



# the Commentator

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## Andrew Cuomo Delivers Annual Abrams Lecture

By ASHOK AYYAR '11  
STAFF WRITER

New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo spoke to an NYU Law assembled throng on September 14, delivering the 13th Annual Robert Abrams Public Service Lecture.

The theme of Cuomo's talk, unsurprisingly, was to encourage students to pursue public service. Surprisingly, he exhorted students to just spend a few years in service, not necessarily their entire careers.

Why serve at all? Because the government matters today, and lawyers in the public sector can make a difference. They get a sense of reward in their chests. And, Cuomo reminded us, the legal skills they develop will be valuable in the private sector.

Cuomo recounted a personal moment of inspiration from Bill Clinton, who told him that being an attorney general is the "purest form" of all public service, because attorneys general "use the law to do justice," whether social, racial, or economic.

Cuomo's own rise to this august office was a predictable march through other posts in state and federal government. Son of former Governor and Attorney General Mario Cuomo, the younger Cuomo served in the Manhattan DA's office before becoming Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary for President Clinton. As NYAG, Cuomo, 51, has pursued landmark cases and tackled areas that the Department of Justice has not, a major achievement considering the headline-grabbing tenure of his predecessor, Eliot Spitzer. Cuomo has investigated Wall Street in the aftermath of the financial crisis, the student loan industry, members of the legislature and former Governor Spitzer.

Another major thrust for Cuomo has been government reform and accountability. He devoted much of his speech to outlining his vision for government reform, and employed a helpful PowerPoint presentation to explain his agenda. Cuomo's assessment of the situation facing New York seemed out of place for a crusading Democrat. He blamed bloated government for much of the state's ills. Economic distress, compounded with an already dysfunctional government, has driven the budget out of bal-



ance. Raising taxes isn't the solution, as taxes are already high and the New York's most wealthy are highly mobile. The legislature isn't the answer, either – he noted with scorn – so the remaining option is to call a constitutional convention and have the citizenry step forward.

Some of the initiatives he would like to see are public financing reform, lobbying reform, redrawing of district lines (by a non-partisan commission), campaign finance reform, and, of course, attracting top talent ("YOU!" read his PowerPoint) to the government.

Although Cuomo brought his policy discussion back full circle to public service, his presentation at times felt more like the unveiling of a political program rather than a public service address to students. It came as no surprise that just a few days later, President Obama apparently urged Governor Paterson to not stand for re-election and yield the Democratic nomination to Cuomo. It is rumored Cuomo will in fact challenge Paterson for the seat in the Democratic primary.

Still, Cuomo's speech was not all slick. He bared his human side, showing himself to be modest and good-humored. He joked about his own varied career, saying he "can't hold a job," and that "people wouldn't have joined his administration if they met him" first. He also joshed about student anxiety with the legal job market in disarray. And he even admitted that if he could go to law school again, he would drink more, and a bit more seriously, read a newspaper and become well-rounded.

The Robert Abrams Public Service Lecture was endowed by Robert Abrams '63, who himself served as Attorney General. Last year's speaker was Anne Milgram '96, the current New Jersey Attorney General.

## Revesz Answers Students' Questions During Thio Town Hall Meeting

By ERICA IVERSON '11  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The air was tense last Tuesday as students, armed to the teeth with questions, gathered at a town hall meeting in Greenberg Lounge to finally hear Dean Richard Revesz provide answers about all things Li-ann Thio. Taking on a slightly different format than previous town halls, the hour was divided into three parts: general background information from the Dean, a closed question and answer session moderated by Yoshinori Sasao, the Student Bar Association (SBA) President, and finally an open question and answer session.

Marching their SBA President to the front lines, the crowd expectantly waited for the grilling it had long anticipated. As the first few minutes of the closed question and answer session unfolded, however, the situation mirrored the first 11 taping sessions in David Frost's famous interview of Richard Nixon. Revesz spent several minutes delivering monologues about broad topics such as the vetting process and why the appointments committee does not do a Google search when looking



Dean Richard Revesz divided the meeting into three parts: an initial speech, questions by the SBA President, and a general question-and-answer session.

into prospective faculty candidates, without really delving into the heart of the Thio matter.

After a few of these long-winded answers, Sasao was finally able to get a word in long enough to request that "for the rest of the questions, [Revesz's] answers be a little bit shorter," drawing hearty laughter from the crowd.

After that ice-breaking moment, the town hall seemed to focus on more pressing student concerns. Revesz defended the administration's decision to appoint Thio, even in the

face of her discriminatory views and remarks, on the basis of "academic freedom." He stressed that a "robust discussion of ideas" is necessary in an academic community and that it should not be Thio's views that disqualify her from a position on the faculty, but rather her arguments in support of those views. He admitted that he believed her arguments to be weak and unsupportable and that had a more rigorous evaluation of her ideas been necessary, these

See THIO page 3



After over a year, the fountain in Washington Square Park finally opened again for Greenwich Villagers to cool off in. Don't get too used to it, though. Now that the center or western portions of the park have been reopened, plans call for the eastern side to be fenced off for renovations.

Infra

LRAP is more evil than you thought. page 2

Hungry? Why wait? Go to Keste and eat some pizza. Seriously, do it. page 3

The Informant! is anything but informative. page 4



LRAP has some fine print you public interest leaning folks might want to know about before you rush off to take that firm job so you can “take the money and run.”

This means that if you intend to go into public interest after law school, taking a firm job will actually earn you LESS money than taking a public interest job. Say you work for a firm for ten weeks. That makes you a nice \$31,000 for the summer. You get to keep \$15,000—way more than the \$6,500 2L summer PILC grant, right? Wrong. Because between city, state, federal, and social security taxes the government is going to want about 35% of that, a dent that the LRAP office does not consider when determining your earnings. So your \$15,000 gets reduced by the amount you have to pay to taxes which on \$31,000 is about \$10,800. So you'll come away with \$4,200.

you'll make even less. Say you work for 12 weeks and make \$37,200. The tax on that is going to be just over \$13,000. So you'll get to keep \$15,000 – 13,000. A whopping \$2,000.

Not exactly. LRAP's stated goals, according to "LRAP 101" are "to provide graduates with greater flexibility in career choice," and to "provide assistance in repayment of law school loans." Neither of these goals are furthered by setting up incentives to take public interest jobs 2L summer. In fact, the way the system is currently set up hinders both of these goals.

money and thereby reduce the amount that LRAP will have to cover post-graduation, making more funds available to more graduates.

Finally, if the system is set up this way to encourage students to seek out public interest summer employment, that goal is short-sited. While 2Ls in public interest summer jobs undoubtedly accomplish a good deal in their 10 weeks on the job, those accomplishments are likely to pale in comparison to what a graduate can do with a full career in public interest. The program should focus on maximizing the funding that will enable graduates to carry on NYU law's tradition of being a "private university in the public service."

# Revesz Did Not Get It All Wrong Regarding Thio

About halfway through the town hall meeting last week about the controversial appointment of Li-Ann Thio as a visiting professor, Dean Richard Revesz was asked what he would do if a potential visiting professor was a Holocaust denier. Revesz dodged and evaded as if he were Oscar De La Hoya, saying it depends on the context. Looking at the audience's responses, I felt that many people were not satisfied with that answer. But it was at that moment that I really felt sympathy for the Dean, as the question was a microcosm for this entire Thio debacle, and the unfair position that he found himself in. I know he's come under a lot of criticism throughout this whole process from many in the law school and on the blogosphere, but it's really easy for us to judge when we are not in his shoes. When it really comes down to it, I think the administration acted very rationally throughout this entire process, and definitely should not have withdrawn Thio's appointment.

in general? Or against New England Patriots fans? How can NYU possibly come up with a reasonable line?

Even if the administration wasn't totally in the wrong, I will admit that it definitely made a mistake by not realizing Thio's views in the first place. In the future, there needs to be a "google search" policy for all incoming professors. The benefit of doing this clearly outweighs the cost of wasting about 30 seconds browsing the internet.

In the end, it's time to put this controversy behind us. NYU clearly made mistakes, but that does not mean that we should completely villainize the administration, because I think that most of us would have made similar decisions if we were in power. Furthermore, it sparked intelligent discourse on a host of issues, including gay rights, professor's views, and the efficacy of Googling. Any time where the Dean of a top-5 law school tells a town hall meeting about what happens when he Googles himself, you know that a controversy has gotten way out of control.

# the commentator

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If you actually took the time to read this entire promo, even though it is sideways, all of us at *The Commentator* salute you.



# Keste Brings the Flavors of Italy All the Way to Bleeker Street

By STAVAN DESAI '11  
STAFF EDITOR AND  
ELYSE FEUER '11  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Move over Lombardi's! There's a new pizza in town! After reading the *New York Magazine* review of Keste, which rated the restaurant's Neapolitan pies as the best in the city, we had to see if the pizza would live up to the hype. Keste, which opened last March, offers gourmet style thin crust pizzas at reasonable prices.

day the wait can escalate up to an hour for a table. The restaurant doesn't take reservations, so arrive early, or grab a drink at a nearby bar while you wait. Keste does have a bar but it is small and usually packed with those eating at the bar.

The wine selection is small but there are many affordable options. We ordered a half carafe of the second cheapest white, which was a fairly standard Italian white and a half carafe of the house red (the cheapest on the menu), which

zarella, tomatoes and a balsamic dressing was basic and tasty but fairly small. We also had the Toscana Salad (\$8), which had mixed greens, sliced pears, toasted walnuts and a lemon vinaigrette. The vinaigrette was overly oily and overpowered the delicate ingredients; it could have used more acid.

When it came to the pizza, we chose the Funghi (\$14) and the Pizza Del Re (\$19). We were seated next to the bell-shaped wood-burning oven and were able to watch our pizzas being formed, topped and then placed inside the oven. The restaurant earns an "A" for its crust, which is of the true Neapolitan style — chewy, airy and lightly charred. The crust is a bit thicker than a normal New York thin crust pizza, but is just as light and satisfying sans all the grease.

The Funghi pizza had slices of fresh mozzarella and was layered with bright San Marzano tomatoes and fresh basil. The pizza was then topped with a medley of sautéed mushrooms. The mushrooms were perfectly cooked and added texture and an earthy flavor to the pizza, which married beautifully with the lightly charred crust. The

fruity smell of the heated olive oil topping the pie brought a wonderful aroma to our table

Keste doesn't offer dessert, so after polishing off our plates, we sauntered over to GROM for



Stavan Desai

*Keste's pizzas are cooked in a wood-burning oven that is easily visible inside the restaurant.*



*Ordering a Funghi pizza at Keste in the West Village will cost you \$14.*

Our group of four arrived at the restaurant around 7:45 pm on a Friday night. Although we were seated promptly, on any

was better than expected.

We ordered two salads for the table. The Della Casa (\$7) with mixed greens, fresh moz-

when the pizzas arrived.

The Pizza Del Re was a white pie that had layers of truffle spread, prosciutto di parma, mushrooms and fresh mozzarella. The truffle spread provided a complex flavor profile that distinguished the pizza from a simple mushroom white pizza. The prosciutto adds a slightly salty flavor but not so much as to overtake the overall flavor of the pizza. The flavors meld together to give you one of the most approachable, yet flavorful, pizzas we've tasted in the city. In fact, if classic, oily New York Style pizza isn't a prerequisite, it's probably the most flavorful pizza slice I've had outside of Tuscany.

gelato to finish off the meal.

Keste is a great pizza place, but this is not your usual New York slice. Keste slices aren't overly large, dripping with grease, or piled on with cheese (not to knock New York style pizza, because it can definitely be amazing in its own right), but if you're looking for flavorful, authentic tasting Neapolitan pizza, Keste is hard to beat.

Keste is located at 271 Bleeker Street and is open for lunch and dinner daily. 212-243-1500. Credit cards accepted.

*Want more inspired ideas about where to dine? Check out our food blog at [IdCrossTheStreetForThat.Wordpress.Com](http://IdCrossTheStreetForThat.Wordpress.Com).*

## THIO: Dean Gives Long Answers

*Continued from page 1*

weaknesses would have been taken into consideration.

Revesz's academic freedom defense extended to his response to the question of why Thio was asked to teach a human rights course of all things. He said the only concern should be whether a professor was

context, he was also unsure whether such a scenario would ultimately change his position.

Providing a forum for such opposing viewpoints, he maintained, is crucial to an academic environment; only by engaging in a dialogue will we be able to "test" the ideas that people like Thio hold. He lamented that she was not there to directly defend her views and participate in a "robust debate with the community." In the open question and answer session, Revesz further argued that other countries are at different stages in their development of ideas, and that only positive things could be gained by encouraging this kind of international exposure.

However, even after the open question and answer session, some students were left feeling unsatisfied. "I feel like the school ultimately feels that it did nothing wrong in the hiring process, and it kept developing this slippery slope, asking if they'd have to rescind an offer to a professor who said something years ago or which required a quick Google search," said Scott Blair '11. The Thio denouement is not over, though, as Professor Kenji Yoshino and Assistant Dean Deborah Ellis take the stage today in a Thio-inspired debate about academic freedom.



Michael Mix

*The town-hall audience listens eagerly to the Dean.*

a "fair and probing academic in the area," not whether she holds a particular viewpoint. If a professor was asked to teach a course on the death penalty, for example, would it matter whether he or she was for or against it as long as she could engage students in a broader discussion of the issue? He extended this logic to the chilling hypothetical, posed by Sasao, of allowing a Holocaust denier to teach a course on human rights. Though the Dean vacillated, saying that everything "depends on the context" and he "couldn't really answer the question" without that

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## The Informant! Misses the Mark, Despite Oscar-Worthy Weight Gain

By **BRIAN BYRNE, LL.M. '10**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

An actor's willingness to fluctuate his own weight is a solid indicator of commitment both to his craft, and to a particular role. Typically, it conveys utmost belief in a project, and is a tried and trusted method of generating hype and publicity in advance of the release. Even more striking than the free advertising, is the patent nexus between personal metamorphosis and critical acclaim. De Niro's weight gain for *Raging Bull* was a stepping-stone to Oscar Glory, as was Charlize Theron's for *Monster*. Similarly, Tom Hanks, and Russell Crowe enjoyed Oscar nominations for *Cast Away* and *The Insider* respectively, both striking examples of weight variation. It is hardly surprising then, that Matt Damon's 30-pound weight gain for *The Informant!* received plenty of press attention. The word Oscar was even thrown around haphazardly in the media, no doubt a combination of the abovementioned critical expectations and an exploitative marketing machine. However, one could not discount the hype, for it had credible foundation; especially considering that a director as accomplished as Steven Soderbergh was at the helm. Ultimately though, despite its potential, the resulting movie is a disappointment, plagued by poor directorial decisions and an artificially imposed choice of genre.

*The Informant!* tells the true story of an international price fixing scandal and the insider Mark Whitacre (Damon) who brought the cartel to light. Whitacre co-

nates every scene transition and sets the tone of a cheesy sitcom. Combined with yellow faded cinematography, events feel like they take place in the 70s rather than the 90s (the decade in which the film is actually set). We are also privy to Whitacre's internal monologues throughout, and although there are some genuinely funny one-liners to be found here, they fail to reveal the character in any meaningful way. This is a major flaw, because it is impossible for the audience to truly connect, understand, or empathize with Whitacre. Because Soderbergh keeps the audience at such distance, the unfolding events and the behavior of Damon's character seems farcical. Farce quickly fosters disinterest, and disinterest eventually leads to frustration.

This directorial misjudgment warrants potent criticism because the story of Mark Whitacre had immense potential to be dramatized in an intriguing, and affecting way, without necessarily sacrificing some of the finer comedic notes. The absolute commitment to comedy is inappropriate for the subject matter and the complexities of the protagonist. With the exception of one scene, Damon is never given a platform to reveal the deep struggles and flaws of his character, and I contend that under different direction, he could have easily turned in the finest performance of his career. Soderbergh breezes from scene to scene missing countless opportunities to let Damon shine, and the result is a wearisome mess of a movie that feels cartoonish and unnecessary. Even if one disagrees that a deeper exploration of Mark Whitacre would have offered greater satisfaction, it is difficult to comprehend why Soderbergh did not engage in a sober dramatization of the price fixing investigation. It seems obvious that this would have been more rewarding, particularly in light of his past success with *Traffic*, and *Erin Brockovich*.

*The Informant!* is an example of an established director seeking to challenge himself personally in the unfamiliar territory of comedy. Personal ambition is always commendable, but that's probably little comfort to Matt Damon, a fine, and committed actor who has been let down so badly by Soderbergh in this instance. Worse still, the Jason Bourne six-pack is gone, and all that remains is a truly forgettable film. The next time Damon is inspired to pile on the pounds, he would be wise to ensure the director shares his commitment to character portrayal. Reflecting on the success of *The Departed*, maybe he should rejoin Martin Scorsese, at least until Soderbergh becomes reacquainted with his talents. In the interim, Soderbergh always has Clooney!



Matt blows the whistle, while struggling to fit into the stall.

operated with the government to make recordings of competitor agreements, and the majority of the movie centers on his duplicitous life as both corporate star and amateur secret agent. Antitrust students who may be salivating at the prospect of seeing the Sherman Act on the silver screen can rest assured that the legal framework of events are treated very superficially, and watered down to the point of annoyance. Nonetheless, it is of course interesting that Hollywood was content to foist such dry subject matter onto the masses. Ultimately, it is the very fact that price fixing is so far removed from traditional popcorn fare, which leads Soderbergh to derail the movie.

From the outset, the director is relentless in his quest to sell the film as a comedy. The story is injected with lightheartedness in an arbitrary manner, most irritatingly in the form of a hideous score that domi-

## TV FOR SALE!!! No Really, It Needs to GO!

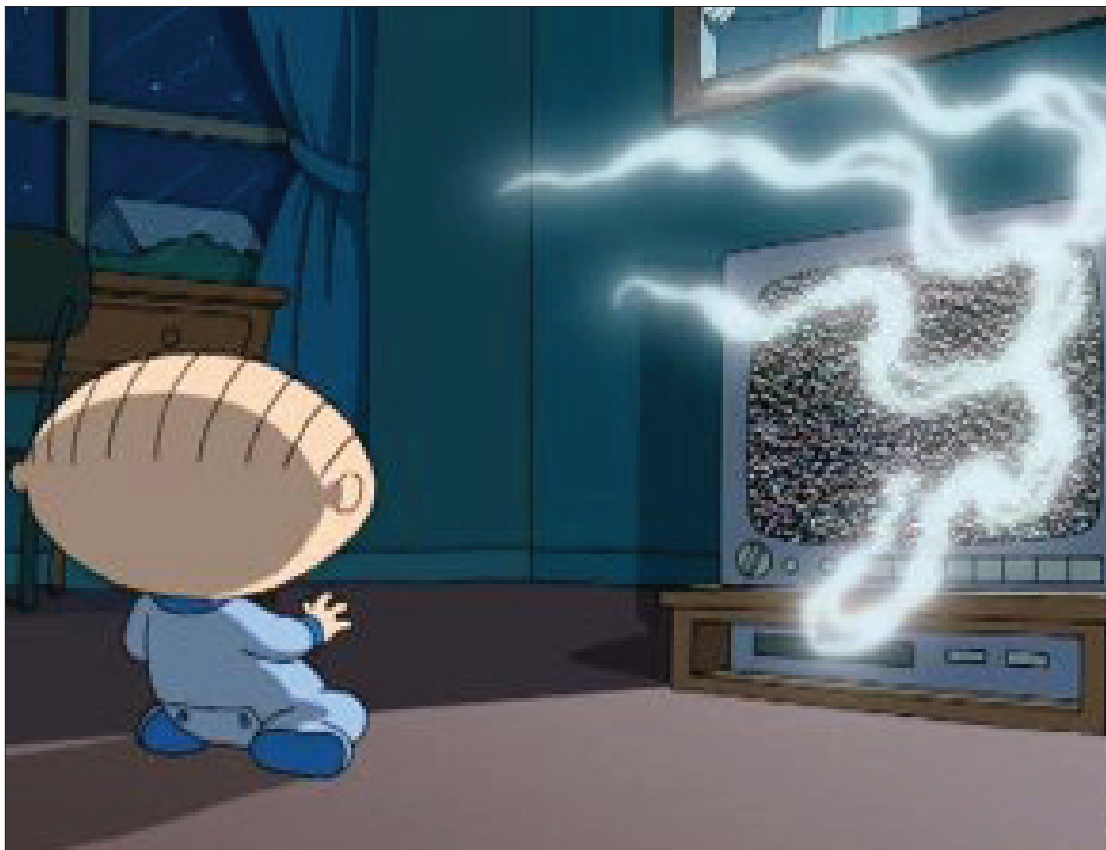
By **DENNIS CHANAY '11**  
STAFF WRITER

Well, I finally bought a television and it hasn't been pretty. Nothing is on, but nothing has stopped me from sinking my nights into this devil box either. It seems television is the new Youtube in my apartment, except it has all these great advertisements that take up half the airtime. Even this article was

news networks as ego enhancers, instead of sources of information. That is, if I agree with a particular decision Congress has made today, I tune into MSNBC. If I disagree, I tune in FOX. This way, I can sleep soundly, knowing that every opinion I have is completely supported by everybody else, and anyone who disagrees with me is either a socialist or a racist. Of course, if I feel particularly irrelevant or incompetent in my choice of profession,

watching the same promiscuous, vacuous, self-serving yet interchangeable characters reality actually has to offer. When this happened clever producers jumped at the challenge, teaming up with talented scriptwriters to create semi-real characters who could help us sink even lower.

Perhaps VH1 has the answer? I gave it a shot, watching endless countdown shows fade into endless hook-up shows. At one point,



The TV is trying to grab another unsuspecting law student. ... Quick, someone grab the remote!

written at the last moment with college football over my left shoulder. It's all a drug. "Why am I doing this," I ask myself. "Check what's on Food Network," my brain answers.

The Food Network has been a great escape for me because the rest of my television is inhabited by terrible, terrible people. Kanye West hates white girls and Glenn Beck hates everybody else. Old news, give me some *Iron Chef*. More than this, however, Food Network is one of the last channels left that actually delivers on what it purports to be. The only other channels that deliver on their names are Black Entertainment Television and the Woman's Entertainment Network. So here I am watching the Third-Annual Best Burger Competition

The Entertainment Channel is boring beyond belief. Even E! makes fun of E!. CourtTV has become TruTV, now with 75 percent less truth. When the History Channel isn't telling me about UFOs it's providing me with prophecies of an impending apocalypse. Cartoon Network is dabbling in re-runs of *Saved by the Bell* and the British *Office*. The Learning Channel has now become the de-facto Freak Show Channel, cashing in on anyone who wants to see the shortest, fattest, most hairy, most fertile or otherwise genetically anomalous members of the human species.

Even the news isn't really the news anymore. The problem has gotten so bad that I've taken to using the major cable

Nancy Grace at Headline News is always there to let me know that I'm in good company.

Speaking of relevance, let's not forget President Obama, a man so relevant, he's inescapable. I used to get a cultish vibe from his campaign. But surfing the tube last Sunday to find him on five different channels talking to five different people at the same time has led me to the conclusion that our President may, in fact, have supernatural powers. I imagine a world where Obama breaks onto the airwaves to deliver speeches while simultaneously interrupting other Obama speeches, already in progress.

All of his salemanship makes me long for that other great pitchman who was once ever present on my TV screen, Billy Mays. Unlike the mere mortals in Washington, Billy Mays could probably sell anything, including affordable healthcare. In fact, he did. It was called iCan. How did he do it? Cocaine? Yes, but also sincerity. Nothing sells a product like sincerity, and Billy Mays had it. Maybe what the President needs is a fire in his eyes, a Mayesque fanatical commitment to things like aresol lawn fertilizers and super-adhesive wall putties that can only come from a big bag of blow.

I miss Billy Mays, just like I miss a lot of other things about the television of my youth. I miss Jerry Springer, new episodes of *Cops* and *Cheaters*. It seems trashy TV will forever have my heart. So, what am I left with?

*The Hills* has taught me that somewhere along the way the American people grew tired of

I thought I'd hit the jackpot; being treated to a world-class musical performance by the girls or Real Chance at Love 2, entitled "Animals are Awesome." With environmentally minded lyrics like "tigers need a happy place" and "orangutans are similar to humans" how could I go wrong?

I also try to take refuge in talk shows; namely, Tyra Banks and Maury Povich. Tyra is amazing. Her ranting personal stories, inappropriate audience gifts, and deeply held conviction that "this hairdo" is the "real her," bring a type of realness to her show that make it all the more easy to appreciate her many talents and upsides. Maury, on the other hand is a tyrant. There are few things more hysterical than Maury's phobia shows. Think Maury attempting to "cure" a young woman's fear of balloons by luring and trapping her in a locked room full of the things. It may be the height of schadenfreude.

But, alas, I am increasingly finding myself bored; perhaps more bored than I have ever been these last six months I've spent without a television. Even Maury Povich chasing a hysterically crying woman around his studio with a large dill pickle fails to amuse me. I now must admit, that I have a television problem. This boredom wouldn't worry me so much, if Dr. Phil wasn't so adamant that "only boring people get bored."

"Am I becoming a boring person?" I ask myself. This time my mind doesn't answer—exactly the answer I needed. All of this being established: the TV is \$110, serious offers only, no refunds, buyer beware.