

surely I started to put it together. At some point during this process, Dan was publicly identified as the source. I ended up writing a 10,000-word profile; that's what started my career.

Today, we have the most secretive administration since the Nixon administration, perhaps even more secretive, and a press that again is trying to challenge the government's secrecy—and doing so at some legal risk. Reporters across the country, not just in Washington, are being pressured to reveal confidential sources. And in the early 21st century, the government has an arsenal of legal and extralegal weapons (which were not available in the early '70s) to demonize a free press, to pressure it, to politicize it.

The historic value of the Pentagon Papers themselves was that they revealed what was going on in secret in the halls of power as a disastrous war was planned and executed—and the discrepancy between that secret history and the pabulum and propaganda being fed to the public by their government as a cover story. The importance of the Pentagon Papers case is that the Supreme Court upheld the right of a newspaper to publish material that was in the public interest without restraint, whatever classification it had received from the government. The court upheld the public's right to know what its own government is doing when it supported the decision of both the *Times* and the *Washington Post* to publish the *Pentagon Papers*. Whether this precedent will be held up by our current court remains to

## Good Fellas

FOR THIS BLOCK IN QUINCY HOUSE, THE SUCCESS FIX IS IN

By John Sedgwick

NOT THAT LONG ago, attending Harvard was a promising development for a postadolescent, but, as they say in the equities markets, no guarantee of future results. Now, apparently, if you go to Harvard, you've got it made. You've won the Pulitzer, copped the Nobel Prize. The resume, the contacts, the careerism, the confidence, the killer mentality—Harvard is money in the bank, and lots of it.

This occurred to me last spring as I pondered a group of mostly juniors on Quincy House's third floor, in rooms 301 to 308, which its organizer, an eager South African named HUGO VAN VUUREN, enthusiastically described to me as "the power blocking group" of Quincy House. Something about the way he said it seemed to suggest that he really meant, of the entire world. Tom Cruise-handsome, Van Vuuren himself was an Olympic-class 800-meter runner in South Africa and continues to serve in the "domestic services" area of his country's military, but he can't really talk about that. At Harvard he presides over the Woodbridge Society of International Students and the Crimson Key Society, and lately he has been cruising the halls of MIT for VC investment opportunities, much as Harvard MBAs used to.

"Hugo is very good at recognizing talent, and how that can benefit him," says one roommate admiringly.

His blockmates are similarly active. Everyone is president of something, from ARJUN VASAN of the Harvard South Asian Association, which Van Vuuren calls "the biggest ethnic group on campus," to CHRIS FINNE of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra. There's also Andrew Einhorn, who organized a global conference of the World Model United Nations in Beijing over spring break. And VASCO BILBAO-BASTIDA, a "mediagenic" multiracial student from East L.A. who speaks six languages and lists more than 1,000 friends on his Facebook page. And BEN CONLEE is, in Van Vuuren's estimation, "the smartest math guy in the country." Not a bad stock-picker either. After cranking out 60–70% gains investing on his own, Conlee just started an investment club that Van Vuuren expects to be the "biggest one at Harvard." Van Vuuren has assigned himself "recruitment and marketing" for the

venture. Inevitably, they'd lined up what Van Vuuren calls "amazing" summer jobs. He himself was slated to work for Apple in Bangalore.

Smartest, biggest, best—you rarely hear such breathless superlatives on a campus that is so well stocked with over-achievers. Visiting Cabot House one evening I had dinner with a sleepy-looking 35-year-old who was still working on his undergraduate degree. I took him to be a lost soul before someone whispered to me that this was RIVERS CUOMO, the lead singer for the alternative band Weezer, which has sold more than 7 million records. Cuomo would never have let on. That's the Harvard way: It may not actually be modesty, but it does pass for it.

Sure enough, when I follow up with Van Vuuren's blockmates, they admit to their many accomplishments sheepishly. "I'm not really the math guy," Ben Conlee tells me, when I reach him at D.E. Shaw, the \$23 billion New York hedge fund, where he is spending the summer doing quantitative research, having turned down the National Security Agency. But, when pressed, he does admit that, well, yes, he was one of a handful of "winners" of the Putnam math test given to math whizzes all across North America, and his Harvard math team did beat out just about everyone in the world. And, no, he had no trouble getting a summer job. "With my background, I can get pretty much any job I want in finance."

And the "mediagenic" Vasco Bilbao-Bastida insisted that he was actually "most passionate" about issues of social

justice. But later, talking about all his Facebook friends, a more candid appraisal slips out. "I guess you'd say I'm someone who everyone knows and likes."

I'd imagined that with so many ambitious people crammed into a small place like Quincy 301–308 they would behave like scorpions in a bottle, that their competitive instincts would overwhelm them in their quest for yet more success. There has been some good-natured rivalry between proponents of Apple and Microsoft, and unusual enthusiasm for the traditional Assassins game. Yet Quincy 301–308 was not a competitive arena. The place was an opium den, everyone high on their nearly magical success. Good stuff simply seemed to happen for these guys: A's, summer internships, grants, adventure, fun. None of the student leaders thought to tell me how he'd won his post—the strategy, the effort, the doubts. It was as if they'd all glided to the top like preppies into the Porcellian. There was, if anything, a sense of entitlement that one associates more with blasé St. Grottlesex grads than with these turbo-charged world-beaters. Their block is their club, the Success Club, a place to be with their own sort, where they can glory in their triumphs and daydream about all the worlds to be conquered next. A place, in short, to revel in their supreme Harvardness. They are so filled with it, they don't see it for what it is. As Vasco Bilbao-Bastida put it to me before he left for the fellowship in Japan that would precede a career at JPMorgan: "We're just a great bunch of guys." ■

