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Hill prezzes on

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Hillary burbles are starting up again. We already know our favorite choice wants a rest, a hairdresser, a stylist, a masseuse, a diet, a beer privately, a day to stay put and a chunk of time off to smell the roses or whoever else she thinks smells.

But word is she's talking to political pros. Sounding them out. Bringing them close. If not planning to run, put it this way: She sure looks like she's planning to walk real fast.

JOHN Cusack on his just-opened movie "The Raven":

"A macabre, lurid, gothic Edgar Allan Poe thriller stylishly brought to life — and death. A madman murderer's inspired by Poe's darkest works. A detective and Poe work to get inside the killer's mind and try to stop his making all the author's brutal stories a bloody reality."

OK, so "The Sound of Music" this isn't. Also a nice quiet sit-down with Cusack this almost wasn't. We were due to meet. I showed. He didn't. Having somehow clambered into the wrong car he'd gone to the wrong place. And, finally appearing, looked very unCusackish.

"I know I look different," he said. "I play Edgar Allan Poe. I grew all this facial hair and long sideburns and worked to get under my high school weight."

So is he a Poe aficionado?

"Yes. First of all, I did lots of research. Also, I grew up reading his work. I loved his poems. I was fascinated by them. I even have a very old body of his writings. It was a gift from someone. He was a complicated person. This shoot was also complicated. We did it nights in Serbia.

"I had an apartment here in New York for five years. New York is a wonderful place to play, but I have no time for playing. I see my dad and sister [**Joan Cusack**] but, like most people, I only have two weeks off. I'd see them more and do more if I had time off. But I don't. I'm working back to back."

A Level 6 black belt in kickboxing, John Cusack is an outspoken political blogger opposing our war, disdaining **Dubya Bush**, then adding, "But **Obama's** now as bad as Bush." I'd loved to have talked more but because he was late he disappeared, so in the words of Mr. Poe: "Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'"

OKLAHOMA City news: **Bruce Boxleitner**, whose grampa had a ranch, who starred in "How the West Was Won," just got the Western Heritage Award. Look, don't pick on me — I'm just a reporter. **Temple Grandin** — who pioneered humane handling of animals and who was played by **Claire Danes** — cheered him on.

I DIDN'T see mama kissing Santa Claus but last week, before I left the country, I did see **Spielberg**, cap pulled low, dark glasses, sprinting uptown rapidly at 11:40 a.m., on Park Avenue's east side at 61st. On his cell, talking fast. Whatever he was selling, I'm betting they bought it. Nobody recognized him but me.

RAH-rah-ing the Rangers: Canadian rocker **Bryan Adams**, the Strokes' **Albert Hammond Jr.**, **Spike Lee** with son **Jackson**, **Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi** and whoeverthatfianceis in team colors. She in blue headband, he in red shirt. So, kemosabe, even minus Tonto, these are definitely not the Lone Rangers.

WAIT. Don't go away. Give me another chance to share really important information. Like: After eight partners and 10 kids, Gang Green's **Antonio Cromartie** now expects Nos. 11 and 12 so NuVo Condoms just sent him a year's supply of Those Things. Nice. Could last him a weekend . . .

SO how is New York different? The other day department store security arrested the same crook four times. The guy was comparison shoplifting.

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RAVEN-Symone spent a break from “Sister Act” eating sushi at Mr. Robata . . . The book party for **Mark Bego’s** “Aretha Franklin” and “Whitney Houston” at Nic’s Martini Lounge in LA must’ve been hot. The fire department came. . . Dr. Scholl’s, of corn-plaster fame, giving foot massages May 9 at 508 W. 37th. For some reason **Megan Hilty** of “Smash” and her feet will be there.

B’WAY powerhouses opened while I was away. I just caught magnificent **John Lithgow** unfolding America’s history. “The Columnist” proves what’s old is new again. We’re still mired in war 60 years later — Vietnam, now Afghanistan. Hooray for Kennedy, boo on LBJ. Now hip-hip for **Clinton**, razzberrys for Obama. At Bond 45 afterward, diners raving about the play sighed, “Nothing changes.”

Another mustn’t-miss is “Clybourne Park” at the Walter Kerr. The production is so excellent, the cast so brilliant that the matinee audience stood to applaud. It, too, deals with the American lifestyle. Everyone: See these two plays.

MATCHING our new outer-borough livery cabs, or maybe honoring Kermit the Frog, everything’s suddenly turning grass color. The big successful drink at Indian restaurants? Spicy — and very green? Slumdog Margaritas.

Only in New York, kids, only in New York.

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