

OPINION

Celebrities: Above the law

By **KATIE GOODRICH**
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I struggled to pinpoint a valid topic for an opinionated article. I struggled until I checked the latest development in the celebrity-criminal news and discovered, much to my surprise, that Kiefer Sutherland will serve 48 days in jail for his recent DUI conviction. He will have to surrender (report to jail) on December 21st.

I am glad to see that Sutherland will have to serve more than a few hours in the slammer as a consequence of his actions. His recent conviction is a violation of probation he was placed on for a DUI in 2004. According to the website, Criminal Law-Free Advice, the mandatory jail time for a second DUI offense in the state of California is 90-120 days. Obviously sentencing guidelines don't apply if your last name is Richie, Hilton or Sutherland.

In fact, if you compare Pennsylvania DUI sentencing to that of California, the Golden State sentencing guidelines would appear to be tougher.

All three celebrities (I use that term loosely) committed the same crime—they were all on probation for DUI when they were arrested a second time for the same charge. Let's pretend that the three celebrities were living in Pennsylvania; for violating their probation with a second DUI offense, they would be looking at five days to six months in jail. In addition, in Pennsylvania sentencing is based on BAC. California sentencing does not base sentencing on BAC.

This seems more stringent in my opinion. With the information given we have to wonder why Sutherland is sentenced to 48 days. Hilton spent about 23 days in the clink and Richie spent a whopping hour and a half behind bars. According to an August article on People magazine's website, non-violent female offenders sentenced to 30 days or less are usually booked and released within 12 hours. Richie barely spent two hours in jail, and I'm sure that isn't the norm for Los Angeles County—unless of course you are a Hilton, Richie or Sutherland. Let's move beyond the glaring issue

of celebrities being above the law and focus on something a tad more serious. According to the website Alcohol Alert, there were 1,719 alcohol related traffic fatalities in California for 2005. Hilton, Richie and Sutherland aren't lucky because they merely got a slap on the wrist; they are all lucky because none of them killed an innocent person while they were selfishly disregarding the law. It's important to know that the same year, California had the highest amount of alcohol related traffic fatalities and Pennsylvania ranked fourth. Perhaps neither state is handling drunk driving correctly?

The following is a poem that circulated through e-mail. We all need to remember that when you get behind the wheel while intoxicated, it's not just your life you are endangering—no matter what your last name may be.

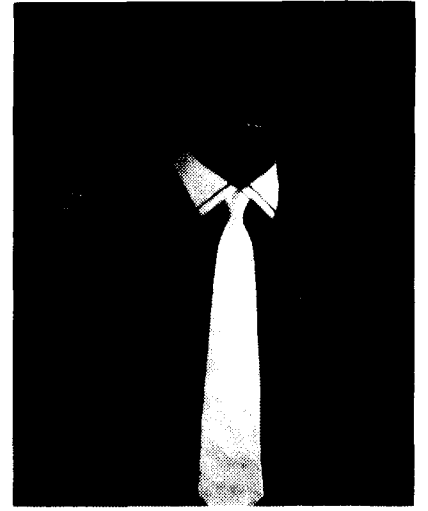
MOM

I went to this party mom
I remembered what you said
You told me not to drink mom
So I drank soda instead.
I felt real proud inside mom
The way you said I would
Even though all my friends mom
Told me that I should.
I know I did the right thing mom
I know you always right
The party's finally ending mom
As everyone drove out of sight.
As I got inside my car mom
I knew I'd get home in one piece
'Cause the way you made me feel mom
So responsible so sweet.
I started to drive away mom
As I pulled into the road
The other guy didn't see me mom
And hit me like a load.
I lay there on the pavement mom
I hear the policeman say
The other guy was drunk mom
Now I'm the one to pay.
I'm lying here dying mom
I wish you'd get here soon
How come this happened to me mom
My life bursted like a balloon.
There's blood all around me mom
Most of it is mine
I hear the paramedics say mom
I'll die in a short time.
He didn't know where he was going mom
He was probably at the same party as I

There's one big difference though
mom

He's going to live while I die.
Why do people drink mom
It can ruin your whole life
I'm feeling sharp pains mom
Just like a burning knife.
The man who hit me mom
Is walking, it's no fair
I'm lying here dying mom
While all he does is stare.
Tell my brother not to cry mom
Tell dad to be brave
For when I'm in heaven mom
Write my name upon my grave.
Someone should have told him
mom
Not to drink and drive
If they'd often take the time mom
I'd still be alive.
My breath is growing short mom
I'm becoming very scared
Please don't cry for me mom
'Cause when I needed you, you
were there.
I have one last question mom
Before I say good-bye
I didn't even drink from
So why am I the one to die.
This is the end mom
I wish I could look you in the eye
To say these final words mom
I LOVE YOU & GOOD-BYE

President's Corner



By **MARQUES STEWART**
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Always remember that the good of Penn State Harrisburg is in your hands.

Let us cut straight to the chase. I really do not like to sugar coat anything.

There are rumors of impeachment floating through the school. You should know that I represent the Penn State Harrisburg campus fully – whether it is attending meetings, class and/or working in the office until 1 or 2 a.m. I am here to represent YOU.

Many believe the rumors of the “unconstitutional proceedings” that are stated in my impeachment letter are bogus. In the upcoming weeks, you shall be given information about the impeachment, once it is made public in the Student Government Association meeting. Meetings are held every Thursday at 12:30 p.m. in room TL 128.

Now, please backtrack and remember one of our goals for this year is to unite the campus as one by promoting diversity, clubs, co-chairing events, increasing student participation in events and increasing school spirit. Let us not allow this minor tribulation of impeachment have an affect on our campus. We are here to unite the campus not divide it, no matter who wants us to part. Always remember that we are ONE UNIVERSITY.

Down to some SGA updates: Please read below some of the Constitutional Amendments that are up for approval. If you have any questions or concerns about them, please e-mail mes5169@psu.edu.

The Pennsylvania State University Constitutional Amendments Whereas The Student Government Association (SGA) is the representative and collective voice of the Student Body, the SGA works with various campus organizations to provide all students an opportunity to become involved in academic, social and extracurricular activities.

Whereas the Constitutional allows the Association to operate in an effective manner.

Be it resolved, The SGA should focus on the development of leadership, community service and communication.

Section 3 Vice President (D) All clubs are required to have a member of their executive board that is not a member of SGA, meet with the Vice President at least twice a semester. All clubs must have a member of their executive board attend two ICC (inner club council) meetings within the fall semester and two ICC (inner club council) meetings within the spring semester.

Section 7 Communications Director(Update) Shall serve as a spokesperson for the SGA.

Section 8(ADD) Webmaster Shall create and maintain an active website and display show casings of the Executive, Legislative and Judicial bodies.

Article IV Section 2 (P) Cannot accumulate an excess of two unexcused SGA meetings per academic semester while in office. Two late arrivals will equal one unexcused absent.

Before I close, a tip of advice I can give you on overcoming challenges is to BE STRONG. As long as you have the support from others, you will make it through.

National insecurity: constitutional ignorance is not quite bliss

By **MARTY SANTALUCIA**
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Beginning in this editorial and continuing into my next, I am going to present three situations which seem to portray American apathy toward the rights granted to us in the U.S. Constitution. I came to write about this topic because this Wednesday marks the one year anniversary of George W. Bush signing into law The Military Commissions Act of 2006. This is an act that can only be described as one of the most forward and outright sanctioned attacks on the American people's Constitutional rights in recent history, and the chances are that many reading this are unaware of what it even is.

On October 17, 2006 The Military Commissions Act was signed into law. Strategically pushed through Congress by the doomed Republican majority less than a month before the 2006 elections, the act called for several terrifying concessions on the part of the American people. Glaring from the pages of what was the latest national security related piece of legislation was the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*.

Roughly translated from Latin to mean “you must have the body”, *habeas corpus* has been a part of Western law since it first appeared in

the English *Magna Carta* of 1215. The writ was initially comprised of several separate clauses, which together stated that the government could not hold its citizens in prison without the detainee knowing why they had been arrested and allowing them to challenge their incarceration. In 1787, *habeas corpus* came to the New World as one of the only rights guaranteed to the American people in the actual body of the U.S. Constitution. Alongside the guarantee of this right, however, were two conditions under which the Congress could suspend it.

“The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it.” (U.S. Const. art. I, § 9) Only twice in the history of the United States has the national situation degraded to a point that actually allowed the suspension of *habeas corpus*. The first time was in 1861 by President Abraham Lincoln in an effort to quell southern rebellion and protect Washington D.C. during the early years of the Civil War. Ten years later in 1871, President Ulysses S. Grant also suspended the writ to quell rebellions in the south during the period of reconstruction. In suspending *habeas corpus* for this third and most recent indefinite period, Mr. Bush has arrogantly and illegally ignored the constitutional

fail-safes protecting our rights as American citizens. In an all-out attempt to grab power and vastly expand the Presidency, he has suspended *habeas corpus* for anyone his administration deems an enemy combatant – you, me, or anyone else.

On September 28, 2006, when The Military Commissions Act passed the Senate, there were no American rebellions being carried out. Again on September 29, when the legislation passed the House, the borders of our country were not compromised to an invading force. And finally: on October 17, all was calm as President George W. Bush signed into law the first suspension of *habeas corpus* in 135 years, the first time that a suspension had ever been unconstitutionally carried out. The government of the United States could legally imprison both citizens and non alike without justification.

More horrifying than the actual allocations of this law, however, was the utter lack of public response. Be it from the media or the citizenry, the issue was in and out of the news, and therefore the public mind, within a week. The only conclusion one can come to is that something has gone horribly wrong when a 790 year old protectorate of the average citizen is stripped away and no one as much as blinks an eye. If anything deserved weeks of unrelenting

media coverage it was, and still is, this – not a politically embarrassing election which still sits more than a year in the future.

The problem seems to be rooted in an impatience that has come with the world of instant gratification. Public attention can only be held, especially on less savory issues such as politics, for a very short amount of time. Take for example, the length of the average campaign ad since the first “I like IKE” commercial of 1952. Many advertisements featured a speaker, who was either the candidate or a supporter, talking about their particular views for a whole minute, sometimes longer. Compare this to the 2004 election, in which no aired commercial lasted more than 30 seconds. This could easily be related to the increasingly high cost of television air-time, however; as seen with the most recent campaign finance reports, running for President seems to requires you to “have more money than God”. The truncation of political advertisements is because past that 30 second mark, the American public starts to consider it a boring TV show, and you loose them. It is this mentality that makes fighting for Constitutional rights so unappealing.

Fighting in a system, especially one as large and complex as the United States, requires time and energy. Both are valuable resources

that the American public would much rather invest in their jobs and family. To me, this always comes back to my favorite quote by Jon Stewart “moderates have shit to do.” Unfortunately, there is little – too little – left to put towards maintaining the legal strongholds that buttress our way of life.

Those in office have learned of this public exhaustion and taken advantage of it.

Ideally, this piece would end with an enlightened and easy answer to the problem of our perpetually besieged rights. Unfortunately, one does not exist. The only way to reverse the current damage to our system is through constant maintenance by the citizenry of our country. This includes doing anything to get involved with the system that ultimately dictates how you go about your life. Currently, there are hundreds of proposed bills aiming to undo the crimes committed by The Military Commissions Act, to restore the writ which makes possible your freedoms of speech, press, and religion, however; the public is uninterested in the issue, and so they sit.

I encourage you; I implore you to spend half an hour and look at the true state of our country.

Look outside of the media and see the real danger we are in, and then get up and do something.

Worthless lectures: a waste of time

By **TOM BROWN**
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As many of you are aware, the Pulitzer Prize winning, national best-seller “Enrique’s Journey” was added to the core curriculum for incoming freshmen this year. Although I’m in my second year, I delayed my

freshman English requirement, so I had the pleasure, or perhaps displeasure, of reading this work. Actually, I did enjoy the book. It is a heart-wrenching tale of a boy's struggle to immigrate to the United States illegally in search of his mother. Despite any

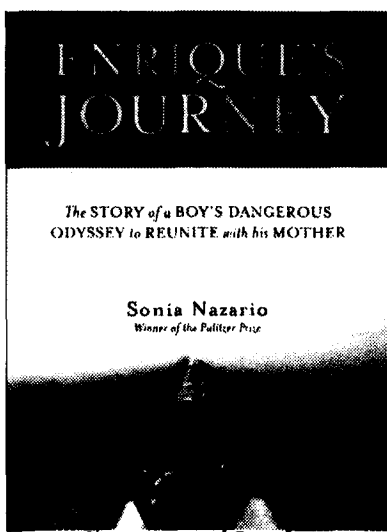


Photo courtesy of Google Images

personal biases about immigration, Sonia Nazario wrote with vivid clarity, which made for a good read across the board.

Now, on to my point, Nazario was invited by Penn State Harrisburg faculty to speak on campus about her hit piece. She accepted the offer.

At this point, I suppose we should all be saying “Wow! What an incredible opportunity to have someone with such acclaim speaking on our campus!” Unfortunately, in my opinion at least, this wasn't quite the case on October 8,

2007. Don't get me wrong; Nazario has clearly proven herself a superb author—her presentation on the other hand, not so hot.

Why, you may ask, would I say such terrible things about such a brilliant journalist? My answer is quite simple: I left the Student Center on Monday night not feeling one bit smarter than I did before I walked in the door. This I believe constitutes a failure on the part of the presenter.

So, let's discuss why Nazario did such an awful job—the biggest reason has to be that she added nothing! I, along with roughly 50 of my peers, sat through a one hour synopsis of “Enrique's Journey.” This baffles me.

I'd say that it's safe to assume that Nazario was well aware of her book's status on campus when she arrived.

I'd be willing to bet that when the PSH faculty invited her to speak,

they at least hinted at the fact that her book was required summer reading for incoming students. From that detail, couldn't Nazario have inferred that a large majority of her audience had already read the book?

I'm no Pulitzer Prize-winner, but I feel like these are fairly simple inferences.

Moving on, I'm going to pretend that I'm the presenting author for a minute. I've written a national best-seller, so clearly I'm a talented writer. I've been asked to speak on the campus of an accredited university. I've been told that the faculty enjoyed my book so much that they assigned it as summer reading for all incoming students. Most of the students have probably read my book. What do I talk about?

Well, if it was me, I would have gone into some detail about how I actually wrote the book.

I'm sure that Nazario gathered a