For Sale to the highest bidder?

Well, interviewing season is now over. No more 20 minute quickies in the Charles Hotel, no more endless courtships in distant cities over dinner and wine. It’s time to return to the day-to-day minutiae of law school life, and try to forget how close some of Ralph Nader’s words cut.

If the last month and a half hasn’t been enough to teach all of us the power of the almighty dollar, the school is apparently looking for a Daddy Warbucks to teach us.

It seems, for the low price of $50 million, even Langdell is for sale. You got it. The library that’s the architectural and economic pride of the Law School, currently named after the famed Christopher Columbus Langdell who saved HLS from going the way of the Princeton Law School, is up for grabs. If the guys over in Baker House have their way, we could all be spending inordinate amounts of time subbing in the Redstone or the Sullivan & Cromwell Library.

Sure, signs of fawning gratitude to big money donors surround us already. After all, we have the Ropes & Gray Room, the Olin Center for Law and Economics, the Kirkland & Ellis professors around us already. Thus, the opinions reflected in articles, editorials, and cartoons are those of the authors and not of the Olin Center for Law and Economics, the Kirkland & Ellis professors.

The RECORD does not commit political errors... to its public admiration at least in part because of his objections to the NDMB’s court-pack ing scheme … to his public admission of his own anti-labor sentiments to FDR’s court-packing proposals. 

844-5960.

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Submissions must be sent to the RECORD at the above noted address, dropped in the RECORD box on the Harvard campus, or submitted on a computer disk or by e-mail. The RECORD reads and appreciates every letter we receive; we reserve the right to edit letters and submissions for space as necessary. We will return your disks. Double-collated subscriptions are available. Subscription price: $40.00 per year; $50.00 per year mailed outside the U.S. Individual copies: 35 cents at newsstands, 50 cents at Law School, $1.00 retail, $2.50 for back issues. Second-class periodical postage paid at Boston, MA and additional mailing offices.

In October 2009, the last name of Charles Wyzanski was misspelled in the headline accompanying his letter to the Editor. The RECORD regrets this error.

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For more letters, please see p. 4.

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Correction

In the Oct. 22 issue, the last name of Charles Wyzanski was misspelled in the headline accompanying his letter to the Editor. The RECORD regrets this error.
Beyond good and evil

The last edition of the RECORD extensively covered the screening of Steven Emerson’s film “Jihad in America,” co-sponsored by the HLS JewISH Law Students Association (JLSA). A letter to the editors (“Jihad Story Misleading” by Avi Bell and two op-eds (“Jihad in America” by Aharon Friedman and “Why we Sponsored Jihad in America”) stressed the importance of the screening of the film, and criticized both the article that was published in the RECORD following the screening and the actions of some students who distributed handouts that attempted to counter some of the factual claims that were presented in the film. The op-ed published by JLSA (“Why we Sponsored Jihad in America”) went in a series of monologues.

Thanks to the JLSA for expounding on “Why [They] Sponsored ‘Jihad in America,’” but it really wasn’t necessary. We already knew why. What’s interesting is that even after their soul-searching and more than two pages of RECORD newspaper print, the JLSA and its Board still don’t seem to understand why we’re concerned. Until they do, the future dialogue in which they assert an interest will look more like a series of monologues.

Agreeing that we speak from an unfamiliar and under-publicized perspective to most Americans, we will try to more carefully explain what brought students from all over Boston to protest Steven Emerson’s work. It is not just the personal ‘offense’ as the JLSA puts it, that many Muslims and non-Muslims feel from the title and tone of Emerson’s broad-brushed and racist “shallowing” of Islam. Emerson’s work does more than offend us; it elevates us. He directly and aggressively tries to take most of us completely out of the public discourse on issues of Muslim terrorism, and Islam. Despite declarations that the “majority of Muslims are not militant,” in his publications Emerson paints nearly every local and national Muslim organization and charity as militant or clandestine supporters of militant Islam.

He seems to see ghosts of terrorism in even the most mundane and moderate landmarks of an emerging American Muslim public voice.

Two brief examples: his description of the first-ever White House Eid holiday celebration as “Friends of Hamas in the White House,” and condemnation of the first and only American Muslims appointed to the National Commission on Terrorism and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, both nominated exclusively by affirmative discrimination of Americans who associated with JLSA, all the different positions were articulated from a Muslim perspective, as serious to Muslims as are the larger implications at stake in this debate.

If we can bracket for a moment the Muslim v. Jewish dimension, we can easily read this debate as typical of a particular stance of doing things to express one’s viewpoint and restate the bread and butter of American public culture. If we manage to make this move, then one thing is addressed in Emerson’s movie seems exemplary of the way race and violence in American cities are always the stuff of Argument like those used by Mr. Emerson: we are used over and over again to justify racial profiling by the police, and here in Harvard the same follows. When someone talks about terror and Islam in the way Emerson and JLSA talked about it, it was the same rhetorical moves as people who “naturally” tie race and violence. Thus, it would be hard to argue that we maintain the distinction between this debate and its practical implications for the daily lives of all minorities in America.

As we said earlier, as Arabs and Israelis, we could teach everyone a lesson in accusing, blaming and role-playing, but the more important lesson that we have to teach is about how to avoid doing all that, and the way toward a real and productive dialogue.

This lesson was missed by JLSA and this is the reason why they are not only sad but also angry. Very angry.

Why Was JLSA Surprised?

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Nader ‘58 urges students to seek public interest

Life Outside the Firm

Nader argued the audience with statistics about the hardships and injustices in the world, along with the increasingly corporate society. “Three-hundred and fifty of the wealthiest people on earth own 30% of the planet’s wealth. Thirty billion dollars are hoarded in tax havens. There are 1.2 billion people living on less than one dollar a day. And, of course, the epidemic of AIDS is killing millions upon millions in the Third World.”

Nader asked the audience: “What are you doing to address these issues?”

Great Things From Small Seeds

Nader encouraged the audience to try

to solve those and other societal problems. Acknowledging that many of these problems seem daunting, Nader nevertheless urged his audience to keep going, saying, “Many of you have demoralized yourselves from taking on big challenges. Whatever the scale of the problem, don’t change it. It’s too overwhelming.”

“If we are overwhelmed, what do we think other students are going to do?” he asked.

As an example of how to begin to address these issues, Nader referred to a recent resolution by the American Bar Association that was adopted at its annual meeting in Washington, D.C. “Let’s get started!”

Jamaica Potts ’02
Nov. 9, 1999

Alum’s advice to LIPP critics

I recently read a number of letters from current and former students who were concerned about the undertakings of the Low Income Protection Plan (LIPP) and who asked whether the reform efforts were worth it. I was very glad that I didn’t come to this university unprepared by this new era of corporate mentality, he said, speaking loudly to all those present. “Harvard is a university — a lack of diversity, a disinterested faculty, a not highly selective admission process — that explains many of our fundamental problems.”

Harvard’s corporate culture.

Thanks to the large debt we collect in law school and the normative assumption that prestige is based on which New York firm recruits you, this makes it easier for you to change your school and graduate as indistinguishable automatons.

If you are interested in the suggestions that here you will come to Harvard to become even more so, ponder this: Why were admitted students no longer excited about the choices at Harvard? Why did the classes at Michigan and Boston — two of the most prestigious and graduate as indistinguishable automatons.

As the LIPP debate begins full swing, I wanted to add my own small observation and I would not like to see LIPP be used as a vehicle to get us to see what the law is doing or to the Law School, should consider sending to their alma mater, reminding young students that they are going to school and the normative assumption that prestige is based on which New York firm recruits you, this makes it easier for you to change your school and graduate as indistinguishable automatons.

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DING DONG, THE EGO’S DEAD

Before the phenomenon called “HLS Corporate Recruiting” entered my life last fall, I have to say, I wasn’t really used to rejection. I mean, if I got to HLS, I must have been doing pretty well in life. Back then, I just took rejection personally; I recall losing my cool and walking around for hours wondering who’s resume could have been more compelling than mine. And laughingly enough, being pissed off about it.

My recent “ding” letter from a San Francisco CPA firm. I had learned that a Dersh entered my life. Joe Doyle has shown me how far I’ve progressed in my analysis of rejection, specifically made by people who were holding the standard “I really enjoyed meeting you and found our conversation compelling.” I looked at the letterhead and thought, “Nice.”

But I never even interviewed with McCutchen Doyle. I was rejected for a job I had not applied for and told how compelling I was by a man I’d never meet.

This is the best rejection letter I have ever received. While reading it several times and absorbing the absurdity of the situation, I noticed that I held proof of the level of artificiality and ridiculousness that is every 2L and 3L’s October experience. “Who is this? Is this a …

The rejection shod light on too many “ding” letters. I had been “dinged” before I entered the room. Middle-aged, enormous, with a monotone accent, Fenno was obviously enamored with his important self. After saying a few minutes trash- ing the firm I worked at last summer, he began to tell me of his conversation with the HLS recruit he interviewed at 1:30 p.m., with whom he had obviously been far more impressed. “Ish, _____ worked, you know, at a branch office of your firm, and he thought the litigation there was NOTIONS! Unadorned by the impropriety of your name, he filled my entire body with cryptic words: “…”

I was out of there at 13 minutes, flat. As I rode down on the Charles Hotel el- evator, fuming that I hadn’t had the guts of Fenno exactly what I thought of him, the elevator stopped and another person got in. I immediately recognized him as “Dean’s Office, this is Dersh, how can you do it?”

I was going to ignore Joe to save both of us the pain of an embarrassing inter- view. “Hey, Brewmeister, Fenno here! How ya doin’?”

Ten minutes later, over sushi, Joe told me of an appointment with Frank’s committee in which he watched his colleagues cut me up. With unabashed glee, Frank told me about the interview: “I was so good enough to fly your ass across the coast, but upon meeting you, we realized that you were a lot more than a mere paperweight of yourself that was to indifferent to say, I was shocked. Why did he care?

Fenno sighed as he noticed the dead si- lence on the other end of the line. Clark had obviously been having second thoughts and realized he was talking to an actual stu- dent. Fenno still had plenty of time to kill, so he scaled another number from the di- rectorial“Dersh’s office, this is Dersh, how can you do it?”

Fenno decided to emulate his RECORD colleagues, and pretend to be an actual reporter. “Ah, yes, Mr. Dershowitz, this is Jim Rosen-Rosen calling from the New York Times. I just wanted to quickly ask you to respond to the quote you from Posner’s book.”

“What, the one where the other said that the undermining of my analysis of the impeach- ment was that Clinton should have hired me as his lawyer?”

“I don’t know, Frank.”

“Couldn’t have said it better myself. No scratch that, of course I could have. I am Dershowitz, aren’t I?”

“Yes, Mr. Dershowitz, I see. Now, what can you tell me about the $1,000 you re- ceived from … uh … from your national dential campaign?”

“Oh, well, you know, anything to get a little bit of cash here or there. Committee, right? Gotta love them C-SPAN cameras.”

“No really.”

Said, Fenno, striving might- ily to keep his composure. “Well, anything else about you our readers might like to know?”

“Well, my childhood was quite interest-

Fenno rolled his eyes. “Oh, I don’t know. Maybe it means slamming your door in students’ faces when they come to ask you for help. Or possibly it has something to do with hiding in your office and pretend- ing not to be around when people come calling. Maybe it relates to releasing your grades late, consistently, every damn year, thereby screwing people for years. Or might it have something to do with just being a world-class bastard who treats students with condescension and dis- dain?”

But what do such things matter when you are being rejected?

“Brilliant, Brezovicki. Well, you did manage to make a hero out of Scott Strauss. No one could ever pass that up. But beyond that, come on. It isn’t time to stop basking in the reflection of your accomplishment. How do you continue behaving like an actual member of your community?”

There was a long silence on the other end.

“Sure, what, don’t you have anything to do?”

There was an even longer pause. Then, from the other end, there came only these cryptic words. “Cravath rewards, you pecuniurn omnem.”

Fenno groaned and hung up the phone. For him, rejection just wasn’t something it used to be.