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**Princeton, NJ
Weather**
 Fair, 40°F
 (feels like 34°F)

The view of Princeton from One Tree Hill

Powell Fraser

Princetonian Columnist

"Some say Princeton students are arrogant. But then again, some people are jealous, and rightfully so ... All in all, if you can get in, you want to go here." These are the words of Jared Padelecki, star of some show on the WB called "Supernatural." I haven't watched the WB since I lied about watching Dawson's Creek in junior high. So naturally I was skeptical about their new DVD series called "The U" that promises "high-energy video tours of America's fifty most popular colleges."

My vertigo kicked in next: This was a DVD with a case of ADHD. Old Nassau had been edited into a 10-minute music video without a single shot lasting longer than three microseconds. But I eventually realized that my disorientation was a side-effect of drinking a martini before noon. By the time I had regained my grip on my plastic cup, I had concluded that "The U" had pretty much nailed Princeton.

Make no skull-and-bones about it: This is not the DVD that Dean Malkiel, runner-up for the 2005 Coolest Malkiel award, or President Tilghman want you to see. Most of the students shown in this video seem to be wearing cable-knit sweaters while strolling to the ATM to check the balance in their trust fund accounts. The voiceover tells us that Princeton students are "conservatively-dressed, good looking, well-connected, wealthy, and extremely intelligent." And no, they didn't simply extrapolate after talking to me. In fact, nobody from "The U" ever approached me while working on this video. They did have the wisdom to speak with my elementary school friend, Robert Wai Wong '06, the on-campus arbiter for people who eschew the metrosexual Yale look in favor of a bit of class this side of paradise.

So what else did "The U" have to say about Princeton? They advised prospective students to be on the lookout for pink pants, yellow shirts, and small animals everywhere (I think they were talking about crocodiles and horses, not black squirrels). The narrator also described Princeton's professors as "rock stars" (though I've never seen G.J. Ikenberry do a line of blow and then destroy a hotel suite). The DVD proclaimed that Princeton students were "competitive but friendly." Clearly they've never seen me lose a game of Beirut — and that's not because it's never happened.

Featured prominently in this video were things called "eating clubs," which your average admissions brochure would have you believe are little more than

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archaic institutions predating the Emancipation Proclamation in which socially-enlightened students decline to participate. "The U" also makes the ludicrous accusation that these clubs host amazing parties where the beer flows like wine and the women instinctively flock like the salmon of Capistrano. How could they not have swallowed the University propaganda that would lead you to believe that the Wilson Black-Box Theater is the center of campus life? Obviously "The U" did not attend Frist FluFest, which was attended by everyone who's anyone and spawned the pickup line, "Hey, baby, I'm inoculated."

Maybe the job of "The U" was to capture the Princeton stereotype, not defuse it. After watching the DVD, I came away with the impression that your average Princeton student is a well-dressed overachiever who likes to work and party hard. Is this so terrible an image? Yale's segment features apologetic quotes like this one: "Believe it or not, Yalies know how to have fun." Harvard's spot insists that "there's also normal people here." Of all the Ivies on the DVD, Princeton looks like the place students enjoy the most.

If the collar-popping, squash-playing, Wall Street-bound element of Princeton must be the enemy in the Administration's kulturkampf, then we are prepared to take up arms as insurgents to defend the Princeton that we know and love. Deflate our grades and we will still get amazing jobs. Offer us four-year colleges and we will still bicker and sign-in. Offer us free t-shirts and — well, we'll take them. But remember this, Shirley: "The U" is on our side.

"So If you're not opposed to the popped collar, and you're excited about the eating clubs, and you're ready to work hard for amazing professors, then Princeton is the place for you," Jared tells us. I hope you've enjoyed it so far. I know I have.

Powell Fraser is a politics major from Atlanta, Ga. He can be reached at pfraser@princeton.edu.

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