



Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

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Confessions of a Not-So-Dangerous Mind

By Tom Cervino

**Before I start, I just have to get something off my chest: I was told to write something for this week's issue of GDT.*

So, what is there to say? I mean, it seems like everyone and their mother has had something to say about the conflict in Iraq so I won't go there. And seeing how I'm a full-time student here, it would seem logical that I gripe about SOMETHING not pleasing to the general population (food service, academic woes, male-to-female ratio, just to name a few). However, I don't feel as though my words will produce any kind of reaction.

Well, I know what I'm NOT going to write about. So how do the writers that submit something every week come up with shit to write about?!

Think Tom, think.

There is this one idea, but it might be too radical. It might tear the very fabric that holds our college being together. The idea might scare, shock, and even make you laugh. It's more of a stupid observation really, but I'm willing to bet that most of you reading this know what "lol, brb, rofl, ttyl," and ":-p" are all about. That's right. I'm talking about instant messaging.

I can barely remember a time in my life when I didn't use some form of an Instant Messenger. I think that my first encounter was back in 6th grade, using the America Online service. This way of communicating was a brilliant thing! I mean, who needed the phone when all you had to do was pick your friend, type a message, and have your answer in seconds? It was like manning your own switchboard. Need to ask Matt a question? No problem! What's his screen name?

And it's at this point that IM became something more than a service. It's a very important thing, your screen name. This name was how you identified yourself in a digital-world called AOL. You could be anyone you wanted! "xxCuteChic19xx, God69, IAMADONKER" (Note: That last screen name is real. I graduated high school with him). Great. Obviously God himself did not use AOL, but online, you could have a conversation with him.

So through our high school years, we were blessed with instant messengers. With this came the "profile." This profile is exactly what it leads you to believe – your

own personal space to list things about yourself and be an individual...just like everyone else. Some people bare their inner soul in these profiles, while others don't acknowledge their own existence at all. But by this time in your IM career, you can tell a lot about a person by his/her profile. Many times you were able to see that a friend was upset about something, or that another just got a new significant other (You know what I'm talking about! "Marital Status:" mean anything to you?). The profile became a part of you and it carried over with you to college.

How convenient! We now have 24/7 internet connection here at RIT, so you can just keep your instant messenger online as long as you want! With this, the away message becomes even more popular, allowing you to leave your precious computer while letting everyone know that you're not there to take their IM's. Now don't you be that person who lies. I'll be the first to admit it! I have gone down my buddy list of about 200 people, and looked at every away message before. You know you've done it, and you're a dirty liar if you say otherwise.



LOLZ!@!

So, with a profile, an away message, and IM lingo, we've invested a good portion of our lives using this service. I'm sure many of you reading this have had that horrid conversation (if you can call it a conversation, I mean, it is only typing back and forth and I KNOW that I speak faster than I type...) in which you typed something you regretted. Have you broken up with someone online? How about a fight? Ever save a "conversation?" I bet you've shared a conversation with another friend before, haven't you?

Where are you going with this?

There is this "thing" lingering over our heads. We as IM users have been able to communicate with friends more easily, save time, and perhaps ruin ourselves all at the same time. IM is the beautiful evil for some of us. But considering the fact that we've had all this emotional damage done to us with IM, how are we to handle it? What other generation has had to deal with the sociality of IM? We are the first ones to handle this, and what have we done to compensate for any flaws? Who else knows what it feels like to be dumped over the computer? It's not like the telephone – you can't hear tone of voice with words on a computer screen. At what point in our lives do we say, "That's it. I don't need this IM anymore?" Have we depended too much on a good thing? What's the next move for those who are "X% addicted to Instant Messenger! How addicted are you?"

Well, that's for you to decide. :-p I'll ttyl!

Instant Messaging lingo

IM – Instant Messenger

Lol – Laugh Out Loud

Ttyl – Talk To You Later

Brb – Be Right Back

Rofl – Roll On Floor Laughing

** - That just saves my ass if this article doesn't seem like it's professional, because by no means, am I a writer*

The Call of Today by Alexander Brazie

What was the motivation
Which drove me everyday

Was it the sight of your face
Was it the touch of your hands

Was it the look in your eyes at night
Was it the way you made my steps feel light

Or was just it a dream
Confused and twisted by the shadows in twilight

Were we all deceived by illusions
Were we all fools to play the game

Nay

Though the daylight changed
Though the reasons faded away

That time was its own world
That time had its own place

To be reflected upon in the cool evenings
To be remembered as the sun of life sets

Now, look to new faces
Now, look into new eyes

For a new chance
For a new surprise

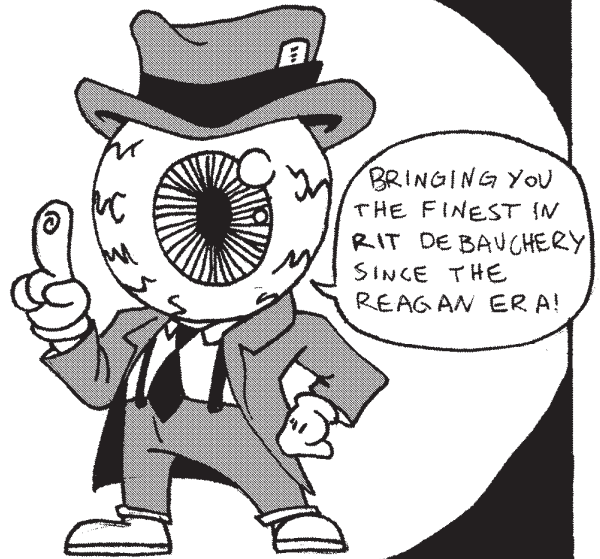
For a new beginning to arise

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BONA-FIDE
CRIME WATCH REPORTER!

JOE CORNEA

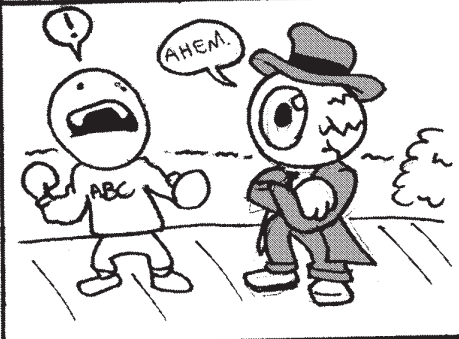
PUBLIC EYE!

by PETER LAZARSKI - GSI



5 AM: Public Annoyance

Student found screaming in quad, was not aware that Rush Week had ended.



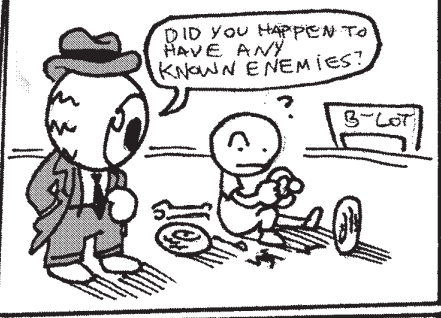
9:30 AM: Harassment

Housing operations reported a number of threatening messages regarding housing assignments



12 Noon: Theft / Vandalism

A student reported his car ransacked while leaving B Lot.



1:15 PM: Ill Behavior Without a Permit
A number of CS students were seen engaging in a sort of bizarre bonding ritual.



2:43 PM: Females Spotted!

Two female students seen leaving the SAU unaccompanied by the customary throng of suitors.



4:20 PM: Bad Taste
Student Publication reported to be excessively naughty.



PJL '03

TEH Part III: Intelligence, Beauty, and Sanity: Pick Two

by Adam Preble

So far there have been some references to some band called “Crazy Diamond.” Yes, the band’s name came from Pink Floyd. This didn’t say much about their music, which was actually alternative revival. You know you’re old when 90’s music is being played for nostalgic effect. Well, it’s not *quite* time for 90’s music to become hip again, but we’re projecting a little into the future. Anyhow, this band was scheduled to perform on a Friday at RIT. The concert sold out, everybody was having a good time, the performance was spectacular...

...Of course, Paul and Ken didn’t bother going. A typical “Paul and Ken Friday moment” is playing Halo across the LAN from Paul’s single Riverknoll apartment. Ken had given it to Paul after failing to serve pornography on the web with it. He even had Linux shoved on the thing. It was novel, but Linux really didn’t serve him any purpose -- unless inviting your friend over to show them how neat it was is a “purpose.” He ended up getting Halo, like every Xbox owner is supposed to do. Ken would always complain about how much it sucked, and that Quake 3 running on Linux was 100 times better. That didn’t matter, because he kept coming over to play it anyhow. Something about having your game teammate/enemy sitting on the same couch as you makes these games even more fun.

Meanwhile, Clarissa, the lead singer/guitarist for Crazy Diamond, and her two bodyguards were wandering the RIT campus. More specifically, they were fleeing a strange mob of fans. These people didn’t seem to be interested in autographs, pictures, or even conversations. They wandered shortly behind her everywhere, muttering, “she-creature.” Normally, Clarissa would stay the hell away from a college campus where she was performing. However, she was trying to hunt down an old friend. She had caught up with him on Instant Messenger, of all places. Unfortunately, the specifics of getting together got all screwed up. This didn’t keep the famous musician from trying to hunt her friend down. She had always been terribly short on friends, with the way things were in her high school. The record industry didn’t help much either. For every failed attempt at finding this guy, she’d go have herself another beer at one of the adjacent parties. This didn’t help her much, because it increased the size of the crowd following her.

Oh, and another odd thing was that they were all men.

Paul and Ken were waiting for the next game of Halo capture-the-flag to start. This gave Paul some time to reminisce on his week. “Hey Ken, I got an interesting instant message from an old high school friend the other day.” Ken didn’t say anything, because, of course, he didn’t care. Paul continued, “She was really strange. I couldn’t figure out if she was just screwing with my head half the time. Anyhow, she kind of disappeared from my school in 10th grade, and now she says she’ll be at RIT for this weekend.”

“Do you plan to meet her? She sounds stupid.” Ken commented. Paul had thought about it, but never got back to her. He hadn’t seen her online since that Tuesday. The game started, and the two boys entered their little video game world again.

On the Clarissa Torrence front, she was now walking with just herself and her two bodyguards over to some single Riverknoll apartments. She had a cigarette in one hand and dragged bottle of beer in the other. “That fucktard is around here someplace.” She mumbled to her bodyguards. The large one was named Thumb, the shorter was named Pinky. Pinky, although obligated to follow Clarissa all over the place, was getting fed up with the search.

“We finished checking out all the parties, he wasn’t there, so...”

“I told you he wouldn’t be at any parties! That’s not how he is!” Clarissa was now heading for the darkest, most recessed apartments. The area they were in had a proverbial “DO NOT DISTURB” sign written all over it. “This is his country, right here!” She declared. One could see cave trolls frantically running back to their apartments at the sight of outsiders. Shadows formed into shapes of slow, wobbling bodies that followed from behind. They chanted, “She-creature. We want she-meat.”

“Screw this.” Thumb declared, “I’m heading for the nearest unlocked door. Failing that, the nearest locked door.” He knew that course of action was the best for them -- this mob seemed inspired by otherworldly desires, and was not worth messing with.

Paul and Ken were now getting pissed at their current match in Halo because some idiots gave up and started team-killing. In the middle of pounding on the table in frustration, the door into the apartment burst open, and Clarissa, Pinky, and Thumb piled into the dark kitchen. Paul and Ken froze in the living room. The only illumination in the whole place was the cold glow from the television. In the ensuing silence, they could hear the eerie moans of “she-meat” from outside.

“Excuse me for a moment.” came a girl’s voice from the dark kitchen, followed by the dull glow of a burning cigarette. One could hear it burning away from a strong whiff. “Damn, that felt good.” In a shocking demonstration of common sense, Paul yelled, “Put that out, you’ll set out the fire alarm!”

“Oh, oopsies,” returned that girl’s voice, a pause and then, “What the fuck! Who are you?” Hands floated through the air looking for a stray light switch and a lamp. A few lights were started up at the same time, showing an apartment occupied by Ken, Paul, Pinky, Thumb, and Clarissa. The back door opened up soon after, and Kan leaped in. “Hey guys, what’s going on?” he started. “I could barely find my way in with the lights off. And what’s with all the crazy people outside? They’re acting like they just saw a girl... oh shit!” he screamed, and pointed at Clarissa and shouted, “That’s Clarissa Torrence!” She stood in front of her bodyguards, still with a beer in one hand and a cigarette in another, and glared back at Kan. She hung her belly out and her eyes were sullen. She looked 25% drunk, 25% high, and 100% pissed. Paul was busy looking at her, trying to figure her out. Clarissa’s defiant stance shifted toward Paul at this, and she blurted, “So you’re gonna gawk at me . . . Paul??” Her expression suddenly neutralized.

Paul hadn’t quite figured out the connection that his high school whack-o friend got a record contract, dropped out of school, and had a name change. Nobody had bothered to tell him. Even during the online chat, Clarissa didn’t write a thing about it. Although she was very different, neither her dress habits nor her personality changed much. She leapt over and gave him a big hug. “Dude, how’ve you been?” she asked him. Paul half-heartedly shrugged, not knowing who she was yet.. “Haven’t changed a bit!” She said, and hugged him again. There was a hasty introduction of everybody in the room. Kan and Ken’s names were too similar, so Clarissa opted to call Kan “KK.” They played a quick game to determine how stupid she was [see the first story in the series]. It went something like this:

Clarissa: Ohh no I never took the SAT, or ACT for that matter...

Ken: Dude, she has to be an idiot

Clarissa: ...but Mark Twain once wrote, ‘Don’t let schooling interfere with your education.’ I read the classics and some philosophy while on the tour bus.

Ken: ...Woah...

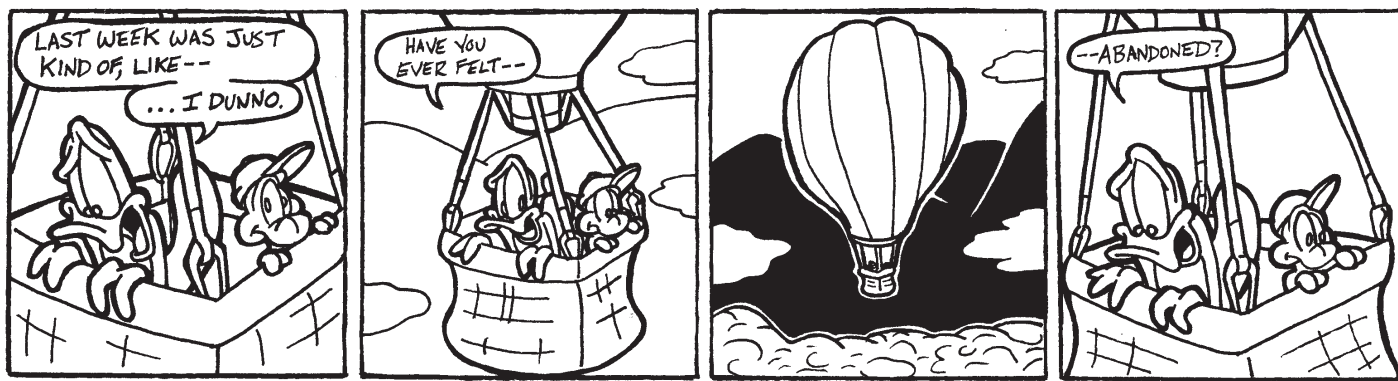
Kan: She’s the real deal...

Ken: ...a complete moron.

Clarissa kept talking. There was a shine in her eyes people rarely got to see. Paul couldn’t stop staring, and wondering, “How did she get her hair like that?” It looked like a red mop.

Their introduction was interrupted by hands plunging through the windows, clawing into the

The Traveling Platypus Bob Rutan (GSI)



apartment. Voices slowly murmured “she-creature” over and over. “Are they zombies?” KK asked Paul. Kan was older, but had only started school at RIT in the fall as a graduate student, so Paul was the most experienced there as a sophomore. Paul wasn’t so sure what to say. He had heard of the older students craving female company on campus before, and that such cravings can corrupt a man. However, he didn’t know if this was a display of that corruption, so he shrugged. It was obvious to these three nerds that the quickest way to resolve this deadly situation was to use the Internet.

The zombies wouldn’t just wait a while for Kan to look up information on them. More arms burst through the windows, followed by a leg or two. Pinky declared, “This is crap -- I’m going to use my extensive martial arts experience!”

“I didn’t know you knew that stuff,” Thumb observed.

“Well yeah, I know this neat thing called ‘gungoboom.’” Two sawed-off shotguns slipped out from under his overcoat. “Oh, I know what you mean.” Thumb stated, and got his M4 Carbine out from his overcoat. They both had a smug expression as they turned around, and opened fire at the window. Loud squeals came from behind the curtains -- the monsters’ death cries sounded something like pigs. The zombie horde vanished for a moment. Thumb and Pinky looked at each other, back out the window, and were both simultaneously hit by body parts that were flung from the outside. “That wasn’t very nice!” Pinky hollered outside, emphasizing his stance with shotgun pellets.

Kan had performed something of a miracle by booting the Xbox into Linux and loading up a web page. He found something interesting off RIT’s Student Health page:

There have been reports lately of technology and engineering students suffering from girl withdrawal. These students begin to speak in slurs and act irrationally. They are a danger to girls on campus, and should be treated as soon as possible. The current cure for girl withdrawal is to expel the student from RIT. Attempts to resist an attack from a withdrawal victim have been fatal. Victims exhibit a strong resistance to pain that seems to correspond to their strong resistance to logic.

“Guys! You can’t stop them!” Kan declared. “We gotta get out of here!”

“How?” Pinky and Thumb shouted back. There was a pause, until Paul got an idea. The rear window so far had been pretty clear, so they’d go crawling out of there. Clarissa would get covered in a pair a sweatpants and a sweatshirt, stuffed with pillows to make her look fat. He put a cap on her to cover her finely-braided, red hair. They’d just sneak out that way and that would be that.

Unfortunately, while getting Clarissa dressed for the role, the zombies plunged through the kitchen window hobbled their way into the living room. Ken, in an act of divine inspiration, picked up the Xbox, and flung it at them. The sheer power of the massive Xbox cut through their bodies, disabling them for precious seconds. They all slowly piled out of the other window and into the cold outside. The only problem now was getting to a safe place. Thumb had called ahead to the bus driver, and Kan declared S-Lot to be the rendezvous point. They clawed their way through some bushes while taking a shortcut there.

S-Lot was packed with zombies. Not a single part of the pavement was visible. It was like there had been a congregation for a speech, and they were all facing this small group. Clarissa shrugged, sighed, and topped off her beer. “Figures, doesn’t it. Just like high school.” Paul told her. He had remembered who she was after all. “There’s the bus on the other end of the lot!” Pinky pointed out. Clarissa sagged for a moment and asked Paul, “Yeah well, did it ever stop me before?”

“You were crazy to me in school. I was content to forget it.” Paul told her.

“Yeah, well, I wouldn’t have been so *batshit insane* if all the girls weren’t out to get me all the fucking damn time! *How dare I not subscribe to their stupid little cliques and . . .*” Clarissa got worked up like she used to. Paul told everybody to just follow Clarissa over to the bus. She broke off the end of the beer bottle on the ground, raised it to the sky, scream, “Here I come! Bitches, leave!”

“She . . . creature?” Some of the zombies muttered; Clarissa’s demonic charge with a broken beer bottled was not regarded as womanly. She sliced, smashed, punched, clawed, bit, kicked, elbowed, and

otherwise shred the mob to pieces in an untold fury. It was a pity, really, to see these ill and untreated men being used as Clarissa's payback for some seriously severe high school trauma. It looked like Paul's school had a surplus of airheads. Clarissa always thought they were a little shallow. They didn't have any interesting hobbies, while Clarissa played guitar, and did other things. She didn't act superior to them until they decided to cut her off completely. Even worst, they decided to wage some kind of jihad against her, since she was of a different sort than they. It made her depressed, which made her music even darker, and apparently, more sellable. When offered a record contract, she read only as far as the clause about needing to travel.

As the bus drove away to the Thruway, Paul wondered how the hell he was going to get back to school and explain all this. Later, he found the advice on the web site was followed well -- most of the students had been expelled. Clarissa gleefully paid for the apartment repair work, on the condition that they meet again under more normal circumstances.

The problem is how one might define "normal circumstances."



Yes it is!

Meet the staff and lend a hand!

Wednesday at 9 PM

Crossroads



**Gracies
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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Publisher: C. Diablo

Editors:

Dan Conley
Gary Hoffmann
Pete Lazarski

Layout:

Adam Fletcher

Writers:

Adam Preble
Tom Cervino

Visuals:

Bob Rutan

Contributors:

Alex Brazie

Printer Daemons:

Ed Brannin
Ray Wallace
Josh Brown
Jen Martorana
Mike Fisher
Peter C. Gravelle
Matthew Denker

Musical Inspiration:

Agatha is Pete's gf

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Contact us at gdt@hellskitchen.org or by regular mail at:

Gracies Dinnertime Theatre
92 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, NY 14623-5604