

Web-savviness not PCs' domain

COULD STELMACH HAVE HANDLED IT ANY WORSE?

I'm not talking about the First Ministers' Meeting, his frequent flyer miles, or speculation about the impending provincial election—though I'm sure Stelmach would have been more than happy to. Late last week, all anyone wanted to discuss with the Premier was the website that bears his name, but which (as it turns out) was already snapped up by the U of A's own Dave Cournoyer—for a mere \$14—some nine months ago.

The war of words between Stelmach's spokesflaks and the somewhat bemused former SU executive was animated, if uninformed. The more the provincial PCs and their legion of Liberal-haters stumbled over each other to decry the injustice of Cournoyer's prank, the deeper a hole they dug—and the more out of touch with reality they betrayed themselves to be.

As with most issues in Alberta politics, this has proven to be quite divisive. Only instead of the usual Tory/Grit dichotomy, it's more along the lines of people who've heard of the Internet versus those who haven't. The truth is that Cournoyer, while mischievous, hasn't done anything legally wrong, and now one can only hope that he calls the bluff of Stelmach's legal team—not only for our further amusement, but because the legal precedent on this matter still needs to be set.

Praise for Cournoyer's antics (or, at least a few tsks-tsks for those of the Premier) has come from some of the unlikeliest of sources, including the ultra-right-wing Ezra Levant.

Other more amusing—if less coherent—sound-bites have come from the right as well. *Edmonton Sun* columnist Neil Waugh waxed poetic about “a teeny, tiny Grit” who, as it turns out, “isn't some obscure fat frat boy with a sticky-up haircut.”

Meanwhile, the cease and desist letter from Stelmach's law firm implores Cournoyer to “govern [himself] accordingly,” and Stelmach himself, apparently caught off guard, quipped to reporters, “you know, I'm from the school that your name is your name [...] which, you know, mom and dad gave to me for free.” This nonsensical Bush-ism only further underscores Steady Eddie's lack of understanding in this matter and why he should have opted to resolve the situation quietly instead of taking a run at what has proven to be a much more agile opponent than he was counting on.

It's also foolish to suggest that Cournoyer was acting on behalf of the provincial Liberal party, for whom he was until recently employed as communications coordinator. While the Liberals will undoubtedly come out having scored some points in this little shooting match, the fact that one petty act of cyber-vandalism has done more to send the normally unshakeable PCs running for cover than years of the Liberals' huffing and puffing tells us as much about the relevance of the official opposition party as it does about Cournoyer's own savviness.

The dust seems to have settled somewhat for now, not because Cournoyer has given in, but likely because Stelmach and company are slowly, quietly starting to realize that they don't have much of an argument. In other words, the prank worked, and Stelmach has nothing left to do but learn from his error-by-omission, as well as (perhaps more importantly) the embarrassing series of PR gaffes that ensued. That, and snap up every URL from edstelmach.cc to steadyeddie.net before it's too late.

ADAM GAUMONT
Editor-in-Chief

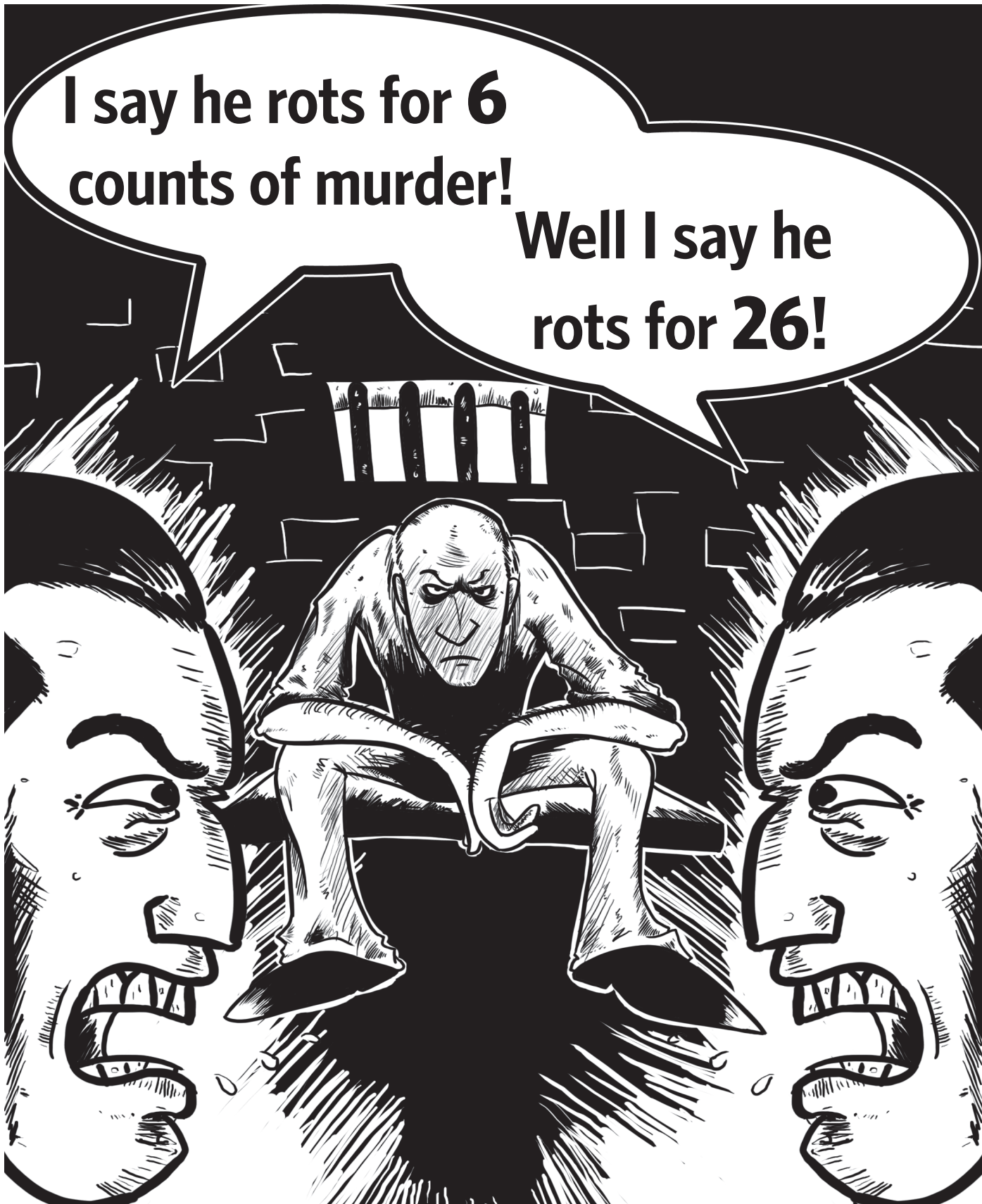
Royalty gets arrested

AFTER THREE YEARS OF ANGRILY SHAKING THEIR fists at the border, the US has finally managed to arrest Canada's Prince of Pot, Marc Emery—that is, assuming that the Canadian government agrees to the plea bargain he signed. But once Emery is safely behind bars, he can sleep sound knowing that no longer will college kids have the means to grow evil marijuana plants in their dorm room closets.

Congratulations, boys. This here's a silver-lining on the shit storm you call the “war on drugs.”

CONAL PIERSE
Opinion Editor

I say he rots for 6
counts of murder!
Well I say he
rots for 26!



CONAL PIERSE

LETTERS

Gateway relies on your improvised responses

Biweekly, the *Gateway* selectively sweeps four Streeters at random to comment on a question. Thus, it's crucial that all individuals on campus be prepared with a charming, witty, and impassioned response (Re: “Streeters,” every issue of the *Gateway*).

The Streeters column must be one of the most highly read sections—seeing how it's right at the front, shorter than a capsule A&E review, and less static than most news reports. Should the question posed to a Streeter prove to be more riveting, they need to take it upon themselves to bust out a unique response. In the absence of creative intervention, the entire *Gateway* issue could falter.

It's both necessary and intriguing to read a diversity of responses, so enchant us if you're selected. The outcome will be sensational, and it's possible that your response will be timely—“remember when that one Streeter said...”

How do you avoid getting
stumped by Streeters' Block?

OSLO BELZILE
Via Email

Cybersquatting, unlike Council, isn't newsworthy

First off, Cournoyer: grow up and stop domain squatting (Re: “Province threatens Cournoyer,” 15 January). Your motive was either profit or, more likely, attention to your political ideas. But there are clean ways to achieve either.

Next, *Gateway*: get your facts straight. This isn't the province threatening anything, it's the law office representing Ed Stelmach threatening an action—and a completely justifiable one at that. Also, don't waste my DFU money reporting on domain squatting.

I don't want to see any sad faces over sand thrown in the playground. Sure, it would have been smart for Stelmach to have registered his name as a domain, but there are reasonable limits to free speech in a democracy. I don't know the case law to say if Dave is technically in the right or wrong, but

I can say that if I embarked on the same path, I would expect the same outcome.

And since I'm writing a letter, would the *Gateway* please report on something at Students' Council that occurs after question period. The meat and potatoes happens after the questions are dispensed with. Just one thing.

Please.

SCOTT NICOL
Business Councillor

Letters to the editor should be sent to letters@gateway.ualberta.ca (no attachments, please).

The *Gateway* reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity, and to refuse publication of any letter it deems racist, sexist, libelous, or otherwise hateful in nature. The *Gateway* also reserves the right to publish letters online.

Letters to the editor should be no longer than 350 words, and should include the author's name, program, year of study, and student ID number to be considered for publication. Any use of Internet slang will result in immediate deletion of said letter and copious cursing on my behalf.

LETTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Cluck, cluck, cluck, splat!

Editor's note: The following was in response to a prank during Engineering Week that saw five agriculture students toss five live chickens off the second floor balcony of CAB, thinking “they would flutter down.”

Dear Editor,

They were just going to end up in the Colonel's hands anyway. Some mechanical engineers told us that these chickens [sic] were the right aerodynamic shape and there was great possibilities of Bourelli's force coming into effect here. Ee-aye-ee-aye-oh.

OLD MACK DONALD
21 January, 1986

*From the Archives is a semi-regular feature where the *Gateway* runs historical letters that we feel are of particular importance—or are just particularly hilarious.*