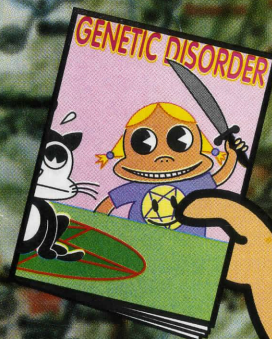


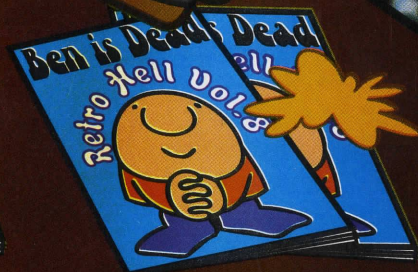
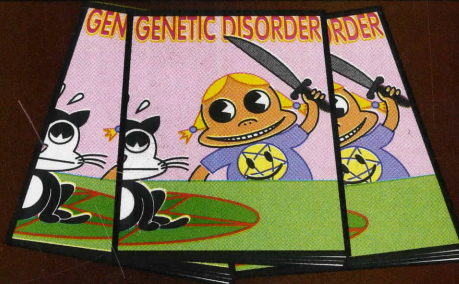
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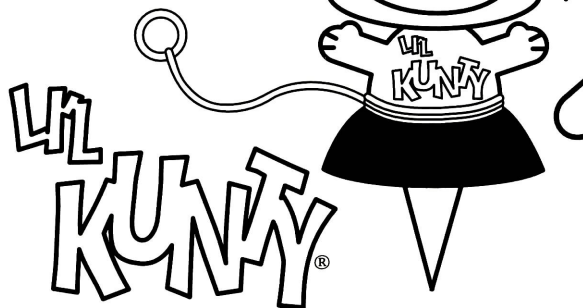
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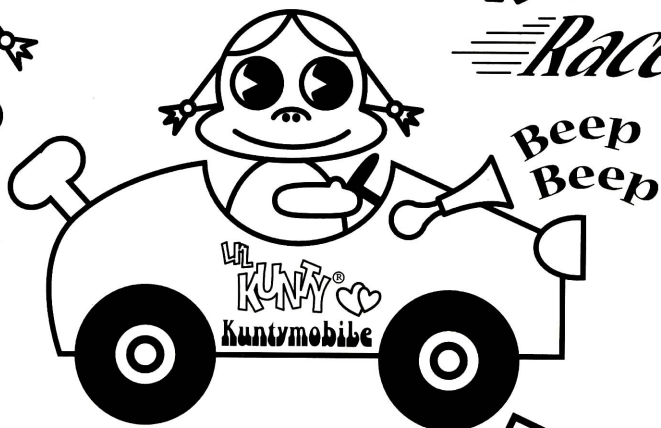
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"I went home with a lesbian tweaker."

That's a new expression I use when I wind up in a completely bizarre situation, wondering how I got myself in this mess. Like the time I woke up in the back of a friend's car with a homeless guy sitting next to me smoking crack. ¶

Virgil, Ralph and I were standing on the corner of Third and University after leaving a party at 1:50 a.m., trying to figure out if we could make it to the store in time to buy more beer.

"Nah, I think we're gonna go home," Ralph said.

"Ah, come on, don't go home just yet," I pleaded.

While we were debating on whether or not to call it a night, a woman walked between the three of us. "You guys are tweaking, I can tell," she said. "I know all the tweakers in the neighborhood. Someone tried to rip me off earlier and I just punched him in the face." It only took her three seconds to blurt out her words.

Since San Diego is the former meth capital of the world, being approached by a speed freak at 2 a.m. was no surprise.

"So, you guys got any?" she asked. "I know you do. I know a tweaker when I see one."

Maybe it was because the three of us are skinny and we were being so loud. It was probably the alcohol talking, but I decided to play along. "Nah, we don't have any. But I know you do. Why are you holding out? I'd share with you if I had any."

"No, I swear. I don't have any," she said, almost begging.

"But you know what I really want?" I said. "I want some more beer."

She had plenty of beer, she said. She was house sitting for some friends and they stocked the refrigerator before they left.

I whispered to Virgil and Ralph, "Come on, let's go drink her beer."

Ralph looked at me like I was nuts. "Dude, she's completely whacked out on crystal," he

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said. "Besides, I know what you're thinking and you're stupid if you think you're gonna scam on her. She's a lesbian."

That much was obvious. She had a flat-top and was wearing flannel, faded jeans and combat boots. But Ralph had completely underestimated me. I wasn't after her body. I wanted her beer.

Virgil and Ralph thought the situation was too weird and went home. I followed her to a cottage on Fourth Avenue, where she charged me a dollar for all the Miller High Life I could drink. She turned on all the lights, cranked the classic rock station and sang along to ELO and Peter Frampton songs while rocking back and forth like a mental patient. I sat drinking my beer, taking this all in. I started getting nervous when her rocking back and forth accelerated and she started talking at me, not to me. "Am I freaking you out? Am I freaking you out? Am I freaking you out?" she repeatedly asked.

"Uh, no, uh, everything's fine," I lied. Then I stuffed a couple of beers in my pockets and staggered out the door.

When Virgil called the next day and asked what happen, the first words out of my mouth were, "I can't believe I went home with a lesbian tweaker." ¶

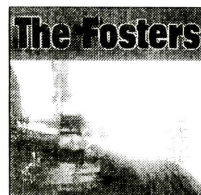
I originally started working on this story in small increments to be part of the "official" Kill Zines diary, Socially Fucking Retarded, but I was certain that most of my contributions would have been cut due to limited space. After looking over the finished stories, I felt they were too good to go to waste, so I compiled them into this single issue of Genetic Disorder.

Before you begin the story, I'd like to say that I'm still friends with everyone from the tour. You might get the impression that I would love nothing more then to dig out their hearts with a spoon, but I'm still on good terms with everyone mentioned. You can't help but have conflict and tension when you stick five strangers in a motorhome for two months, but I think we all made it home with only minimal amounts of bitterness.

And I'd like to point out that leaving home with less than \$50 cash and a couple of boxes of zines for two months was my biggest lesbian tweaker experience yet.

####

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I watched my dad empty our trailer's septic tank for two weeks every August between 1977 and 1989. He would slide the hose out of the square bumper, connect an end to the septic tank valve, run the other end into a hole in the ground and release the stop. Two weeks later, when it was time to go home, he'd run a water hose into the trailer's small bathroom, hold down "flush," and run water from the tap with posted signs that said "UNDRINKABLE WATER" straight into the toilet until he thought the tank was clear. Emptying raw sewage was a skill I learned at a young age through observation. It would become very valuable later in my life.



It was two girls, three guys, a 26-foot motorhome and 10,000 miles. It was the Kill Zines Summer Vacation Tour.

Darby from *Ben is Dead* and Noël from *Bunnyhop* starting setting up the tour the previous fall. I knew they were planning on a big trip, but was shocked when Darby called me in May and invited me to join. I had originally planned to go to Europe (practically for free) for two weeks with the Maple Skateboard team; but I quickly scrapped those plans to ride around the US with Darby for two months. The one big event that I would miss was the Republican convention. I was hoping to return from Amsterdam just in time to blow up the San Diego Convention Center with my stash of M-80's.

Even though I was giving up Europe and a chance to blow up the Republican National Convention to tour as part of Kill Zines contingent, when I called Darby back to say I could go, her response was, "I have to talk it over with Noël first. What are your bad habits?"

"Well, I don't smoke, but I do eat meat occasionally. I don't shower that often, but I do take showers before I smell."

"Oh, yeah. I like to drink," I told her.

She also asked me what my positive traits were.

"Uh, I can drive big vans and motorhomes. I know how to work on cars a little. And I know how to empty out the septic tanks on motorhomes."

Because I know how to drain raw sewage, I was immediately given the thumbs up.



But no matter how high my qualifications were as the toilet guy, there were other obstacles I had to clear before I could leave. First I had to finish issue #14, which was already six months late (incidentally, it took 14 months to complete). Then I had to find a way to pay for printing costs.

Finishing *GD* wouldn't be that difficult. I would annoy the contributors and advertisers, and stay up on bad 7-11 coffee for a week finishing my stories and

putting everything together. Getting the cash was going to be the hard part. I'd been really broke the previous year and had no money to spare. My economic indicator was \$100 debt every month for three months to pay my rent. First I became depressed, then desperate.

First I sold about 400 CDs, cashed out a savings bond my mom gave me, and raided a retirement plan I earned from two years of work at SDSU. Then I borrowed from friends, family and roommates. But the worst thing I did was take a part-time job.

For a week I'd noticed a "Help Wanted" sign in a photocopy shop around the block from my house. I shaved, put on nice shirt, picked up an application and was hired within a week. It was the second time in my life I've gone to a job interview with a bad hangover - and been hired.

I did mostly data entry, but also helped customers and actually learned how to use a cash register for the first time. Because I know how to use Pagemaker, I also did desktop publishing. Okay, kids, this proves one of the many evils of capitalism. I was paid \$5 an hour to do work that the owner had no skills for except charging a customer \$30 an hour. Hmmm, doesn't sound quite fair, even with overhead, does it?

I waited one week before the tour to tell the manager I was leaving. I almost burst out laughing when he put his hand on my shoulder and said, "I don't know if there will be a job for you when you return from your trip."

GD was coming along smoothly despite the interference of having a part-time job. I had a date set up with my printer to make sure I would have the new issue in my hands before I left. For the home stretch, I stayed awake for two and a half days straight finishing the layout. I delivered it to my printer a day late, but he assured me that it would be done in time.

Normally there's a three-day turn around. I dropped off the masters on a Thursday and the job should have been ready on Monday, but no later than Tuesday. The zine absolutely had to be in my hands by Wednesday because the next day was the Fourth of July and everything would be shut down until Monday. Besides, I was leaving on Sunday. That Friday I called the printer to make sure everything was going okay.

Of course things weren't okay. They were backed up because of the holiday weekend, and the zine was now too thick to go to my normal bindery.

Because *GD* has an attached cover, the printer has to send the copies to a bindery where they staple the covers to the newsprint and trim the excess paper. The bindery could only staple through a zine with 112 pages. The new issue had 128 pages. My printer recommended someone else, but with no luck. Because of the thickness, they couldn't do it either. "Maybe try these people."



Nope, too thick for them too. I even tried a newspaper, but a friend who worked there told me they're trying to portray themselves as a family paper and wouldn't take a job because of the content. Who would have thought that an entire issue dedicated to Satanism could upset a family paper.

I did find a bindery in San Marcos, an hour north of where I live. They charged three times as much as my normal binder, but they could have it done in time. Come Tuesday, I borrowed my friend Brett's van and drove to the printer at 2 p.m. "It's going to be another two hours, come back at 4." I called at 3:30. "Try back at 6." At 6, they told me to show up at 9.

Just like I guessed, 9 turned into 10:30 when it was done. But the bindery said they only needed a day and the printer would drive three pallets loaded with approximately a half ton of paper each up to San Marcos. My printer said it was all he could do since they were so late. Add that with how pathetic I looked when I realized that I couldn't fit a single pallet in Brett's van.

Each time I made one of my reassurance calls to the bindery, they promised me that as long as they received the pages early on July 3, they would have them done in the afternoon. Everything is going to work out, I thought. I rented a U-Haul and two friends said they would help me unload them. We drove the 40 miles to Escondido, picked up the big rig and arrived at the bindery at 5 p.m., an hour before they said they would be finished.

I almost had a heart attack when I saw my pallets still stacked with the raw pages and no employees around to run the bindery. Fuck! I started to panic when I spotted a foreman-looking guy. "Yeah, the afternoon shift went home. The evening shift will be in soon."

Did he know when we should come back? "I can't say how long it will take. We'll call you."

We drove all the way back to my house and waited. And waited. And waited. They never called. At 9 p.m. they finally called and said they were having problems (naturally, I thought), and that they would be

done by midnight. No problem, as long as they're done.

Besides needing the finished zines for the tour, the San Diego Comic Convention was starting the next day. Lorraine the T-Shirt Girl and Noël from *Bunnyhop* would be waiting for me to pick them up at the train station at midnight. They were coming into town to work at our booth at the four day Comic Con, which was our San Diego event. Great, one more thing to worry about. One of my roommates said he was going to be around, so he could pick them up and I could continue to deal with my zine fiascoes. I don't know what else could have gone wrong.

I made sure we were back at the bindery by 11 p.m. in case there were any more problems. I figured if I was standing around, they would be more likely to finish my job even if their machinery continued to eat my zines.

We sat around for another hour and a half waiting for the bindery. I eventually made it home around 2 a.m. with over 1000 lbs. of *Genetic Disorder*. Ray and Jason helped me carry each 35 lb. box up a flight of stairs into my house.

Believe me, there's nothing like meeting people for the first time covered in sweat and muttering about how fucked up the past week has been. Nice to meet you, Noël and Lorraine. Finished with that, we dropped off the truck and were promptly pulled over for drunk driving on the way home because Ray was confused by the 5-way intersection at Park and El Cajon Blvd.

"Have you been drinking?"

"Not a drop."

"Follow my finger. Okay, you guys can go."

I played my answering machine before I went to bed. "Larry, this is Tom calling from the bindery at 10:30. We're having problems. We're not going to be able to finish your job tonight. We're having problems



Lorraine showing off the Kill Zine banner

with our machines. You'll have to wait until Monday."



The San Diego Comic Convention and the 1970 Dodge Dart

The San Diego Comic Con is the biggest comic book convention in the country. Every year, thousands of comic and toy collectors flood the convention center looking for Han Solo in the original packaging and that special edition hologram card. It also allows grown ups to dress like their favorite Klingon. I've been able to scam my way into the last three conventions and generally enjoy tooling around looking at all the toys I used to own. I still kick myself for blowing up all that stuff with firecrackers when I was a kid. This year I was so busy getting ready to leave and packing boxes for the mailing, I didn't get to hang around any nerds. No big deal - the real fun of the Comic Con is the party that happens every year.

This year's party seemed a bit stale, but then again, I was so burned out from finishing up *GD*, it could have been me. The first Comic Con party I went to was at a three-story loft downtown. There were 40 kegs, a

couple hundred pounds of pretzels and over 1000 people. The first level was a wide open space with a boxing ring filled with people quietly chatting. The second floor had bands all night. The third floor had all the beer and food. The third floor also had an extra room with strippers and Glenn Danzig was the bouncer/doorman. It was the first time I had seen Danzig not standing on a stage. The guy is about five-feet tall and four-feet wide and really dresses in those Guido mesh shirts with that skull belt buckle. It was honestly one of the best parties I've been to in my whole life.

With that party to use as the standard for all future Comic Con parties, this one was a dud. For the second year in a row, it was held at the downtown golf driving range and basically consisted of a bunch of bands near a sandtrap and people scattered all over the green. Since Kill Zines was part of the event, we were given 100 drink tickets, half of which were given to me since no one else in our group really drinks. I spent the entire evening pouring beer down my throat and giving away drinks to everyone I knew. I remember the night ending with Lorraine dragging me out after the house lights came on and most people had left. If they realized that this would be the first of many times the others would have to drag me away from a party or a bar, they probably would have held a secret meeting later that night and kicked me off the tour.

The next day I woke up hungover, dropped everyone off at the Con and immediately got back to work. There was already a rushed feeling. Darby was driving back to LA to set up things at Amok Books. I had to pack boxes and stuff envelopes. I wasn't even sure how the three of us plus Darby's sister were getting to LA with all of our stuff. Noël and Lorraine showed up before 4 p.m. with a couple in a van who had a booth at the con. They started putting the heat on me to finish up. I threw all my shit in a bag and started loaded everything into the van. It was obvious we weren't going to make it to LA in time for the event. We would be late to every event afterwards with the exception of NYC and the West Coast dates.

As the van started to drive off without me, I ran inside to give some instructions about my car to my roommate Vaughn. For the past four or five months, I had been driving an unregistered four door 1970 Dodge Dart. Johnny Yuma originally sold it to me for \$100, but said I didn't have to pay him after he heard it had broke down on me once and left me stranded. The car was beat to hell. The blinkers, gas gauge and windshield wipers didn't work. The seats were held together with duct tape and covered with towels. The driver side door had a tendency to fly open whenever I made right hand turns. The steering column was ripped out and a bungee cord held the ignition in place so it would idle. None of the locks worked and it leaked a quart of oil every 4-7 days.

But I loved that car. I never registered it because I didn't have any paperwork. That, and I didn't have the money. Johnny traded a Chevy Nova for the Dart, but somehow the Dart ended up with the Nova paperwork. Johnny tried to get a receipt for it, but the owner disappeared. He was on parole and had to wear one of those ankle bracelets that monitored his location. Apparently he tested positive for drugs, so he cut the bracelet off and skipped town. It was my understanding when Johnny gave me the car that if I was ever stopped by the cops for anything, I would be pulled out at gunpoint.

I handed the key to Vaughn and asked him to move it every couple of days while I'm gone. When I walked out to get in the van, somehow I knew it would be the last time I would see my beloved Blue Bomb, especially since I already had a big karma strike against me. Last winter, these people from a couple of blocks over abandoned their four door Escort directly in front of our place. Every couple of weeks these people would push their car a few feet up the street. It took them two months to move the car from around the block to our house, where it sat for three months with a flat tire. My other roommate Joe was familiar with the "Anarchy Car" and never liked it. One night after a few beers, I made a Slayer stencil and Joe's girlfriend went out and painted

Slayer on the hood. I didn't think the white-on-blue looked good, so a couple of days later, I painted a black one on their right front fender.

A couple of weeks later I left a huge "666" on the left passenger door. Other people in the neighborhood were picking up on our idea of a creating a street mural out of a broken down Escort. Someone put a huge sticker that said, "It's time for a BIG DICK BREAK" on one of the windows. Someone else put a "Born Again Pagan" sticker on it. It continued until the city towed it one afternoon.



Los Angeles

Lorraine, Darby's sister Selina, Noël and myself piled into the mattress in the back of an old Dodge Ram and headed to LA. with all of my stuff, which included my BMX bike and brother's CB radio, along with the Kill Zine booth and T-shirt board, and our drivers' convention merchandise. We sat in the back and bickered over who was putting their feet on who for two hours.

Since this was the first event I attended - the first KZ event was at Golden Comics in LA the week before the Comic Con; Robin Williams and the midget from Twin Peaks somehow ended up at the Golden Comics event. Noël said Darby monopolized Williams and the midget asked Lorraine if she "fooled around"; I wasn't sure what I was in for.

Since we were late, a handful of LA zine people were already there and set up. The set up was simple. Each zine had their own table and were hocking their mags. People mostly chatted with people they knew or browsed Amok's amazing selection of books. Later in the evening, someone wheeled in a karaoke machine and the bad singing to '70s tunes commenced. It was around this time that this guy approached me and Lorraine and asked if he could take a picture of sitting at the booth. Sure, no problem. So Lorraine sits on my lap and I make the sign of the devil and weird faces while he snaps a couple of shots. Then he asked that the four of us pose for a shot together. Sure, no problem. Noël, Darby and Lorraine held our banner like a bullfighter and I made horns with my fingers and crouched down while he snapped a couple more.

As he started to put his camera away, I asked him, "Hey, who's this for?"

"Spin."

Yikes!!! What did I just do? If I had known, I would have held my hand over my face or something. I thought the guy was shooting photos for *BID*. I knew that I'd have hell to pay if a picture of my face ended up in *Spin*.

Well, the picture of Lorraine sitting on my lap

did appear three months later and I have yet to be struck by a bolt of lighting. Since he took the photo in July and it took so long to come out, I assumed it wouldn't ever be published. I was pretty shocked when one of my friends woke me up one Sunday and said, "Hey, Larry, I'm at work right now looking at a picture of your ugly face in Spin magazine. The girl is cute, but you look like a dumb ass."

The Amok Books event ended the same way most music shows do. People slowly trickled out until only a handful of people were hanging around. Besides the hell-ride to LA, I thought if the rest of the tour is similar to this show, it's going to be pretty smooth sailing. How quickly I forgot about my hell-month of finishing *GD* and how nothing ever goes right.

We had two days in LA before we were going to pick up the motorhome and actually hit the road. Darby and Noël were taking care of remaining tour details, the same last minute things I had to deal with in San Diego, such as mailings and finding people to take care of pets, the house, etc. I spent most of my time running errands for Darby in her beat up car with the dangling headlight. After seeing Darby's car and how she drives, I was glad that she wasn't going to be behind the wheel. She would have sped us off a cliff somewhere in the Appalachians, I just know it.

There's nothing like driving in LA on a hot weekday afternoon. Darby needed this-and-that done, so she drew a map of Hollywood and sent me on my way. I had to pick up T-shirts, extra bundles of *BID* and envelopes for her bulk mail. The printer and shirts I found just fine. As for the envelopes, she drew the building on the map, but not the address. I drove up and down Santa Monica, Sunset, Hollywood, Western, Vermont and Normandie looking for this place with no luck. I finally limped back to the *Ben is Dead* mansion two hours later after convincing myself that this was some sort of trial and I had failed. I would now look like an idiot to everyone.

Maybe I did the right thing. Like when Shel Silverstein said if you're a kid that doesn't like to do the dishes, break a plate. If you keep breaking the dishware, maybe your parents will get the idea. If they think I'm an idiot, then they'll expect me to be a fuck up and not give me any responsibility. Ah, yes, now I can just sit back and sip beer for six weeks and enjoy the scenery.

Well, I convinced them that I was an idiot, but the wrong kind. Now I was a dork who would still be stuck doing heavy lifting. When giving instructions to Larry, please speak to him slowly. He's special. Not to worry, there was still six weeks to reinforce the idea that I'm an idiot.

On the night before we were to leave, we were introduced to the fifth member of our party, Jeff, who we

dubbed Busdriver Jeff. Originally Dishwasher Pete was going to be our driver, but he had to back out because his girlfriend Moe got a hernia working on an Alaskan fishing boat, so he was going to hang out with her this summer. Pete said he had a friend that lived in Ventura that would be up for a roadtrip and could help with the driving. So Jeff now entered the picture with 24 hours and counting before the Kill Zines Tour was ready to launch.

As the drivers, it was me and Jeff's responsibility to pick up the motorhome the next day. We will forever refer to it as the motorhome as "the 'Bago,'" although it was a Ford. Such a small detail, and besides, it's so much more fun to say "'Bago.'" It was 26 feet long and could sleep six, but in reality could sleep five comfortably if three of the five were shorter than 5'8". It had a microwave, stove, large bunk bed, kitchen table, toilet and shower. It was nicer than a lot of my friends' apartments. We didn't know how much information Darby had told them, so we signed the paperwork and got the hell out of there. It would have been just my luck to mention that we're going cross country, then have one of the rental people (who were all Swiss-German) say, "But our rentals are only for California, Nevada and Arizona. We are regretful to inform you that you cannot take your motorhome." Add to the fact that with I didn't have any driver's insurance and who knows what could have happened.

Okay, we had the motorhome, supplies, zines and the people. You would think we could hit the road before 2 p.m. for our 24-hour drive to Austin. No, things don't work like that. Darby still had a shitload of work and quite a few loose ends to tie up. Plus, we were still hurting for sponsors. Mint, an online service, came through, but all the promo items they were mailing to us were on a UPS truck somewhere in San Diego. Darby argued with UPS for 45 minutes before they said they would ship them to Austin. That's only one example of the kind of stuff we were dealing with. It was at that moment when I realized there were forces more powerful than our own, conspiring and working against us. We will never get out of LA, I thought. When we finally got around to packing all the shit in the 'Bago and I saw Darby packing 11 fucking pairs of shoes and a set of rollerskates, I knew we would be there all night.



Arizona and New Mexico

We finally said goodbye to the *BID* mansion at 1 a.m., dropped off Darby's one-eyed car and hit the road. The plan was Jeff would drive until he was tired, then I would take over, pulling over when I could no longer keep my eyes open, repeating the procedure until we hit

Texas. We got about as far as San Bernardino and crashed hard at about 4 a.m. after listening to the Noël-Lorraine-Darby Combo rock the back seats for two hours with their keyboard and Mr. Microphones. Since we were still strangers to each other, it was still too early for me to say, "Hey, shut the fuck up for a little while."

The next day Jeff and I power-drove through the remainder of California and most of Arizona. After passing through Tucson, it was starting to get late, so we decided to put the 'Bago to real use and hit the wilderness for the night. Jeff had once stayed at a campground approximately 40 miles south of the freeway, just shy of the New Mexico border. As we plowed south down a two-lane hilly road, the rain started pouring down. Having grown up in the desert, I know that one thing Arizona is known for during the summer (besides scorching heat) is flash floods. The water crossed the road at every dip and Jeff was hitting these moving puddles at about 50 mph. I had visions of us hydroplaning and flipping, then being washed away by a torrent. The small town newspaper headlines the next day would say, "Five tourists killed in flash flood, hundreds of soggy magazines litter surrounding pastures."

We survived, but to this day, I'm still surprised we didn't eat it. After arriving at the campground around sundown and serving up a pasta feast, Darby demonstrated her camping prowess by pitching a tent in the rain and sleeping outside. Jeff tried with Darby's other tent, but it filled with water. I always pictured Darby being a city person, but I was totally wrong. She surfs, hikes, camps and sleeps on the ground. Jeff was an outdoors kind of guy and had a hat to prove it. Myself, I don't mind camping, but I hate waking up with the sun on my face, and a bathroom is nice in the morning. Noël seemed to have the same opinion when it came to the outdoors.

As for Lorraine, she hates the outdoors. Give her a house with big lamps, a microwave to heat up Spaghettios, a shag carpet and a pink tile bathroom, and she couldn't be happier. Take her out of her element and include the bug factor and, to borrow from a stupid phrase, she is not a happy camper. Her fear and hatred of bugs is deep. From the teeniest speck of a gnat to a wet, clingy flying cockroach bigger than your dad's thumb - they are all evil and must be destroyed.

My only outdoor fear is of the wookalar. Although similar to the Pacific Northwest's sasquatch, it's actually more of a cousin of Mexico's chupacabras. A wookalar is a big, bear-like creature with a pig snout that feeds on the brains of other animals. It gets to the brain by sucking the gray matter out through the creature's nose. A full-grown wookalar could easily suck the brain out of a human's nose, but luckily none live in Arizona. I was worried that some could have migrated to Southern Arizona, but we didn't stick around long enough to find

out. We were out of there before noon and headed towards New Mexico.

This was my first time through New Mexico since I was five, and I'm really surprised I had forgot that New Mexico is fireworks country. And wouldn't you know it, the first place we stop for gas has a fireworks store across the street. I've always loved blowing shit up with M-80s. Living close to Mexico my whole life allowed me to become quite the pyro. I always have at least a dozen bottle rockets and 100 or so firecrackers on hand. So when I saw this store, I had a mental shopping list of all the stuff I was going to buy, minus bottle rockets. I brought a case with me from San Diego.

I ran across a highway to get to the fireworks store and was nearly clipped by a car when I hit their gravel parking lot. I was drooling when I walked inside. I thought to myself, "I need something that could blow up parking meters." I was expecting to buy some firecrackers just shy of dynamite, but I couldn't believe what passes for M-80s in this state. Where I'm from, an M-80 is about the size of a toilet paper tube and could easily



Where's my lighter?

take a couple of fingers off if you're unfortunate enough to still be holding it when it explodes. Here, they sold M-160s, which should have twice the charge of an M-80, and they were only as big as my thumb. How the hell am I supposed to blow up a parking meter with this? That's what happens when the government steps in to regulate. Oh well, they'll have to do. Give me a couple Roman candles, throw in a couple punks and a book of matches and I'll gladly be on my way. When I paid for my toys, the woman pointed to the sign next to the register. "Please do not light off fireworks in our parking lot. Thank you."



Everyone knows Southern California is mostly concrete. What wild animals live in or near the cities definitely have adapted to being around humans. There's plenty of garbage for skunks, possums and raccoons to eat, and coyotes can always capture house cats, small dogs and the occasional human baby for a meal. Once you get out on the open road, animals start popping up everywhere. Lizards, frogs, snakes, deer and all sorts of rodents are jumping out all over the place.

Apparently once it's dark in Texas, the deer come out to party. They were hopping around, jumping over fences, hanging out with friends and running around like a pack of wild teenagers. It was fun to watch them while driving but I was a bit nervous too. My friend Mitch told me about this time he and his band were driving in the Pacific Northwest and saw a deer get cut in half by a car and try to crawl away while its hind quarters were on the other side of the road. To keep deer from running in front of you, he said you can buy these things called deer whistles to put on your car to scare them away. The deer can hear the whistle and run away before they get trapped in your headlights. The only thing I had to ward off deer was a Didjits CD and Vindictives tape, and that only annoyed the humans.



Austin

After two straight days of driving, I was determined to get to Austin that night. We had plans the next day to float down a river in San Marcos, Texas, which is only 30 minutes or so from Austin. I turned on the automatic pilot, pounded down the worst coffee I ever tasted, and pulled in a vacant parking lot at 5 a.m. I had driven 12 hours straight and was still a bit wired. I tried to buy a quart of beer to help me sleep, but I could never

figure out the alcohol laws once I left California. Okay, I can live without the beer for a night. Everyone slept for a few hours then woke up soaked in sweat.

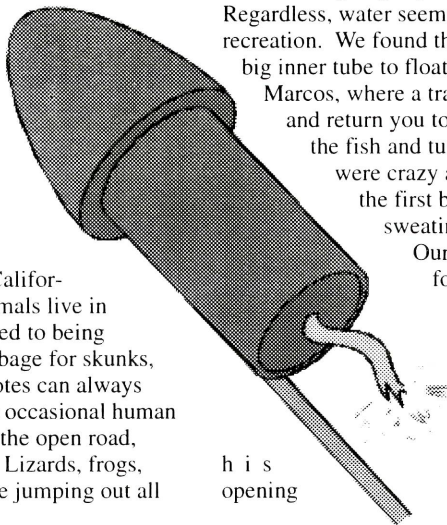
As big of a desert Texas is, there are lots of small streams and rivers running through it. Apparently due to bad planning and population growth, many of the streams are going dry or suffering from low water levels. Regardless, water seemed to be a big part of the daytime recreation. We found this place where you could rent a big inner tube to float a few miles down the San Marcos, where a tractor will pick you up at the end and return you to your car. The water was warm, the fish and turtles were everywhere and the kids were crazy and swinging from ropes. It was the first bath the five of us had after sweating for three days straight.

Our Austin contact was Ken Oatman, former buyer at Fine Print. Fine

Print, of course, is one of the biggest zine distributors in the country. Yeah, love 'em or hate 'em Austin is Fine

Print's town. But none of that has anything to do with Ken or family. They were super nice, up their home, showers and bathrooms to us. We groomed

h i s
opening



ourselves for our evening event. For me, that meant shaving for the first time in two weeks. It took about an hour and I lost about a pint of blood. I didn't need the blood anyway, since I was planning on drinking with a bunch of Texans, and less blood equals more drunk.

Our first zine event in Austin was at Fringeware, a zine/book store near the capital building. A bunch of locals were already there with their zines and the owner provided the keg and pretzels. The city of Austin was becoming everything I pictured it to be. I only wished we had a few more days here so I could explore it on bike. Oh well. We hung around until dark, heading over to Austin's premier club, Emo's.

Emo's is huge. There is the main indoor club with a bar in the rear, then there's a large outdoor patio with a stage. Bands for the evening were Cakelike, Kelly Deal 6000 and Buck-0-Nine, and with great pleasure I can say I missed every one. The evening consisted of a hot club, lots of people to talk to, beer and a lot of heavy boxes to load in and out. We ended up back at Ken's house to sleep. He shuttled his kids off to Grandma's house that night so there would be more room for us. I was lucky enough to get the bottom bunk in his kids' room. Ugh, I woke up with a bad headache and a case of cottonmouth after drinking about a million \$1 cans of Pearl Beer. Noël came into the room and yelled, "Larry,

you need to get up and take a shower. You're stinking up the kids' room."

It took us about six hours to get out of town, which would become the norm. Before we could hit the road, we had to stop and buy all the things we forgot in LA. The final stop was at a health-food store to stock up on groceries. Darby and Lorraine stocked up on supplies while the rest of us kicked back in the air conditioning. After about 10 minutes, Lorraine rushes back in. "Larry, I just found the perfect girl for you. She has devil horns. Give her a copy of *Genetic*."

I can talk shop all day with zine people. You stick me in front of a cute girl and I turn into Jo Jo the Circus Idiot. Lorraine dragged me to the aisle where the girl was browsing. She had her head shaved excepted for two spots on her head with the hair sprayed into devil horns. I walked up to the girl and said, "Because you have devil horns, I have to give you a copy of my zine. It's about the devil."

I don't think it could have been possible to have said anything more lame. When we drove out of the parking lot, she sat in the patio, totally immersed in the zine, I swear. I told everyone in the car there would be a love letter waiting for me when I got home. I was expecting something along the lines of "Dear Larry, or whoever it was who handed me a zine in Austin: this was the best zine I've ever seen. Let's get married."

Okay, right now, flip to the last couple pages of this issue. There was no letter from a devil-girl offering me her hand in marriage. The only thing I came home to were bills.

After a couple hours on the road to Memphis, I knew it was time to do my specialty. I told Jeff to keep an eye out for a KOA to dump the dumps. I made a rule when we left LA that there would be no number two's in the tank. Were people listening to me? No one ever listens to me.

Kampgrounds of America charged us \$10 to use their facilities. I pulled out the drain hose and got to work, the same way my dad did during those camping trips. He would have been proud to watch me handle the sewage. Lorraine grabbed the video camera and everyone piled out to watch me. Jeez, isn't anything sacred? I connected the hose, released the valves and the tanks poured into the ground while Jeff flushed things out with a hose pouring directly into our plastic toilet. Once emptied, I closed the valves, cleaned the drain hose with the faucet and put the hose back into the hollow bumper.

"Okay, who's ready for me to make them a sandwich?"

"Ew, gross," the den moms said "Go wash your hands."



Although Texas is considered part of the South, I didn't really consider us in the Rebel Territories until we hit Arkansas. As much shit is talked about the South, it was really nice. The scenery was great and the people were a hell of a lot nicer than they are in San Diego. We had two days to get to Memphis, so Jeff drove the day shift and I pulled the night shift until about 3 a.m. when I pulled over to sleep behind a motel in a small roadside town. I climbed up in the bunk behind Jeff and passed out. Around 7 a.m., I woke up to a constant, high-pitched squawk. I rolled over with my eyes burning from exhaustion and tried to go back to sleep, but the squawking continued. "Welcome to our shitty fast food. May I have your order?" Pause for the response that I couldn't hear, "Would you like something to drink with that?"

It was the same three fucking sentences squawked through a fast-food intercom over and over. I tried a pillow over my head. No luck. I peeked out the window and saw at least 20 cars in line to eat at this grease pit. Barely conscious but awake, I jumped out of the bunk and started screaming "I'm gonna kill these fucking hillbillies. Who the fuck eats all this fast food shit at 7 o'clock?" I was about to put on my shoes and kick a hole through the speaker so I could have some peace and quiet, but decided it would be quicker to pull the 'Bago 50 feet up next to the row of semis whose drivers were also trying to catch some shut eye. I was able to get far enough away so the sound was only a whisper. I went back to sleep and woke up after Jeff had driven us far away from the town.

Once we got back on the road, I asked everyone if they had heard the drive-thru box. "No. Was there a bunch of noise or something?" was the consensus.

"What, you couldn't hear that goddamn drive-thru box over and over again?"

"No, but I did hear you say something about how you wanted to kill hillbillies or something," Jeff said.

★★★ Memphis

There was a waffle-log sitting in the pit of my stomach when we pulled up to Shangri-La Records. Waffle House has somehow achieved legendary status among traveling punks and touring bands. What the bands usually forget to mention is how bad the food is. We spotted the famous boxed-letter sign beckoning us to join the Waffle Army. Through the blue haze of the smoke filled restaurant, Darby made her usual pleas for real butter while the waitress blew spit bubbles. Darby got margarine and the rest of us got hard, cold waffles.

If there wasn't a half-pound of hardened batter in my stomach, I probably would have been more excited to see Sun Studios on the way to Shangri-La Records.

Shangri-La is the cool record store every town should have. We browsed the vinyl and zines long enough to be hospitable before asking for a map to a thrift store and Graceland.

Cut-off shorts and a sweaty T-shirt isn't the proper attire to tour Elvis' house, so I shopped appropriately at the thrift store. I scored a pair of beige polyester pants and a half-corduroy, half-cotton cowboy shirt. Now comb in half a can of pomade in a half-ass attempt at a pompadour and I was set. Lorraine is

always dressed for Graceland complete with blue eye-shadow, so she didn't require any effort. Jeff and Noël went for the buttoned-down look. Needless to say, even at Graceland, we looked like a bunch of freaks.

Usually you're in for a big let-down when you come face to face with something that makes up part of our cultural identity. Yes, the Statue of Liberty is really small, and the Grand Canyon can be a boring place to visit. But Graceland is exactly how American comedians have satirized it. There were signs for trailer parks and cheap motels towering over the parking lot filled with RVs driven by ugly, overweight Americans making their pilgrimage to Elvis' grave. And just like the retirees, we climbed out of our motorhome, minus Darby, ready for a heaping dose of the King.

We bought our \$9 tickets and were given a number that would be called when it was our turn. We had to wait for a van that would drive us across the street from the ticket windows, gift shop/tourist traps and the TCB Jet Museum. Here's where it started to get a little strange. When it was our turn to line up, we were handed a "Bones" McCoy type of tape deck-on-a-sling and a pair of headphones. It was then a two-minute van ride across the street where a tour guide greeted us before herding us to the front door. She gave a little speech about the history of the mansion and explained how Lisa Marie basically owns the place and pays occasional surprise visits, subtly hinting that you never know, today could be



All that's missing is a quart of Old Milwaukee

one of those days. "Now put on your headphones and push 'Play.'"

I was in shock. It was so gaudy that it knocked me speechless. We were led around the thick shag rugs, the room with the three TVs and the tawdry wood paneling by a tape deck emitting a deep narrator's voice with occasional observations by Priscilla and soundbites of songs. "This room was Elvis' game room, where he used to race slot cars until he turned it into a shooting range. Push 'Stop' and look around until you're ready to continue."

Listening to some of the commentary while looking at a bunch of goofballs wearing headphones got to be too much at times. People were taking this shit seriously while we were acting like a bunch of clowns posing in front of Elvis' karate jump suit. Noël got a bunch of dirty looks when he screamed out "Disgusting!" when Priscilla told the story about how Elvis once ate meatloaf every day for six months straight. "We finally had to ask the cooks to make something different for the rest of us."

It's become a cliché to say Elvis is the King of White Trash. Basically, the guy was a compulsive shopper that latched on to any hobby and bought every possible accessory until he was bored and moved on to his next diversion.

But I got to admit, it was worth the nine bucks. The only gaudy item they didn't shove on us during the

two-hour tour was a cold quart of Old Milwaukee.

We went from Graceland straight to the club. As we headed into downtown Memphis, we had to take a couple of detours because the streets were blocked off and filled with people. Bands, arts and crafts tents, beer gardens and food booths lined the streets that would have otherwise been jammed with cars. This was making a good day even better. We had five hours to kill before the show started so everyone split up to investigate. Me and Lorraine wondered off in the rain looking for food, music and beer. We ended our adventure to watch a blues that had the crowd dancing.

"Come on, let's dance."

Lorraine said as she dragged me out into the middle of the crowd, forcing me to stammer through this basic swing dance move that she knew. One-two, one-two, twist, throw and twirl. I fucked it all up, but I was having the time of my life. I actually promised her I would try to learn to dance before the end of our trip.

We started setting up in the back of the club, Barristers, after it got dark. The Make-Up, who we had been playing tag with ever since we left San Diego, was headlining the show. The day before I left home, they played a free show around the corner from my house, then they played Tucson while we camped in southern Arizona, and split Austin the night before we got there. We sold zines and danced on chairs while they did their gospel punk thing.

Most of the next day was spent watching Darby unsuccessfully try to log on to the Internet, which was such waste of time. Not that I had anything else to do, or that what she was trying to do wasn't important to her, it's just that everything else stopped until she was finished. Part of the problem is when there are more than three people, no one can agree on what to do, so what usually happened is we were stuck with what Darby wanted to do and tough shit for everyone else.

But for every afternoon wasted, there was usually something to make up for it. The next day I woke up to Jeff asking how much it costs to get in to Dollywood. Dolly Parton's kitschy southern version of Magic Mountain. "\$25 bucks, plus parking!?" Jeff flipped a U-turn and pulled over on the side of the road.

"Where the fuck is Dollywood?" I asked. The first words out of my mouth every day were some variation of "Where are we?" usually followed by, "Man, am I hungover."

I coated myself in sunscreen while Darby started planning a covert break-in. Noël wussed out and didn't want to go. I guess he'd rather sit in a motorhome than ride waterslides. To make sure the 'Bago didn't get towed, Darby wrote a note saying, "Our motorhome broke down and our little boy is inside waiting for us.

Please don't tow our car. We'll be back soon."

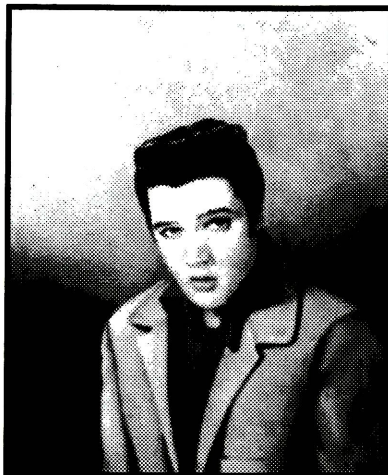
We had a half-mile walk from the highway to the front entrance. A high fence protected the park for the first quarter-mile. The rest was protected by a bushes and a small fence. We found a clearing, hopped the fence, walked over a small bridge, climbed over a waist-high handrail and found ourselves inside an employees-only area of Dollywood. Luckily the area was deserted, so we found a gate and let ourselves in the park and quickly disappeared into a crowd.

Not to dissuade anyone else from breaking into the place, but this is no Disneyland. There were

no adrenaline rides like Magic Mountain or Great America has, and what rides they did have lacked the disgusting charm that Disneyland's rides have. Instead, you have a whole amusement park dedicated to Dolly Parton's rural rags-to-riches story, highlighting her singing and acting career, of course. And, no, there were no roller coasters called the "Double D Loop" or "The Shaky Jugs" or "Knockers' Revenge," although it would have been cool if there were. Instead the buildings were made out of logs and giving you the feeling that you were in the movie "Coal Miner's Daughter" eating churros and frozen bananas instead of "Cinderella."

The best part was the Dolly museum, which was set up to look like a cave. You enter the cavern and get to stare at gold records, cheesy sequined costumes, movie posters and photos of Dolly singing at the Grand Ol' Opry. Believe it or not, they actually had a poster for the movie "Rhinestone," starring Dolly and Sylvester Stallone. I've been told "Rhinestone" was Sly's first attempt at a comedy (I think "Stop or My Mom Will Shoot" was his second). The plot was simple: Dolly had to teach Sly how to be a country singer or she had to sleep with an ex-boyfriend. Yeah, I'm laughing already. Needless to say, Sly now sticks to the action adventures.

Dollywood was only good for a couple hours of entertainment, so it wasn't long before we were back on the road. We got to Nashville just as it was getting dark. Even though we didn't have a planned stop, someone in



Memphis recommended stopping at a local record store to sell a batch of zines. I called information for the number, but when I rang the store, the woman who answered couldn't hear me over the background noise. She screamed, "Are you calling about the bands?" she screamed. "The Make-Up aren't going on until after nine." I was able to explain over the noise that we were a traveling zine store and asked if we could set up for the night. "Sure, whatever," she said.

"Hey, the Make-Up are going to play," I announced. "We can set up and try to sell some zines."

"Yeah, I know," Darby said. God, this was a trying time. First off, Darby asked me to call for directions, knowing full-well there's a show, but doesn't bother to tell anyone. Then, when I took the initiative to set up something, there's no interest. Fuck, I just can't win.

The space for the show was cool. The record store was up front, and the bands played in a large back room joined by a wide hallway. I think we sold approximately \$15 worth of stuff. The show ended in the grand metal tradition of pyrotechnics when I lit off half of my fireworks stash in front of 'Bago. I look out to the fans and scream, "Thank you, Nashville, goodnight!" and just like rockstars, we climbed in our bus and headed toward the next town.

I pulled on to the freeway and set the cruise control. Darby pointed to a spot on the map and said she wanted to stop there for the night, then climbed out of the navigator's chair and went to sleep with everyone else. After burning through Texas, Arkansas and Tennessee, she was adamant about camping in the Appalachians.

I had Born Against to help me stay awake while everyone else dozed. After driving for a couple hours, I knew something was wrong. Where the fuck is the offramp? I should have seen it miles ago. I flicked on the light and tried to read the map without running off the road. Shit. I passed Darby's offramp by 45 miles. I pulled over at a gas station, asked for directions back. Everyone was asleep while I mulled over whether or not to turn back. It's only 2 a.m., I can drive another hour. I backtracked for 20 minutes before I realized it was hopeless. I was too tired to make it.

I pulled over at the first town and parked the 'Bago behind a grocery store. Lorraine, Noël and I climbed out and walked around to stretch. When we walked back to the car, I saw Darby awake and sitting in the driver's seat, looking very pissed. For some reason, I had a flash back to being high school in the vice-principal's office. You know that feeling when you've fucked up, not on necessarily on purpose, but fucked up nonetheless, and no amount of explaining will help.

"Where are we at?" Darby asked. I pulled out the map, pointed out how I missed the spot in the

mountains she wanted to camp at, and hinted that it was a lost cause to go back. Nope she wasn't having it. "Oh, you'd rather sleep behind a grocery store?" Well, yeah, actually I would.

Being the big dork that I am, I bit my lip and started driving into the hills. Darby made up for it by staying awake and navigating. It was the lack of a copilot that had made me miss the her exit in the first place.

We climbed into the Appalachians for an hour or so until we found a turnout where we could park the 'Bago. Lorraine made her usual pleas to keep the screen shut to keep the bugs out while Darby and Jeff climbed up on the roof to sleep outside.



I woke up to the sound of everyone climbing out the door. Jeff drove us to one of those national park camper/tourist information centers complete with \$1 five-minute showers. I had some work to do on the 'Bago, so I got greasy while everyone showered. I climbed underneath and noticed that both front tires were bald. The left one was so bad that the radial was poking out. Great, I'm driving around the mountains last night half dead from exhaustion and all I needed was a front tire to blow out and send us off a 200 foot cliff. I changed the left tire, figuring we could squeeze another 700 miles out of the other one. Since I was already dirty, I thought I might as well empty the septic tank too. Besides, it's been four days and I didn't know when I'd be able to empty it again.

I finished up changing the tire and pulled the bike off the back to do a few jumps while waiting around for everyone to finish showering. I let Noël give the bike a go, while I gathered everyone up to head down to the empty the tank. Jeff said the dump station was about half a mile down the road. "Hey, Noël, I don't feel like loading the bike up yet. Ride it down to the dump station and I'll follow you in the 'Bago." He declined. Fuck it, I'll ride the bike and you guys can follow me. Showing off for the kids, I jumped on the bike and did a little bunnyhop on my way down the hill.

One thing I should point out is when I traded my old car for this bike, it didn't come with brakes. Before giving me the bike, my brother sold the brakes to a neighborhood kid for \$10. I scraped up enough parts to put brakes on the bike, but I never had the chance to install them.

When Jeff said the place was just down at the bottom of the hill, I had no idea how big the hill was, since I was asleep when we drove in. Everything was cool at first. I was cruising along while everyone stared at me from the 'Bago, watching me slowly gain momentum. Okay, where's the bottom of the hill? I was quickly approaching 20 miles an hour and still gaining speed. I



And I lived to tell about it

started to drag my feet on the pavement. I was still gaining. I steered on to the shoulder, which alternates between grass and gravel, trying to dig my heels into to stop. Still gaining speed, I turned back on to the road, pushing my feet into the pavement, but going too fast to stop.

The bike started to get the wobbles so I figured my only chance was to ghost-ride the bike and run it out. The hill kept getting steeper, so I leaned back and launched myself off the bike, pushing off the pedals and handlebars simultaneously with my feet and hands. I hit the ground running with the bike still headed on its downhill death-ride. I took about three more steps when the bike flipped up and bounced straight back at me. Just when I thought I was going to die, I jumped over the bike, but not before one of the pedals caught me on the shin just as my shorts started to slip off my waist. My shorts dropped around my ankles as I tried to run out my momentum without tripping and falling on my face. A couple more steps and I finally came to a stop. I pulled up my shorts before turning around to see everyone

laughing hysterically at me. Sheesh, I almost died and I'm bleeding and made a giant ass of myself - and Lorraine didn't even video tape it.



Bristol, Virginia

I was groggy and out of it when Jeff pulled in to Bristol. Why we stopped, I don't know. I saw everyone through a window walking down the middle of town while I was still trying to wake up. Just as I climbed out of the 'Bago, I saw Jeff, Lorraine, Noël and Darby disappear inside this department store. I made my way up to the window, but the door was locked. Maybe the place was run by an international kidnapping ring and would force the four of them to toil in underground uranium mines. I peered through the window and saw old grocery-store coolers with T-shirts hanging inside them instead of Oscar Meyer lunch meat. There are stacks of old stereo receivers and old clothes, as well as a few aisles of fruits, vegetables and canned foods. A handwritten sign next to the door said "Before you shop at other stores, try us. We're cheaper and really need the business."

I started knocking on the door wondering why someone would let shoppers in then lock the deadbolt behind them. A roly-polly old man let me in but didn't say a word. He locked the door behind me and went back to his chair next to the cash register and started watching two black and white TVs tuned to the same channel.

The store was a combination thrift and grocery store complete with his-and-her toilets in the bathroom in the back of the building where the owner lived. I picked up a couple of T-shirts for 50¢ each, along with a tube of toothpaste, a bunch of bananas and a few 65¢ cans of vegetable soup. Darby started talking to the guy, asking questions about his store. Apparently the guy collects coupons, buys the stuff at amazing discounts, then restocks it on his shelves with a slight mark-up.

After dropping the groceries off, Darby and I set off to explore the town. We followed the sound of bluegrass up the main drag. I could see a painted wall before I could see the band. There was a huge mural proclaiming Bristol as the birth place of country music. The "official" birth date of country is August 1, 1927 when Ralph Peer signed Jimmie Rogers and the Carter Family to Victor Records. The people of Bristol were celebrating the upcoming 69th birthday for an entire

week. That afternoon there was a band playing and retired couples dancing a two-step. Darby and I watched for about 15 minutes, trying to get their moves down, wondering if we should give it a try. For me, that's like listening to someone speak in Arabic then trying to repeat everything they said. Ah, what the hell, we stepped on the parking lot-turned-dance floor and gave it a whirl. All of the locals had at least 25 years on us, and I was easily the worst dancer they've ever seen in their 50+ years on this planet. I stepped on Darby's feet until the song ended and called it quits. They may have been better dancers, but I'm a better skater, so I took off on my board before the locals could laugh at me.

On the way out of town, we spotted a record store and thought we might try to sell some zines. The store was an independently-owned version of the Warehouse and the girl gave us a blank stare when we asked if they carried any zines. Oh well, let's find some new music for the trip. I guess the talk of heavy metal rubbed off on Darby because she picked up a used Quiet Riot CD, against my recommendation for good metal. I scored a cheap copy of Black Sabbath's "Paranoid" and Slayer's "Seasons of the Abyss." To this day, Lorraine cringes when she hears the opening riffs of that Slayer CD.

★★★ New York

Darby called Dishwasher Pete from somewhere in West Virginia and told him we were on the way. She got the directions and we were off. "Hey, Darby, did we ever figure out what we're going to do with the 'Bago in New York? Didn't we plan to leave it in New Jersey then take the train into the city? So I am driving this into the city?" I was answered with silence. Needless to say, when I saw the glow of the city as we drove through Pennsylvania, I got a bit nervous. It wasn't just the fact that I was scared to drive the 'Bago into New York, it was also an excited nervousness, as cheesy as it sounds, about being in New York for the first time.

I had butterflies in my stomach as we pulled up to the toll booth at the Holland Tunnel. The woman attendant looked at me like I was fucking nuts. Who else besides us would be stupid enough to try to drive a motorhome into the city? She actually tried to save me.

"Hey, you can't drive that thing through the tunnel," she said. "It's got propane, and there are no explosive materials allowed in the tunnel."

"No, this doesn't use propane," I lied. "We've got a gas generator. See, it's running now." She

eyeballed me wearily as she accepted the money and waved us through.



"Enter the realm of Satan!" - **SLEAYER**

I had both Jeff and Darby navigating. “Okay, okay, what’s next? What street? Look for the sign!” The whole time I was screaming for the directions, cabs were swerving in and out of traffic, triple-parking, cutting over three lanes, and everyone was honking their horns. I’ve driven in Tijuana plenty of times and it was nothing compared to this.

We pulled up to Pete’s sublet on Ludlow just off of Houston. It was 3 a.m., but it seemed more like 10 p.m. with the number of people hanging out on the street. As soon as we stepped out into the street, a drunk guy asked Darby if we were the people from “Road Rules.”

“Yeah, I’ve got a camera in my button. You’re being filmed right now.”

We exchanged greetings with Dishwasher Pete and his girlfriend Moe, and he took us up to his apartment. I heard rents were high and the places were small, but this was unbelievable. Pete was paying \$500 a month to live in a place smaller than my bedroom. The bathtub was in the kitchen area next to the sink and refrigerator, and the toilet was in a space half the size of a small closet. I felt claustrophobic with only five people inside. No wonder everyone hangs out in the streets.

I asked Pete for suggestions about what to do with the ‘Bago. There was a parking lot a block away, but it was locked at this hour. Darby suggested I drive it to a high-rent area where people like Yoko Ono and Jerry Seinfeld live. No way were we going to find a space to park this thing. While Noël and I were debating what to do, Darby disappeared. Now it was 4 a.m. and me and Noël were sitting inside the ‘Bago, stressing over what to do. If we left it parked in the street all day, it would probably be towed after it accumulates \$400 in fines. I finally said fuck it, I can’t deal with this right now passed out from exhaustion at around 5:30 a.m.

Noël woke me up at 7:30 and both of us started stressing out again. I decided we should try to get the ‘Bago off the street and into a lot. I rode the BMX bike to the lot we checked out the night before and started to haggle with the attendant.

“Hey, how much would it cost to leave a 26 foot motorhome here for a day? Yeah, it’s pretty big. \$25? I’ll be back in an hour.”

When I showed up with the ‘Bago, the attendant had left. There was a new guy working and he was adamant, even downright hostile about me not parking there. “Come on guy, I already had an agreement with the other attendant.” I pleaded. He pointed to all of the delivery trucks covered in graffiti. “You see this? This will happen to you. I am not responsible. They will break into your car and steal.”

Now I had to haggle all over again. I convinced the guy that I wasn’t worried about the motorhome being tagged or broken into and I would pick it up before 5 p.m.

“Okay, you can park it here,” he said. “But you *better* be here before 5.”

Finally, I was free of that damn beast. Noël had split to hang out with friends, Jeff was with Pete and Moe and who knows where the hell Darby was, so Lorraine and I took off to explore the city.

The first place we stopped was Nasty Little Man, the publicists behind all your favorite bands. I somehow convinced them that they needed to give me a copy of New Bomb Turks’ “Scared Straight” before it was to be mailed out. “Okay, but don’t let anyone see you take it,” the publicist warned. I slipped the CD into a loaf of bread next to my file and walked out of there.

After wandering around uptown all afternoon, we had to get back to the ‘Bago before it got hit by the taggers. Lorraine and I got back to the motorhome at 4:30, and the attendant was already yelling at me to get it out of there. “Okay, okay, give me a couple of minutes to walk to it and warm up the motor.” I locked the door and made a quick dinner. In less than five minutes, the attendant was in front of the windshield flapping his arms for us to get the fuck out. “Alright, fat boy, we’re leaving.” I pulled out, hung a left on Houston, a right on Ludlow, and just as if Satan was sitting on my left shoulder guiding the ‘Bago, there were two empty parking spaces right in front of the Pete’s place again. Now if my dark master would only give me the \$1 million and the flock of girls I requested, but for time being, I took the parking spaces.



Naturally, the NYC event was going to be the biggest of the tour. All the zine people would be in the Pink Pony Cafe, an all-ages coffee house, while all the bands we booked back in June would play at Luna Lounge, a bar directly across the street. The zines in attendance were *Crank*, *Beer Frame*, *Yakuza*, *Crime Watch USA*, *Bust*, and more I can’t recall. Things got off to a rocky start because the other zines was pissed with the fact that our booth was up front. I really think it had more to do with the layout of the room, and the fact that we set up first, but everyone knows zine people are a bunch of whiners. The second gripe was the \$10 fee Darby was trying to collect, which in the true spirit of fanzines, I don’t think anyone paid. I didn’t even know about this until later in the evening when I would overhear people bitching. Oh well, somehow I managed to stay away from most the bullshit and fallout that this tour stirred up.

Once the event got underway, it was business as usual for the Kill Zinesters. Lorraine sold T-shirts and zines, Noël hung around to help and talk to people, Darby would be interviewed by the press and talk to people, and I would drink as much as possible.



Larry, Noel, Lorraine and Darby, hanging out on Ludlow Street, New York City

The place was packed and I was kept busy chasing down beer and more zines. My roommate Joe was in town hanging out with San Diego transplant Comdr. Bill Peculiar. After they shoved off, I decided it was time to go meet the people I've traded zines and letters with. I said hi to Dave of *Yakuza*, but I couldn't remember his name at the time, so I walked over to Jeff of *Crank*. I offered to scam him a beer from the Pink Pony, but he said he brought his own and pointed to a stocked ice chest. I liked this guy's style.

"Where's Darby?" he asked after a few minutes of chatting.

"Come on, I'll introduce you."

Things get hazy here. I introduced Jeff to Darby and turned my attention somewhere else for a moment. Jeff began to browse our booth, spotted a copy of *Hollywood Highball* we were distributing and flipped out. He was cradling his microbrew in the crook of his arm and when he leaned down to pick up the zine, his beer spilled on two of the Fantagraphics books on display. Lorraine started yelling at Jeff, and I knew that tone of voice well enough to take two steps back and keep my mouth shut. Jeff apologized and said he would buy any books he ruined. Fair enough, I thought. Then Lorraine started cleaning up, and yelling at Jeff to help as he was cursing the second issue of *Hollywood Highball*.

Jeff's accident was what I would call the "price

of doing business." He was kind enough to offer to pay for them (which is more than what I would have done) and if Lorraine had such a beef, she should have politely taken him up on his offer instead of yelling. But who listens to me? I'm just the drunk who drains the sewage out of the motorhome. As for Jeff's beef with *Hollywood Highball*, I'm staying out of that one. Talk about one big fucking soap opera.

While all the problems that would later be posted on alt.zines were taking place, The Pink Pony was going off across the street. There was a \$2 cover, the door was making cash, the bar was having their best night ever and the people seemed to really enjoy the bands. At least half of our event wasn't filled with a bunch of grumpy people.

When things started to wind down, Darby grabbed me to introduce me to Vaginal Cream Davis, the muscular, six-foot six drag queen from LA that Darby invited to take part in our NYC and Boston events. Vadge (rhymes with badge. It's my phonetic pronouncing of my nickname for Ms. Davis), was sitting at a booth commenting on all the boys when Darby sat me down and introduced us.

"Vadge, this is Larry. He's going to help out with everything" she told Ms. Davis. Without me realizing it, Darby was creating a new position for me. I was going to be Vadge's Peter Grant.

I'm sure the punkers don't know this, but Peter Grant was Led Zeppelin's tour manager. When Led Zeppelin would check into hotels and start throwing the furniture off the 11th floor balcony, Peter Grant would pull out a roll of cash and peel the bills off. One time while paying a hotel manager for the destroyed TVs, the manager mentioned how he always wanted to throw a TV off a balcony. "Here, have one on us," Grant said, handing the guy \$500. The manager immediately went upstairs and chucked a TV off a balcony.

But even more important, Peter was there to protect his boys. At an airport in Texas during one of Led Zep's US tours, two drunken sailors started hassling the band for having long hair. Peter Grant lifted both of them off the ground by their collars and said, "What's your fucking problem, Popeye?"

Being Peter Grant would require a lot of responsibility and I vowed to take the job seriously.



I was actually glad to get out of New York City. Having to deal with the 'Bago was more stress than I could handle. Plus, I was running out of money. Comdr. Bill told me, "Everyday day I wake up, I have to spend \$20 on shit every day just to live here."

As we packed up all of our boxes in front of Dishwasher Pete's sublet, I took charge and got to my first order of business as Peter Grant. Vadge had stayed in Brooklyn that night and it was my responsibility to pick him up on our way to Boston. But as Peter Grant, I said, "Fuck that. I'm sorry, but I'm not driving the 'Bago all over New York. He's gonna have to take a cab. I want to get this beast outta the fucking city."

We packed up and said our goodbyes to Dishwasher Pete, Moe and Jeff (who was going to hang out in NYC for a few more days before flying back to Ventura). Vadge showed up and it was time to drop Darby off at Patty Powers' house so she could fly back home to LA for a family reunion. Darby actually wanted me to drive her to the airport, but there was no way in hell that was going to happen. I'm Peter Grant now. We got to Patty's house, and there's no parking, of course. I was double-parked on the street, anxious to get on the road, and as usual, Darby was taking forever to get her shit together. After 10 minutes, this man came out and told me to move the 'Bago because he's gotta move his car. I was yelling at Darby to hurry up. She was yelling back. Aaarrrgh. Fifteen minutes later, she slammed the door and yells something like, "Fine, fucking leave."

Finally. I started the motor and Lorraine, Noël, Vadge and myself were on the road to Boston. Our Boston show wasn't until the next evening so we had plenty of time to get there. The plan was to stay at Jessica from *Mommy and I Are One* fanzine's place, which most

importantly, had room to park the motorhome. Parking the motorhome in a safe area was my second priority after taking care of Vadge. Jessica gave me directions to get out of New York through Connecticut, into Massachusetts and up to her Cambridge door.

"Is it safe to park the 'Bago on the street?" I asked.

"Yeah, we live in a quiet Irish community where everyone likes to drink."

"Perfect. I'll fit right in."



I've always had this fascination about Boston. I love colonial history and I've always said if I had to live in any other time period, it would be Boston in the late 1700s. After spending five days there in the present, I don't know if I would ever go back. The first bit of trouble started with our directions. The name of our exit from the toll road had been changed. So after paying our toll twice, we figured out where we needed to be. The second problem was that Jessica's directions were a bit off. The final direction was "when the road forks, bear right, then turn left at the donut shop." I swear to my master Satan, everyone in Boston gives directions by donut shops. "You go up about a half-mile, turn right at the Dunkin' Donuts," or "When you see da Dunkin' Donuts, there's da on-ramp." During our stay, I must have asked directions at least eight times, and every time, there was a left or right at a goddamn Dunkin' Donuts involved.

We arrived at Jessica's place at about 10 p.m. She had to leave to pick up her boyfriend Jay, but she knew of a party. The four of us piled into a cab and hit this party about 11 p.m. We arrived at the party not knowing anyone. I walked in and announced, "Jessica sent us."

"Jessica who?" was the response, but everyone was being cool. Someone pointed to a cooler with only a couple of beers left. I cracked one open and we tried to mingle. All the beer was gone by the time I finished mine, so trying to be the polite stranger, I offered to throw in some cash for the next round.

"Hey, man, you can't buy more beer. It's after 11 p.m. Everything is closed." What the fuck? You can't buy beer after 11 p.m.? You can't buy beer on a Sunday, yet the bars are open after 11 p.m. and on Sundays? What kind of fucked up city is this? I've never heard of such absurd laws.

At the same time, New England's attempt at suppressing alcohol created a cottage industry of bootleggers. It's a simple matter of supply and demand. People like myself want beer and the government won't

let us buy it. So people stock their garages with cases and cases of Budweiser, and when it's after 11 p.m. or Sunday and the boozers are dry, they go to a bootlegger's house and pay \$8 for a six pack. If someone would have given me directions to a bootlegger's house, I would have gladly paid \$8 for a six pack of Schaefer or Stroh's.

Needless to say, the party was a downer. I guess I really do need alcohol to have a good time. The only person who seemed to be enjoying him/herself was Vadge. People, mostly men, of course, were flocking to him. I guess Bruce La Bruce was right when he said, "Everybody's a fag, the whole goddamn world is a fag." Jessica finally showed up and we headed back to her place none too soon.



Lorraine's

biggest pastime is thrift shopping. Since we had nothing to do all day, thrift shopping it was. Jay was going to be our navigator, directing us to a place that sold clothes by the pound. We piled in the 'Bago, me at the helm and Jay in the first mate's seat. "Number One, direct me to the store...and make sure we have parking."

"Ay, ay."

I realized something was wrong when he didn't quite know how to get there. He kept asking himself, "Is it up this street or that street? Just go up a few more blocks." Once we found the place, he had no clue as to where to park. I dropped everyone off, cruised around the block and found a huge empty lot next to the thrift store.

Next mistake: this place wasn't a thrift store, it was a vintage clothing store - big difference. A pair of Dickies exactly like the ones I was wearing cost eight dollars. I bought mine for one dollar. The place reeked of hipness, but they sold records and zines and were nice enough to buy a bunch of copies from us.



Ms. Vaginal Cream Davis

On to the next spot. Lorraine saw a church yard sale and pointed me back in the direction of the Lord's house. Ay, ay, Lorraine.

"Jay, help me find parking." I begged. He told me there was a grocery store parking lot on the next block. "Okay, turn here." I began to navigate the 'Bago into the lot, which was surrounded by a chainlink fence, when I hear a loud crunch followed by a scraping sound. Fuck, I'd just raked the car along one of the poles on both sides of the driveway. I tried to maneuver my way in, but I was stuck. There was a car in front of me looking to get out, while traffic was piling up in the street. The 'Bago's fat ass was blocking a lane of traffic and all of these irate Bostonians started screaming. I

was panicking as I pulled forward two feet, then backed up two feet, trying to straighten the fucking car out so we could get out of there. Noël was outside frantically screaming and waving his arms and trying to direct me, which only stressed me out more. While watching Noël flap his arms in the mirror, an old woman walked right in front of me as I pulled forward. Smack. It was only a bump but I did knock her forward a few feet. Luckily she stayed on her feet. Okay, I'd had enough. I charged straight back into the street, pulled up on the curb and burned rubber out of there.

I pulled over the first chance I got to survey the damage. I was checking out the casing of the outlet I just destroyed when I noticed a trickle of water coming out from underneath the 'Bago. I climbed under and saw that the septic tank was leaking. Great. I knew I was gonna catch hell for that one. I didn't say a word to anyone.

I got everyone back inside the 'Bago. I just wanted to get to the club and get this fucking beast off the

road to where the sewage could leak in peace. Jay started giving me shoddy directions towards the club as I began to notice a faint smell that was beginning to fill the 'Bago. Everyone opened up the windows, hoping it would quickly air out. It took another five minutes before the smell engulfed the inside and became unbearable. Everyone up front practically had their head sticking out of a window while Vadge is in the back encased in the stench and choking. Man, I fucked up big time. You know it's bad when you're making a drag queen gag. I can't even describe the smell. Something was very, very rotten inside that tank.

The show that night was at Jacques, a drag-queen bar tucked away on a small L-shaped block. As soon as I parked, everyone jumped out to get away from the gas cloud. Once everyone was out of sight, I climbed under the 'Bago again to survey the damage. It didn't look good. It looked like one of the septic tanks was cracked and still leaking. I had the feeling this was going to come out of my pocket. Fuck it, I thought, I'll act like nothing happened. The panel damage will keep Darby and Noël diverted until I'm back in San Diego.

We settled in at the club and Vadge disappeared to buy a wig. Lorraine, Noël and I took off to check out downtown Boston, all three of us holding hands. Although the city looked nice, everything was closed for the weekend except for a shopping mall. Ugh, I expected more from one of our country's most historic cities. I didn't want shopping malls. I wanted to hang out with Crispus Attucks before he was shot. I wanted Samuel Adams to whip me into a revolutionary frenzy. I wanted Johnny Tremaine to visit from Concord and give us a personal tour of the city. Instead, we saw white-boy Guidos with mullet haircuts and gold chains on the outside of their football jerseys. Sheesh, what a letdown.

The event was billed as "Queens & Zines." We set up in the basement where the punk bands were playing, while upstairs featured the "bigger" local bands with a drag show during the intermissions. Everything was great except for the lack of local zines. A few people showed up with zines, but not enough to bring out a local zine "flavor." Regardless, we still rapped and traded copies with the locals that did show up.

While we were stuck downstairs, Vadge was working the scene upstairs. From what I heard, the local queens were being the worst bitches to Vadge, Jessica and all of the bands. I guess one musician finally threatened to kick all their asses, which calmed the queens down.

I was hoping we would get a better feel for the local scene at a loft party set up after the show. It was more bands and more kegs and it was all free and within walking distance from Jacques. As soon as the show finished, we began loading up. I was anxious to get to the party. With four events under our belts, we already had

our unloading and loading procedures down. I would carry all of the heavy stuff. Lorraine would pack and unpack the boxes and set up the table. Noël helped lug boxes and set up. Darby would disappear to talk to people.

We were following procedure, but Noël switched things around. Tonight he decided he wanted to organize the boxes more, packing certain books here, and the extra zines there, etc. Lorraine said it was pointless. I didn't care. I just wanted to get the hell out of there and get to the party. Before I knew what was going on, Lorraine and Noël exploded. It was a quick buildup, then boom, the two of them are screaming at each other. I stepped in between, trying to calm them down. "Oh, God, who cares about the boxes?" I said. "Let's finish up."

"Lorraine, you just want to go to the party!" Noël screamed. "We've got to organize the boxes right so we can find the stuff when we need it!"

"Who cares about the boxes?" Lorraine yelled back. "They just get messed up anyway!"

After about two minutes of this, I took the flashlight and waved it in both their faces like a high school principal.

"Hey! Hey! Noël, just go over there!" I yelled. "Lorraine, go inside the 'Bago." Now they started laying into me, then dug into each other again with the same lines. Now I'd had it. "Jesus Christ, calm down." I screamed. "I'm the one who wants to go to the party so I can get drunk!" I pushed Lorraine inside the 'Bago and shut the door, finally separating the two. I didn't need this shit, there were two kegs waiting for me.

In the time it took me to walk downstairs and grab more boxes, the two of them had smoothed things out. On to the party. I was walking off when someone from the club grabbed me and said I had to move the 'Bago so the Elevator Drops, the headliners that night, could load up their equipment. No problem, I'd back up a few feet, they'd roll out their cabinets, put them in the van and split. But no, I'm never that lucky. Here is a band playing in their own town and they go out and rent enough fucking equipment to put on a Metallica concert at an arena. So I got to wait around and watch them roll up 30 miles of cables and pack each drum piece, guitar, amp, PA speaker, etc. into an individual case. After waiting around for 45 minutes, I finally said, "Look, let me help you guys load your shit up," and I started rolling stuff to their car. That finally lit a fire under their asses and they started putting their equipment into their U-Haul and split.

It was about time. I hustled the few blocks over to the party and arrived just in time to find Jessica leading Vadge out the door.

"Vadge is tired, so he's going to go back to my

place and go to bed," Jessica said. "But first he has to go back to the motorhome and get his stuff."

What would Peter Grant do in this situation?

Sure, Peter would want to get loaded and try to meet girls just like everyone else, but Jimmy, Bonzo, John and Robert came first. I turned around and walked down three flights of stairs and out onto the street. The street was still crowded with people out on the town on a Saturday. Imagine the sight of a scruffy redhead white boy arm-in-arm with a huge black man dressed in pumps wearing a short wedding dress with a platinum wig. People immediately starting jeering and throwing stuff at us from cars. Fuck that. I kicked into Peter Grant mode and grabbed a cab at a stoplight while dodging shit thrown at our heads. The driver knew where Jacques was and made a couple of turns towards the club. We came up towards Broadway but we couldn't get to the club because the cops had the road blocked with a barricade. The driver said the cops block the street to prevent people from cruising for prostitutes. The cabbie whipped around the block to take a side street, but it was barricaded also.

"Let us out here, we'll walk the rest of the way," I told the cabbie. Vadge and I jumped out and walked down the dark alley past the barricade and the cops manning it. Surprisingly, they didn't say a word about our odd spectacle. As soon as we got around the corner, a guy spotted Vadge and started walking directly towards him. When the guy got within 20 feet of Vadge, he started tugging on his dick, trying really hard to get it up. I was still in Peter Grant mode, so I braced myself, ready to punch the guy's lights out if he grabbed Vadge. He was still pulling on his weenie when he got within five feet of Vadge. I got ready to throw down, but before I could even get my adrenaline worked up, Vadge said something in his sweet voice I couldn't quite hear and the guy walked away. Whew. The last thing I wanted to do was hit someone. The irony was that Vadge could kick my skinny ass up and down the street, and there I was thinking I need to protect the guy.

We got back to the 'Bago and Vadge changed back into his street clothes. We walked back to the barricade and I hailed him a cab, gave the driver directions back to Jessica's place and started walking back to the party.

What a fucking day. I banged up the motorhome, ripped open the septic tank, hit an old woman, broke up a fight between Noël and Lorraine, dodged stuff thrown at my head and nearly socked a pervert. I'm back at the party, trying to unwind while talking to Andy from *Mommy* when he tells me a girl at the party told him I was cute. This day just might end on a positive note.

"But I told her that if she did anything with you, it would wind up in print somewhere for everyone to

read," Andy told me. "So she left."

"The hell with this," I said. "I'm going to bed."



We were actually planning to go back to New York first thing in the morning. I've had enough of my bad luck in Boston. The only problem was that I was still driving around on a bald tire with no spare, so I had to find a place that could change tires on an RV. After a few phone calls, I learned that everything shuts down on Sunday in New England. Sure, it's cool that no one has to work, but now I was stuck here for another day. Noël was hanging out with a friend from NYC who had to get back home, so they decided to take the train. Vadge hooked up with some sugar daddy who picked up his tab to have him picked up in a limo and flown back to New York on a private jet. I told you Bruce La Bruce was right. Lorraine wanted to get back to NYC too but she decided to stick it out with me so I wouldn't have to deal with all this bad luck alone. We ended up walking around Jessica's neighborhood with no where to go and nothing to do. I couldn't even buy beer to kill the boredom and sleep my way Monday. Jessica and Jay had company so we didn't want to bug them, but it finally became too much so we went up to their place and watched "Xanadu" with Oliva Newton-John. Yeah, I was that bored.

But nothing motivates like boredom. I got on the phone first thing in the morning, calling tire shops and campgrounds in Connecticut. There was no way I was going to make the same mistake twice and drive the 'Bago into the city again. The plan was to leave it at a campground, take a train or bus to New York and hang out until the Philadelphia event.

Things were starting to look up. I found a place near Jessica's that could replace the tires in less than hour and I found a campground approximately two hours from New York that had a bus route into New Haven where we could catch a train into Grand Central Station. I celebrated by buying tubing to try to fix the septic tank so we wouldn't have to endure the smell.

Originally I thought I had cracked the septic tank. Instead, the pipe-fitting that connects the sinks to the tank had separated, leaving a two-inch gap between the two. When the 'Bago was moving with any windows open, it created a circular airflow that would suck the smell out of the tank and push it up through the pipe. I covered the gap between the fittings with foam tubing and wrapped an entire roll of black electrical tape around it to seal it up. All the work ended up being a big waste of time. Lorraine and I hadn't even driven 100 feet before the smell started to fill the 'Bago again. The stench would stay with us from Boston until we had the tank fixed at a RV repair shop outside of Minneapolis 16 days later. I could empty the tank, flush it with fresh water and

pour a gallon of the bacteria-killing blue liquid and the smell would still come back to haunt us. Even repairs by a certified mechanic couldn't hold the smell off. Less than a week after it was fixed, the fittings slipped again, allowing the smell back inside.

It was actually a relaxing drive back to New York. I was no longer responsible for Vadge, we could take our time getting back since we didn't have to be in Philadelphia until later that week and I wouldn't have to worry about the motorhome since we were abandoning it. It was also nice not having to travel with a group of people. Little things, such as where to eat or trying to decide how to spend our down-time, could take over an hour with everyone having veto power over the smallest details.

We arrived at the campground just as it started getting dark. I spent all but my last \$20 on the camping space, but I was still in high spirits. All I wanted to do was relax, fix dinner, drink a few beers and go see the Atlantic Ocean for the first time.

I wanted to make my first meeting with the Atlantic a celebration. The general store didn't sell alcohol, so I wouldn't be able to greet the sea with an introduction, followed by a toast. Instead I would light off my Roman candles into the ocean, which I felt was an even better gesture.

Lorraine and I climbed down on the beach, hiding out from any campers who might not appreciate the idea of shooting fireworks out at sea. As with any introduction, I held my hand out into the water for the Atlantic to shake, then fired off my Roman candle salute.



Back to New York

I don't remember if it was my cough or Lorraine that woke me up. All I know is my throat was on fire, I had a hacking cough and it was raining. It was just a matter of time before I got sick on this trip. I was drinking too much, eating bad food and hardly sleeping. My body was telling me to slow down, but I wasn't listening.

We packed a few days worth of clothes, along with about 30 pounds of zines to sell to See Hear. I stuffed everything into my duffel bag, strapped it to my skateboard with a bungee cord, attached a leash to the front trucks to tow it and hit the road. We walked about a half mile to the bus stop that would take us into New Haven. We stood in the rain in front of a donut shop for an hour before Lorraine became impatient. She called the transit department and asked where the hell our bus was. "Oh, we moved the stop about five miles up the road last week." Great, my Boston bad luck had trailed me to Connecticut.

Even with 30 pounds of zines to lug through the rain and an oncoming cold, I didn't mind walking to the stop. Lorraine absolutely refused, quickly pointing out that she hates walking long distances almost as much as beans and bugs. This was getting to be too much.

"We'll hitchhike to the stop," Lorraine said. She made me stand in the street with my thumb out while she asked people in the parking lot if they were going our way. I knew no one was going to stop. One glance at me looking sick and scruffy in my green poncho and they were gonna hit the accelerator. We switched places, Lorraine in the road with her thumb out while I pathetically hit up people in the parking lot for rides. Within a minute, an old Chevy truck pulled up and Lorraine screamed for me to jump in. I turned around to look at the truck and freaked when I saw a huge cross painted on the passenger door and the word "Jesus" painted in three foot letters on the tailgate. I threw my backpack in the back of the truck, careful to hide the pentagram sticker.

"Where do you kids need to go?" the driver asked. He was a blue collar guy in his mid-30s. I made Lorraine sit in the middle, thinking if we had any problems, a girl would diffuse a situation where a guy might be perceived as more of a physical threat. I know it sounds kinda cheesy, but I was trying to be safe. You know how these Christians are.

"We're just trying to get to the bus stop five miles or so up the road" Lorraine said. We're going to train station in New Haven."

"I'm headed that way," he said. "I'll take you there."

We weren't in the car for more than five minutes before he started making small talk, which I knew would eventually lead up to Jesus.

"What are you kids doing this summer? I don't really recommend hitchhiking for women. It can be kinda dangerous."

I let Lorraine do all the talking. "We're college students traveling across the country this summer. We have a motorhome, but we're having engine problems, so we can't drive it."

He was feeling us up, to see if we were either vagabonds or Deadheads. "Do your parents know you're on this trip?"

"Oh yeah."

"Do you go to church? Did you ever study religion in college?"

"Yes," was all I would give him. I didn't want to encourage him.

"Are you Christians and do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, we're both Four Square Baptists," Lorraine said with a very straight face.

I almost choked. What the hell is a Four Square

Baptist? He's gonna know we're liars and throw us out in the middle of nowhere. Besides not knowing anything except the basics when it comes to the Bible, Lorraine is Jewish and I'm half Satanist.

We tried to change the subject. The guy had a guitar tuner in the car, so Lorraine asked him what kind of guitar he played, blah, blah, blah, anything to divert him away from asking about being a Four Square Baptist.

"I've got an Ovation acoustic that I play in the church band," he said. I gave up and kept my mouth shut unless courtesy required a response.

"Oh, I play bass," Lorraine said.

"Really, we're looking for a bass player in our church band."

Oh man, this guy was gonna know we were liars. Luckily we didn't have much further to go. We were on the outskirts of New Haven. He exited highway and he drove us right up to the bus station. We climbed out and I tried to offer him \$5 for gas but he wouldn't take it. "Just go to church," he said. "That's all I ask."

As soon as we stepped on the train, we hugged each other. We were out of the rain and on our way back to New York City. Since the guy was cool enough to take us all the way to the station, Lorraine said we had to promise not to say anything bad about Christians for two weeks. Uh, that one was gonna be tough. I think I lasted three days.

Once we got to New York, the plan was to unload the zines I was lugging around, then head over to Bill Peculiar's place where we would be staying for the next few days. I didn't care what we did, I was just glad to be rid of the damn motorhome.

We both fell asleep on the train, only to be awakened by three drunks screaming, "You get the money, I'll buy the dope." "No," slurred the second guy to the women, "I'll go with you to buy the dope." I looked up and there were two dirtbag biker guys with a weathered women falling over themselves. Both men and Budweisers sticking out of their pockets and an open can in one hand. The women kept slurring, "No, you get the money, I'll buy the dope."

All of the commuters looked like they were gonna shit their pants, nervously looking for the conductor. I thought watching these guys arguing and spilling beer was kinda funny, and since they weren't really bothering anyone, it was a nice distraction. Not only that, but I was a bit jealous that they could get away with drinking on the train while I would have been busted within two seconds.

Bill Peculiar only had one rule when he saw us sitting on his Manhattan stoop: "You can't be here when I'm gone." It might sound inhospitable, but what better way to get a guy who's dying from the flu to get out on

the streets and actually see the city. But before we could sightsee, I had business to take care of.

Our first stop the next morning was the Label That Owes Me \$200. I'll call them Shitty Records. I figured the best way to get my money was to show up at their door and stay until I got my cash.

We found their office in the building directory. We took the elevator up to their floor and rang the buzzer. Nick the Dick answered the door and did a double take when I introduced myself.

Hello, fuckface. I can tell by your fucking accent that you're the guy that's promised me my money over and over after your check bounced twice. You're the guy that said you would have someone return all my calls. You're the piece of shit that lied to me over and over.

I parked myself on the couch, explained why I was in town and that I wanted my money. He said the owner would be around shortly and I could talk to him. The owner eventually did show up, and after telling him about all the fucked up things they've done to me, he promised to have the money for me by 4 p.m. tomorrow. Like the goddamn simp that I am, I believed him. Instead of telling him to fuck off and demanding my money immediately, I walked out of there thinking my money would be there when I returned the next day.

I'm positive the guy knew exactly what he was doing. I arrived at 3:30 so the owner couldn't duck out if I wasn't there at 4 p.m. He didn't show up until 5 p.m., just when I started threatening the two employees. "I wonder what I'm going to smash first. Why don't I take a few of these recording reels. I'm sure they're worth much more than the \$200 you guys owe me." The owner claimed he couldn't give me cash. I'd have to accept another check, this time, drawn from a New Jersey bank. Since it was after 5 p.m., no check cashing place could call to confirm the funds available. I wouldn't be able to cash it until I got to the West Coast, and if they burned me twice, they would have no problem smiling as they burned me three times.

To this day I regret not smashing the office to bits.

I stayed in while Lorraine and Bill went out on our last night in New York. The cold I picked up in Connecticut had gotten worse, so I needed to rest. I made plans to meet Noël in the middle of Grand Central Station at 8 a.m. for a return trip to pick up the 'Bago. Lorraine and our new replacement driver, Jocko, were picking up Darby a rental car at the airport and meeting us in Philly.

My eyes were on fire when I woke up at 7 a.m. I can barely wake up at 7 a.m. West Coast time, so my

sick and tired body was telling me it's 4 a.m. and I'm a goddamn idiot for agreeing to be responsible for doing this.

It was gonna be one serious long day. I took the subway Grand Central Station where I met Noël as planned. We climbed on the train and soon we were rolling into New Haven. Someone directed us to the bus stop where we waited for an hour, wondering if I had enough money to pay the fare. A huge bus, the kind people charter for long trips, eventually showed up and took us out of the city. We were dropped off and told to wait for a smaller bus, the kind that picks people up at airports and drives them to rental car agencies. The small bus dropped off right at the campground even though the scheduled stop was a mile down the ride. Within four hours, we went from subway to train, to bus to a second bus. From there we climbed into the 'Bago to backtrack the entire distance for the drive down to Philly.

★★★ Philadelphia, Flag of Democracy and MOVE

The first thing I realized when I started the 'Bago's engine was I had no idea where we were going. I could find Philadelphia on a map, but after that we were lost. We had plenty of time to get there, so I planned on pulling over after a couple of hours and calling for directions. The drive was smooth for an hour, then we hit New York City traffic. I didn't realize that people flee New York for the weekend like rats from a drowning ship. It was bumper-to-bumper traffic in both directions. We weren't going anywhere.

But I didn't really mind being stuck in traffic. Even with all of the delays, it seemed like we still had plenty of time to get to Philly since it's only 120 miles away from New York. I just sat behind the wheel, humming along to the New Bomb Turks and making plans for the evening. The plans were pretty simple: ditch everyone after setting up and then find the Mutter Museum. I figured I'd have an a couple hours to myself to browse the museum's skulls and human freaks preserved in jars of formaldehyde before anyone missed me. The next item on my mental check list was to track down Flag of Democracy.

I've been an FOD fan ever since I heard "The Family Knows" on a Positive Force compilation back in '86. I quickly found a second FOD song on a the first *Flipside* compilation, but the trail went cold after that. I knew they were still around because Buy Our Records (a New Jersey label that also had releases by Adrenaline OD



Meet Jocko

and Honeymoon Killers) was advertising a new FOD album. At 16 I had three goals in life: getting laid, staying drunk and finding that record.

Before I could muster up the cash to send off for their LP, a friend returning from San Diego gave me a few fliers for upcoming shows. Let's see, RKL with Bloodlake and Cringer, NoMeansNo playing with COC and Reagan Youth. Cool. Maybe I could find a ride. Wait a minute - FOD was playing next month with Pillsbury Hardcore, Christ on Parade, Soulside and Dag Nasty. I will be there.

I lived 120 miles away from San Diego and had no car, no place to stay and no luck. I asked all of my friends who had cars if they could give me a ride to San Diego. Then I started asking people I hardly knew for a ride. Still no luck. I was desperate and starting asking people I didn't know or didn't like for a ride. That's how desperate I was. I was determined to make it to this show.

Just when I was laying out my plans for murder followed by car theft, my friend Ed called and said his mom was driving through El Centro on her way to San Diego. He wanted to know if it was cool to get dropped

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Three out of four people in this picture are in FOD

off at my house to hang out. "Hey, do you think she would drive us to SD and drop us off at a show?"

"Yeah, I think so. And she's coming home the same night, so we can get a ride back too." Occasionally, things do work out for me.

Ed's mom dropped us at Jackie Robinson's YMCA in the heart of Southeast San Diego with simple instructions: "I don't want you boys smoking any pot or drinking any beer." Not if we can help it. We walked in to the cavernous gym, looked around and realized how small both of us were compared to the rest of the punks. We were surrounded in a sea of skinheads and liberty spikes - and everyone was fucked up on something, except me and Ed. And the only reason we weren't was we couldn't get our hands on anything in the one minute it took us to walk from his mom's car to the front entrance.

When the lights went out for the first band, Crabgrass, all of the brawlers moved up front. I didn't know it at the time, but they were a notorious San Diego band whose motto was something like "Crabgrass will kick your ass." To this day, the mention of Crabgrass will make people snap to attention, half-expecting a punch in the nose.

Somehow I survived their set while everyone slammed and/or beat the shit out of each other. Everyone thinned out once FOD began to set up, but I was bouncing up and down, waiting for them to start.

"Ahhh-ah-ahh, ahh-ah-ahh/There's not a cloud in the sky above me/I gotta future, gotta college degree." I watched with my mouth open while Jim screamed and screeched the lines while beating the shit out of his guitar.

They blasted through their set, hardly pausing for a few words between songs. They were the fastest band in the world, well, except for maybe DRI or Adrenaline OD, and I couldn't understand a goddamn word they were saying. I loved every second of it.

After their set, Jim and Dave worked the crowd selling copies of their first LP, "Shatter Your Day," which is still one of my all-time favorite albums. I made inane conversation with Dave as I handed over my six bucks. "Uh, you guys were guys were really great. I've got a copy of that Positive Force comp you're on. I've been looking for this record for a long time. Do you have any shirts?" Blah, blah, blah. Looking back, he was probably thinking "What a dorky kid," but before I could ask any more pointless questions, I looked up and saw Jim get punched in the nose by a short, stocky skinhead. The people working the door rushed the skin out the door before the blood started to flow down his face.

This was a prelude for all the things to come for the rest of the night. I saw so many broken noses, people getting hit from behind, people getting stomped on when they fell in the pit, etc. When Christ on Parade started playing, Noah asked the crowd, "Why is there such a big hole up by the stage? Why don't you come up and take control of this?" No way, man, I'd be killed by gorillas who easily had 100 pounds on me and would take great pleasure in fucking me up.

I found out a couple of years later the violence was typical for San Diego. It continued until the shows stopped around 1990. And it wasn't just the crowd who was getting beat up. Pat from Uniform Choice got knocked out on stage. Moral Crux had their set wrecked at the old Vinyl Communications store. Bobby Steele not only got his ass kicked, but the Undead's equipment was either smashed or stolen by the people who rushed the stage.

I had plenty of time to reminisce about all of this while trying to get to Philly. Traffic was locked up from Connecticut to the Jersey Parkway. What should have taken four hours at the most looked like it was going to take seven or eight hours now. And to make matters worse, we didn't even have directions to the event was in Philly, naturally. When we called the organizer, James, he wasn't quite sure either. "When you get into city, turn left onto the big bridge...." I had a feeling this was going to be Boston all over again.



The Philly event was at Urban Outfitters. I had

never heard of the place before, but in a typical Kill Zine controversy, Urban Outfitters turned out to be a clothing store similar to the Gap. I know what you're thinking, and I was asked the same question: Why would a zine event be held at a department store?

Here's why: Urban Outfitters is dialed in on the youth/hipster culture better than I could have imagined. The company publishes a magazine called *Slant* that not only passes off well as a zine, but is actually better than 80 percent of the zines I get in mail for review. Each issue is on tabloid-sized paper and is designed or illustrated by well-known artists; the list of writers reads like a who's who of the zine world. Al Hoff from *Thrift Score* and John Marr from *Murder Can Be Fun*, Paul Lucas of *Beer Frame*, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

The lights were out and the "CLOSED" sign was up when Noël and I finally made it. Somehow I figured out how to get to the club, a two-story place on South Second Street, for our second event where we met back up with Darby, Lorraine and our newest member, Jocko.

Yeah, yeah, we knew we were late and I didn't feel the need to explain why. Apparently the guy at Urban Outfitters was pissed, claiming that we ditched on purpose because the event was set up at a corporate store. Whatever, man, I've never heard of this place before. I'm more concerned about the fact that the Mutter Museum is closed.

My excitement about Philadelphia was pretty much dead by the time I started unpacking the boxes. First off, the upstairs room where we were holding the event was completely segregated from the rest of the club. Unless someone asked, it would appear as if we never showed up. Secondly, this part of town must be the cruising strip, because there were hundreds of Guidos and extras from Saturday Night Fever trolling up and down the streets.

I was standing around the 'Bago, wondering if it's okay to leave it parked across the street from the club, when a very fat cop started eyeballing me. I pretended not to notice him while he walked a circle around the motorhome. I figured that like dogs, eye contact would be interpreted as either a threat or a challenge. The cop lumbered up to me and asked with a harsh tone in his voice, "What the hell is this doing here?"

"Well, the sign says..."

"Hey, I can read. I could have this thing towed *right now*. What are you thinking? I could arrest you and have this thing towed, you hear me?"

"We were unloading boxes into the club and I was gonna move it right now when you walked up."

"Get it outta here now and I don't want to see you or this thing back over here."

"Okay, I'm outta here."

Welcome to the City of Brotherly Love.



Somehow I knew not to fuck with Philadelphia's cops. Unlike the cops in New York, who at times seemed more like security guards who didn't want to bother with small violations such as drinking in public or flipping them off, I had the feeling this guy would have enjoyed taking me to jail for a parking violation.

The cops in Philly have a notorious history of brutality that made it to the national spotlight during the '70s rule of Frank Rizzo. Rizzo climbed his way up the city's political ladder first as a South Philly beat cop to Police Commissioner and finally to mayor. Once in office, he ran the city in the manner of the big city political machines of the 19th and early 20th Centuries and maintained the status quo with a heavy-handed police force. Whenever there were allegations of police abuse, Rizzo was there to go to bat for his boys and the accusations of abuse never stuck. Regardless, Philly's working class *loved* Frank Rizzo.

One of Rizzo's biggest annoyances was a black resistance group called MOVE. MOVE was founded in the early '70s by a handyman who changed his name to John Africa. The group followed a back-to-nature, anti-technology lifestyle. Members grew dreadlocks, changed their surnames to Africa (one member changed his name to Gerald Ford Africa) and allowed their children to go without clothes, all of which was pretty alarming to Whitey.

On August 8, 1978, police tore down barricades and stormed MOVE's Powelton Street compound. After entering MOVE's headquarters, shots rang out and police opened fire. Police officer James Ramp was killed with a single shot, and three other police and four firemen were wounded. Twelve members of MOVE were arrested with television cameras recording them being beaten by police. Five men and four women were convicted of third-degree murder and seven counts of attempted murder, drawing sentences of 30-100 years in prison. Much of the evidence pointed to Ramp being killed by friendly fire from his fellow officers.

In 1982, MOVE relocated its headquarters to 6221 Osage Avenue. John Africa and the others fortified the walls and windows in case of a second police assault. Following their move, neighbors began to complain to city about unsanitary conditions, including garbage and human/animal waste piling up. But what was really pissing off the neighbors was the huge sound system MOVE set up at their house where they would broadcast political speeches, threats against the government and other verbal harangues at all hours. There was no way the new mayor, Wilson Goode, was going to let that continue.

At 5:35 a.m. on May 13, 1985, police commis-

sioner Gregore Sambor pointed his bullhorn at MOVE's row house and said, "Attention, MOVE. This is America! You have to abide by the laws of the United States." The neighborhood was evacuated and police gave MOVE 15 minutes to come out. Once the 15 minutes passed, police used firehoses to try to flood the house. Shots were then fired, and police began shooting at the house with automatic weapons for over 90 minutes. The SWAT team then blew a hole in the side of the house with C-4 explosives to launch tear gas into the house.

At 5:27 p.m., a police helicopter dropped a bomb, officially referred to as a "percussive device," on the roof of the MOVE "bunker," which quickly ignited the building. Officials allowed the fire to burn out of control, destroying not only the MOVE house, but the entire block. Sixty-one other neighborhood row houses burned down, leaving 250 people homeless. The fire killed six adults inside the MOVE house, including John Africa, and five children. Only Ramona Africa and 13-year-old Birdie Africa escaped. Ramona was shot several times while fleeing the burning house. She was later charged with conspiracy and multiple counts of aggravated assault and was sentenced to seven years in prison.

It's assumed that the only reason there weren't race riots following the MOVE bombing is because Mayor Goode, who ordered the bombing, is black.

One month before we arrived in Philadelphia, Ramona and relatives of John Africa were awarded a total of \$1.5 million. Birdie Africa was paid \$1.7 million in 1991. Residents whose homes were destroyed also received settlements, along with the parents whose children were killed in the fire. The bombing was called "unconscionable" by a commission, guaranteeing the end of Goode's lackluster political career.

Have things gotten much better since then? I didn't want to find out. I retreated to the upstairs, drinking the beer that Darby had smuggled in. The event was pretty much a bust, but it was a nice change to be able just to hang out and talk to people for a couple of hours. I start pestering Jeff from *Hollywood Highball* about FOD. Are they in town? I know the chances are slim, but are they playing tonight? Do they live around here? I want answers, dammit. I even bugged James from Urban Outfitters. "You live here, do you go watch FOD play?"

"Ah, they're okay. They play about once a month. You're from San Diego, what about Drive Like Jehu?"

"Yeah, Jehu, whatever. Let's talk about FOD"

Darby and Lorraine must've thought I was a mental patient trying to squeeze information about FOD out of everyone. I started telling everyone, "Don't say FOD or freebase unless you got some." Darby started giving me that okay-Larry- just-calm-down- I-have-more-

beer-in-my-backpack look after about five minutes of my ranting.

Nothing was going on, so after a couple of hours of hanging out, we decided to call it a night. I ran a few blocks over and picked up the 'Bago and pulled it up to the club. As soon as I stepped out, the same cop waddled up to me about as fast as a fat man can without breaking into a jog. "What did I just tell you five seconds ago?!!!"

"I just pulled up right now."

"Didn't I just tell you right now to move that or go to jail?"

"No, you were talking to someone else. See, their motorhome is driving away."

Now steam was coming out of the cop's ears because I'd kindly pointed out that he was wrong. I spoke as calmly as possible while trying to keep him at least an arm's distance away since I had been drinking. If anything, that would have been his excuse to throw the cuffs on me. "We have about eight boxes we have to take out of the club across the street. It should only take about 10 minutes and then we'll leave. We're sorry for parking here, but we'll only be here for a about 10 minutes." The cop's face was beet-red.

"Ten minutes, or you'll be towed and I'll take you in. You hear me!!?"

☆☆☆ Arlington

James from Urban Outfitters tagged along with us to Washington, DC. He said he was somewhat familiar with the city, so he sat in the navigator's seat while I drove into the capitol. James was a really nice guy, but he gave directions like a blind man. He steered me directly into Georgetown traffic. It took about two hours to go two miles before I could hang a left to get out of there and over the water into Arlington, Virginia. The next stop was at Go Records. The store had a really cool setup. It was on the second story where three bands were playing for free and we set up outside. Dave from *Yakuza* zine beat us to the event again and had his table set up. During the tour, we heard grumbling from a few zine people about our little trip, but Dave basically showed them how easy it was. He told his boss he was taking off for a couple of weeks, loaded up his Dodge minivan with zines and simply drove to every East Coast event except for Boston. And since we were always late, he would end up selling a ton of stuff an hour before we would get there. It was as simple as following our itinerary and showing up.

This was what I would have considered the perfect event, missing only an ice chest of beer. There were plenty of kids there to see the bands, the show was free, everyone was nice, the owner Renee was the coolest,

and a truck showed up with free soda for everyone. Dave and I even threw a football around until 30 other people jumped in on our game. In the confusion, I thought I'd disappear for a few hours to see the city. My first stop was at a Hagen-Daas, where I was served by a polite young man named Henry Garfield and his friend Ian. I told him to keep the change and ran to the Dischord House to watch Minor Threat practice in the basement before I shot back over to Go in the Stern Brothers' school bus for the rest of the night. They didn't even miss me.

We packed up once it got dark and hung around the store until Renee closed up at midnight. We met her at a bar up the street for a couple of beers before Renee and her friend Mark were going to give a tour of our national monuments at 2 a.m. I had exactly \$2, just enough money for exactly one beer without a tip. Unless I started selling a shitload of zines and shirts, things were going to be tough from here on out.

After the bar shut down, we piled in Mark's van for our tour. When I was in 8th grade, I spent a week in DC with 60 other kids from my junior high. Now I was getting a real tour of the city.

In less than two hours, we visited all of our capital's best tourist sites. We laid on our backs at the Canadian Embassy and screamed at its reflective sound dome. We stood on the North Star at the Albert Einstein statue and heard our voices in stereo. We watched people wade in the Reflective Pool (bad idea, our guides told us - it's filled with slime and duck shit.). We ran up the stairs at the Capitol. We woke up the vets holding their 24-hour vigil at the Vietnam Memorial and we chatted around the Lincoln Monument. But my favorite was the Korean War Memorial with its shallow pond filled with change. I fished out at least a couple of bucks that bought me a bagel and orange juice in the morning.

★★★ Baltimore

Even with straight-forward directions from Arlington to Atomic Books in Baltimore, we still somehow got lost and were already running late as usual. By the time we found the store, Dave from *Yakuza* was already set up, as was Steve and Debbie from *Stain* from Philadelphia, Al Hoff from *Thrift Score* along with her husband, and a couple of locals. When I introduced myself to Atomic Books' owner, Scott, he said, "I've heard of your zine before, but I've never seen it. I was expecting a small punk zine. This is better than what I was expecting."

"But you must've known me," I said. "Why else would you have a case of beer on ice waiting for me?"

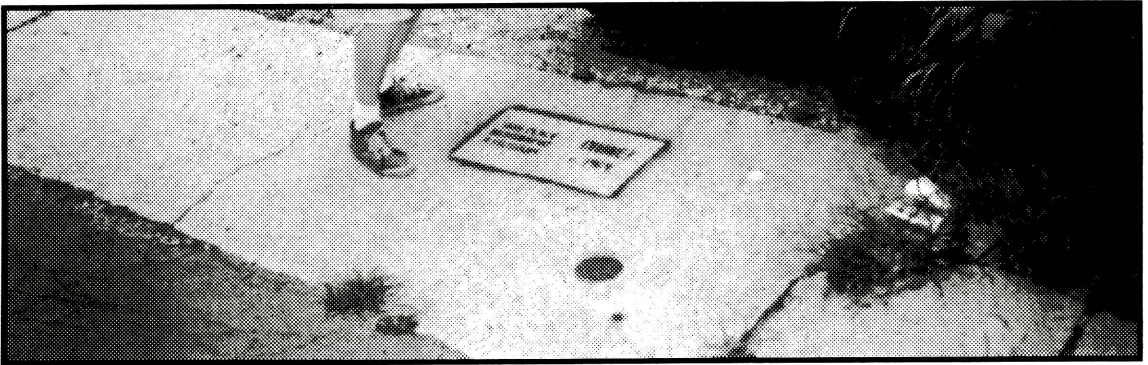
Whether it's traveling to Tijuana, San Francisco, Las Vegas, Austin, Seattle or Baltimore, one of my favorite cultural exchanges is sampling the cheap, regional beers. At Atomic Books this afternoon, the beer we were tasting was National Bohemian, or "Natty Boho." On the flipside, it seemed that Baltimore couldn't get enough of a West Coast favorite, Olde English 800. I saw three OE billboards that said, "Thanks for the support. We'll be back soon." As strange as it sounds, someone told me OE was just recently introduced to Baltimore and the entire city's Eightball supply sold out in a weekend. Instead of boxes of zines and a tub of T-shirts, I should have brought a few cases of OE forties to sell out in front of Atomic Books. I definitely would have made more money.

A city that can drink up a supply of malt liquor definitely makes a statement. And if the area we were staying in was reflective of the rest of the city, Baltimore seemed pretty desolate, especially after it got dark. It was as if the whole town disappeared into the suburbs once the sun went down, leaving only the poor people inside the city limits. All of the liquor stores looked like fortresses and the streets seemed really dark and mean. Even with all of the city's bleakness, Baltimore does have at least one shining personality: John Waters. Once the zine event had slowed down, Scott asked me, "Do you want to see where Divine ate dog shit at the end of 'Pink Flamingos'?" What?!

Scott led us around the corner from his store, and there on the sidewalk, someone had stenciled "This place designated a museum. Divine! c. 1969." Apparently DIY historians have created their own landmarks for famous and infamous sites around Baltimore. The idea was completely brilliant. San Diego could use a group of artists doing the same. "Andrew Cunanan lived here." "The Clash played here." "Mob boss Frank 'Bomp' Bompensiero whacked here." Or, "Boyd Rice worked at this Taco Bell."



**Al Hoff,
Thrift Score**



"Who is that doggy in the window?" Divine c. 1969



After showing up at three events with almost as many zines as us, Dave McGurgen was slowly becoming a Kill Zinester, and we were prepared to take full advantage of him. "Oh, Dave, you have a friend here in Baltimore? Ask your friend Rob if he minds if we park the 'Bago in his neighborhood and use his phone, bathroom and shower?"

"Rob, sorry for keeping you up for three hours after you worked a graveyard shift at Kinkos, but do you and Dave want to go to breakfast with us? If you do, we promise to leave right after we eat, otherwise we might hang around all day and really get on your nerves."

Being a gracious host, Rob took us to a traditional diner and we all fell into our breakfast ruts. Jocko needed coffee, Darby pleaded for real butter and Lorraine ordered her "eggs, loosely scrambled" (quick to send them back with controlled anger in her voice anytime they weren't.) I don't know what the hell "loosely scrambled" means and I sure as hell don't want to know what an angry cook who hates being up at 5 a.m. to work a shit job, uses to loosen them.

Rob broke up our breakfast monotony when he looked the waitress square in the eye and ordered a mysterious dish called scrapple. Once the waitress left, we started in with the questions.

"Excuse me, but what's scrapple?"

"Is scrapple a food or a drink?"

"What's in scrapple?"

"Is it a special omelet or something?"

First we took over his house, then we wouldn't let him go to sleep and now we were bugging him about his choice of breakfast foods. Dave, in defense of his friend, finally said, "Will you guys shut up about scrapple."

"But what is it?" I asked.

"It's pieces of pork mixed with scrapings from

the griddle." All of us responded with "Eww!" Later I find out scrapple is basically a boiled mush of ground pork, liver and flour that's poured into a mold. The ingredients aren't as bad as the California taco shop breakfast favorite chorizo and eggs. Chorizo is basically spiced pork fat and organs, such as lymph nodes and salivary glands, ground up to look like sausage. I stopped eating it years ago after reading the list of ingredients, but I gotta admit, it is pretty tasty.

We were actually excited to see scrapple when the waitress brought our food. It was a bit disappointing to stare at something that looked like a small, gray meatloaf. Rob offered all of us a bite, but none of us were brave enough to try it.



Columbus, Bela and the New Bomb Turks

Whether they liked it or not, Jocko, Darby, Noël and Lorraine would know every single word to the New Bomb Turks' "Scared Straight" LP before we got to the West Coast. I did all my driving to the Turks. I did all my eating to the Turks. The voices in my head started singing me the songs of the New Bomb Turks. So when Dave told me that he set up an unexpected stop in Columbus, I announced that, if by the rare chance the Turks just so happened to be playing that night, I would be leaving to check them out. I also stipulated that if they tried to stop me, there would be a bloodbath comparable to the final scene in "Taxi Driver."

Dave called this guy Bela (pronounced Bay-la, not Bell-a) at Used Kids Records and asked him to help with the set up. Once we got into town, Darby called everyone on her huge mailing list within an hour of Columbus and I called Jen Angel and invited her since *Fuck Tooth*, the only local zine I could name. After

setting up, Dave and I walked up to Used Kids to tell Bela we were in town and thank him for setting everything up on such short notice. I knew it was a longshot, but I hit the flier rack to see about possible shows for the evening, with no luck.

Dave and I approached Bela and invited him to come down as soon as he chance.

"Sure, as soon as I get off work. While you're here, let me buy some zines from you," then he reached down and grabbed a Bud high can and cracked it open. I was really starting to like this guy.

We ended up at a Mexican restaurant afterwards with Bela. He ordered two beers for himself before bothering with the menu. Finally, someone I can really drink with, and I'm ordering a Dr. Pepper because we have to drive to Chicago tonight. Bela looks at all of us, "How come none of you are drinking? You should stay and hang out. I've got a huge three story house all of you can stay at." I started to fidget. "We got a movie theater that sells beer and it only costs \$3. Jim from the New Bomb Turks is coming right now to have dinner with us



Dave McGurgan

then we're going to the movies to get drunk. Chicago isn't that far of a drive." Now I was bouncing in my chair. "Come on Darby, let's hang out and party tonight." It was like begging my mom if I could stay out late or spend the night at a friend's house. Darby started with the "Larry, we gotta go" routine. After my constant pestering, she finally caved in. I pushed my soda away and order a beer.

Jim showed up in no time, and the three of us are pounding down beers. I started pestering him, instead of Darby, asking all sorts of questions about the Turks.

"How come you guys don't release as many seven inch records anymore?"

"Because we never have songs left for an LP."

"What's up with the Rolling Stones rip off at the end of the new record."

"It's a Rolling Stones rip off."

"Did you see the two Hell's Angels at your last San Diego show? They punched a couple people."

"Really? We didn't even know."

"Have you guys caught a lot of shit for being on Epitaph?"

"Yeah, but who cares, we're still the same band."

After dinner we ditched the 'Bago in front of Bela's. I jumped in Jim's car and the two of us headed over to the movie theater. The guy working the door knew Jim, said hi, then asked, "You guys are college students, right?" Seeing the scam right away, I nodded and he only charges us \$2 each to get in. I love it when people flow things without being asked. Like the heshier guy at the 7-11 on 70th St. who would automatically knock a buck off King Cobra forties just because he liked the dreadlocks I had at the time. Or my friend at the record store who sells me used records for the price she bought the records for without expecting anything in return.

I'd heard of theaters and laundromats that sell beer, but couldn't really fathom it. California is so paranoid about minors being in the same room of where alcohol is served, a place like this would never fly. In California, alcohol licenses are controlled by the Alcoholic Beverage Control, and they can tack on any sort of stipulation to your license. If ABC says to sell alcohol, a club has to have a one-armed bartender with a bad limp, then the club better find one or they'll shortly be shut down for violations.

When you think about it, it makes a lot of sense for theaters to sell beer. Most movies these days need beer to make them interesting. There was no way in hell I was gonna make it through "Striptease" without beer. When the lights came on, everyone was drunk out of their minds and hissing and booing. Bela turned around, laughing his head off. "This movie was soooo bad."

Believe It or Not!

Without beer, we would have started a soccer riot.

After the movie, Jocko and I ditched from the non-drinkers (Noël, Lorraine, Darby and Dave) to, well, continue to drink. We went straight from the theater to a country bar to play pool and listen to a bunch of old Patsy Cline, Hank Williams and George Jones songs. Great, lonely songs about alcohol and heartbreak, and I knew every one by heart.

The bartender had to actually kick us out at closing time. Everyone had left while the four of us continued to drink. "Hey, don't you know we're closed?" she yelled. "Finish your beer and get out!"

I can't remember how we got to Bela's house, but it must have been 3 a.m. when we finally showed up, and there was still a small party going on upstairs. Jocko and I faded into the background and watched the show. Bela's ex-girlfriend, Jenny Mae, who he kept referring to as his ex-wife, is there drinking with everyone. They're still friends, but it was hilarious to watch them argue like they were still going out. Apparently the two dated for years. I don't know why they broke up, but Bela has a girlfriend and Jenny is married.

"What did you do tonight?" Bela asked. The conversation started out innocent enough, but quickly turned into a drunk comedy routine where even the jabs were laced with humor.

"(Me and my husband) only had two dollars," Jenny Mae said. "I just got off work and he wanted to buy smokes and I wanted to buy a beer, so we got in an argument. I got pissed, took the two bucks and bought a beer. Then he got mad because I took off with the money, so I came over here because I didn't feel like going home," she said.

Bela: "Go home, you shouldn't fight with your husband."

Jenny: "You can't tell me what do. Besides I'm having fun hanging out."

B: "Well, you should go home and be nice to your husband."

J: "Look at you. Your girlfriend is out of town."

B: "No, look at you, you've gotten fat since we broke up."

J: "I'm not the only one. Look at your gut."

"Hey, do you want to see a picture of my girlfriend?" Bela asked me.

"Uh, sure," I slurred, still drinking a lukewarm can of beer I found unopened on the floor. Bela opened his wallet and showed me a photo, but everything was blurred from my double vision.



"Isn't she cute?" he asked.

"Yeah, man, she's real purty," I slurred, after squinting to try to bring the picture into focus without any luck.

B: "See, everyone thinks she's cute. But you know what, you should go home and not fight with your husband."

J: "Oh, shut up."



After drinking myself into oblivion, instincts took over and told me to find a place to sleep. I found Lorraine's room and she had a whole bed to herself, so I tried to slide in next to her. It's not like we hadn't slept next to each other before.

She started yelling and punching me in the back.

"No, you are not sleeping in here! Get out!"

I don't know what her problem was. We slept together a number of times in the top bunk. We shared a very small futon in New York. I slept next to Busdriver Jeff for a week too. It wasn't like all of us haven't been crammed together while sleeping in the 'Bago where everyone could feel every toss and turn. Regardless, she didn't want to share, so I found a lumpy, rattan couch maybe half the length of my body, curled up like a drunk kitten and passed out.

I could barely move my legs when I woke up. My mouth was glued shut and I was still very drunk. I had slept for maybe five hours, compared to the nine hours I spent drinking the day before. Everyone else was awake, either sitting around or taking showers. I passed on a shower and sat on the porch in the sun with Bela.

"Man, I got really drunk last night," Bela said.

**FRIEDRICH
SULZBECK**
(1781-1841)
A BANDLEADER OF
MUNICH, GERMANY,
FOR YEARS DRANK
40 QUARTS OF BEER A DAY

"I should go running."

Was he nuts?!? He might have drank more than me, but it couldn't have been too much more. He was talking about running while my brain was still swimming in beer and it's already 9:30 in morning. The only thing I could think about was pounding down a gallon of water with four aspirin and going back to sleep.

But Darby had let me out to play the night before, so even as bad as I felt, I knew we had to pack up and leave. We had a full day's drive ahead of us to Chicago, and as much as I was enjoying sitting around at Bela's, it was time to go.

Everyone was out of the shower and standing around looking bored. "Is everyone ready to go?" I asked. I should have known the answer before I closed my mouth.

"No, we're still waiting for Darby. She took off with that Peter Brady-looking kid last night."

I mumbled innocent curses under my breath. "Darby, you had better be getting laid if you're late. I can get shitty drunk and still be on time when necessary and you have no excuse since you don't really drink."

When she did finally show up, Bela ever the gracious host, handed me a bunch of records, including two Rolling Stones records I had been looking for. "Here, these are for you guys. Thanks for stopping in Columbus."

★★★ Chicago

We pulled up to Quimby's Queer Store when expected, meaning we were about an hour late. I immediately fell in love with the store. There were zines, books and comics everywhere, and I wanted them all. The place was packed with local zine people including Jack Geezer from *Underdog*, the nodes from *Lumpen* and Chip Rowe from *Chip's Closet Cleaner*. We got offers of food, a place to stay, free Cubs tickets and a personal tour of *Playboy* headquarters. Owners Steven and Sherri topped everything off by buying a few cases of beer for everyone. I was gonna enjoy my time in Chicago.

We ended up at the *Lumpen* HQ, courtesy of the head node, Edmar. They had plenty of space to park the 'Bago and plenty of distractions along with great stories of wreaking havoc in their town. The first thing Ed showed us are the neighborhood hookers, one of whom started banging on a window of the 'Bago trying to solicit Jocko as he was pulling into the Lumpin driveway. We climbed up a rickety ladder onto their roof and watched the prostitutes chase cars. It was better than TV.

The next day we met up with Dave McGurgen and Bettina from Thrill Jocky for burritos and to plan out the day. In what Jeff from *Hollywood Highball* would

later refer to as the "Kill Zines clusterfuck," eight of us sat around trying to decide how to spend our short time in Chicago. Lorraine was smart and opted to ditch us and hang out with Ed to run errands. Since a baseball game would eat up so much of the day, we out-voted Darby on that one. After an hour, we decided to cram into Dave's van and see the city.

The first thing we did was take Chip up on his offer to see the offices of *Playboy*. The offices are located in a huge glass tower right on Lake Michigan. We rode the elevator up to the fifteenth floor, walked into the lobby, where the receptionist seemed a bit taken back by such a large and lecherous looking group asking to see Chip.

"Who should I say is here?"

"Tell him 'the gang,'" was Darby's quick, but not unexpected sarcastic response.

While waiting for Chip, we took over the lobby, where they proudly displayed *Playboy* and a few other gentleman nudie mags such as *Playmates in Bed* and *College Girls*. I wish Chip worked for *Hustler* instead. They have a much better family of nudie mags. *Playboy's* offspring are filled with airbrushed models, while *Hustler's* bastard children include *Barely Legal*, *Leg Show*, *Honey Buns*, *Hometown Girls* and the skateboard magazine, *Big Brother*. Chip arrived and escorted us into the middle of their huge offices, giving us a detailed history of the magazine.

Hugh Hefner published the first issue in December 1953. He put up his furniture as collateral for a \$600 loan, which he used to buy the famous nude photos of Marilyn Monroe. The photos had been previously published by Life Magazine, but only as the size of a postage stamp.

Those photos, along with the negatives and slides from all the other *Playboy* photo sessions, are kept in a temperature-controlled library with very limited access.

The unknown models are paid a measly \$500 to pose nude and *Playboy* retains all the rights to the photos. *Playmates*, or centerfolds, make \$20,000. *Playmate of the Year* is paid an additional \$100,000 and given a car. The reason they can get away with paying so little is so many women consider the magazine a big stepping stone for their careers as models, singers, actresses, etc. Plus, the publishers are no dummies. If some bucktoothed girl from the Midwest takes it off for \$500 and later becomes the next Cindy Crawford or Winona Rider, *Playboy* will have a goldmine on their hands.

I hoped the office would be filled with naked women and bartenders serving complimentary cocktails, but instead it was just like any other fancy-schmancy office. It basically was a large, open room filled with paintings and sculptures with offices looking down on the

Dreamhaven Books, which is an alternative book store with a decent zine rack. There were plenty of local zine booths and shoppers but not too much for me to do, so I hit the streets to wander aimlessly. Apparently America's crusty punk population had also come to Minneapolis to wander aimlessly. There were crusties on every corner asking me for the \$3 in change I had in my pocket. After walking the gauntlet of crusties to a liquor store to pick up a forty, I was tempted to smash every single one of them in the head with the bottle every time they asked me for what little change I had left.

I assumed they must think I'm rich because I didn't have 37 Avail and Fifteen patches on my ass. If I was going to give money to anyone, it would have been the guy playing banjo in the floppy hat rather than the kids with the leather chain wallets, studded belts and stainless steel piercings that cost more than everything on my body.

This leads to a bigger issue. Why can't these punks be creative enough so they don't have to hit the streets like Moonies asking for donations? Plus, every single one looked alike. You need a gimmick to separate me from my shiny quarters. The banjo-and- floppy hat guy stood out in the sea of greasy spikes and ugly combat boots, and he probably made more than most of us at our jobs that we all hate.



Since we couldn't bowl the night before, we were determined to find an alley after we closed up at Dreamhaven. We challenged a few of the local zinesters (including Mr. Paisley from *Baby Split Bowling News* zine) to 10 frames at an old wooden alley. It was the Kill Zinesters versus Minneapolis and we kicked their asses. Dave was so ready to show the locals what he was made of, he brought out his own bowling ball from the back of his van. And I thought Darby packed a lot of unnecessary stuff. The locals couldn't stand being laughed at in their own town, so they begged for a second game - and won.

Peter from Dreamhaven said we could take over his place and even gave us a small tour of the city the next day, along with directions to the Mall of America, which boasts being the nation's largest shopping mall. I was already against visiting a monument to consumerism, but I acquiesced after I realized that we had been visiting cheesy tourist traps all over the country.

Everyone crammed into Dave's van and we

drove out to the mall. It was bigger and worse than I could have imagined. I pictured the planners telling themselves, "If we build the largest mall in the US, not only can we use that to gain publicity for the mall, but we can also bill it as a tourist attraction." And that's exactly what they did. Besides the size, there were also a bunch of things for the kids, such as a small Lego-land where the kids could build stuff, a really lame roller coaster and a show arena. The idea of a family going to the Mall of America as tourists or for local entertainment is completely unfathomable, but people do it.

The longer we walked around the mall, the more surly I started to feel. Dave would ask me, "Are you okay? You look like something's wrong." Yeah, this whole place is wrong and I can't believe I'm spending an afternoon walking around inside the nation's largest mall.

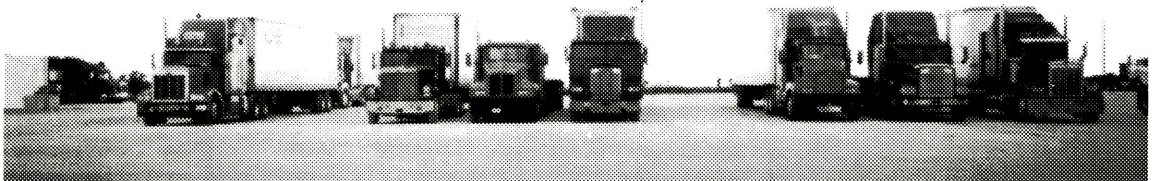
Reluctantly, we did spend some money on food there. While trying to decide what to eat, I saw the only thing that made me smile at the Mall of America: Hulk Hogan's pasta restaurant. The food court seemed almost ashamed of Hulk Hogan's pasta, shoving his booth to back at the food court, making it hardly noticeable. The design was just as flashy as the Hulkster himself, with lots of pictures of him eating large bowls of pasta, wearing Speedos, a bandanna to hide his bald spot and a shredded Hulkamania T-shirt. Just because I was amused didn't mean I wanted to eat something because it had Hulk Hogan's stamp of approval. I opted for Chinese food and secretly hoped his chain would spread across America, even though Hulk is now a bad guy wrestling for the WCW instead of the WWF.

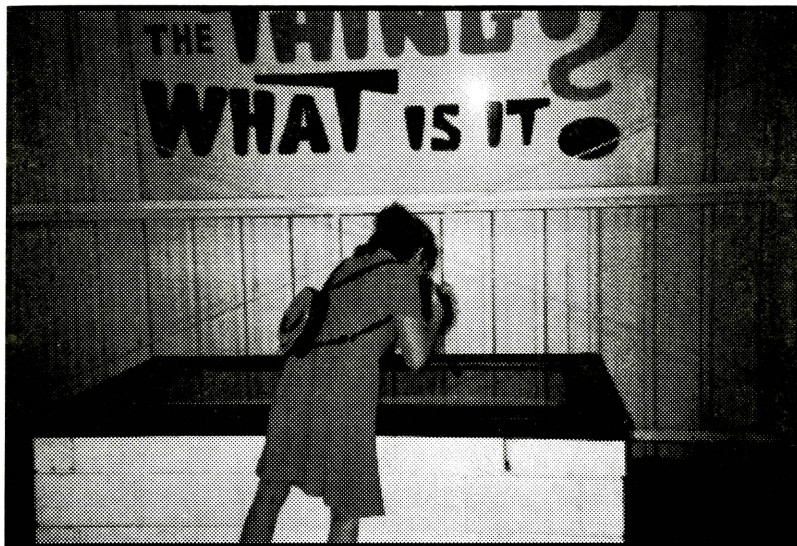
After making our way back into town, we said our goodbyes to Keffo. Dave was going to drive him all the way back to Madison. I'm not sure if Keffo had a good time during his short stay. He was witness to some of our longest delays and our longest night drives. I'm sure Keffo would definitely vouch for us when other zine people accused this tour of being some sort of corporate sponsored vacation. Keffo seemed anxious to leave after witnessing a mere two days of our six week hell.



South Dakota

We had five days to drive the 1,653 miles to our next event in Seattle. Before leaving, we had to fix the septic tank. We made a few calls and found a RV repair





Native American art and clothing. We paid the 75¢ admission and followed the painted footsteps to a large tin building behind the gift store to see *THE THING* for ourselves.

The building was filled with a bizarre collection of, uh, “artifacts,” such as human profiles carved in tree trunks with chainsaws and an imitation Buford Pusser death car. The signs over enthusiastically described the displays, “This is the oldest carved tree trunk in the world. *THE THING* is we can’t prove it.” The sign above the actual *THING* read, “*THE THING* - What is it?”

I’ll tell you what it is - a big disappointment. *THE THING* was a wooden statue entombed

shop in a small, sleepy town approximately 20 miles outside the Twin Cities. We dropped the ‘Bago off with our long list of repairs. The mechanic said it would be a few hours and pointed us in the direction of the town to kill time while he worked.

Jocko, Lorraine, Darby and I wandered around and found a cafe where we could relax and wait. Noël had Dave pick him up on his way back through Minneapolis. Neither of them felt like camping or sight-seeing, so they were going to make a straight run to Seattle. I think Noël and Dave didn’t want to spend any extra nights sleeping in Dave’s van or spend time seeing the country when they could be in the city with luxuries like showers, toilets and couches to sleep on.

The mechanics spent about four hours changing the oil, repairing the fridge which stopped working before we got to NYC, refilling the propane tank and repairing the septic tank. We all had smiles driving southwest towards Mankato with the windows rolled down for the first time in two weeks without the rancid smell of our septic tank gripping our lungs.



After passing through Tucson a few weeks before, I kicked myself for not bringing my copy of *Roadside America*. As soon as I saw the billboards for “*THE THING*” I knew we were going to miss our nation’s greatest tourist traps without that book. Luckily for us, *THE THING* had giant billboards telling us where to go. We pulled over in Cochise, Arizona to investigate. *THE THING* itself was hidden behind large gift shop that sold mostly turquoise jewelry, rattlesnake hat-bands and

in a glass case. They didn’t even try to make it look scary. I later heard Lorraine is selling hidden video footage of the tour for \$3.99.

Tourist traps like *THE THING* are a nearly extinct side-show/carnival slice of Americana that you can only find thanks to this book and we nearly missed everything until we crossed the border into South Dakota.

Jocko, who had been smart enough to remember to bring his 1996 edition of *Roadside America*, pointed out that we weren’t too far from the Corn Palace. Located in the corn crazy city of Mitchell, SD, the Corn Palace is a corn-covered monument the size of a square block.

We wouldn’t suckered out of any money this time, since it was 1 a.m. when we found the Palace. Darby and Lorraine jumped out and ran towards the building while I looked for an alley to take a piss. From behind a dumpster, I heard the two of them shrieking, the kind of shrieking that is real fear, not the kind of girly “eew gross” I was accustomed to.

I ran out to the street only to see Darby and Lorraine shoot back into the ‘Bago. Jocko and I looked at each other, shrugged our shoulders, and moseyed over to see the Corn Palace. The building had a strange texture - hey, it really is made out of husks and corn cobs. But something just wasn’t right. It was almost like the walls were alive. I stepped under a halogen street lamp for closer inspection and heard a loud crunch under my feet. Jesus Christ! I was standing on a sea of cockroaches. I jumped back away from the building. It was completely covered in roaches, millions of roaches, eating the corn building materials. Ugh. I dragged my feet as I walked

back to the 'Bago to scrape all the cockroach guts off my shoes.

Darby and Lorraine were shaking with fear and refused to let us back in the motorhome until we could prove that we didn't have any bugs on us. "Come on now. No roaches hid in my ears. Let us in."

"No, shake out your clothes."

"What the hell are you talking about? Here, is this good enough?" I dropped my shorts and raised my arms in the air. "See, no bugs." Darby and Lorraine let out the same horrific scream. They reluctantly let Jocko and me back inside, but I wasn't sure what they were more afraid of: 100 million giant cockroaches or me with me with my shorts around my ankles.



The next day is when we really started to notice the bikers and their Harley Davidsons all over the road. We'd spotted plenty during our adventures, but now they were everywhere, taking over the rest stops and restaurants. I glanced at the itinerary Darby's friend Lisa Anne drew up for us. "August 2-10 Biker week at Sturgis." Maybe a big, dirty, hairy Hell's Angel will throw Darby over the back of his hog and ride off to the big rally. Regardless, I just hoped that neither me or Jocko would run one over or run any off the road. As a matter of fact, I didn't even want to cut one of them off.

Darby wanted to venture off I-90 to hike through the Badlands, so she pointed to a place on the map and we were off to see the rough landscape. While driving into the park, we hit a grasshopper storm of Biblical proportions. Grasshoppers were everywhere. I kept having to hit the windshield wipers to see through all the bug guts, and that would only smear them and make it worse. Gross. Lorraine was having a fit from all the bugs. When we finally pulled over, Lorraine didn't want to get out of the 'Bago. She started up the generator, turned on the air conditioning and said she was staying put. Darby wanted to go hiking. Jocko thought it would be fun. I figured I had nothing else to do, so why not? I poured a gallon of sunscreen on my face, ears, neck, arms and legs and we were off.

We started off on a marked trail, which disappeared after 30 minutes. We walked to the point of wondering if we should turn around or keep going. We had been walking for at least an hour, and we figured we should have seen the road by then. We walked another mile or so before we climbed a tall hill and finally spotted the road. We would have died if we had gotten lost because people were so used to us being late they would have waited a week before sending out a search party.

We asked a construction guy parked on the side of the road how far we were from the parking lot. "Oh, it's about six miles down the road." The three of us were

dumbfounded as to how we got so far from the 'Bago. "Uh, you don't think we could get a ride that way, that is, if you're going that way."

"Well, I'm not supposed to pick up hitchhikers," the guy said looking us over. We must have looked really pathetic, totally sweaty, slightly sunburned and covered in dirt. "But I guess I can give you a ride up to the visitor center; it's only a couple of miles to the parking lot from there."

We piled into the passenger seat of a huge dump truck. It was so tall it had a side ladder to climb into the cab. Even though this thing was bigger than my house, there wasn't enough room for the three of us. Jocko was on the seat, pushed as far from the door as possible. Darby was on his lap with her legs pulled up, and I was mostly on the floor board, feeling every single bump in the road. When I climbed out of the cab, I was sore and bruised from all the bumps and bounces.

We figured there would be no point in all of us walking back to the 'Bago, so I volunteered to go pick it up and return for Darby and Jocko. My luck hitchhiking had been pretty good, so I stuck out my thumb as I started to walk up the road. It didn't take long before a park ranger picked me up and dropped me off at the motorhome. Lorraine and I returned to pick up the other half of crew and we continued with our journey west.



Jocko pulled out *Roadside America* and said Wall Drug was the next tourist trap along with way. Wall Drug is the quintessential American tourist trap.

It all started in 1936 by offering hot, thirsty travelers a glass of cold water. The drug store opened in 1931 and now it occupies most of downtown Wall, South Dakota and over 1 million people visit every year. Even if we didn't have *Roadside America* with us, we couldn't have missed it. There were billboards every 100 feet, or so it seemed, begging us to stop.

Usually I would be bouncing up and down to visit a place like Wall Drug. I love all the corniness of fiberglass animals that you can sit on for photos, the crass commercialism of bumper stickers advertising the store's own name, and all the hokiness of knickknacks like keychains and those glass baubles that snow when you shake them up.

But not this time. I was completely broke, with the exception of six pennies I'd been carrying since Minneapolis, and I hadn't eaten anything all day. As a matter of fact, I hadn't been eating much of anything the past few days. Now the hunger was really gnawing at me and I was really in a foul mood.

I started to despise all of the people spending their money on the cheesy tourist garbage. Do you really need a hat that says, "My Worst Day of Fishing is Better

Than My Best Day at Work,” or “World’s Greatest Grandpa”?

I found everyone sitting inside one of Wall Drug’s five restaurants. I slid into the booth next to them and ordered water while they ordered lunch.

“You’re not eating anything?” Darby asked.

“I don’t have any money.” I said. “I already owe you \$6 for the movie in Minneapolis.”

“Oh please, Larry. Just get some cash from the ATM.”

“I can’t. I only have about \$80 in the bank, and I’m really gonna need that money when I get home. I’m gonna have a bunch of bills due and I still owe my printer \$450.”

“You could get \$20 if you wanted to,” was the only response she had. I wasn’t in the mood to have to explain in detail my financial status just to prove a point, so I shut my mouth and waited for them to finish. When they got up to leave, I made up some excuse to linger around the restaurant. As soon as they stepped out of sight, I finished Darby’s mashed potatoes and bread crust, then cleaned Lorraine and Jocko’s plates, then slid over to a couple nearby empty booths to finish their leftovers too.

The food didn’t change my mood. I went and sat outside on the sidewalk to watch the bikers while everyone finished their browsing. Man, I really must be hungry because I had a hallucination that Dave and Noël were standing in front of Wall Drug. Didn’t we leave these guys in Minneapolis a couple of days ago? Dave was beaming when he saw me.

“Look at all this jackalope stuff I just bought,” he said. Dave and I both have a thing about jackalopes and I was kinda jealous, but at that moment, I was too sour to comment. By this time, I just wanted to get to the West Coast where I friends in the cities at our last four

stops. I was especially anxious to get to Seattle. I had plans to hang out with my friend Meghan, but most importantly, for the first time during this trip, I would be able to get away from everyone. No responsibilities, no ‘Bago, no boxes to lift and no being told what to do.

I wasn’t in a big hurry to get there, but I didn’t want to fuck around and waste time sitting in a motorhome when I could be somewhere hanging out with friends. I had no problem with acting like a tourist and visiting a few of our national parks such as Yellowstone. But when Darby said she wanted to see Mt. Rushmore when we left Wall Drug, I thought to myself, “Mt. Rushmore?!? How long could we stare at Teddy



Roosevelt’s huge rocky teeth?”

Finding our former presidents’ granite heads wasn’t easy. The road markers weren’t very obvious and the road itself was so narrow that Jocko smashed out the driver’s side mirror when it hit a plastic pole acting as a road divider. Driving on the narrow roads with all the bikers whizzing around was bad enough, but without a mirror, it was almost like driving with your eyes shut. I was certain we were gonna kill someone that day.

When we finally found the mountain, it was

nearly dark. Darby and Jocko mingled with the tourists while I let Lorraine run up my phone card trying to call one of her hippy boyfriends an hour away. It got old pretty quick. Lorraine never got ahold of her hippy and started snapping at Darby. All I remember is Darby's response: "Lorraine, we planned this trip a long time ago and we included camping and sight-seeing." Lorraine got huffy, jumped up in the bunk and yells back, "Fine! I'll just go to sleep!" and slid the curtain closed as quickly as she could without ripping it off the roof (basically, this was the 'Bago equivalent of slamming a door). We'd been cooped up for three days and everyone seemed to be getting on each other's nerves, with the exception of me and Jocko. We got along great. It turned out that Jocko lived in San Diego for a few years and we knew some of the same people. Plus it was nice have a drinking buddy. Darby might have an occasionally beer, but I needed someone who would hang out and soak. Before Jocko joined up, I would drink alone, further reinforcing the idea to the others that I'm an alcoholic. Now at the end of the night, Jocko and I would drink a couple of beers and I'd listen to his stories about meeting the Big Boys in Austin and herdsman in Africa asking him if he knew where to score bull semen.



We found a glass shop in a small town on the South Dakota/Wyoming border that could replace the mirror. We waited an hour for the new mirror to be cut, then jumped in the 'Bago to head off to Yellowstone. Jocko climbed into the driver seat and Darby told him, "Why don't you let Larry drive?" No, Jocko insisted that he drive. He started up the motor, put it into reverse and immediately backed into a the side of a Suburban that was parked directly behind us. I guess he forgot to look in the new mirror we just installed.

The owner came running out screaming when he sees us standing around looking at the dent. After 20 seconds of ranting, he said, "Okay, I just needed to get that out of my system. I'm calm now." He called the police so they could fill out a report for his insurance. The cop asked Jocko a bunch of questions, then sited him for "failure to look while backing." He also told Jocko he had to fill out a questionnaire and mail it back to the state of Wyoming, or he his drivers license would be suspended for one year in the Equality State. He was the only driver to be ticketed during the tour.



I was surprised that Yellowstone had a \$10 cover charge. I didn't even recognize any of the bands on the flier. We paid the fee and drove into the park, hoping we'd get to see Old Faithful without having to wait around for hours. The drive was pleasant enough. Lots

of trees, a couple of lakes and we even saw a couple of buffalo! As we drove further into the park, traffic started getting heavier and heavier and roads became worse and worse. Construction crews had the roads completely tore up, with work crews stopping traffic intermittently to move heavy equipment. What should have taken an hour was now becoming two and a half hours and now our transmission problems are starting to come back. The transmission had this tendency to conk out whenever we put a serious strain on it after driving for a few hours. We could only move at about 5 mph through the hills in Yellowstone. It was one of the few times I felt like a dumb tourist. I had the feeling it was going to be dark by the time we got to the geyser.

We did make it in time to see Old Faithful erupt. Lot's of oohhs and aahhs and applause. Afterwards, we walked on the wooden planks around some of the small hot water springs and pools, just basically enjoying the scenery and the smell of hot sulfur.

Once back on the road, I knew there would be no more tourist traps, no more national parks and no more historic monuments. I was ready to power drive through Montana and get to Seattle. I kept my mouth shut. I knew that if I announced my plans it would be like telling everyone what you wished for after you blow out the candles on your birthday cake. Somehow it would have fucking jinxed it.

We made great time since there was no speed limit in Montana. We were back to the old routine. I would drive until I couldn't keep my eyes open, then I would pull over at the next truck stop or rest area to sleep. Jocko would wake up and get behind the wheel.

I woke up shivering our second day in Montana. It was August and it's colder there then it is in San Diego in the wintertime. I looked out the small window in the bunk and saw that we were in the Rocky Mountains and there were patches of snow everywhere. We eventually climbed high enough to where the ground was completely covered in snow. We pulled over for a snowball fight and I had the biggest grin on my face. I'm from the desert. I've been to the snow before, but I've never actually seen it fall from the sky. In August, it's 125 degrees in my hometown, and there I was trying to bean Darby and Lorraine with snowballs.



Seattle

The day before our Seattle event, we get as close as a hundred miles away from the city and we pulled over into a grocery store parking lot to have a fish fry. Darby knew I was itching to get into town, but she wanted to camp in the woods one last time. To placate me, she bought a case of Budweiser, knowing I wouldn't



WARNING

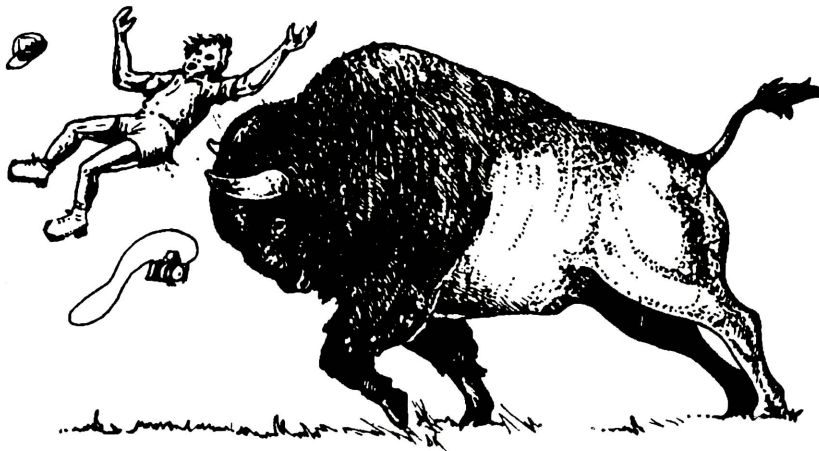


MANY VISITORS HAVE BEEN GORED BY BUFFALO

BUFFALO CAN WEIGH 2000 POUNDS
AND CAN SPRINT AT 30 MPH,
THREE TIMES FASTER THAN YOU CAN RUN

THESE ANIMALS MAY APPEAR TAME BUT ARE
WILD, UNPREDICTABLE, AND DANGEROUS

DO NOT APPROACH BUFFALO



complain about not making it to Seattle if I had beer. We found a nearby campground to sneak into, built a fire and had a little party.

Since we had to be in Seattle by 4 p.m. and it was only a two-hour drive, we reverted back to Darby-time. We sat around while she tried to decide what she wanted to do. The only thing I had to do was drain the septic tank. The repair work from Minnesota hadn't held up and the smell was back. That only took me five minutes, but Darby wanted to work on her zine to counteract all the negative publicity our tour had received. Since she couldn't use the laptop while we were driving because of the bumps, we sat in the 'Bago for well over an hour, waiting for her to give us permission to leave. I simply gave up and started drinking the leftover beers from the night before.

You would think that with five days to get to the event, we could be at Carl Drunko's Vox Populi art gallery an hour early, but we got there just as everyone else was finished setting up. Dan from *10 Things Jesus Wants You to Know* had his booth along with his computer so you could check out his web site. Pistil Books had a bunch of their zine and book inventory for sale outside. Fizz also had a booth, and a bunch of smaller local zines had tables too.

While I was unloading our boxes, I heard a familiar voice, "Hey, Larry, what are you doing?"

"Meghan, we finally get to meet in person. How did you know who I was?"

"They said to look for the guy wearing the Motards pin."

Before we got to New York, I made the very important decision to wear my Motards badge every day. I lost it a couple of times and Lorraine even stole it off my shirt and hid it from me, but I always got it back. No matter how bad things got on this trip, I knew they would never get too bad as long as I was wearing my Motards pin. The others made fun of me, but I didn't let it bother me. They were jealous they didn't have Motards pins of their own.

"Why are you guys so late?" she asked.

"Man, you don't want to know," I said. "We're always late. By the way, can we get some beer? I don't have any money, but if you buy me a forty, I'll pay you back after I sell some zines today." I really know how to make a first impression on a person.

Meghan, like a true friend, obliged. After I got half a forty in me, everything is good. I sold a few zines and T-shirts and tried to meet as many of the local zine people to trade copies while Ean and Denny from

Sicko played a couple of solo sets.

I gotta admit, I did have a hidden reason for wanting to get to Seattle so quickly. I wanted to get away from my traveling companions. It wasn't that I was upset or mad at them for any reason, but I needed a break. I didn't want to deal with our usual roundtable discussions on the smallest things like where to eat. I didn't want to worry about parking for the 'Bago. I didn't want to have to sit around and wait for Darby.

It sounds selfish, but I didn't care what the others did after the event. I was gonna grab my toothbrush and dirty laundry and leave with Meghan. I would join back up with them at the second Seattle event the next night.

But when I started to leave, Darby and Lorraine started in with me. "Where do you think you're going? You still have to put away all the boxes."

"No problem, that'll take five minutes," I said. "Then I'm leaving with Meghan. Then we're off to see Thee Headcoats." As soon as the words came out, I knew I should have kept my big, fat mouth shut. I said it on purpose. I knew they didn't have any plans and if the show wasn't sold out by now, it soon would be.

"WHAT! HOW COME YOU GET TO GO? WE WANT TO GO TOO. YOU CAN'T GO IF WE CAN'T."

"Sorry, the show's sold out. I gotta go." They went from pissy to pissed after that. Things got unreasonable from there.

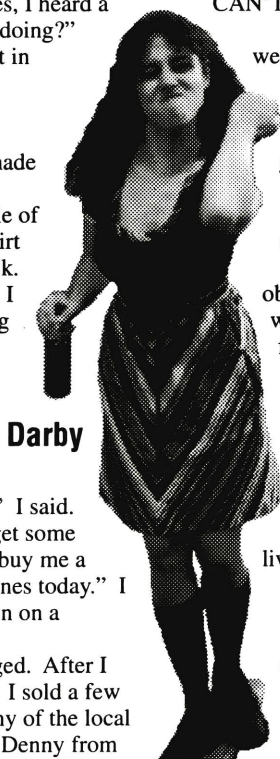
"No, you have to stay here while we go find tickets." They wanted me to stand guard over the boxes instead of simply loading them up, and they didn't want me to leave the gallery until they returned. Meghan finally stepped in.

"Look, I don't have a car," Meghan said with obvious forcefulness. "When my ride gets here, we're leaving. Larry's not staying here waiting for you. If you need him to put stuff away, he needs to do it now because my friend is gonna be here soon."

I loaded up the boxes in record time so I could get the fuck out of there. I sighed from relief when Meghan's friend, Naomi, picked us up. "See what I've had to deal with," I told them. "Man, sometimes it's like living with your parents again."



The Crocodile was packed for Thee Headcoats and the beer lines took forever. I had a little bit of money from zine sales, so I did some quick beer math and determined that the deadly black Mamba, a high octane microbrew, would be the



best beer for my buck. Beer math is pretty simple - every drunk knows the formula, no matter how liquored up they are. It's a simple comparison of quantity, taste and alcohol content. For example, San Diego's premiere club, the Casbah, got rid of their \$1.50 Miller drafts a couple of years ago, the next cheapest beer is Bud bottles for \$2.50. A quick beer math calculation tells me that \$1.50 for a draft is a good bar price, so I'll spend my money here. But \$2.50 for a bottle means I'll be drinking 99¢ quarts of King Cobra at my house before the show. If I do buy beer at the Casbah, I'll buy a 26 oz. of Steinlager for \$4.50. You get two more ounces of a better beer at slightly less than the cost of two Budweisers.

While Meghan was introducing me to all of her friends, I spotted Darby and Lorraine making their way through the crowd. Darby's resourceful; I knew she'd get the two of them in. All that drama was for nothing.

"Hey, Lorraine, over here," I said, waving her over. "Do you want a drink? I'll buy you a drink if it has alcohol in it." I had been bugging Lorraine to get drunk with me the whole trip. She'd occasionally have a mixed drink and she would always take a single sip of beer whenever I offered, followed by this sour face as soon as she swallowed. It got to be a little game after awhile.

I was actually surprised when she said she wanted to drink that night. I bought Lorraine a drink before she could change her mind. Come to the Dark Side, Lorraine. She got good and tipsy from the couple of drinks I bought her, while I spent every single remaining penny I had getting completely trashed before Thee Headcoats went on.

The dance floor was packed before the band started tuning. I was stumbling around, looking to hang out with someone I know. Billy Childish and Company started playing and I moved to the back of the club. I grabbed a chair to stand on so I could watch the band. A few minutes later, a cute, drunk girl pushed her way to the back of the crowd and pulled a chair up next to mine. She climbed up on the chair and started dancing. My alcohol-soaked brain doesn't quite recall how it happened, but as soon as Thee Headcoats kicked into "Young Blood," me and the drunk girl started making out while standing on our chairs. I'm singing along to the song in my head while kissing the girl up and down. Maybe it was the song, with its simple, repetitive lyrics of "I wanna be a young blood," but when the song was finished, we stopped, held hands briefly, and then it was over. It was perfect.



Meghan woke me up the next morning. I couldn't remember how we got there. Later, her friend Naomi told me when she dropped us off, I wouldn't get out of the car. "Uh, Larry, we're here."

"Yeah, take me home." The metaphors are endless.

"No, we're here," Naomi said. "You need to get out." Again, me and my knack for making great first impressions.



Even with the hangover, I knew the next day would be a good day. I didn't have to do any driving or tag along for any lame excursion out of boredom or group peer pressure. I had a short list of things to do and all day to do them. The first item on my list was laundry. Meghan loaned me a bunch of quarters and I loaded up the machines before any of her neighbors could get to them. The second was a shower. I was so dirty I'm surprised Meghan didn't hose me down before letting me in her house. "Man, I really need to take a shower. I think it's been..."

"Larry, shut up. There are certain things I don't need to know."

"God, you can see the streaks of dirt..."

"Larry, shut up and go take a shower."

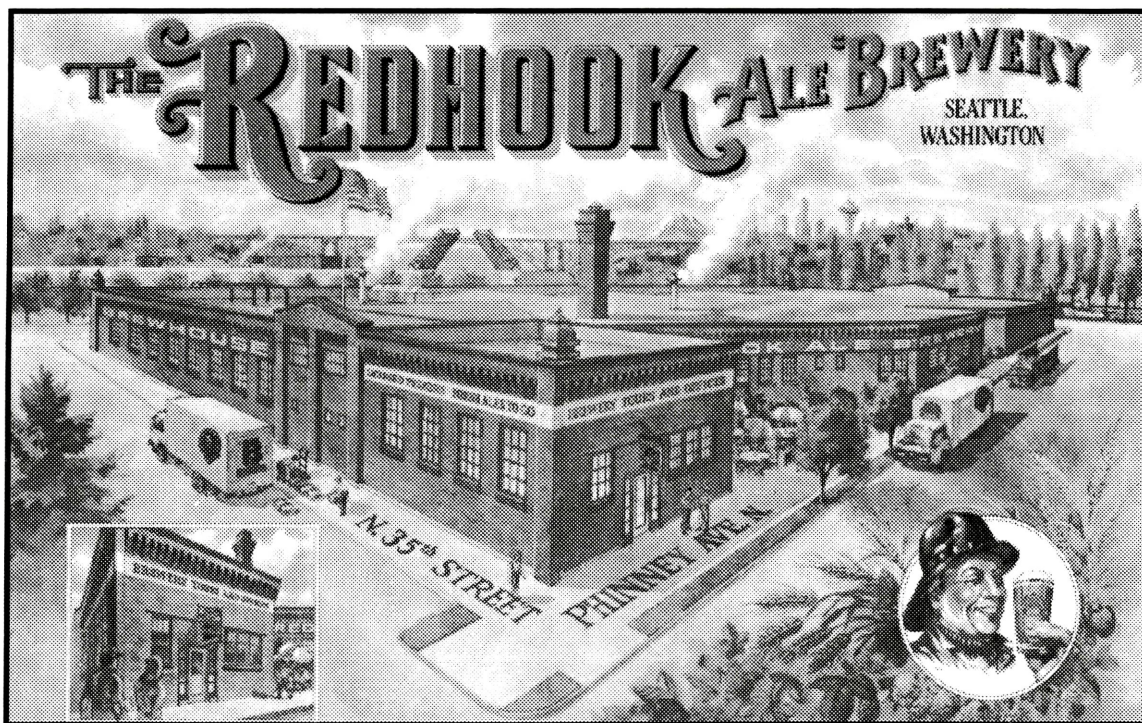
After 35 minutes of scrubbing, I stepped out into the world in clean clothes with a renewed sense of vigor. And as soon as Meghan loaned me \$20, we started our day. First off were bagels, followed by a stop at the Empty Records PO box and we were off. We swung by Fallout Records just so I could buy the Slayer/TSOL split 7", then walked back over to Vox Populi to help Carl Drunko clean up after last night's event. He had pretty much taken care of everything before we got there, so I browsed the books, zines and comics while him and Meghan chatted.

While browsing around, I looked up and saw my friend Devin from San Diego walk in the front door. I was in shock. What was he doing in Seattle? The only reason I could think of was my pet garter snake that he and his roommate Rachel were pet-sitting had died, and he drove all the way from San Diego to Seattle to break the news.

"I can't believe I found you," Devin said when he saw me standing there with my jaw open. "I was driving around looking for you. I took the first exit I saw, hung a right, and just by luck, found this street."

The odds of finding us were unbelievable. First off, Devin knew nothing about Seattle. It was just dumb luck that he found the gallery. Second, he was a day late. He had an old flier that said we would be at Vox Populi on Saturday, when the date was actually Friday. And third, Meghan and I were actually at the gallery when he found it.

No, Mr. Snake was alive and healthy, although Devin said his aquarium was starting to smell pretty bad. Devin was staying a couple hours from Seattle for a



family reunion, so he decided to try to find me and hang out for the day. He borrowed his grandpa's car and followed the signs to Seattle. I just knew today was going to be a good day.

The last item on my to-do list was to visit Bruce Lee's grave. We piled into the car and Meghan navigated. The cemetery was huge, and you could see the path worn in the grass to Bruce and Brandon Lee's graves. A large group was leaving just as we walked up. Both graves were decorated with small tokens and gifts from fans, so I thought we should do the same. I left Bruce my six pennies that I carried all the way from Minneapolis and part of my favorite necklace that had finally rotted off somewhere around New York. The necklace was an old leather string I found at a punk show in Las Vegas five years ago. Everytime it broke, I would re-tie it in a new spot until it was too short to fix. I couldn't seem to throw it away and everytime I dug something out of my pocket and Lorraine saw that rotten piece of string, she would get disgusted and scold me for not throwing it out. Jeez, sorry for having one sentimental thing in my life. I think Bruce would have liked it.

But my biggest show of respect was my karate demonstration. After years of Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan and scores of other movies they used to show on "Kung

Fu Theater," including one of my all time favorites, "The Man With the Flying Guillotine," I've learned all your basic karate styles: Crane, Snake, Tiger, etc. My favorite is the drunken monkey style. I found a small stick on the ground and ask Devin to hold it for me. "Aaaieee!" and snap, the stick broke in two from the swiftness and strength of my right handed chop. I asked Devin to do the same, you know, out of respect. He gracefully broke his stick, and we left in silence as a group of 10 or so other Bruce Lee fans walked towards the graves to pay their respects.

We still had an entire afternoon free and knowing that Devin and I like beer, Meghan casually mentioned that the Red Hook Brewery might still be open to tours. We raced down to the brewery to join the 4 o'clock tour. We paid our \$1 admission and were given our very own personal six-ounce Red Hook glass filled with beer. This is how all punk shows should be. "One dollar and I'll stamp your hand for ins and outs. By the way, here is your complimentary beer." We drained our glasses immediately and our tour guide quickly gave us refills.

The guide went over the history of Red Hook, its ingredients, how it's made, production numbers, gave a tour of the vats and most importantly, explained the

different types and styles of beers brewed, with a couple of samples of each. Every topic was covered with humor and insight. If only school was this interesting.

At the end of the tour, our guide handed out postcards and said if we drop them in the box by the door on the way out, Red Hook would even pick up the postage.

"If I lived here in Seattle, I'd be here every day for lunch, and stop by after work," I said as she handed me the postcards.

"I see the same people here all the time," the guide said. "I hope we see you again too."

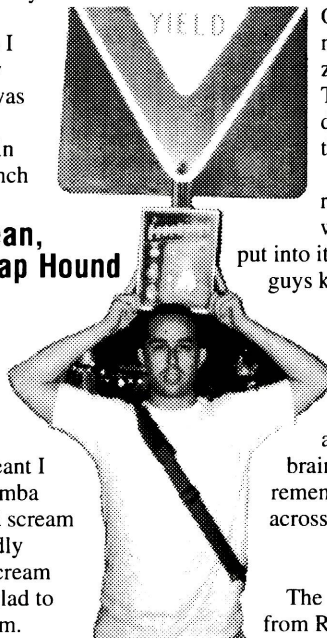


Nothing feels better than being free of any responsibility and drunk at 5 p.m. I never once wondered what my zine compatriots were doing. All I know is that I had to meet them at the Crocodile at 7 p.m. and that they owed me \$10. They hadn't arrived yet when Devin and I rolled over there. I did see a familiar face sitting on the curb in front of the club. "Yo! Jeff. Hey, it's Larry." Jeff Fox from *Hollywood Highball* had somehow scammed a flight up to Seattle and was hanging around all afternoon. We were going to do the last leg of the tour with us. Jocko and the rest showed up soon after and I was back to unloading boxes.

We set up in the wide hallway-type area between the bar and the dance floor. The Groovie Ghoulies, Sicko and Scared of Chaka were on the bill tonight. These were bands that I was actually interested in watching, but bailed on the Groovie Ghoulies to talk to all the people I was surprised to bump into, such as a guy from Gas Huffer, Sticker Guy Pete who was touring with SOC, a Supersucker, comic artist Jim Blanchard, and Lorraine's cousin Ken from San Diego who had heard a bunch of stories about me from my SDSU dorm roommate from back in '89/90. Neither he nor Lorraine knew the other was in town.

Devin had to drive back to his grandpa's house, so I resumed my beer drinking alone. I was out of money, so I would stand next to the bar and scream, "Lorraine, how many zines have I sold?!? I need a deadly black Mamba!" She would hold up five fingers, which meant I earned \$7.50, more than enough for a Mamba plus a tip. "Have I sold any T-shirts?" I'd scream over the music. "Two? Cool! More deadly black Mamba for Larry." Watching me scream for beer all night, I bet they were just as glad to be rid of me as I was to be away from them.

**Sean,
Crap Hound**



★★★★ Portland

I slept right through Dave's call to Meghan's for directions. "Larry! Get up!" Meghan yelled. "Those guys are coming right now to pick you up." My head was throbbing and I don't even remember how we got back to Meghan's house. I had just enough time to pack a box of all of the clothing, toys, records and zines I had collected since Chicago to have shipped to San Diego.

As always, Dave was right on time. And now that he was traveling with Noël, the two of them were a well-oiled piece of Swiss machinery, knocking on Meghan's door within five minutes of our scheduled pick-up. This was probably the only place, with the exception of Austin, I would have liked to have wasted a morning away when I should have been productive. Lucky me, I got to be on time. We hit the road and I was back asleep in 10 minutes, letting my body repair itself of the damage from the Mamba's venom.

I woke up as soon as Dave pulled up in front of Reading Frenzy in Portland. I'm still out of it when Dave and Noël go introduce themselves to the owner, Chloe, and a couple other locals. "Larry, are you hungry? We're going to breakfast around the corner."

We sat down to eat and I finally snapped out it. Hey, I'm in Portland. I had been reading *KOOL Man* since we left Chicago, the exhaustive documentary of Robert Dupree, a fat lump of shit from Oregon who had invaded the zine community, using dubious means to both harass zine editors and try to get laid. Sean Tejaratchi, who publishes *Crap Hound*, documented Dupree's antics and compiled them as *KOOL (King of Oral Love) Man*.

I finally spoke up. "Hey, I've been reading *KOOL Man* for the past couple of weeks. I can't believe how much work Sean put into it. I thought it was really great. Do you guys know Sean?"

"Yeah, that's me." He had been sitting right across from me for the past 20 minutes. I'm sure we had been introduced, but I was so out of it after so many cities, lack of sleep, lack of food, alcohol abuse, Darby abuse, etc. that my brain had slowly turned to mush and I couldn't remember being introduced to the guy sitting across from me, eating pancakes.



The actual event was at a cafe around the corner from Reading Frenzy. Maybe the fog never lifted

from my head because I couldn't function socially. Instead of rubbing elbows with the local zine publishers, I paced back and forth between the cafe and Reading Frenzy over and over, inspecting the cracks in the sidewalk, where I found shredded government documents. I looked around, wondering who was shredding what looked like food stamps or SSI checks, and I spotted a bleak building on the corner with tall walls topped with barbed wire and cameras pointed at the entrance.

I finally came alive when my friend Cahnie showed up with her new baby, Nora. I asked if I could hold her while we talked and caught up on things. I noticed Darby staring with her mouth open. The image of me holding a baby was very disturbing to her. "Larry, that is so wrong. You holding a baby is just not right."

Cahnie and Nora left after a couple of hours, and I was left to pace back and forth between the two buildings, occasionally talking to people but not really participating in the day's event. After a lot of nothing, I heard someone asking around the tables, "Isn't there a guy named Larry with you?" It was this girl who was selling homemade clothing accessories, such as belts made out of seat belts and bottle caps. She had been there the whole time and I never really paid attention until now. "Hi, I'm Larry...wait, KT, what's going on? I can't believe you were there the whole time and I didn't even recognize you." KT is a friend of *GD* contributor Shane. Both moved to Portland from San Diego a few years ago.

"Shane's out of town and was bummed he didn't get to see you, so he asked me to make sure you get pizza and beer." No one had ever set up an ambassador in their city for me. I let KT and two of her friends lead me away without telling anyone. They paid for the pizza and I covered my beer. There was no zinesters or motorhome in sight, and I could finally relax, eat and drink in the sun in Portland.

I walked the block back to the cafe really slow. There was nothing for me to do. I need a change of scenery. For some reason I was disgusted with myself and sick of sleeping inside a motorhome that smelled worse than the sewage treatment plant across the street from my uncle's old house in El Centro.

We had some time between finishing at Reading Frenzy and setting at the Satiricon, a Portland club, for our evening event. We stood around on the street with the locals debating what to do until it got dark. Pinball! Dinner! Pinball and Dinner! How about a movie!

Fuck this. I walked to a pay phone and asked my friend Mark to come pick me up so I could hang out with him and Cahnie. "I'll meet you guys later at the club," I told Darby when Mark arrived. I'll take sipping beer on a porch with old friends over debating on a sidewalk any day.

The area where the club was located was

deserted when Mark dropped me off. The 'Bago was there, I just hoped everyone else was. The club was just as empty as the streets. Everyone was sitting around, looking bored. They didn't even bother to pull out any zines. I killed the boredom with beer, then hit the pay phone outside to make a few free long distance calls with our stealth dialer. While talking on the phone, at least six different crackheads must have cased out the 'Bago looking to steal my bike. I had to yell, "Hey, get the fuck away," every ten minutes. I wasn't so worried about losing the bike, I was worried about the future of the thieves. The bad karma generated from stealing bikes returns with a force at least 10 times greater than the evil sent out.. Bike thieves might scoff at the light penalties now, but they will suffer heavily later. Iggy Scam said it best with "There's a special place in hell for bicycle thieves."

Don't believe me? I lived across the street from Brent my whole life. Brent was a bit of a bully, but he wasn't a one hundred percent evil person, like Hitler or Dr. Octopus, so I expected him to have a bit of hard luck sometime down the road. But when he stole a couple of bikes in junior high, I knew he was gonna have hell to pay.

When he was in high school, he got a job as a bag boy and worked his way up to cashier at 18. An 18-year-old making over \$10 an hour in El Centro is a big deal, and since he still lived with his parents, he thought he was on top of the world. But the bicycle gods had his name on their shit list. It didn't take very long for him to get caught stealing a twelve pack. Management has suspected he was ripping them off for a while and put him under surveillance until they caught him not passing items over the scanner for a friend. He couldn't find a job for three years after that, and what little work he did get didn't pay more than \$5 an hour.

That was over five years ago, and Brent still lives with his parents.



After saving the crackheads from bad karma, I climbed inside the 'Bago and passed out. I woke up sometime later to Darby jumping around being completely annoying. "Let's wake up Larry!" she screamed. "Look, he's drunk and passed out!" Groan. Leave me alone.

Jocko started the motor. "Jocko, I want to listen to Chokebore!"

"No, Slayer," Jocko said in his deep voice.

"No, Chokebore!"

"SLAYER!"

"War Ensemble" kicked in two seconds later and Jocko pulled out of the parking lot. "Propaganda death ensemble/Burial to be/Corpses rotting through the

night/In blood laced misery.” I smiled before I rolled over and passed back out.



It takes a lot of hard work to wake me up in the middle of the night after passing out twice, so you’ll have to use your imagination as to how much noise Darby was making to bring me to full consciousness. I was kinda groggy, wondering who is shaking the ‘Bago and what the hell all these smacking noises were. I slowly came out of my haze to the sounds of smooching and whispers, and feel of the ‘Bago steadily rocking. At first I was in shock. I couldn’t believe Darby would make out with all of us asleep in the ‘Bago. She was being so loud and the motorhome felt like it was bouncing up and down like a pogo stick.

I laid there in silence. I have this rule that I try to never to “cock block” - that is, get in the way of someone getting laid. I know that if roles had been reversed, both Lorraine and Darby would have started yelling, probably ruining any chances of getting laid. No one can ever accuse me of cock blocking, so I just quietly wished for them to hurry up so I could go back to sleep. They eventually slowed to low pant 30 minutes later, which was quiet enough for me to go back to sleep.



Eugene

I was used to waking up with slight hangovers, but my legs were cramped up from sleeping on the short bench, which was usually Noël’s bed. Typical idiot move, the tallest guy passes out on the smallest bed. I got up to stretch and find my two morning necessities: running water to brush my teeth and a place to throw a whiz.

“Where were we?” I asked. Darby mumbled and pointed to a house. I walked in the door and saw two couches of slack-jawed stoners staring straight through me with Marty Feldman eyes.

“Uh, hi, uh, is Chloe here?”

It took a minute for things to register. Finally one of the ‘tards spoke up.

“Who’s Chloe?”

“Chloe from Reading Frenzy? This is her house, right?”

“Who?”

“Whoops, never mind. Sorry, wrong house.”

I walked out to the sidewalk, completely confused. Was I still in Portland, and if so, whose house did I just walk into? I should’ve been getting up from the couch at Mark’s house to eat pancakes instead of standing on a sidewalk, pissed off that Darby told me to go into wrong house when I really needed to brush my teeth and

go to the bathroom.

Darby, Queen of Making Out, asked what I was doing. “Where are we?” I asked again. “You said we could use the bathroom here and I walked in and everyone looked at me like I’m a nut. Where does Chloe live so I can brush my teeth?”

Darby started laughing hysterically at me. It was the laugh that told me I fucked up, did something completely foolish and embarrassed myself without even knowing it.

“Larry, were not at Chloe’s house,” she said between giggles. Darby walked me back into the house and showed me the bathroom. The two of us stood in front of the locked door for nearly 10 minutes. “Darby, what’s going on? Is everyone here retarded? And how many people live here?”

Her eyes told me I should kinda shut up. “I think 10 people live here. I think there’s a couple of dogs too.” Great, one bathroom for 10 slow-moving dimwits and me - hungover and feeling surly. I got tired of standing in front of the bathroom door, so I moved downstairs. No sooner was I on the bottom step when the door opened up and someone bolted in. Maybe this person wouldn’t be long.

I stood in front of that door for another 10 minutes. Darby really knows how to pick her boyfriends. I was in a house of happy retards who took great pleasure in keeping me from brushing my teeth and taking a leak. I walked downstairs again, the same thing happened; I hit the bottom step, the door swung open and someone ran in.

That’s it! I walked straight into their backyard and pissed all over the side of their house. That should teach them. They’re lucky I didn’t piss on their couch, floor, heads, laundry hampers, etc.

After writing my name in urine on the side of their house, I told Jocko, “Start the motor. Let’s get the fuck out of here,” and under my breath, “Why do I put up with this?” I don’t ask for much, yet I feel like I’m continually being taken advantage of. I could feel the footprints on my back from everyone using me for a doormat. See what happens when you’re nice? I felt like an even bigger heel because I didn’t hadn’t told everyone to fuck off a month ago.

I hate it when there’s conflict, tension or hostilities in such close quarters, but look at what happens. I bit my tongue to preserve the calm atmosphere and everyone viewed it as passiveness. When I missed the off-ramp to camp in the Appalachians, I should have told everyone to fuck off, that I can’t read a map and drive at the same time. When I busted my ass to have the repairs done in Boston and everyone took off except Lorraine, I should have just left for New York with them and not worried about it. When they bitched because I couldn’t get them tickets to see a show that I

had no idea was even happening, I should have told them to kiss my ass, that it wasn't my problem. It's too late now, but it's not going to happen again.

Jeff and Jocko were just as happy to get away from the 'Tard House. Jocko later told me that when they pulled up to the house, Darby and Lorraine jumped out of the 'Bago and ran inside, leaving him and Jeff alone in the 'Bago. Jocko threw up his arms and said, "What the fuck are we supposed to do?" They had no idea where we were, what the plan was, or who's house we were at. Thank God I was unconsciousness. He and Jeff climbed up in the bunk and went to sleep.

We made two stops before we made it to Green Noise Records in Eugene, the first for gas, the second for directions. Oregon, like New Jersey, has some wacky law that makes it illegal to pump your own gas. The pump jockey at the AM/PM asked us if we were on tour. Duh.

"Man, you guys missed Phish by about three days," he said.

"Kid, don't make me light you on fire, okay?"
Grrr.

We pulled over just north of Eugene to call Green Noise for directions to our afternoon event. The owner, Ryder, is a swell guy, but he, like nearly everyone else, couldn't give us exact directions to his store. Aaargh. "Please, is there anyone around who would know," I begged.

"I get around by bike and I really don't know," he said. "Just come into town and when you see this road, turn left," he said. There was a lack of confidence in his voice that told me we were gonna have problems finding his store. I was so used to people not knowing where they were, I let it go. His vague directions actually worked. We pulled up in front of the store and I noticed there were 10 hippies with their dogs on hemp leashes standing on every corner.

I think maybe five people stopped in throughout the course of the day to check out our tables. The beauty of it was that I don't think any of us cared. But no people also meant no money, and I was already broke, so things couldn't get any worse.

After a couple of hours of browsing records and chatting with Ryder, Jeff and I took off to get away from everyone for a while, check out the town and find food. We found a place to sit and eat where we could talk without anyone else around.

"Uh, Jeff, where did we stay last night?" I asked

"Some lame friend of Darby's," Jeff said
"Hey, uh, when we were sleeping, did you hear anything."

"Oh, man, Darby was *soooo* loud. She woke both me and Jocko up and we just laid there looking at each other."

"Whoa, I'm glad I wasn't the only one who woke up, otherwise no one would have believed me," I said. "Can you imagine if me, you or Jocko had done the same thing? Man, Lorraine and Darby would have thrown a fit. Can you imagine about to get busy and have them start screaming, 'Shut up! Shut up!?' I wouldn't be surprised if they would do something like that to deliberately keep one of us from getting laid."



After Ryder closed the shop, all of us had dinner together before Dave, Noël and Lorraine left for San Francisco, eight hours away. The rest of us headed over to Ryder's to clean up before going out. I called a couple of friends from high school that were going to school in Eugene and told them to meet us at a bar where William Hooker was performing. In typical tour fashion, we were all late and missed him and my friends. Shows end early in Eugene so the stoners aren't away from their bongos for too long.

We didn't have to pay a cover, so we sat around in the bar and drank. Jocko and I were chatting it up with a few locals who were nice enough to ask if we wanted to high. Jocko took him up on his offer and left for a small house party. He said the conversation the whole night was about camping. Everyone in Eugene loves to camp out in the woods. Jocko said one guy starts reminiscing about how they were camping a couple of weeks ago, and had an awesome drum circle going when this other camper came along and told them to shut the fuck up. They didn't let his negative vibes break the circle. The guy came back and shot the leader of the drum circle. While listening to the story, Jocko said he burst out laughing, just like I did when he repeated the story. Everyone at the party gave him negative vibes until he split back to Ryder's.

While Jocko was mocking hippies, I turned my attention to this girl I had noticed staring at me. She was cute, intelligent and laughed at everything I said. After I ran out of money, I stood up and told her, "It's time for me to go. Later," and walked back to the 'Bago so I could play the Flag of Democracy CD Ryder gave us and pass out.

The next day, Jeff was nice enough to point out what was obvious to everyone but me. "Larry, that girl was eating out of your hand. Didn't you notice how she was laughing at everything you said?"

"Uh, not really. I was drunk," I said. "Next time get my attention by clobbering me in the head with a beer bottle." He agreed to my request, but later, when this scene is repeated, he doesn't follow my instructions.



The clock was ticking on our rental contract, so



Noel, Darby, Dave, Larry, Lorraine, Jocko and Jeff in Eugene

I was hoping we would try to make it to San Francisco as quickly as possible. I was out of money, but I had that check from the rip off New York record label for \$200. But instead of rushing to return the 'Bago, we cruised south from Eugene down the I-5 planning one last night of camping.

It was already dark when we crossed into California. I was driving on autopilot and everyone else was lounging in the back when I noticed something bright a couple of miles up the highway.

"Is that a fire?" I could see small patches of flame climbing the side of the hill and small fires on the highway. I pulled over about 100 yards from the flames, grabbed our fire extinguisher and ran up to see what was going on. It wasn't a pleasant sight. In the middle of the highway, there was a crushed car with a woman trapped in the front passenger side. Her head was drenched in blood and she was screaming in pain. There was a highway patrolman already there trying to pry open her door with a crowbar, but the car was crushed and it was no use. The impact was so hard, it ripped the engine block completely from the frame and was lying 100 feet away in flames. If there was anyone else in the car besides the woman, that person was dead. The damage to the car, especially the driver's side, was too great. The front seat was completely wrapped around the steering wheel. There was no way anyone could have survived.

I was staring at the woman in shock when the 18-wheeler the car had collided head on with started to explode, setting the mountain on fire. As the big rig was slowly going up in flames, the gas tank and tires were starting to blow up from the heat. The first tire landed maybe 150 feet from me. "There's nothing I can do here.

I think I'll go back to the 'Bago," I thought. I didn't want to be hit with any flaming tires or shrapnel.

It took approximately 30 minutes for the fire engines and paramedics to arrive and rip open the door with the Jaws of Life, freeing the woman. It would be another four hours before the fires were extinguished and the wreckage cleared from the road so traffic could move again. Traffic must have been backed up for at least five miles. We pulled over at the first campground we found and went to sleep without saying much.



The campground we stopped at was approximately 20 miles north of Lake Shasta. The manager was wise to our pull-in-late-and-leave-without-paying scam, so he started hanging around the 'Bago as soon as he saw signs of life. His ace was the bathroom key, so we paid a discounted rate so we could empty the tank and use his toilet.

Jeff didn't need the key to the bathroom. Before anyone could even offer it to him, he quickly replied, "I shit in the woods." He was definitely amused with himself.

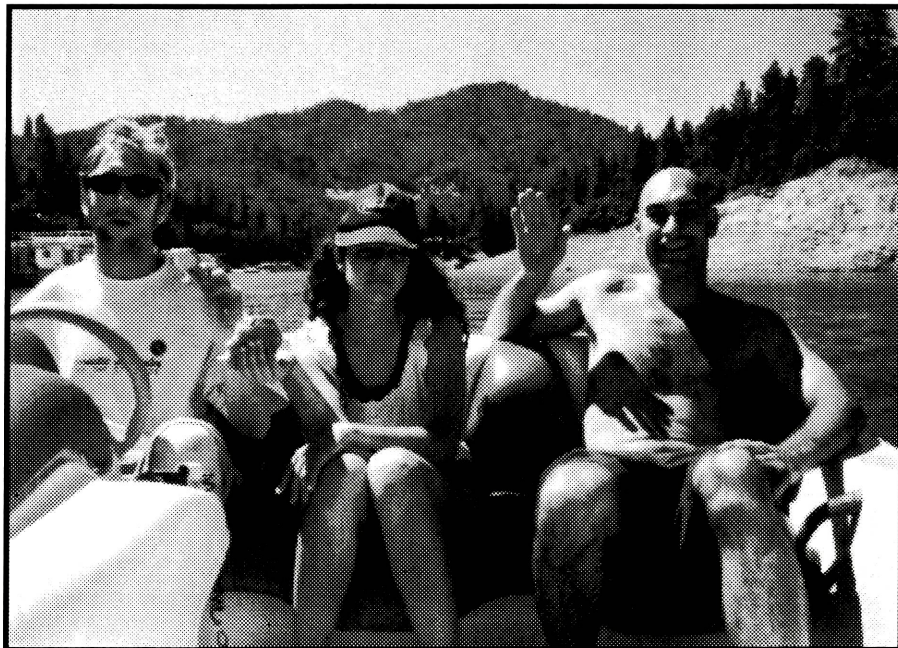
It was over ping pong and Gatorade in 100 degree heat at the campground when the plan was hatched to go swimming in Lake Shasta. We found a boat rental place, picked up a little Sea Doo boat (a hideous name for a hideous boat) and a knee board with a tow rope.

Not only did my dad teach me how to empty septic tanks, but he also taught me how to pilot small fishing boats. I volunteered to drive and motored us past the house boats and out on the open lake. Darby got to go first. I got a devilish grin thinking of dragging Darby all over the lake. Heh heh heh. She jumped into the water and I threw the rope out to her.

"Are you ready?" I yelled out.

"Wait...okay...no...okay, go," I gunned the motor and Darby jerked forward about a foot before she lost the rope. The inboard motor immediately sucked up about 10 feet of rope, wrapping it around the drive shaft before it killed the engine. The motor would start, but when I pushed on the throttle, the boat wouldn't move.

"Ya know, I'm really getting tired of all these little fuck-ups," I said after shutting the motor off.



Lake Shasta



Jeff was the DIY mechanic of the group. He jumped in the water, swam underneath the boat and tried to unwind the rope without any luck. The inboard motors on these little Sea Doo boats work by sucking up water and spitting it out the back instead of having a propeller. The motor should've had some kind of guard to prevent these sorts of disasters, but obviously this one didn't. We all agreed this boat was the sea equivalent of a Dodge Neon, sure, it'll get you around, but don't expect any amenities or safety features of any kind.

I figured that me and Jocko would use the remaining tow rope to pull the Sea Doo back into port when Darby realized she had her Swiss army knife. Jeff reluctantly volunteered to swim under the boat and cut away the rope. He nearly drowned himself hanging on to the back of the boat, treading water while slicing away at the rope. Every time someone moved around in the boat or another boat roared by, the Sea Doo would bob up and down, slamming down on his head. He finally realized, that he should A) put on a life preserver, B) tie the knife to his wrist so it won't sink to the bottom of the lake in case it slipped out of his hand, and C) have me and Jocko sit in the front of the boat to elevate it a few more inches above his head.

After 30 minutes of cutting, we were back in business. I tied the long end of the rope to the back of the boat. I'd be damned if we didn't get to use the wake board. Darby got in the water and readied herself; I gunned the engine again. The rope jerked out of her hand again and the little motor immediately sucked up nearly the entire length before I could shut off the engine.

"This shit is really starting to get old."

Jeff sighed at my outburst, slowly put on a life preserver, dug out the knife out of Darby's bag and jumped back in the water.



By the time Jeff cut away the last strand of rope, our two-hour rental was up. We were now even more determined to use the boat. We threw the wake board and what was left of the rope in the Sea Doo and hit the lake full throttle. We'd return the boat when we're done with it.

Not only has my Irish heritage given me a penchant for alcohol, but I can also burst into flame when standing in direct summer sunlight for more than 15 minutes. My skin only has two shades: pale white or fire engine red. There's no middle ground and I get very cranky when I'm covered in blisters from being out in the sun all day. I prepared for this adventure by covering any

exposed body parts with industrial strength sun screen. When I jumped in the water, I still had my shirt on (Ain't nothing worse than trying to sleep with third degree burns on your back.) That meant I was still wearing my Motards pin. I didn't even think about the pin when I started doing cannonballs and flips into the lake from the bow of the boat. I was hauling myself back into the boat to do another jump when the pin popped off. I watched it in slow motion, flying off my shirt and, with a small "plunk," it hit the water and started to sink. I dove in trying to swim after it, but it was no use. It was gone. After everything that pin went through, I thought I'd have it forever.



Before turning the boat in, Darby wanted to drive. As soon as Darby opened up the throttle, I prayed the boat wouldn't land on my head when we flipped. I flashed back to her car and remembered how she drove. Jocko and I sat in the back with white knuckles while Jeff had his kidneys bruised by being knocked around the bow. She was doing sea donuts and catching air off other boats' wakes, subconsciously trying to commit suicide. This is why she doesn't drive the 'Bago.

We snuck back to the docks two hours late. Not only did they charge us for being late, but they also made us pay for the rope that their boat had chewed up. "Fine, if you're going to charge us for the rope, then we're taking it with us," Jeff told the fraternity guys working the counter. Not that we could do anything with a wet, purple rope, but it was the principle of it. If we paid for it, we owned it, and we'd be damn if you let another customer use it.

I'm pretty sure Jeff threw the rope in the first available dumpster.

★★★★ San Francisco

After traveling for five weeks, the last five-hour drive to San Francisco seemed to take forever. It probably wouldn't have been so painful if Darby hadn't bought the beer for her, Jocko and Jeff to drink while I drove. We pulled in front of Noël and Seth's *Bunnyhop* Emporium around 1:30 a.m., emptied and cleaned the 'Bago until 3 a.m. It seemed like I had just closed my eyes when someone started banging on the door at 8 a.m. to wake me up so we could finally get rid of the beast.

Darby, Jeff, Noël and I drove it over to San Leandro where Moturis' NorCal branch is located to drop it off. We were supposed to wash the damn thing at some trucker car wash 40 miles away, but said fuck it instead.

Let them clean the damn bugs off the thing. We agreed to pay for the wash but they still had to assess all of the damages before we could get out of there. Hmmm, let's see. The step to the door was completely fucked. I think Jeff hit something in New Mexico. The side door compartment was bent to hell from scraping the pole in Boston and the septic tank still smelled like rotting war atrocities. There were a couple things they missed too. There was a battery compartment underneath the Bago where a rod had fallen out, creating this rattling sound that drove Lorraine nuts until I fixed it with duct tape. I didn't say a word when the mechanic did not notice it.

The mechanic and service rep spoke to each other in German about what it would cost to repair all of the damages. He announced a figure and we went inside. They also had to add the charges of hours we used the generator and miles we put on the car. They totaled the miles on the odometer and announced to our pleasure that we put more miles on any Moturis vehicle in their history. We balanced out the expenses with our receipts for the two new tires and other repairs.

We sat around while they clicked buttons on the calculators. "Okay, you owe us \$2,000."

I was completely defeated. To even say that we didn't have anything close to that amount would be a waste of words. I wanted to run to the BART station two miles away and get as far away from that fucking motorhome as possible. I could see the stress on Noël that I was very familiar with at this point and Darby just sat there, sinking low into her chair when the figure was announced.

I paced around, then asked to see their bill. "Wait a minute. You added all of our receipts into the charges column, so we're being billed twice, and you doubled the fee on the miles."

"Oh, you're right. You now owe us \$600." We had just enough money left in the Kill Zine fund to cover it. Noël congratulated me like a proud papa whose son had just made a good play in a baseball game.

"Good call, Larry. Good call."



It should have been no surprise when I heard there was some sort of controversy surrounding our zine event in San Francisco. The week before we arrived, there had been a story in *SF Weekly* tearing into us, complete with a quote from Seth from *Factsheet Five* saying that none of us fit into the category of being a fanzine. It might sound trivial, but them's fighting words in the zine world. Especially when you consider, compared to *Factsheet Five*, my press run, distribution, frequency and title recognition ain't shit. It wasn't that it bothered me, but Seth is someone that should have known better, especially with his experiences dealing with the

press.

The controversy started because the postcards we had printed in July had our sponsors' logos, including a DGC (Geffen Records) logo. It's well documented that I don't care for major labels, so I never felt the need to defend having them as a sponsor. Their contribution to our tour was a couple boxes of god-awful samplers. Darby originally tried to sell them at our stops for \$5 until I had to convince her that everyone hates samplers and we're better off asking for \$2. We may have sold 30 copies all tour - almost enough for two tanks of gas.

The event was scheduled to be at Epicenter, but they gave us the boot after the DGC so Seth from *Bunnyhop* set us up at Snapper Ticker, a used clothing store approximately 100 feet from Epicenter. Epicenter set up a competing, if you will, event the same day, only four hours later.

Darby knows that the best defense is a good offense, so she started working on the Kill Zine zine, which later became *Socially Fucking Retarded*. Yeah, sounds like adding fuel to the fire, but standing in front of Darby when she's on a mission is similar to running across four lanes of freeway traffic. You might make it across, but there is a good chance you will get clipped by a car going 75 mph. Whether or not you get hit, you're gonna have to sit there for four hours waiting.

I made it down to the event and helped set up when I found that I had left all my zines back at Noël's. A quick jump on the BART, a short bus ride and I was back at the event an hour and 10 minutes later.

I was in a pretty foul mood by the time I got back. But there was Kevin Chanel, former San Diegan, *GD* contributor and man behind *Chin Music* zine, whose going away party I missed (by the way, he's related to the guys in the Zeros!). Darren and Zack, two San Diego ex-patriots, were there. Yvonne and George were there too. Then Freud, another SD ex-pat and *GD* contributor, showed up. These were friends that had all showed up to see me and it made everything better. The only problem was that they all showed up at the same time and I would have these little one minute conversations, then turn to my right and start talking to the next person, making these quick 90 degree jerks just to talk to everyone. Aaron from *The Probe* showed up just to drop off zines. I had sent him a couple of postcards inviting him out to hang around. I said the first thing that came to mind. "Hey, I almost didn't recognize you with your pants on." It was dumb, but I'm not very good at first encounters, so I thought I would try to be funny. I wanted to kick myself as soon as it came out. I probably sounded like a smarmy dick, but he seemed to take it in stride.

"I hate these things," he said. "I just stopped by to say hi to you and ask if you would try to sell some copies of *The Probe*."

He split out of there as soon as he handed me the 10 copies of his zine.



Knowing there was this controversy brewing, all of us ran over to Epicenter for their event, which was just getting started as we showed up. Everyone who published a zine was asked to participate in a discussion group. We went around in a circle and introduced ourselves and zines. I think I lasted 20 minutes, and here's why. When distribution was brought up, one person talked for 10 minutes about how he didn't want to sell his zine, he only wanted to give it away in person. Selling it took something away from him. Right on, that's why I give away more than 2000 copies of *GD*, but I thought group discussion on the topic was pretty pointless. I probably sound heartless, but his distribution problem was solved and I don't think he needed to go on and on. Call it preaching to the converted, so I didn't need to listen to the remaining nine minutes of his speech.

I slithered away from the couches and approached Lali, who was working the register. Lali contributed to *MRR* for quite a while and was a big part of Epicenter before she moved to Austin.

"Hey, how would you like to get outta here and go get some beer," I asked her.

Lali led me to a bar around the corner where the bartender was trying to empty a keg so he sold me \$1 pints of whatever while Lali drank Guinness. We hung out, talking about punk rock, Aaron Probe kicking in doors and other scene gossip when Darby and Jeff showed up. Soon Seth and Jerod from *Factsheet Five* and six or seven other zine people showed up. Everyone was drinking, getting along and really enjoying themselves. Now this is how the zine event should have been.

It started to get dark when I remembered my friends were playing at a bar around the corner. Since I had somehow forgotten to eat that day, I was completely blotto when I came up with the brilliant idea of trying to impress Lali while showing my appreciation for my Kill Zine colleagues by announcing that I was now going over to the Kilowatt to get us all in for free. The band was Deadbolt, and I felt those fuckers owed me four free tickets for their show.

"I'll walk over there to make sure everything is cool. See you guys in a few."

Somehow walking from the bar to the Kilowatt, I passed through the drunk barrier. Breaking through the drunk barrier is a lot like breaking the sound barrier. You act normal until you hit the barrier, but instead of a sonic boom, you begin to stumble and slur every word coming out of your mouth. I walked up to the doorman, "Hey, I'm friends with Deadbolt. They're gonna put me on the list. I just gotta find them." The door guy held my ID



Guess who?

while I ran through the packed club to find someone from Deadbolt. I worked my way up to the stage where I found Harley Davidson, vocalist and guitarist. "Hey, you motherfucker, I came all the way from San Diego to see you guys [that's the line I use on everyone when I bump into them out of town] so can you put me and a couple friends on the list?"

"Sure, babe, let's go see if we've got any room on the list."

Of course there was no room, so I paid the \$7 I could barely afford and walked back in with Harley, forgetting about my companions at the bar.

I started talking to Harley and Les Vegas, Deadbolt's drummer, right before they're supposed to go on when I felt a tap on my shoulder.

It was HER. The first words out of her mouth were, "I knew you were going to be here."

It had been one year to the month that she walked out on me. After helping Devin move one day, I came home and she politely informed me that she didn't want to be my girlfriend anymore. We had gone out for nearly six years and still had five months left on our lease.

I took her backstage (that being a room in the basement that anyone could walk into) and I handed her a beer I stole from Deadbolt. We talked for maybe 15 minutes. I told her about the tour, but I was so out of it, I couldn't remember the names of any of the cities we had

been to, and I could only point to the names on a piece of paper I had in my backpack. Usually when I'm drunk, I talk a lot of shit. Considering how broke I was, I'm surprised I didn't bring up the \$237.50 she still owes me.

I don't remember much of what we talked about except for the fact that after receiving her teaching credential, she had moved up to San Francisco with her new boyfriend and they were engaged and soon to be married.

"What?!? You're getting married? It's only been a year. Go out and have some fucking fun first. Don't get married."

"Well, you never wanted to get married."

"I never want to get married."

Sometime during this conversation, Darby found me and said that she and the others were waiting outside and wanted to know if they were on the list. Since I had promised everyone they would be on this list when they weren't, I handed Darby a handful of cash and paid for everyone. Had my blood alcohol not been at about 25 percent blood and 75 percent alcohol, I wouldn't have been so generous.

Deadbolt started playing, so we went back into the crowd to watch the show. She disappeared, while I made my way up to the front of the stage. Jeff and Darby were on the right of the stage. I needed more beer for Deadbolt, so I handed Darby a \$20 and told her to buy

trouble. I was in this club alone and had no idea where to go or how to get there. The only thing I can recall is stumbling down the street with someone, mumbling about how I couldn't believe she was getting married after only one year and how I wanted more beer.



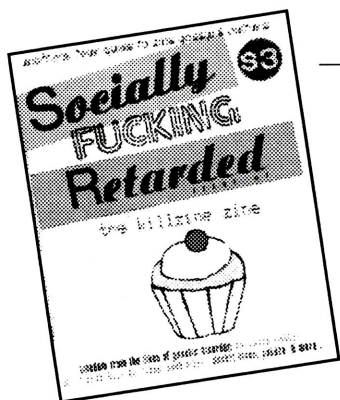
I felt the pain before I even opened my eyes. My mouth was glued shut and some little gnome was trying to jackhammer his way out of my skull. I pulled my shirt over my eyes to block out the light, but it was no use. I was awake and in pain, and there was no going back to sleep.

When I was finally able to open my eyes. I found myself stretched out on a couch. My shoes were off and I was using my jacket as a pillow. Memories of the night before slowly came back. Through the slit in my eyes, I scanned the room. “Jennifer’s house sure is fucking messy,” I thought. I looked at my watch. 1:30 p.m. Jesus, this is the latest I’ve slept all tour. Darby or someone would have woken my up by now. Speaking of which, where is everyone? This place is completely deserted. Maybe they went to lunch.

I put my shoes and jacket on, stumbled around to find a filthy bathroom to take a piss and swish my mouth out with some of the mouthwash I found sitting on the counter. I went and lay back down, trying to sort out what had happened the night before.

It was obvious I drank way too much. I haven't blacked out in years. Out of all of the drinking I did on tour, leave it to the last day to get more fucked up than I had been in the past three years. Sheesh, of all the places to run into my ex-girlfriend. After going out for nearly four-and-a-half years, she started putting the screws to me about moving in together. I put it off for nearly six months, until I had it with my shithole apartment, dickhead neighbors and asshole landlord. We ended up moving into a great two-bedroom house on a hill in the College Area. I used to sit on the deck in the afternoon,

It took me a moment to realize that there was a bigger problem than walking into my ex-girlfriend with her fiancée. I really had blacked out on my feet and told Jeff and Darby not to worry about me because I had a place to stay. My alcohol-soaked brain told me I was in



Socially Fucking Retarded gives you all the behind the scenes gore, gossip and controversies from the Kill Zines tour. Also included is zine resource information that will make you realize just how really fucked all you zine people really are. You're looking for distribution for your zine? HA!

reading true crime books with Mt. Helix to the left and a clear view of Mexico 15 miles away. After eight months of living together, I guess she couldn't handle me any more.

She moved to Hillcrest, the same neighborhood I moved to four months later when our lease expired. My new place with Joe and Vaughn was approximately six blocks from her apartment.

The weird thing is, as much time as I spend walking or riding my bike through the neighborhood, I never once saw her around. At times I felt like a kid sneaking around, hoping I wouldn't run into her when down on University Ave., but then again, I was always curious as to how she'd react. I had this feeling she'd probably accuse me of stalking.

Well, I wouldn't have to worry about that anymore.

What I did have to worry about was where had I slept last night? Somehow I came to the realization this wasn't Jennifer's house. This was the second time in my life I'd passed out and woke up having no clue where I was. The first time was when I was 18 and had been drinking at a discotheque with Steve and Ed in Mexicali, Mexico, 10 miles south of El Centro. I remember talking to this girl, then telling her to move her feet because I was about to throw up. She did, and everyone watched me puke all over the floor. Steve freaked out knowing that puking in Mexico could mean a night in jail. He dragged me out to Kristy's car (see *GD* #14) to pass out..

Next thing I knew, Kristy and everyone else in the car were telling me to wake up to cross the border. I saw the border lights about a half mile in the distance. I screamed "American" (if you've never crossed the US - Mexican border, the first thing they ask is "Citizenship?") and pass back out. They shook me awake again just long enough to tell the customs agent "American," then I blacked out again.

Somehow they knew to take me to Steve's house rather than my own. When they opened the door to let me out, I start puking all over the street.

"Are you going to be alright?"

"Yeahaaiiiillllbeoookaeeeeey"

They drove away while I was knocking on Steve's window. Knock knock knock. No one answered and I was standing outside shivering in the December desert cold. In my alcoholic fog, I somehow remembered a book my third grade teacher, Mrs. Fernandez, read to the class. It was about a stray dog who lived in New York in the '30s. The book was written from the dog's perspective and what it was like to survive during the Great Depression. During the winter, the dog learned to climb under recently parked cars to stay warm. As soon as one engine started to cool in the winter chill, Rover would shoot out and lay under a warm recently parked

Model T.

Hey, I thought, Steve's parents park their cars in the back - maybe I could climb underneath one to sleep. His backyard is surrounded by a six foot high fence and somehow I scaled it without hurting myself. I found his mom's Thunderbird and tried climbing under just like the dog. The car was probably only 12 inches from the ground and I would have needed a hydraulic jack to get under it. I tried the doors and they were both locked. By this time, my teeth were chattering.

Fuck it, I thought, I'll just break into the house. I tried the back door and it was open. I should mention that Steve lived in a high crime area. His parents never left the doors unlocked and they had this cocker spaniel that hated me and would bark before I could get within 10 feet of their front door. To this day, Steve is still amazed that I made it inside his house without his dad thinking I was a burglar.

I woke up the next day, still drunk, on Steve's bed with Ed, inches from my face, smiling. Steve's dad was knocking on the bedroom door.

"Where's Steve?" his dad asked.

"He's behind the door sleeping," Ed said.

"Rough night, eh boys?"

Both of us sleeping on Steve's bed with our clothes on and Steve curled up like a kitten behind the door must have tipped him off.

As soon as Steve's dad shut the door, Ed asked me how I got home.

"I don't know"

"How did you get inside Steve's house?"

"I don't know."

"Hey, do you remember making out with [the girl I almost puked on]?"

"Shut the fuck up."

I almost believed them, but they were more amazed about how I broke into Steve's house. Steve said when they came home, I was blasting Agnostic Front's "Victim in Pain" and passed out with my arms at my side and face down in a pillow. They thought I was dead.

Now here I was six years later in San Francisco, with no idea where I was and how I got there. I dug Jennifer's number out of my backpack and found the phone.

"Hello."

"Jennifer? This is Larry."

"Where are you, Larry?"

"I don't know." I could hear Darby screaming in the background at the mention of my name. "You should walk outside and find a bus stop to figure out where you are."

"I don't want to get locked outside." Besides, I knew SF well enough to get to wherever I needed to go.

"Larry?" Darby grabbed the phone. "Do you

remember how much money you had last night?"

"Uh, no." I knew I had about \$60 earlier the day before. Now I was scared to look. I think I was left with \$15.



The light was blinding when I stepped outside. Before I walked down the stairs to the street, I saw a door with the name "Zack" stenciled on it. Yes! I was hanging out with my friend Zack who met up with me at Snapper Ticker. He must have shown up to see Deadbolt, then found me in a catatonic state and dragged me to his house.

I stepped out to Lower Haight and found a bus to take me to Chonga's house. He was long-time friend from El Centro (everyone thinks we're brothers because we look so much alike and share the same last name.) and he left me the keys to his place, only he lived way the hell down in Lower Mission. I took the long bus trip to his place and let myself in. I called Darby as soon as I walked in.

"Darby, it's Larry."

"Hey, don't you know we're supposed to appear on a children's television show at four o'clock today?" she said. It was 3 p.m. and I was still drunk and dirty.

"What the hell are you talking about?" I asked.

"What show? 'Bill Nye, Science Guy'?"

"What are you thinking? Of course not 'Bill Nye, Science Guy.'"

"'Beakman's World'?"

"God, Larry, don't you remember, on the way to Austin you said you'd go on the children's show with me?"

"Let me guess, was the conversation something like 'Larry, do you want to go on a children's show in San Francisco?' and I responded with something like, 'Uh, sure, whatever.'"

"Yeah. You have to do this with me. Call back in 20 minutes."

As soon as I hung up, I felt this wave of depression and despair hit me. It wasn't being away from home, it was the feelings stirred up from bumping into Her combined with being broke, hungover and knowing that there was nothing to look forward to once I got home in a week or so. I called Steve at work in San Diego and asked him to call me back. Somehow, talking to a friend made it all better.

I called Darby and she said the appearance at the science show was canceled. I hung up the phone and went back to sleep.

I woke up at 7 p.m. I was supposed to be at the Berkeley event at 8 p.m. I hustled down to the bus stop and waited. And waited. Since Freud lived in the East Bay, he said he wanted to hang out as long as I didn't



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mind riding on the back of his motorcycle. Fuck yeah, I'll call you when I get there. I finally got to the BART station at 24th and Valencia for more waiting. It was Sunday, so I assumed there would be fewer trains. Then there was an announcement that the train that was supposed to be there was going to be 30 minutes late.

By the time I got to Cody's Books in Berkeley, it was 9:05 p.m. The doors were locked and the employees were cleaning up.

I knocked at the glass until one of them was annoyed enough to speak to me.

"Are the Kill Zines people still here?"

"No, they left about 20 minutes ago. I think they're at the bar next door."

I run over there and see the Tom from Big Top Distribution.

"Hey, where's Darby and Noël?"

"Oh, they left about 20 minutes ago."

The depression and despair started to hit me again. I walked up to Rasputin's Records and left a message on Freud's pager.

"Hey, I'm here at Rasputin's. If I don't see you in 20 minutes, I'll page you again." I browsed through their terrible used vinyl section and waited. He never showed up, so I paged him again and waited. He still never showed up. I was scared that I was going to miss the last train so I walked back to the Berkeley BART station and caught the train back to 24th and Valencia, then the bus back to the grocery store near Chonga's so I could buy enough beer to put me to sleep.



Back to Los Angeles

The tour was now finished and I had to find a way to make it back home to San Diego. Without a 'Bago or another event, there was no unifying factor, nothing to make us stick together. Now that everything was finished, I had the feeling that it was every person for themselves in regards to finding a ride home. Darby was talking about renting a minivan and spending a few days driving down the coast to camp and surf. Lorraine had an ex-boyfriend hook her up with a plane ticket. I was broke and couldn't afford a few more days traveling around. Not that I had any money waiting for me at home, but at least I could fall back on some of my tried and true scams once I was back in SD. Here I had nothing. On top of that, I knew that if I didn't get on the ball, I could soon add homelessness to my list of Kill Zines consequences.

I started looking at my options. I had a friend in Santa Rosa, an hour north of SF, that I hadn't seen in a while. I could take a bus there to cool my heels while trying to figure out what to do. At least I'd be eating.

I packed my things up from Chonga's house, took the bus over to Jennifer's to drop everything off, and left to meet Darby and Jeff later that day. Jeff and I eventually ended up at a bar near the Mission District and started scheming. Jeff did the quick math and figured out our cheapest option was to rent a small car. I didn't have much stuff left and Jeff only had a backpack. We could

cram our stuff in the back of a small car and be in Los Angeles in six hours.

But then Darby got wind of our plan.

She decided she needed to get back home too and didn't want to meander down the coast. Instead of renting an economy car, she wanted to go in on a minivan or sport utility vehicle. Jeff called around and the biggest car we could find was a large Ford passenger car, the same kind that cops are using these days. They wouldn't rent us anything bigger because of San Diego's high auto-theft rate. "We'll take the Ford," I heard Jeff say into the phone. "Uh huh, yeah, we can pick it up at noon tomorrow."



I woke Jeff and Darby up at 9 a.m. "Hey, Jeff, what time do you have to pick up the car?"

"Uh, the lady said we had to pick it up at ten," he said. It was one of the oldest tricks in the book.

"Then we should get going," I said. "I can be ready in about 10 minutes." We finally found a way to beat Darby's perpetual lateness. Too bad the tour was over.

Needless to say, it worked out perfect. We told Darby we had to be there at 10 a.m. and we arrived at the rental car office at exactly noon - as Jeff and I expected. We took off back to Noël's and began the arduous task of pulling all of our stuff back out of his basement. Let's see, Jeff had his backpack and a small box of zines. That goes in the truck. I had a sleeping bag, duffel bag, skateboard, backpack and two boxes with zines, records and my brother's CB that we only used once. At the most, our stuff combined would take up two-thirds of the trunk. I knew the bike was going to have to stay. Even if I took the handle bars and tires off there would be no room. I told Noël and Seth that I would pick it up next time I was in town. To this day, I still don't know if it's in their basement or if they dumped it somewhere. The only other item was my T-shirt tub, but it was nearly empty

and we were able to pack some of Darby's stuff in it and put it in the back seat.

Then Darby started to bring out the rest of her stuff. All of her back issues, her camping gear, her clothes, her food, all the zines she collected, her laptops, her goddamn 11 pairs of shoes and rollerskates, and

everything else that easily fit inside a motorhome that was now being crammed into a four door car.

"Darby, what the hell? Why can't you leave your zines and have Noël ship them to you? Plus, I gave these guys all of my food, why can't you leave your food here?" I was

getting flustered as I watched her pile more and more of her stuff into the backseat, which was slowing taking over the space where I would be sitting.

"Larry, I need this food when I get home," was her terse reply.

"Darby, I need my food too, but we simply don't have room. I'm leaving my fucking bicycle, you can leave a few things too."

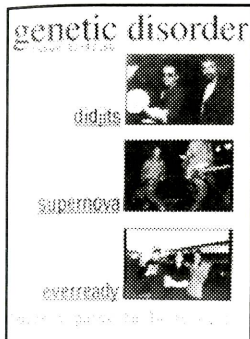
She just ignored me and piled everything she could fit to the point of overflow in the trunk, backseat and back window.

Goddammit, why can't I be selfish for once! Again, I felt like a fucking doormat. She's basically going to take up my seat in the car with her stuff that she could have shipped home. We didn't even have to include her in our plans to get home, but my fucking morals got in the way of my being rational. I felt we should let her come along out of camaraderie, out of being nice, out of it simply being the right thing to do. Now look what happens to me. I kicked myself for letting her in on our plan. Jeff and I could have driven to Southern California in comfort and now I'm squeezing my 6'4" frame into a space that would hardly fit a child. Why wasn't the shortest person with the most stuff riding in the back? I had to tuck my knees into my chest to fit into the seat I was sharing with my skateboard and backpack.

genetic disorder back issues

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Issue #11 - \$1.50 PPD

I continued to harass and heckle *Hypno Magazine* (which has since gone out of business - heh heh) and I took Eveready 99¢ shopping. We also had a contest where people were encouraged to figure out the staffer's names by their beer bellies. I also interviewed Supernova and, the world's greatest band, Didjits. I chose La Mesa for the Loser's Guide. 2000 copies printed.

56 pages - newsprint with cover

Issue #13 - \$2 PPD

I interviewed 12 bands and asked them one question, "Tell me about a practical joke." I also wrote about several fun pranks that I've planned, performed or been burned with.

David Stampone wrote a huge story about nailing someone with the flaming bag of dogshit trick. As part of the Loser's Guide to North Park, I wrote a story about the PSA 187 disaster. 4000 copies printed.

104 pages - newsprint with a full color cover



Issue #12 - \$2 PPD

I finally break away from band interviews. This time around I profile 13 of San Diego's most notorious serial killers and mass murderers. I wrote a story about how I was nearly caught shoplifting a copy of Penthouse, and followed up with a story about someone who OD'd in a *GD* T-shirt, which was covered in two newspapers. The highlight is the story about the two high school girls I took to prom the same day I graduated from SDSU. 4000 copies printed.

90 pages - newsprint with cover

Issue #14 - \$3 plus six 32¢ stamps.

This issue deals with Satanism, and the Satanic conspiracy theory, all with a nod towards the metallic '80s but loaded with sarcasm. Definitely the best issue of *GD*. There's also a calendar with a Satanic fact or occurrence for every day of the year.

I also interviewed a San Diego police officer that deals with occult matters and an author who debunks Satanic crimes. There's a total of 15, indepth, researched stories.

5000 copies printed.

128 pages - newsprint with a full color cover



Subscriptions are \$12 for four issues. Be sure to include the issue number you wish to start your subscription with. Limited copies of #8 and #9 are also available. For a complete catalog with T-shirts designs, please send one stamp or IRC.

WHY PAY CASH FOR THINGS WHEN YOU CAN TRADE?

If you have a skill or can get your hands on something of value to someone else, get in touch. I'm trying to organize a small, loose-knit bartering network. For example, if you work at movie theater and can let people in for free, why not trade tickets for CDs or something else of interest? It sure beats paying cash. I'm putting together a list of people, contact information and what they have to offer. Please get in touch if you would like your name added to the list.

I was able to put up with the cramped conditions for about two hours before I became horribly claustrophobic. I couldn't move my legs at all and my entire body weight was leaning on the door. I kept imagining the door flying open and my body flying out at 80 mph, bouncing up and down the I-5.

"Jeff, you gotta pull over." I was frantic. "I can't sit back here any more. You gotta pull over now."

He took the next exit and I climbed out to stretch my legs. I threw all of the things Darby had piled between her and Jeff in the back and climbed in the middle of the seat. I'd have to sit on a hard hump for the next four hours, but at least I could feel my legs.



San Diego

I thought we were finally going to get rid of Darby when we pulled up to the *BID* mansion. After we unloaded the car and dropped Jeff off, I would be home in less than two hours. Jeff and I started grabbing all of Darby's stuff and loading it into her house. She was too busy checking in with her sublet renters to help, but I didn't mind. I just wanted to get out of there. Just as we carried in the last boxes, Darby says, "You guys can't leave this stuff here, I have renters right now."

Apparently Darby had sublet her place to a couple of her friends. These guys were about as sharp as a marble, with brilliant moves like putting a pot of beans on the stove to boil, then going upstairs to sleep. Maybe they were related to her friends in Portland.

"What the fuck, Darby? This place is huge. Just cram your stuff in a corner and sleep in your office or on the couch," I said with overt hostility.

No, that would be too easy, and I learned a long time ago, that if things are easy, there are forces stronger and more powerful than my own that will make things as frustrating and difficult as possible.

Just so I could get home at a decent hour, I started grabbing all of *her* stuff and stacking it for a *second* time in her garage.

Darby was going to try to stay at the house of some guy that worked in the television industry (how LA!), so we had to drop her off at the Paramount TV studio. The security actually let us drive in and we found our way to the offices where Darby's friend worked. They said we could either wait in their rec room or go down and watch them film the show he works on, "Talk Radio." We did both. We played free pinball for about 20 minutes, then I started to get restless and looking for things to steal. I started wandering the halls, thinking I'd bump in to Blossom, Erkel, Kramer or Moesha. Hell, I'd settle for Mac Davis, whose last TV appearance was probably on "The Muppet Show," but this place was

empty. We had to head down to the set to catch a glimpse of any celebrities.

I've never seen "News Radio" before, but it stars one of the guys from "Kids in the Hall" and the guy that does that voice of Troy McClure on "The Simpsons." We were lucky enough to end up on the side of the set so I could mingle with all the other VIP's and big shots. The general public was sitting in bleachers, performing their role as trained seals by laughing no matter how many times they had to endure the same scene over and over. I spent the first hour stealing food and trying to look inconspicuous in my dirty T-shirt. If anyone would have said anything to me, I would have told him I'm one of the Cory's, the one with the drug problem, and I was killing time between scenes on my set. It's too bad everyone left me alone.

After an hour, even stealing got old. "Hey, Darby what's the hold-up? I wanna get out of here."

"I have to wait for my friend to finish working," she said. "I'm not sure I can stay at his house. You guys have to wait until the show is finished." Hmm, I wonder why Jeff didn't offer to let her stay at his place? They seem to have become pretty good friends in the short period of time they spent together. Maybe not as friendly as I thought.

The show finally finished taping around 11 p.m., Darby finally got everything settled with her friend and allowed us to leave after making us wait another 30 minutes. I couldn't stand the atmosphere of the studio lot and was dying to leave, but when it came down to it, the realization that the tour was finally over was both a relief and a bit depressing. There was really nothing for me to go back to. I had maybe \$2 to my name and later found out the check the rip off label in New York gave me had bounced again after cashing it in SF, reducing my bank account to -\$250. It was a month before I found out when I tried to cash a \$15 check so I could buy some food.

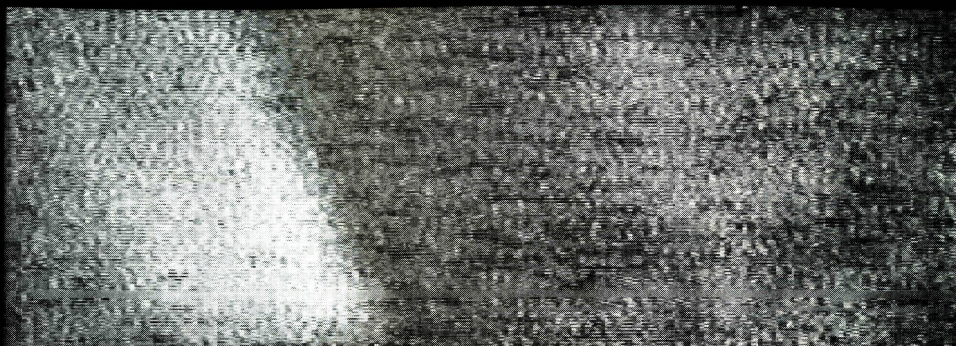
Darby gave me and Jeff big hugs and we were off. Twenty minutes later I was alone, racing down the I-5 at 90 mph. If I'd known what I was going home to - debt, the electricity being shut off several times, an upset girlfriend (who soon became another ex-), hours on hot San Diego city buses, virtual unemployment, having to borrow \$300 to keep my phone from being shut off, a bitchy new house cat that shit all over my room - I might have never gone home. But at that point, I didn't have to worry about any of it, at least until the next day. At least, for a couple of hours, I'd have some time to myself. I popped in a Devo tape and sped home.

"Wait a minute, something's wrong/He's here to do us a favor/A little human sacrifice/It's just supply and demand...."

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