

Doormen check IDs, bounce comments off patrons

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John Hong and Richard Hyland sit, greeting patrons with good ole' Skeller hospitality, exchanging "Hey buddy!"s and other acknowledgements to familiar faces.

Sometimes the responses aren't quite as friendly.

"Did you hear that?" Hong asks. "They just called us a part of their anatomy."

But Hyland, busy checking someone's ID card, doesn't seem to notice.

It is just another night at the bar on 108 S. Pugh St. and Hong and Hyland, both bouncers at the Rathskeller, accept such treatment as part of their job.

Hyland (senior-labor and industry relations), a three-year bouncer at the Skeller, said he serves comebacks of his own.

Wearing cut-off jean shorts exposing polka-dot boxers, Hyland related one occasion when he asked a woman for a second form of identification.

The woman's boyfriend, offended by Hyland's request, responded curtly, "Why don't you fingerprint her?"

Hyland replied, "Do you like it when people give you a hard time when you work?"

The man said no, and Hyland answered, "Then don't do it."

Quick comebacks and watchful eyes are key skills for doormen.

To be successful at the position, bounc-

ers must rely more on brains rather than muscle.

And since preventing underage patrons from entering the bar is crucial, carding at the door is an art form.

Andy Block (senior-economics) said he has so far "busted" 150 people while working at the Skeller's door.

"You look at people's eyebrows," Block said. "And after a while, it comes down to a direct science. You watch their hands and the back of their necks."

Doormen detect a fake or altered ID by bending or touching the card, he said.

To protect the bar from liability and ensure its patrons' safety, doormen also consult each other if they are unsure of a card's authenticity, Block said.

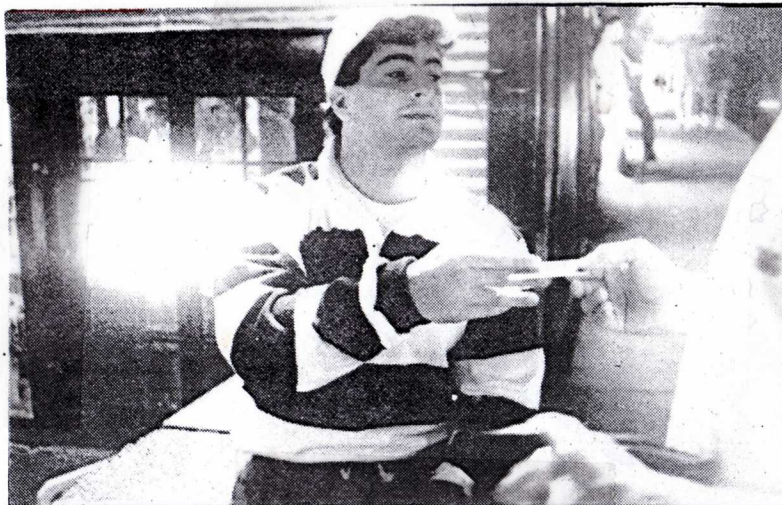
In some instances, people blow friends' cover by calling them by their real names, he said.

"I play it like a game," Block said of his uncanny ability to ferret out pretenders.

And the frauds are aware of his insight. Block recalled one time when an underage woman called his apartment to make sure he was off that night — she was discovered by another doorman.

To prove his loyalty to his job, Block blew the whistle on his own fraternity brothers for presenting fake IDs.

Block even has his name in a bar tour. After he caught several sorority members a year and half ago with fake IDs, they



Collegian Photo/Patti Christian

Andy Block, a doorman at the All-American Rathskeller, 108 S. Pugh St., returns a valid ID to its owner.

dubbed the tour the "We Hate Andy Block Bar Tour."

But Block seems to take his fame in stride.

"It's almost like being a celebrity because things get blown out of proportion," said Block, his hands crashing down on him to

gesture a bomb exploding in his face.

Mark Krull, head doorman at Player's Sports Bar, 112 W. College Ave. said he trains new doormen on the job.

"I look for someone who is smart and uses his head," he said.

Preferring the title "doorman" —

"bouncer" implies physical actions and a "25,000-pound gorilla with no brains" — Krull said he teaches his doormen to expect the unexpected and play the host.

"I don't want a doorman with an attitude that looks for fights because (fights) will find you," Krull said.

Dressed in the referee "zebra" uniform required of all the bar's doormen, he stressed that doormen should stop a fight before it turns to blows.

Doormen should settle a problem with a patron outside instead of inside where a situation becomes tougher to control, Krull said.

Though doormen are taught basic self-defense, they are encouraged to resolve situations verbally.

When necessary, Krull advocates holding troublemakers instead of punching or kicking. In one harrowing experience, Krull restrained a man who pulled a stray razor on him.

Even when a doorman does the job, things can still get out of hand.

Block remembers one night he witnessed two brawls that landed eight people in jail.

Despite unruly crowds, most doormen find their job enjoyable.

"I meet a lot of people and friends," Krull said. "Educational-wise, it teaches you certain disciplines, like keeping your temperament and patience."