity, my style has physically shifted a little over the course of this time. I think that comes with the non-binary identity that has helped me as a lens for viewing my own gender identity and gender performativity and looking at oppressive structures of misogyny, basically. If that makes any sense.

TT: Would you say that there is a "Bard Look" and if so how would you define it?

BA: I would say that there are many Bard looks, but I wouldn't say that there is a look. I do think that there is a spectrum of dressing with uniform and costume at opposing ends. Uniform is what you're told and expected to wear, and costume is what you are choosing to put out that defies that uniformity, it's a more personal choice. I think it's that people come to Bard and there are people who are really interested in who they are and that can pertain to the way they dress and exploring ideas of self in what they wear, how they present themselves.

TT: Do you think that it translates both socially and aesthetically?

BA: When I was a first year PC, residents would complain about the standoffishness of some of their peers. I would always advise people to take a step back and realize most people are uncomfortable a lot of the time, and this manifests differently but sometimes leads to this aloofness. Sometimes we just need to work up the courage to talk to each other.

TT: Do you notice a difference between how people in your class present themselves from the other classes?

BA: I don't think I could say that I see a difference. I can say that I've witnessed myself and my peers the rest of my class as our individual styles have shifted and changed over the years. Each year is so diverse, that I don't think there is a style that demarcates each class. I definitely do have style crushes in every grade but it's more about a spirit of dressing than the specificities of what people are wearing.

TT: Do you feel like choices in your appearance are more for yourself or for your peers?

BA: I would say they are consciously for myself, yet systems of power will unconsciously have an effect on me, whether I dress to oppose them or go with them. This makes clothing just another lens of self-exploration and societal evaluation. So I do make conscious choices of how I want to dress.

TT: Ok last question, do you think there is a lot of pressure to fit into a certain mold at Bard?

BA: I think most people everywhere prescribe to a mold, but I think people here are more aware of the forces that make those molds and often actively engage in resistance. Fashion is interesting because on one hand it is a tool to oppose these structures, and on the other hand it enforces them. Here at Bard this is four years of self-exploration. So for different people that means different things, and I don't think anyone would oppose someone's choice to wear or not wear something.



mama knows best

julie and avery  
mencher



photo courtesy avery mencher

MKB is an advice column cowritten by mother-son team Avery Mencher '17 and his mother Julie Mencher, MSW, a licensed therapist in private practice for over 25 years, with a specialty in working with college students. Every issue, students submit questions anonymously, and Avery and Julie choose a few to answer, so keep those questions coming!

**Any advice for how to start building myself back up after a breakup? I read a Vice article that says I'm basically doomed until I find the next ex, but I don't want to at this point, until after Bard. I hate Tinder. How do I "get back out there"?**

**Julie Mencher:** Oh, pumpkin, I'm sorry for your loss, sorry that you're hurting. One thing I can tell you: if you follow the Vice advice, you'll for sure find the next ex – what you WON'T find is a good, healthy connection that might result in a lasting relationship! People aren't ink cartridges – they're not replaceable, and you can't feel virtuous if you recycle them.

**Au contraire:** You need some time to feel the pain, lick your wounds, and heal from the break-up by understanding what went wrong. Was your ex-partner a bad choice to begin with? What did you do to make it work, and to make it not work? What was your partner's contribution? When you look back at the course of the relationship, can you see places that it went off the rails, and then figure out what you could have done differently? Are there any themes or flaws in this relationship that are similar to your past relationships?

Then, at the end of that soul-searching road, make a list and keep it on the notebook in your phone. It could be called, "Lessons Learned from my Last Relationship," or "Who I want To Choose (or Not Choose) Next Time Around," or "What Feels Like True Love," or "How I Feel About Myself When I'm in a Good Relationship."

**YOU** are your best guide. Listen to your instincts, not Vice, when they tell you, "You're not ready to get back out there."

And, when you've done all this, I guarantee you'll be more open and healed and ready to find your next love. And other people might even sniff that out and find **YOU**.

**Avery Mencher:** Yeah, Vice is a rag. What article did you read? Something like "We Ruined The Relationships Of Seven Couples And Then Gave Them Shitty Advice?"

It sounds like you may not be really ready to get back out there! If you don't want to "find the next ex" until after Bard, spend some time on yourself. Think of things you can do that make you happy, independent of a significant other. You don't have to immediately jump to the next relationship, and you should always feel comfortable taking your time in order to make sure that you're okay.

Make sure that you utilize the community you've built for yourself too! It's ok to lean on the people who care about you. You've already taken the first step to reaching out for help by writing to us. Now it's time to tap into friends and family.

**How do I explain to my parents I am dating someone who identifies as trans or gender non-conforming?**

**Julie Mencher:** You have come to the right person! I've specialized in working with trans\* people and their loved ones for over twenty years. The first thing I tell people is: know who you're dealing with. Are your parents particularly conservative or progressive on these matters? (If particularly conservative, then you know they'll need time, education about gender variance, and support. If particularly progressive, they might not need much educating – though they might need more than they think they need. However, they might run smack into a quintessential liberal's dilemma – What happens if I can't walk the talk? – and then take out on you their conflicts about their own selves). Is your relationship with them particularly close, such that not sharing your dating life with them would be out of sync for you? How serious/long-standing is the relationship with the person you're dating? Do you want your parents to meet this person?

What's happened in the past when you've made choices they disagree with? What's the absolutely worst case scenario if your parents disapprove, and are you prepared to face that? (For example, if they might stop paying for your college education over this one, you might wanna think twice about telling them).

**HOW** would it be best to tell them: face-to-face, phone, or e-mail (notice I didn't include texting)?

Since I think all these factors affect how you should proceed, it's a bit difficult to answer your question generically. Here are some things to keep in mind:

-Since transgender advocacy is the first social justice/diversity movement to come of age in the era of social media, the pace of public awareness and trans-positive social change has been viral. That's created a bit of a generation gap on this one. For example, I am waaaay ahead of most of my peers (a.k.a., your parents) on understanding and accepting the new gender landscape. So you might have to cut your parents some slack and give them some time to play catch-up here.

-And speaking of having patience with your parents: The development of awareness, acceptance, and pride is a process – not an event – for a trans\* person. Likewise, the loved ones of trans\* people – and their loved ones – must go through a similar coming out process over time. That means that your parents' first reaction likely won't be their last. Just give them some time, and don't freak out at their initial freak-out, if that's what happens.

-When you do share this news with them, you could turn the tables on them by reminding them that you're young. (This will not only knock them off-balance; they'll also be impressed with your wisdom for realizing that). Remind them that college is the perfect time for identity exploration, and more and more young adults are including gender in this developmental moment. You can also remind them that this will most likely not be your last romantic relationship, and you know that you'll learn a lot from it, no matter who you're dating (see my response to previous letter).

And, if all this isn't specific enough, book a session with me through my website ([www.juliemencher.com](http://www.juliemencher.com)) and we'll talk.

**Avery Mencher:** Sweet plug for yourself there, Mom. We're supposed to be giving advice, not promoting your #brand (jk she's a really good therapist and anyone would be lucky to have a session with her!!) I'm mostly going to defer to the literal expert here, but I agree with Mom that you have to know your audience. If they're maybe not the most informed or trans-positive parents, perhaps try to introduce them to some of the dialogue and vocabulary surrounding the issue first, thus easing them into a world that they may not be very comfortable in. Once they feel more knowledgeable, they may be less quick to judge.

**I'm a freshman and actually not liking it very much here at Bard. What can I try to do to be more positive and have a better experience?**

**JM:** I'm going to defer to my son on the Bard-specific aspects of this question. But first and foremost, you need to know: **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**. It may LOOK like everyone around you just met their besties and are blissed-out in college heaven, but I am here to tell you, **IT'S NOT TRUE**. I've worked at three college counseling services, and I've met with dozens if not hundreds of disgruntled first-year students. How could it be otherwise? The build-up to college is so intense – for how many years have you heard that all the hard work and perfectionism and being great at everything would pay off when you got to college?! How many people told you that college would be "the time of your life"? How many times, when you were just itching to get away from your parents or high school or community, did you think, "I just can't wait till I get to college?" It's not often that your first semester can live up to years of outasight expectations.

For some people, college life is love at first sight. For others, it's a slow burn. For yet others, it's just not a good fit. But it will take time for you to figure this out. Give it your best effort for this semester, and then reassess. Take it away, Avery . . .

**Avery Mencher:** Finally, a question that I have more experience with! Freshman year, like probably every transition for your entire life, is never totally easy. There's so much going on and you've undoubtedly had annoying lame adults telling you that college will be "the best four years of your life" for years now. Just remember that nothing freshman year will be the end of the world. Some people make friends in the first month of freshman year that they keep forever; some don't find their best friends until sophomore year, or later. Try your hardest to remain open to all options. You may have come into Bard dead-set on becoming a Biology major, only to realize that you have a real passion for History. That's ok! It's good to try uncomfortable and new things.

I was one of those annoying people who did find a great group of friends in the first month of freshman year, and I still chose to go abroad to Berlin last fall, leaving them all behind in Annandale. Guess what? It really sucked. I had an incredibly hard time being away from the academics and the social life that I was used to, and I couldn't wait to come back to Bard. Now that I'm back, I reflect on my worst semester of college as one of the most important in my life. It's always important to remember that hardship has a place in your life, just as much as joy and happiness. Even though it may be hard to have this perspective, eighteen is still young. You have more time than you expect to make friends, choose your major, and have a great time. If things aren't working for you right now, try going to a club meeting or party or event that you wouldn't normally gravitate towards. The amazing thing about going to such an eclectic college is the unbelievable variety of "college experiences." Be patient, keep an open mind, and I promise you'll find yours.



**crucifix transplant***johana costigan*

I had nothing to report to your pointed face during the all-nighter in a booth. Early blue morning, hairnet and crack for the second time down the toilet. I assumed you were an accomplice until proof of innocence emerged. In those days we caught each other— friends in the guitar and hard rain, smells fresh, like a narco Walmart. After NA I made it back to God, I'm such a church mouse. Confession cured all, obviously, but five decades in I can't get used to the chalkiness of Eucharist. That being said, the deacons were the worst, nothing but hands.

**untitled***posy sloane*

Sun hit blows carrying imminent sunburn, and running salted water under arms. Attractive to flies seemed a scatological decree, although the drone could do with some consistency—the bother being not fact, but something of a deviation. Imminence proclaimed some seed-like ingenuity. Perennials had it; if not now, then to-be. The word carried like a devotional through pews—one game of telephone, snaking on all fours—to burst like hips in making or being made. Another imminence uncurls. The desert makes dust and flattens at a step. Farther, the sun set San Mateo on fire as she towed-off—she thought of great caves on the lake that could save her. (In June she had growled at shallow waters who scraped her toes on the bottom rocks; oiled potatoes she thought rocks in a bowl and hands to turn with ocean salt.) San Mateo used posture as currency and got tied by hands to incendiary poles. (Sticks stood straight in the pools like dead for kicking—water leeches rings on stalks, the precursor to bipedalism's circles; each younger, greener, looking). Thinking on the water boiled her as she bellowed herself till night. The sun streaked black on those pools. Flies hummed a dirge and drew dust in with their breath. A sun's pyre becoming.

**Eigengrau***terrence arjoon*

direct control of my retinal field  
in 3,2,1...  
confession time:  
I talk in my sleep—  
to the sun, b/c I miss it  
News:  
there are no more years  
Fact:  
the attitudes of the body  
are the categories of the spirit  
that, is why, I joined the harissa cult  
spiritual detritus, the man, the street—  
join a cult for the orphic blt recipe  
stay for community  
and Culture



photo by jared de urarte



