A Long, Strange Trip
Alumnus Writes Innovative Guide for New Law Students

In a genre that is traditionally dull, dry, and dusty, Ben Weiss’s book, Malice in Wonderland: What Every Law Student Should Have for the Trip, is an oasis.

Weiss, JD ‘09, penned the 128-page book to set the record straight about what students should—and should not—expect in law school. “Malice in Wonderland was written for readers looking for a concise, honest, and practical take on the first year of law school,” Weiss says. “There are plenty of dense, 400-page reference books. I felt that rising 1Ls would appreciate a different take and a different voice.”

Writing under the pen name, Thaddeus Hatter, Weiss adopts the persona of “Uncle Malice” to guide hopeful law school students through the “Wonderland” of law school. It soon becomes clear that readers have gone “through the looking glass.”

Uncle Malice explains why mistakes in class are like bad Oscar speeches, what “gunners” are and why they never have weekend plans, and how to “launch a preemptive strike” against a professor. Fictitious cases like Kardashian v. Dignity are invented for “case studies,” and the book is peppered with new terminology Uncle Malice coins for his tour.

“I hope readers come away from Malice feeling more relaxed about the first year,” Weiss says. “I wanted the book to alleviate some of the initial stress that comes from not knowing what to expect. Malice is not designed to intimidate or frighten, but rather to empower.”

Weiss notes that about 140,000 students attend law school each year, and that hundreds of thousands of college students consider pursuing it at some point.

Weiss, who received numerous honors in law school, practiced in corporate and securities law for Thompson Coburn LLP in St. Louis. Earlier this year, he attended the prestigious Ira Sohn Investment Conference in New York as one of four finalists for the Ira Sohn investment contest prize. He currently lives in New York City.

Malice in Wonderland, published by Fine Print Press, is available from Amazon.com and all major retailers.

Carrots from Uncle Malice

► Accept that you are going to have at least one bad Socratic incident. Don’t make it worse by making a scene.

► Don’t try to B.S. your way through an answer when you are unprepared; your professor will know and can use the opportunity to make an example out of you.

► If the thought of speaking in class makes you break out in a cold sweat, do what you can to blend in and remain inconspicuous.

► Use preemptive strikes to put the ball back in your court and regain some control over the process.

► If you get called on when you are not paying attention, stay calm, follow the Socratic Fire Drill, and you will survive.

► Don’t be an answer hog. Gunners never have weekend plans.

► At the end of the day, your relative ineloquence during a class discussion doesn’t really matter. It will have no effect on your final grade, won’t prevent you from being a successful attorney, and no one will remember. Relax, do your best, then forget about it.