

READ

MAGAZINE

NO. 23
\$3.00

LITERATURE FOR THE PUNK DORK

RENO 911
BOUNCING SOULS
SHERMAN ALEXIE * JAY MOHR
LAGWAGON * THE REAL MCKENZIES
THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS * NERF HERDER
JIM NORTON * JON BENJAMIN * GREG GIRALDO
THE TRAVOLTAS * MR. SPOONS * DANNY WOOD
ANGRY AMPUTEES * RUBBER CITY REBELS * MOD
STREET DOGS * PINK STEEL * RISE AGAINST

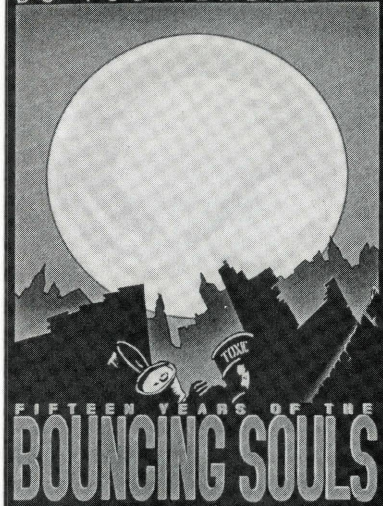
THE CONSPIRACY ISSUE



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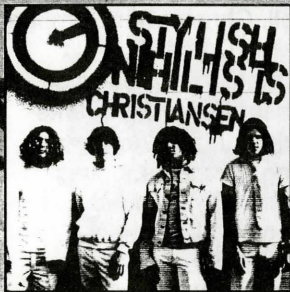
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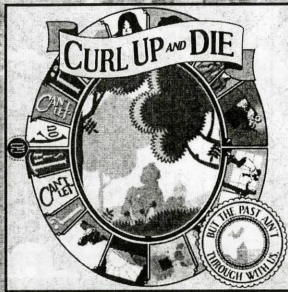
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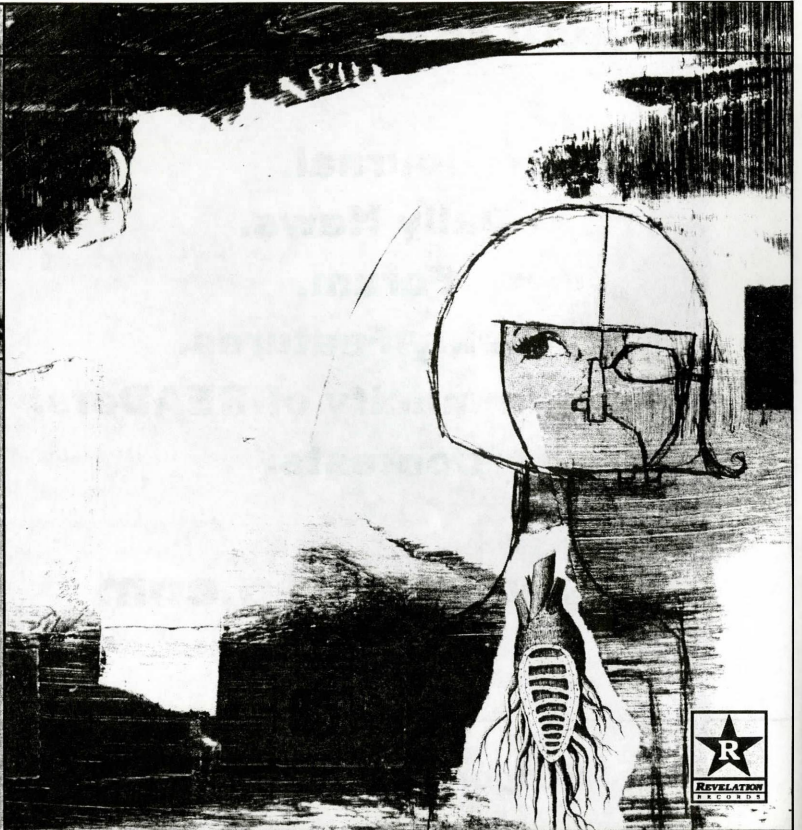
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READ No. 22

All the crap that's fit to print.

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Our brothers & sisters of the small press revolución!

READers

HAIKUS FROM MY SISTER

R-E-A-D now
news columns and book reviews
my only hobby

Forum 4 to 12

How I love Readmag dot com

Adam you kick ass

A FAN LETTER!

From: javaccar@###.com

To: adamonkey@hotmail.com

Subject: Re: Bacchus plateau

hey the last read I read was the work issue.
very excellent. my girlfriend kept getting annoyed because for a week afterward I sat on the couch giggling like a little girl (instead of paying attention to her I assume).

ANOTHER FAN LETTER!

Thanks for the copy, its wicked fucking good. i almost wet myself readng it because it was so fraught with hilarity (i think??) The interviews are awesome and so are the snap judgements by bryan kremkau, ill keep reading it. - Dustin

FROM MY SISTER!

Hi There!!

Mom and I went to the craft fair in Hicksville today. The show was not advertised properly. There were hardly any customers there. Mom and I stayed for 6.5 hours. She sold her beaded flowers, I tried to sell READS and beaded bracelets. I am proud to announce that I sold 9 bracelets for 50 cents a piece (\$4.50)and 1 READ magazine for 50 cents. I will give you the money. I was more excited with that than anything. Mom sold around 5 flowers the entire day. She didn't even make her money back from paying the 40 bucks to sell there.

There were a few vendors that I gave READS to. They were very interested and spent the day reading them. One girl is a finalist for the New York America pageant in November. She asked if she could give out some READS to the pageant contestants. I wasn't sure what to do-so I have her e-mail to get back to her. She also said she would do an interview about the whole contestant process and her experiences. She may contact you.

After the day sitting at the table, I went to a music store in Westbury, walked in carrying READS and the guy said, READ MAGAZINE!!!! I KNOW THIS MAGAZINE! Do you want me to sell them??? SO, I made a business deal with him-he sells them for 2 bucks each. He gets \$1.00 and you get

\$1.00. Unfortunately, the place is going out of business over Thanksgiving, so I just gave him 20 copies.

One more thing, There is a new flea market that opened in Island Park. I went yesterday and spoke to the manager to see if he would like to advertise or have music people advertise. He said he'd reach you if interested. He read some pages while walking around and was hysterical laughing.

SO, that's my READ news for the day. Congrats on the 50 cents. My 4.50 is already spent. I blew it on Las Vegas night tonight.

SKA SKA SKA!

From: CheckerboardKid@###.com

To: editor@readmag.com

Subject: Hey Adam!

Phil from Checkerboard Kids here! I just read your 10 biggest Ska mistakes articles. Good points all around! Tho you must admit that the Skinhead Reggae lovers of the early 70's contributed to the Skins of the 90's being there. Swiping music will always exist but if people are really into the music they'll buy the occasional CD especially if it's some obscure band. Not crossing into rap? AHA! That's what we were missing! Can you imagine how that would of sounded? Instead of Coolie Ranx you get a Ja Rule? Shoot me now! I guess you were right about this elitist attitude! Best, Phil

MY SISTER AGAIN!

Hey Adam,
Nick and I brought 2 READS into the Outback Steakhouse last night. I gave a copy to our waiter. Two minutes later, he came back to the table and told me that everyone in the kitchen was hysterical laughing. He said he was going to stay home (on a Friday night) and read it all night. I enjoyed walking past the entrance listening to people complain why there was a 90-minute wait for a table!

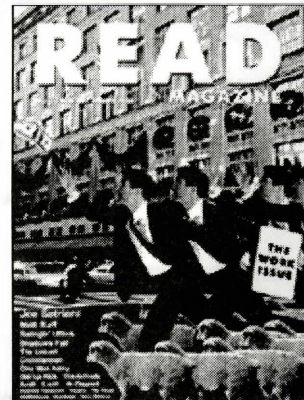
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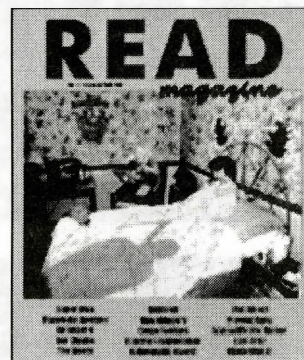
READ reserves the right to print or truncate letters unless you specify not to reprint. Also, all typos and grammar/punctuation errors will be kept in because we're lazy.

Back Issues

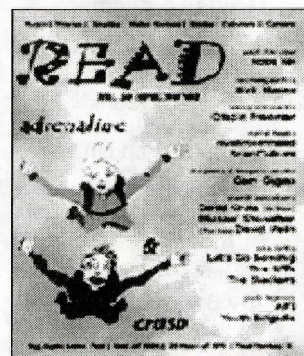
\$3 each!



#22—The Work Issue Avail, Swingin' Utters, Joe Satriani, Matt Ruff, Shadows Fall, Get Up Kids, The Arrivals, Christiansen, 5 Cent Deposit, Lo-Hi, The Locust, One Man Army, Poulain, Wafflehouse, Knuckle Sandwich, Neva Dinova, Abilene, Northstar, and The Feud



#21—The Fear Issue Dillinger Four, Manifesto Jukebox, Erik Turner of Warrant, Jen Chapin, The Sillies, MuchMusic VJ Diego Fuentes, Superdrag, Prevent Falls, and Pokemon voice actor Lisa Ortiz



#20—Adrenaline & Crush Issue AFI, Let's Go Bowling, The Slackers, The Riffs, Scar Culture, AM/FM, adult film star Kobe Tai, voice actor Crispin Freeman, Mushroomhead, Dungeons & Dragons creator Gary Gygax, David Cross, Youth Brigade, Michael Showalter, and David Wain

#19 (Time Travel & Burritos) and #18 (Pets & Dreams) still available too!

Letter From The Editor

Conspiracy theory was always an incredibly stupid and dorky subject until I picked up a curious, thick book called *The Illuminatus! Trilogy*. This cult masterpiece, an epic battle between shadowy groups with shadowy purposes, touched upon all things weird and unexplained in zany ways, and I was hooked.

As a youngin', I became something of a Discordian, promoting chaos and sworn to defeat the Illuminati, whoever and wherever they are. Friends joined my crusade, though our weekly Discordian meetings usually dissolved into ordering pizza and jamming to Black Sabbath. The closest we came to destroying the evil, world-dominating Illuminati was when we infiltrated the local Mason chapter. We got three steps inside when an old guy approached us and said, "Hey, what are you kids doing here?" and we ran out screaming. I am sure they have since recorded our brain patterns and cloned evil version of us.

Being a rebellious youth, I had to turn my back on conspiracy when the X-Files debuted, and every asshole college kid (and a couple years later, just about everyone else) were talking stupid conspiracy stuff. When I began zining, it was always in my mind to come back to conspiracy, but the stupid popularity of that show prevented it.

Still, conspiracies haunted me: Is that filling for my cavity a mind control device? Why does it seem like the moon is following me whenever I'm driving? Why do vegetarians smell bad?

When it came time to do a new issue of this here mag, I couldn't decide if I wanted to do something on world history, mustard, or ditch the topical idea altogether and just write whatever. A fan of democracy, I posed the question in a poll on our lovely website readmag.com, and the gaggle of READers resoundingly wrote in "conspiracy". That triggered those dormant yearnings within me, and here we are now.

So this ish looks at all the frightening conspiracies that plague our world, such as the deviant milk industry, the truth behind dinosaur extinction and Rick Springfield, and why Alcoholics Anonymous think they're better than you.

Dig in, enjoy. Then visit the forum at readmag.com and let us know what you think.



How to send us fan mail:

- READ, POB 3437, Astoria, NY 11103
- Readmagazine@aol.com

How to send us hate mail:

- Suckit@yomama.com

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- Note: UPS doesn't deliver to PO boxes.
- When in doubt, gift certificates are acceptable.

How to hang out with cool READers:

- Visit readmag.com.
- Join the forum.

How to become my friend:

- We're actually on Friendster. Shut up.
- See "How to send us money and gifts"

READ Miscellany

Crap that doesn't fit elsewhere.

The Hours Drinking Game!

I recently had the great misfortune of being forced to watch the chick flick opus *The Hours*, quite possibly the most depressing and boring movie about lesbians EVER. After "hours" of praying for quick death, I realized that the movie, like most things, is bearable when drunk. With that in mind, I have created the first-ever drinking game based on *The Hours* for the benefit of all men who are made to watch it. —Adam Liebling

Rules:

1. Take a drink whenever any of the following happens:

For the amateur drinker:

- You see a bouquet of flowers.
- Eggs are broken (whoa... heavy symbolism dude).
- You see a woman writing and you hear what she's writing.
- A monologue lasts more than two minutes.
- A scene lasts more than ten minutes.
- A character takes off their glasses before speaking.
- Two women kiss, but it's very much not sexy.

For the advanced alcoholic:

- A woman cries, or looks like she's about to cry.
- A woman sits quietly, looking sad and forlorn.
- Suicide is mentioned or seems imminent.
- A character wallows in self-pity.
- There is an emotional scene with only two characters.
- You start falling asleep.

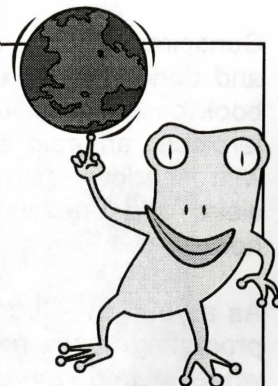
2. If you have not already passed out, do so before you're forced to comfort your hysterically weeping girlfriend.

Written by various folks on the readmag.com forum:

Things That Make You Realize You Read READ Magazine Way Too Much

- You snap judge everything.
- You find yourself quoting Rush lyrics and you've never even heard their music.
- You know more about Adam's penis than you do your own.
- You can't read interviews unless the band is being insulted.
- You think Bruce Campbell is the best actor, living or undead.
- You spend most of your time wondering who would win in a fight - sharks or dinosaurs?
- You begin worshiping the one and true god - Chris Elliott.
- You think you're being stalked by Emmett Otter.
- It's not worth reading unless it's in bullet points.

Evidence That Aliens Control Our Planet



All billboards and signs actually only say "Obey," but only Rowdy Roddy Piper can see them.

Highly trained and advanced alien agents are disguised as auto mechanics so that they can overcharge you for something that doesn't need fixing.

Aliens simulate PMS in women every 28 days to keep male humans weak and afraid.

Many alien agents are enormously rich producers in the porn industry. That explains why the aliens get all the hot freaky chicks.

Sometimes when we go to say "I love you," what comes out is "I love... Emperor Staaag, Lord of the 9th Dimension!"

Jeff Goldblum.

Aliens were responsible for the Niger-uranium claims.

Michael Jackson's human face mask has gradually melted off, revealing his true identity—the nefarious alien Jennifer Love Hewitt.

Aliens established the student loan system, to make their home planets rich.

Everyone in my junior high school was told by aliens to make fun of me.

I am forced to dial more numbers than necessary when calling long distance because of a furry creature from Melmac.

Aliens were behind the cancellation of *Get A Life* after the perceived slandering of comrade Spewey.

The technological achievement of the Diamondvision at Shea Stadium can only be explained by interference from an advanced race of alien Mets fans.

Aliens introduced planet Erf to the acting chops of Jonathan Lipnicki, who charmed audiences as the adorable son of Tom Cruise's love interest in *Jerry Maguire*. It was the greatest gift from an alien species... and we destroyed it in our ignorance. Humanity... what have we done??!

Women are told by aliens to laugh at my naked body.

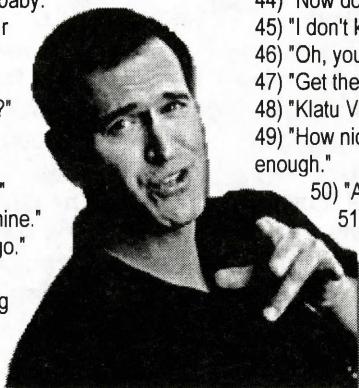
Replace "Jesus" with "spooky alien" and the Bible suddenly makes sense.

—Adam Liebling and Ray Manuud

Bruce Campbell Pick-Up Lines

Compiled by Bryan Kremkau

- 1) "Gimmie some sugar, baby."
- 2) "Say, what color is your underwear?"
- 3) "Swallow this."
- 4) "Say, what's your size?"
- 5) "Come to papa..."
- 6) "Who's your daddy?"
- 7) "Hail to the king, baby."
- 8) "Nothing is as big as mine."
- 9) "Yo, she-bitch ... let's go."
- 10) "I'm Brisco County Jr. That name mean anything to you?"
- 11) "Say, are you a spring or winter?"
- 12) "First you want to kill me, now you want to kiss me. Blow."
- 13) "My name is Ash, and I am a slave."
- 14) "See this? This is my boom stick!"
- 15) "Well that's just what we call pillow talk, baby."
- 16) "You know I love to hear you say the F word."
- 17) "Well hello Mr. Fancypants."
- 18) "The biggest gun usually wins."
- 19) "Don't flatter yourself cookie-puss, it's me."
- 20) "Alright... who wants some... who's next?"
- 21) "Show me your stuff baby..."
- 22) "Well, this is no time to stand here with my schnitzel flapping in the breeze."
- 23) "You're going down!"
- 24) "Once a bloodsucker, always a bloodsucker."
- 25) "What's up doc?"
- 26) "Let's make like Zeus and bolt."
- 27) "Oooh, I'm sensing some hostility here."
- 28) "Bend over and chew on this."
- 29) "You know, there's nothing like the sweet smell of a domesticated woman, and I mean that in the most respectful way."
- 30) "Do I look like an idiot?"
- 31) "Hey big boy, is that a baguette in your pocket or are you just happy to see me?"
- 32) "I don't eat human flesh."
- 33) "Ladies, please, I'll get to each of you one at a time... or in some other combination."
- 34) "Buckle up bonehead, cause you're going for a ride."
- 35) "Say toots, how about a horizontal mambo on the rocks?"
- 36) "What do you say we have some champagne, eh baby? After all, I'm a man and you're a woman, at least last time I checked."
- 37) "Yes, well my stuntmen have arrived. Excuse me, I've got to go... rehearse."
- 38) "Well, you want to hear a long story about a shipload of rum, some cattle and a weeklong game of cutthroat poker?"
- 39) "What exactly was it I said you didn't understand?"
- 40) "Hey, I paid for an hour."
- 41) "Relax, it's nothing I haven't seen before. On second thought..."
- 42) "Ah, keep your skirt on."
- 43) "Uh we haven't met. I'm Autolykus. Perhaps you've heard of me?"



- 44) "Now don't frown, you'll get wrinkles."
- 45) "I don't know. I haven't seen your bottom line."
- 46) "Oh, you know what, you're pathetic."
- 47) "Get the gum out of your ears and listen up."
- 48) "Klatu Verata Nrmnphnfr..."
- 49) "How nice to see you again. It hasn't been long enough."
- 50) "After all, I am the King of Thieves..."
- 51) "You want a piece of me, huh?"
- 52) "Come on... give me a smile... gimme some teeth... little smile..."
- 53) "Where were you the first time you heard this one? Boom-shakalakalaka boomshakalakalaka, hey fiddly iddely diddely, ish skidely oom poom poom poom, yada yada vedo hey!"
- 54) "Oh that was so rude!"
- 55) "And we can't argue with destiny, now can me?"
- 56) "Where are my melons?"
- 57) "I'd hang myself if it would just put you out of my misery."
- 58) "A little bump and grind here and there is to be expected."
- 59) "True love never dies. It just hibernates, laying dormant like a cold sore waiting to fester."
- 60) "You didn't used to call me autoerotic for nothin..."
- 61) "Let's get this straight - I'm the sultan of swat."
- 62) "Oho yowza! Well that'll certainly perk you up."
- 63) "A good thief, like a good lover, takes his time."
- 64) "Look at the firmness of those of those rounded peaks, the cleft in that valley..."
- 65) "Don't change the subject."
- 66) "Hey, remember this one? Baked potato baked potato, half-baked alligator, mam sham boomigator, shika waka saw!"
- 67) "You shut up or you're gonna suffer premature teeth loss."
- 68) "Well, at least one of us got lucky."
- 69) "What's the matter, don't you trust me?"
- 70) "Don't worry, this is business, not pleasure."
- 71) "Hiya cupcake..."
- 72) "Oh actually where I come from I'm considered something of a ... ladies man."
- 73) "You've got to admit, fits like a Trojan glove."
- 74) "Oooh, that gets harder every year."
- 75) "I hate to toot my own horn, but ... toot toot."
- 76) "Hey baby, why don't you come on over to my pad. We'll have a Scotch and sofa."
- 77) "Well, we can't do it here. We need more room."
- 78) "Now I know what you want, but I'm afraid a broken heart is all I can give you at the moment."
- 79) "That's right, spread the word. I'm a lover and a fighter."
- 80) "I'm gonna give you one last chance to prove you're not a moron."

(Quotes were picked from his movies, tv shows, and other crap.)

READ Miscellany

Meet Some of our Staff!

• Sy Boccarri

A soon-to-be huge rock star, check out Sy's no-wave band Naked Highway at nakedhighway.com.

Affiliation: Rosicrucians

• Christopher Campbell

Our resident cynical film critic, he also freelances for many big film pubs and sites. Check out his upcoming film site LowExpectation.com.

Affiliation: Discordians

• Sean Carswell

Co-founder of Razorcake and Gorsky Press, Sean shames us all with his writing ability. Visit the Seanster at razorcake.com and gorskypress.com.

Affiliation: Knights Templar

• Jennifer Kao

Punk rock karaoke goddess extraordinaire, JK also slams out her poetry and musings zine-stylee in Bigger Isn't Better, attainable through READ.

Affiliation: The BiCoasters

• Kittenpants

Nothing's funnier on that world wide web thing than Kittenpants.org. Or funny-looking.

Affiliation: The Cult of Mithra

• Bryan Kremkau

The Monsieur of Montage, the Adonis of Adobe, if there's anything that looks good in this ish, you can thank Bryan. He's also the founder and editor of SkaPunkAndOtherJunk.com

Affiliation: Skull n' Bones

• Adam Liebling

...does not actually exist. The entity calling himself Adam Liebling is actually an intelligent amalgam of Cheez-Its and Nutter Butters.

Affiliation: Elders of Zion, Ferrero Rocher Erf Society, Atkins

• Tara Meehan

Screenwriter and long-suffering Mets/Jets fan. Sass is back!

Affiliation: Jews for Jesus

• Mark Prindle

One of the most popular music reviewers on the web, Prindle infuriates and delights (mostly infuriates) music lovers through his site markprindle.com and [Citizine \(citizinemag.com\)](http://Citizine.com).

Affiliation: Priory of Sion

Conspiracy Articles I Didn't Write

—Adam Liebling

Theory: God Fodder Whacked

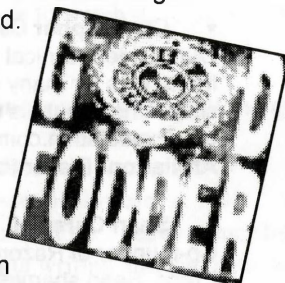
What: Ned's Atomic Dustbin were killed by the Dead Milkmen, who then turned a memory control device or mass hypnosis machine on the alternative scene to make them forget Ned's ever existed.

Evidence: Ned's were on every-one's lips up until like 1992, and their only competition were the Dead Milkmen who must've been

like, hey these guys are all in our shit. Now no one remembers Ned's.

Remain uncovered? Likely. Weezer did the same thing to the Dead Milkmen, so all evidence is lost.

Why I didn't write it: I've never listened to a Ned's Atomic Dustbin song in my life.



Theory: War In Iraq Is Over Sand

What: The US, facing a huge sand shortage, engaged a preemptive strike against Iraq to take over and control their sand industry.

Evidence: We took out Saddam, and yet we're bringing in even more troops... to help haul the sand home?

Remain uncovered? Unlikely. It may become declassified in a few dozen years. Unless the president is still in the pocket of the sand interests.

Why I didn't write it: I'm afraid I'll come down with Persian Gulf Sickness, which I think is just the runs from too many kabobs. Hey, maybe the war is over kabobs!

Theory: Children Of The Cosmos

What: We are descendents of an alien race that touched down on Erf in 3800 BC & shtupped the Sumerians.

Evidence: Per the Book of Enoch, the Nephilim were "angels" who came from the skies and interbred with the humans. It also explains why the Sumerians suddenly had all these advances in astronomy and medicine.

Remain uncovered? Hey man, it's in the Bible. You fucking heathen.

Why I didn't write it: Sounds like the storyline of a bad Squaresoft RPG.

Theory: The Dalai Lama Controls The United States Postal Service

What: When I have to wait 45 minutes to buy a 37-cent stamp because only one of four tellers are open, I realize that it's really the Dalai Lama trying to teach me the virtue of patience.

Evidence: The popularity of "Love" stamps. This is what happens when the ultimate hippy meets capitalism.

Remain uncovered? Likely. To prevent the sin of pride, Lama wouldn't boast about his enterprises.

Why I didn't write it: You don't want to cross the Dalai Lama. He'll cut you.

Theory: The Bigfoot Hoax

What: "Bigfoot" is really Vin Diesel in his pimped-out fur coat.

Evidence: It's how he was discovered. A producer saw the photo and said, let's shave this guy, teach him a few words in English and give him a role in Pitch Black.

Remain uncovered? Unlikely. He will return to the wild as soon as his 15 minutes are up, and he's already at 14:30.

Why I didn't write it: I hate acknowledging Vin Diesel in any way.

Theory: Made-Up Cow Disease

What: The poultry industry created Mad Cow Disease. Executives from the major poultry groups covertly tipped one cow too many and drove a few of them apenuts.

Evidence: Obviously, the poultry industry benefits most from a decrease in beef consumption.

Remain uncovered? Likely. Whistleblowers at poultry factories are too chicken.

Why I didn't write it: Fear of the poultry industry calling fowl with a lawsuit.

Theory: Tommy/Pamela Lee

What: They released their own home video to boost their careers.

Evidence: They were both fading brands before the home video came out. Who the hell cared about Motley Crue after Dr. Feelgood? And it's not like they have reason to be shy. I mean, Jesus, he can pole vault with that thing.

Remain uncovered? Tommy Lee's heroic penis certainly isn't.

Why I didn't write it: There's already another Tommy Lee home video joke in this ish, and anyway, this is sooo 2000.

Theory: The Guys Who Made The Crop Circles Never Got Laid

What: The two old guys who spent years full of long nights in corn fields, cutting down corn to make geometric shapes, probably never had sex in their lives.

Evidence: Ohhh, I don't know... Perhaps it was the whole spending-years-full-of-long-nights-in-corn-fields-cutting-down-corn-to-make-geometric-shapes thing.

Remain uncovered? Likely. They easily admitted to doing it, but will they admit to not "doing it"?

Why I didn't write it: Crop circles were actually made by aliens who never got laid.

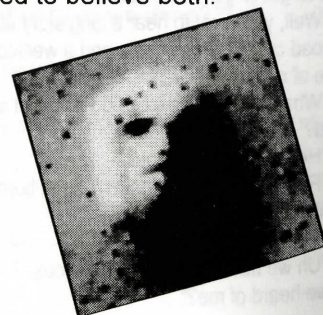
Theory: My Face On Mars

What: From photos from the Viking missions, the face on Mars seems to be a monument to Man made by an advanced race on Mars. And strangely... the face looks like mine.

Evidence: The straight Roman nose, the classically chiseled chin, the pouty lips that long to be kissed, the deep set eyes that hold the wisdom of the universe... Ancient Martians worshipped me as a god.

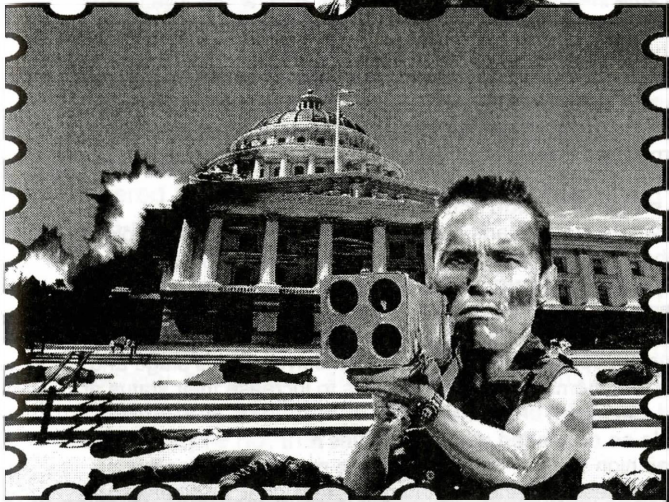
Remain uncovered? Unlikely. The government may not want people knowing I'm the future of the Martian race, but they can not keep me silent. Except with money.

Why I didn't write it: It's also my image that it's in the Shroud of Turin, and people are simply too narrow-minded to believe both.

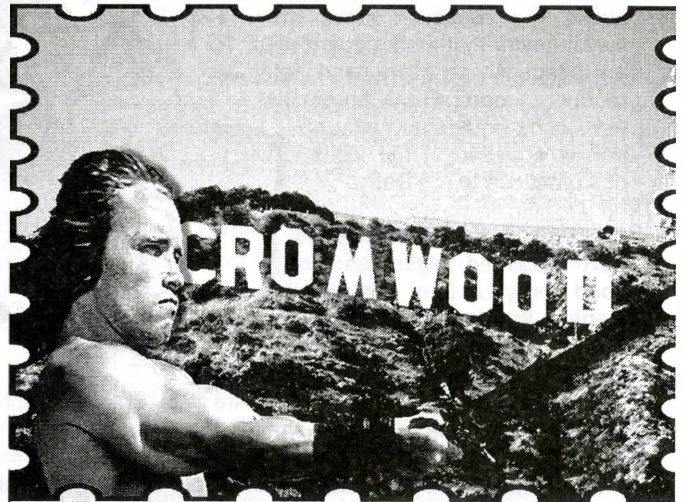


IF ARNOLD BECOMES GOVERNOR...

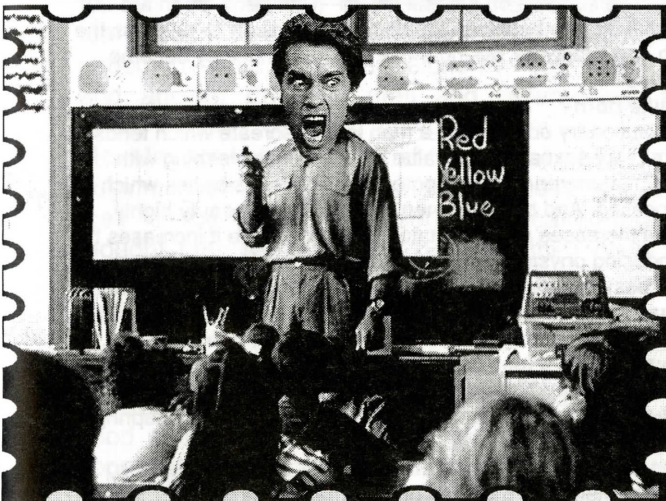
BY
BRYAN KREMKAU



HE WILL CLEAN HOUSE IN SACRAMENTO



MAKE REFORMS IN THE NAME OF CROM



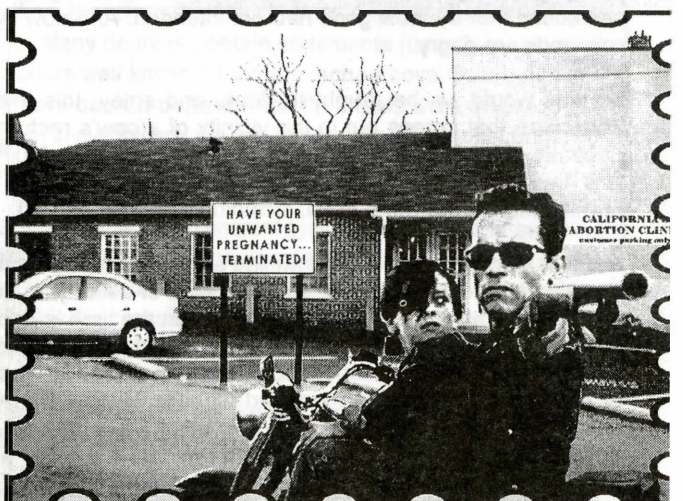
VISIT KINDERGARTENS



DEBATE ILLEGAL ALIEN ISSUES WITH THE PREDATOR



USE DYNAMO AS A BACKUP ENERGY SOURCE DURING BROWNOUTS

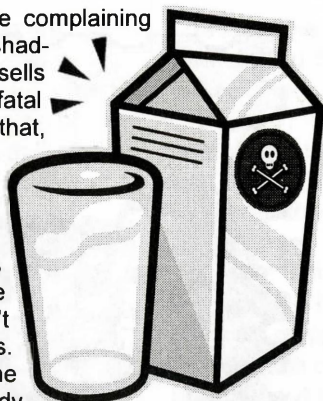


GO TO EXTREMES WITH HIS VIEWS ON ABORTION

milk: got poison?

—Adam Liebling

The other day, I heard people complaining about "Big Tobacco", some shadowy industry that markets and sells an allegedly addictive and fatal product. I don't know about that, but I can't understand why no one is appalled at the insidious practices of Big Dairy.



After all, tobacco companies never claimed cigarettes are good for you; they just didn't mention the deadly side effects. But the dairy industry has the gall to say milk "does the body good." Celebrities we love and admire, like Frankie Muniz, appear in print ads with white smut that we can only hope is milk on their lips. "Got milk?" is synonymous with "You must drink copious amounts of milk or your bones will slowly crumble into dust and your entire family will go to hell." We force the cow milk down our children's throats, we stock school cafeterias with the vile little boxes, we even hook our workforce onto the foul material through coffee.

Tobacco was kind enough to just keep their product apart from the food supply, but milk thought nothing of slipping their product into our cheeses, yogurts, and even ice cream. The dairy industry milks milk any which way they can.

"So how is milk bad?" the brainwashed lot of you ask. For one, milk was designed as a short-term nutrient for infants. For another, we're supposed to only drink these emissions from our mother's floppy chest pillows. What we are NOT supposed to do is continue drinking the tit juice well into our adulthood, squirting it into our coffee, and churning it into custard.

We are also not supposed to suck on the teats of other animals. Look at cows—they are obviously meant to be eaten as steaks and chili burgers or turned into luggage, not jerked off dry by machines or sleazy farmer hands. That is why the majority of people get sick from milk, whether it be lactose intolerance (a form of racism, I think) to getting that gross phlegmy feeling in the back of your throat—we are ingesting secretions that the cow gods had not intended. And now the cow gods are angry.

So why would we be taught to drink, and enjoy, this thick white crap that comes out in the vicinity of a cow's rectum? Because a populace that drinks whatever Frankie Muniz tells them to drink is a populace that will do ANYTHING Frankie Muniz tells them to do, including rampage and kill.

Muniz is putting together an unwilling army, obviously drinking mind control juice, for the supreme goal of destroying the hated cow gods once and for all. And when the time is right, milk-drinkers will be under his control, undoubtedly be forced to run around and do unspeakable things to cows. So I beg of you, put down your frogurt and Chubby Hubby. If your desire for milk is unquenchable, you must leave the cows alone and pay mom a visit. She won't mind—it is, after all, what mothers are for.

Ask Dr. Jen*

* not really a doctor, just a devotee to evolutionary psychology

For those of you with arched eyes, evolutionary psychology is the study of the relationship between human evolution and contemporary human behavior. I became interested evolutionary psychology about a year ago when I wanted to expand my knowledge of what makes people tick and the dynamics behind relationships. This is one subject where I've exhausted the supply of books written on the area with anything new to say (if anyone has any recommendations, please let me know!) but because I've retained my love for the subject, I thought I'd share some of the insights I've learned and hopefully stir some interest in the subject.

Why are kids so mean in high school?

High school is where status starts becoming important for most people. It is the arena where most adolescents start experimenting with romance, academic competition becomes more intense, the struggle for independence begins, and their identities as consumers becomes defined. Cliques and friendships become important as sources of support, status, and identity. Because people are still unsure of themselves at this stage and starting to establish themselves, the pressures to increase their status at the expense of others can be intense.

Why are people so obsessed with celebrities?

Because of their high status—they possess the right mix of physical endowments and success (whether monetary, professional, or otherwise).

Why do men always lust after young women?

Believe it or not, reproductive success is linked to any species' preference, whether flower, bee, or human. Younger women translate into greater reproductive success on several levels—younger women are more likely to give birth to healthier babies and more likely to possess the physical health and vitality for raising these children until they become adults themselves.

Why do men like porn?

The primary evolutionary objective of a man is to procreate which tends to make them a) very sexual and b) value variety (since sleeping with more women increases reproductive potential), both sensibilities which make porn appealing. And because men value physical beauty highly, partly because it increases a man's status, partly because it increases his chances of producing physically attractive children (and hence their reproductive success), they tend to be very visual and porn is highly visual.

Why are so many women drawn to men with the bling-bling?

From the Yanomamo to nomadic women in Africa to women living in NYC, most women value a man with resources. A man of means translates into not only a higher standard of living for the woman herself, and hence her status, but also a greater chance of success for her offspring.

Why do men hate asking for directions?

Most men begrudge giving up their status, whether the loss is real or perceived and whether it's in the eyes of their mate or strangers.

Why do so many people like sweets?

This harkens back to the days when humans were hunters and gatherers and sources of sugar were more difficult to find. Think of bears and monkeys—most of the time they eat meat or insects or leaves but what bear doesn't love berries or honey and what monkey doesn't love fruit? Now we have tons of sugary foods at our disposal but unfortunately we haven't rid ourselves of our sweet tooth acquired during days when sweets were harder to come by.

Why do people who seem to have it all want more?

It doesn't matter if you're Beyonce or Donald Trump—humans are generally programmed to always want to increase their status. Also, you have to remember that a many people who are beautiful, successful, or rich are surrounded by people who are even more beautiful or more successful or wealthier which only fuels the sense that they can do better.

If you'd like to read up on evolutionary psychology, here are some recommendations:

The Moral Animal: Why We Are the Way We Are: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology by Robert Wright

Sex on the Brain: The Biological Differences Between Men + Women by Deborah Blum

Survival of the Prettiest by Nancy Etcoff

—Jennifer Kao

THE SECRETS OF FREEMASONRY REVEALED!

All your questions answered!

For thousands of years, the uninitiated have wondered about freemasons. What is it they do? What do they want? How will they get it? Are they good in bed? All those questions and more will be answered for the first time, right now. Because I did a five-second google search.

Yes, the answers to freemasonry are pathetically on display for everyone and anyone with a modem and an archaic dial-up connection. Thousands of years of careful secrecy have been shot to hell, with answers to all the secrets now available to anyone bored of porn. And honestly, they're not that interesting.

What is Freemasonry?

In either the early 13th, 16th, or 18th century (it's debated), stoneworkers, architects and other artisans formed this fraternity to preserve their creative and spiritual secrets. There was also a bunch of religious mumbo-jumbo involved, including alchemy, sun worship, Druid and ancient Egyptian rites and ceremonies, and this whole allegory between being creators and the Creator, etc. Masons will tell you that their order goes back to the beginning of mankind, because all those who pondered their existence were Masons. Basically, the Masons thought they were hot shit because they could put one stone on top of another while also able to think some deep thoughts.

What do the Freemasons do today?

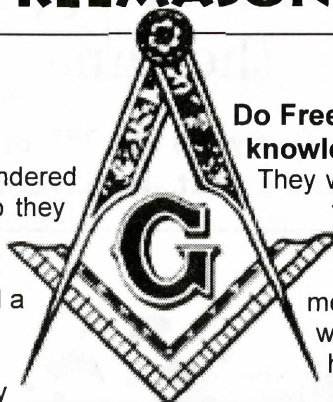
Sit around and smoke cigars? They claim to promote good ethics, but I have yet to meet a Mason, let alone appreciate his moral superiority. They still do all the funky rituals though.

What sort of rituals?

Masons have to pass through degrees. The just-initiated aren't told shit, or are told a lot of contradictory things to confuse them. As they pass the rituals and progress upwards, more is revealed to them. At 32 degrees, they become Master Masons and supposedly they then learn the secrets of life. 33 degrees is rewarded to the grand poo-bah supreme council of masons, or some such nonsense.

Why all the secrecy?

Maybe it was originally out of fear of being persecuted. Or more likely, they just thought it would be cool, especially for such an exclusive fraternity. It's also elitism—they also don't want the general populace, or even their younger members, to know all the truths they think they know.



Do Freemasons hold any special knowledge or wisdom?

They wish. Many claim that masonry is all about finding man's place in the universe, the meaning of life, yadda yadda yadda. I think it's all about a bunch old, privileged men trying to feel important in a society that would rather herd them off to a retirement home and forget about them.

What's the final secret of Freemasonry—the one the 33rd degree Mason learns?

Don't waste your time in dopey secret societies.

Do Freemasons really want to secretly take over the world?

Sure, but who doesn't?

Aleister Crowley rips the Freemasons a new one!

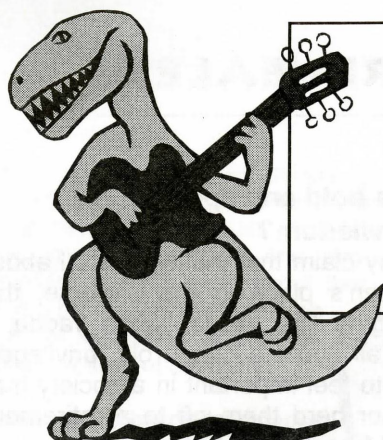
From his book "Confessions":

"**What is Freemasonry?** I collated the rituals and their secrets, much as I had done the religions of the world, with their magical and mystical bases. As in that case, I decided to neglect what it too often actually was. ...I **proposed to define freemasonry as a system of communicating truth - religious, philosophical, magical and mystical; and indicating the proper means of developing human faculty by means of a peculiar language whose alphabet is the symbolism of ritual. Universal brotherhood and the great moral principles, independent of personal, racial, climatic and other prejudices, naturally formed a background which would assure individual security and social stability for each and all.**

"The question then arose, 'What truths should be communicated and by what means promulgated?' My first object was to eliminate from the hundreds of rituals at my disposal all exoteric elements. **Many degrees contain statements (usually inaccurate) of matters well known to modern schoolboys, through they may have been important when the rituals were written.** I saw no point in overloading the system with superfluous information.

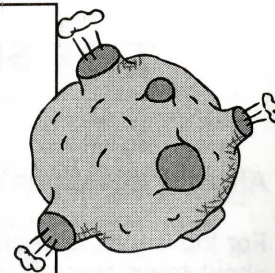
"Another essential point was to reduce the unwieldy mass of material to a compact and coherent system. **I thought that everything worth preserving could and should be presented in not more than a dozen ceremonies,** and that it should be brought well within the capacity of any officer to learn by heart his part during the leisure time at his disposal, in a month at most."

In other words, Masonry is like any other religion that claims to have all the truths, only they choose to complicate things by meeting out their dogmas in tiny installments to a select few. Lame. (Bold mine)



What Happened to the Dinosaurs?

65 million years ago, 75% of life on Earth suddenly became extinct. Here are some of the theories:



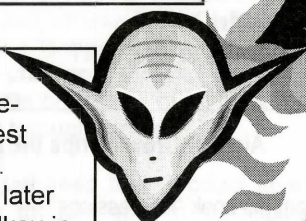
God became bored with dinosaurs and sought to make a species after his own image. And so that epitome of Man, this reflection of God, went on to beat the record for single-season doubles for the Mets with 44 in 1996.



An asteroid, or a series of asteroids, crashed, wiping out all large animals. This paved the way for mammals to develop and evolve, culminating into the 1966 birth of Bernard Gilkey.

A massive volcano erupted, spreading deadly iridium into the atmosphere. A heavy atmosphere that was only lifted when Bernard Gilkey hit a career-high 30 homers for the Mets in 1996.

Aliens invaded the planet, vaporizing most native species and kidnapping the rest for their intergalactic zoos. Those same aliens would later star alongside Bernard Gilkey in "Men In Black".



Disease wrought havoc upon the fauna and flora of the planet, killing herbivores first, thus leaving no food for carnivores. This hunger was felt by Bernard Gilkey as he was cheated out of a pennant by the Arizona Diamondbacks in 2001 while on the Braves.

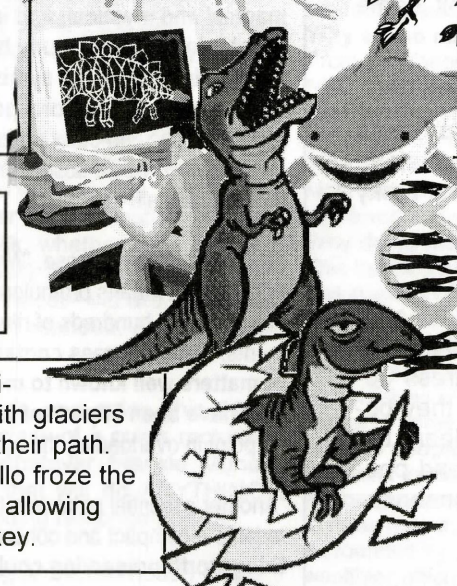
A war broke out between sharks and dinosaurs. The winner? Bernard Gilkey's three-run homer on Sept. 13, 1997, rallying the Mets back from 0-6 to beat the Expos 9-6.



Solar flares and supernovas elevated temperatures to unbearable degrees, wiping out oceans and starting the chain of events that would one day lead to Bernard Gilkey batting an impressive .317 and slugging .562 in 1996, eighth and tenth in the league, respectively.

One of the previous factors forced an evolutionary jump-start, transforming dinosaurs into birds. Pussies.

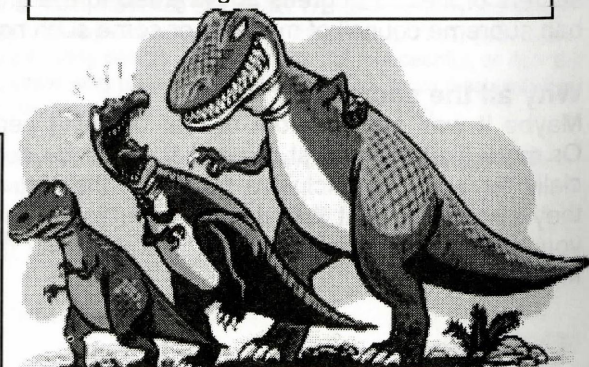
Orbital changes affected climate, swarming the land with glaciers and freezing everything in their path. Not unlike how Frank Castillo froze the Cardinals' bats on 9/25/95, allowing only a triple to Bernard Gilkey.



Cosmic rays made animals ill. Those that could not adapt, perished from radiation sickness. Just as Bernard Gilkey was SICK in the outfield, making only 36 errors in almost 2000 games.



Excessive heat, cold, disease, and/or radiation destroyed the algae in the oceans, lowering oxygen levels considerably and making Earth uninhabitable for most animals. Just as Cooperstown has become uninhabitable for Bernard Gilkey, who only has an 18% chance of entering the Hall, according to the HOF Career Standards Test.



Rick Springfield: Poetic Genius or Evil Madman?

Rick Springfield, the Aussie soap actor/rock star, famous for some popular singles in the early 1980s, is, in this writer's humble opinion, one of the greatest poets of this or any generation.

Born at some point in the 1950s, he rose to fame with the song '**Jessie's Girl**', a song about his killer obsession with his friend's girlfriend. At first it just sounds like jealousy, but Springfield's cleverly written lyrics prove otherwise:

"And she's watching him with those eyes
And she's lovin' him with that body, I just know it!
And he's holding her in his arms late, late at night"

Notice the repetition of the word 'and' at the beginning of every sentence. It likely has some kind of symbolic meaning that few of us are able to understand. But most prevalent is the way he talks about Jessie and his girl. He writes as if he is hiding in a tree spying on them. He even affirms this when he says: "I just know it!" And the exclamation mark? It just adds to the general creepiness of the song. Furthermore, his friend Jessie may not even be a guy. Most guys named Jesse spell it without the 'i'. Springfield's friend may in fact be a girl - a lesbian - and this most likely the reason the singer is stalking the couple.

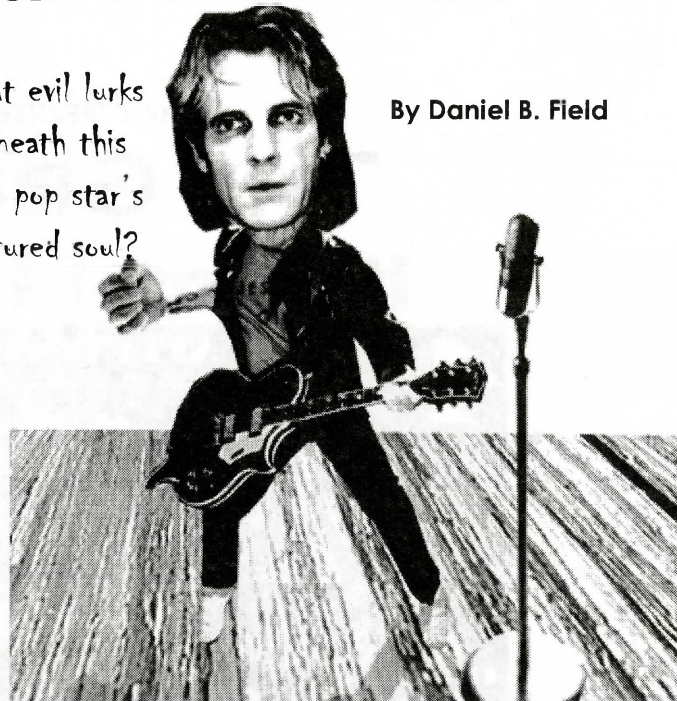
Consider the song '**How Do You Talk to Girls**' on Springfield's album **Success Hasn't Spoiled Me Yet**. In the powerful rocker, he belts out a classic chorus that just verifies his loser Aussie status:

"Seems I'm making it harder and harder
While everybody else is doing well
I get confused by their bodies
I get tangled in their curls
How do you talk to girls
How do you talk to girls
What's a poor boy to do
Tell me how do you talk to girls?
How do you talk to girls?"

As asserted in the third and fourth lines, Springfield's biggest problem is his inability to perform oral sex. As a result of this setback, he cannot look a girl in the face without thinking of her naked and insisting he go down. The singer, at the time this song was released, was well over 30 years of age. He labels himself a boy - a poor boy at that - which may be one of the reasons why he has pedophilic urges. He can talk to women, but it is girls that he has trouble conversing with. Being a rock star, he must have trouble with the plethora of young groupies he gets after every show. Springfield proves in this chorus alone that he definitely had gonorrhea or herpes - instead of revealing this to groupies, he tries, and fails, to perform oral sex.

What evil lurks
beneath this
80s pop star's
tortured soul?

By Daniel B. Field



By the mid-1980s, Springfield's reputation as a diseased Australian stalker/pedophile may have affected his album sales. His 1984 album **Living in Oz** did not try to ignore the fact that he was Australian - a problem for everyone in the world except New Zealanders - but what it did do was try to change his reputation. While he may have changed his stalking ways, he showed that now he was practicing domestic abuse. In '**I Can't Stop Hurting You**', he sings:

"I love you, I love you, I love you
But I can't stop hurting you
I want to, I want to
I can't stop hurting you
I can't, I can't
I can't stop hurting you, it's getting bad
I don't know what to do"

Critics who called Springfield "washed up" were correct; his poetry fails to use the symbolism and imagery of his previous music. Instead, he reveals his problem as literally as possible. To make matters worse, he cannot find a way to change, which may mean that he'll have to go to jail. Luckily, Springfield is a small, weak man, who can't defend himself; as the song continues, he admits, "the wounds heal from the scratch and bite", meaning that his girlfriend put up a fight. More likely than not, she won. Instead of resolving it, Springfield wrote a song, paving the way for thousands of emo kids to follow his footsteps and get beat up by a girl.

In conclusion, this horribly awful man from down under who can't go down may seem like a one-trick pony, but his lyrics are in fact a gateway into Rick Springfield's corrupt soul. Still, his songs are works of poetry that should stand the test of time, giving Springfield a shot at induction into the Emo Hall of Fame.

Image by Bryan Kremkau

WHAT SECRETS LIE BEHIND...

THE GREAT SEAL



In our pockets, we carry around enough Masonic symbols to choke a Discordian. Check this crazy shit out:

1. The most obvious is the all-seeing eye atop of the pyramid. The all-seeing eye, of course, represents either God or John Ashcroft.

Note: The eye is also used by the Ordo Templi Orientis, the Order of Oriental Templars, or the Order of the Temple of the East. Originally, but no longer, affiliated with Masonry, the OTO is just as creepy and lame.

2. The pyramid represents both ancient Egypt and its rituals (which have been continued by the Masons), and excellent architecture. The fact that the pyramid is lighted on the east side represents the eastern temple of somethin' somethin'. Note that the pyramid does NOT represent the enslavement and suffering of the Jews.

3. Annuut Coeptis means "God has favored our undertaking." That's a bit forward to think God cares that much about our money, but hey, if God likes the buck, I like the buck.

4. Novus Ordo Seclorum. "A new order has begun" or "A new order for the ages." No way. That's freakin nuts!

5. In God We Trust. We trust what? Our money? The First Bank of God? And should we trust some invisible force that controls the planet, behind the scenes? Holy crap, maybe God's part of the Illuminati!

6. The bald eagle, a uniquely American symbol. It's even spread eagle, just like our hot American women.

7. 13 stars representing the 13 original colonies. But $3-1=2$, and $1 \times 3=3$. Which is 23. As in 23 Skidoo. As in $2+3=5$, one of the most powerful numbers in the occult. That's why the pentagram star has five points and can be drawn with five lines. That's why apples have five seeds and are called the "witch's fruit". That's why you can't eat too many apples without getting diarrhea.



The roman numerals for 1776.
The very same year Nikola Tesla invented crack for the CIA.

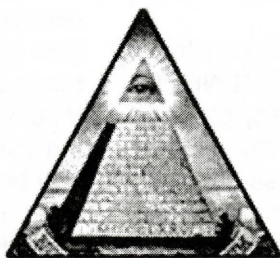
8. If you keep staring at this spot, all the secrets of the Illuminati are revealed. If the images don't become clear to you, that means you enjoy butt sex.

9. Allegedly, there are 32 feathers on the eagle, a nod to the 32 degrees of masonry. But then, I wouldn't know because I don't sit and count feathers on a cartoon eagle on a one-dollar bill. Get a life, people.

10. Money is not actually made out of paper, but from the combined will and hallucinations of a people gone mad. That, and hemp.

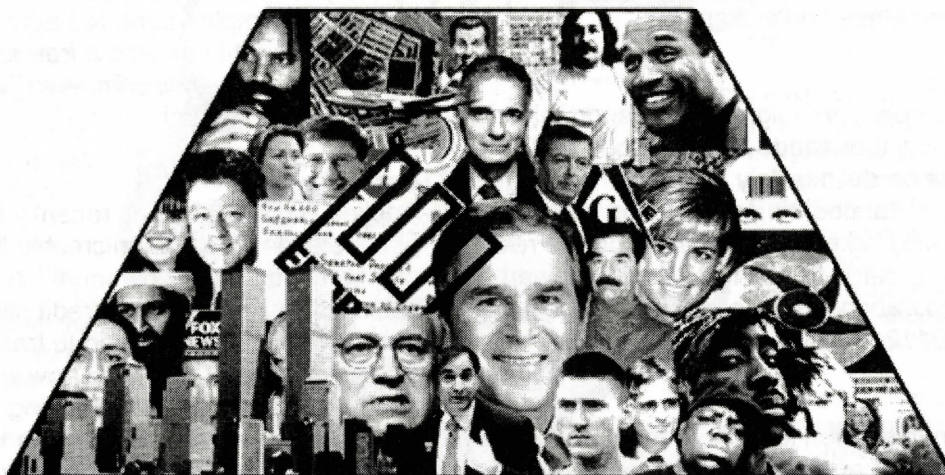
DID YOU KNOW?

If you fold the dollar bill in thirds horizontally, you can make George Washington look like a flaccid penis!



Screw The Illuminati

HERE'S SOME REAL CONSPIRACIES



By Adam Liebling

When you think of conspiracy, JFK probably comes to mind. Or secret societies, or Roswell, or the success of *Frasier*. But what about the conspiracies we are actually experience NOW. The ones we're living through, knowing conspiracies are abound, but not caring much? Let's look at some of them:

9/11 Conspiracy

What did Bush know, and how long did he know? There are lots of insinuations about US energy companies secretly dealing with the Taliban over an oil pipeline months before 9/11, but there are clearer smoking guns than that. Like John Ashcroft being advised not to use commercial aircraft a week before the attacks, large-scale insider trading days leading up to 9/11, or reports that Bush was briefed by the CIA on the imminent attacks. Comprehensive (if speculative) articles and links here: www.takebackthepresidency.com/911.htm

9/11 Coverup

The majority of the murderers on those planes were Saudis, funded by Saudi money. But since Bush and his friends have their pockets full of Saudi money themselves, they've tried hard to block congressional inquiries into 9/11. Finally, the investigation proceeded and dozens of pages about the al Qaeda/Saudi Arabia link have been censored by the Bush Administration. Obviously, keeping that US-Saudi oil/money wheel spinning is more important than matters of national security. (www.americanpolitics.com/20020517Outrage3.html)

Anthrax

Remember anthrax? It was in the news for about a day before we became more interested in J. Lo's breakup with P. Diddy. It seems the investigation has ended (or at least hush-hush), likely because the culprit could be politically embarrassing. That is, since anthrax is pretty damn hard to come by, he was probably someone working for the military's bio-defense program. The US Army has since admitted to having made small quantities of weaponized anthrax, and the strain used in the attacks came from the same US bio-defense labs. Interesting. (www.fas.org/bwc/news/anthraxreport.htm)

Speaking of Anthrax...

Why did the White House begin taking Cipro—the powerful antibiotic used against anthrax—a month before the anthrax attacks? (www.judicialwatch.org/1967.shtml)

Halliburton Windfall

Halliburton, whose director was Dick Cheney before he became Bush's running mate, are profiting mightily in this age of combating terrorism. Halliburton got to build the detention cells in Guantanamo Bay, clean up the giant rubble pile known as Afghanistan, and now was given the contract to rebuild Iraq. And by the way—there was no competitive bidding involved. Halliburton was handed it all, so far \$600 million in military work. (http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2003-05-30-halliburton_x.htm)

Other Friends of Dick

Halliburton isn't the only company receiving favors from the elusive and secretive Cheney. "A June 2001 NRDC analysis showing that the Bush-Cheney energy plan, which the administration released in May, is the culmination of a process that hinged on cozy business connections, secret deals and industry campaign contributions." Basically, Cheney met in secret with industry friends and designed the US's energy plan based on their wish lists. Lawsuits to get Cheney to release records of these secret meetings have so far been unsuccessful. Best article on this here: <http://www.nrdc.org/air/energy/aplayers.asp>. Shameless and sickening.

Enron Unplugged

When Bush's #1 career campaign patrons suddenly went into bankruptcy, thousands lost their jobs and investors lost billions on deliberately faulty information. Bush immediately distanced himself from his friend "Kenny Boy" Lay, and talked a lot about corporate responsibility. So what came of all this? Martha Stewart gets arrested. (<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/DailyNews/enron011210.html>)

Iraqi Road

Yes, the Bush administration launched an unprovoked and unilateral attack on another country that posed no threat to their neighboring countries or the US. For whatever the motive—personal beef, oil, more presence in the Mid East, a warning to Iran and Syria, divert people's attention away from the economy, or simple dislike of Saddam "you tried to kill my daddy" Hussein—the fact arises that Bush lied and bullied to get his way. First there was Iraq's ties to 9/11 (unproven), then the that they were uncooperative to UN inspectors (unproven), then that he had WMD (unproven), then finally that Iraq needed a regime change (like the US). This is one conspiracy that's unraveling in real time; unfortunately, no one seems to care as we're too busy waving our flags.

Sidenote Rant

What gets me about the whole Iraq thing are the roll-over puppy dog Democrats. Because Bush had popular support, Democrats agreed to put American soldiers pointlessly in harm's way. Now that Bush's deceptions are coming to light, Democrats are now acting shocked and appalled. Nice try, but you're not fooling anyone, you spineless chameleons.

Patriot Act

This ironically named act and its potential sequel gives the government broad, sweeping powers in information gathering, law enforcement, and surveillance. Conversely, it weakens judicial review, checks and balances, and the public's access to information. Stronger tools to combat terrorism or a rushed and large leap toward a fascist state? Better burn your library card. (www.eff.org/Privacy/Surveillance/Terrorism_militias/20011031_eff_usa_patriot_analysis.php)

National ID Cards

This stupid and dangerous idea from the 90s has made a comeback after the terrorist attacks. By pretending to be about stopping identity theft and preventing terrorism, this card would include an identification number, fingerprint, and possibly retinal scan, and be used as ATM cards, credit cards, and to obtain social security and medical care. Besides the obvious use and probably real reason for the card—to stop illegal immigrants—it could also be used to keep an eye on every single citizen, including what you're buying, where you're going, and your business records, your taxes, your employment and education records, etc. Funny, I thought this was a free society? (www.newswithviews.com/news_worthy/news_worthy19.htm)

VeriChip

Applied Digital Solutions recently developed an implantable identification microchip for humans which can be used to store personal information, like medical, military, criminal and credit history. Can this human bar code also be used to track people? Doesn't matter—Applied Digital are now working on a satellite-based system for human tracking. Not that they need to—in a few years, most cell phones will have global positioning chips. (www.adsx.com/prodservpart/verichip.html)

Shit I Don't Care About:

Corporate media

Yes, just about every newspaper and news station is owned by the same four giant corporate entities. If it sucks so much, support your local independent paper or independent news websites. Yes, that means actually paying for subscriptions and donating to news sites and blogs. Bitch about Fox News all you want, but when Salon.com goes bust, you have no one to blame but yourself.

Frankenfood

Oh, stop being such a pussy. Just about everything you eat has been altered in some way. You cry about the genetic modification that allows you to eat ripe tomatoes in winter, yet you don't mind the vast quantities of chemicals and preservatives you've been ingesting for decades.

2000 Elections

So much has been written on this, that I'd rather give myself a papercut on the testicles with a hanging chad than have to repeat any of it. But let me say this—believe what you want, but it's obvious Bush stole the election from Ralph Nader, who would've won the whole shebang.

Image by Bryan Kremkau © 2003

Note from the editor: I don't write political stuff usually, so be kind.

Karma Chameleon

Tara Meehan

Karma is a strange phenomenon. Good or bad, it ultimately ends up coming full circle taking a big old bite out of your ass. Examples of bad karma doing this are endless so I'm not going to bore you with sample cases. Good karma is a bit trickier.

I remember being in bed, October 25th 1986. It had to be close to midnight but my ten year old brain had no sense of trivial matters like time or sleep. All I knew or cared to know was that Gary Carter was at the plate with two strikes on him and one out.

The Shea Stadium scoreboard had already congratulated the curse-ridden Boston Red Sox for winning the World Series for the first time in a thousand years. My stomach was turning, aware that the Met haters in my 5th grade class would have "METS SUCK!!" gleefully written over and over again on the blackboard. There would be no clever retort to come back with. I'd have to sit and take it. So there I laid under the covers, tears falling down my cheeks, silently praying for a miracle. A miracle at any cost, consequence be damned! Gary Carter singled and the rest is history. Ten years later, I found myself living in Beantown with the Sox, in the hunt every year for a pennant and the Mets stinking worse than the trash in Washington Square Park, signing certain Hall of Fame free agents, only to have them morph into Hall of Shamers faster than Ralph Kiner mispronounces a player's name. Hence, good karma can become a royal pain in the buttocks.

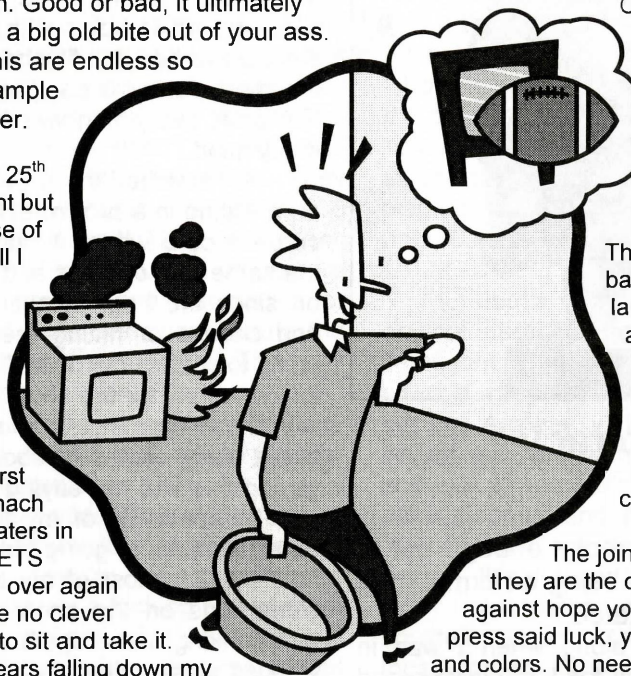
Perhaps the oddest thing about karma, positive or negative, is timing. That said you never hear someone say, "Dude, you got some serious conspiracy-esque karma against you." But think about it. Karma in its truest form can easily be seen as a cosmic fuck you. The Gods, not smiling, but hysterically laughing at you. For lack of a better term, conspirator karma (I know conspirator is not a word but go with me here) can be unavoidable.

It is Saturday, a beautiful sunny, not so humid day. The perfect weekend to walk around the city, buy a terribly trendy ice coffee with the last two bucks you have on you and tell yourself, "Self, you fucking rock!"

But there is one problem- you have been wearing the same underwear for three straight days and should do laundry in case you get laid, even though there are no immediate prospects in sight. What to do?

A light bulb goes off in your pea brain. "I won't wear undies at the club tonight. That 's so hot!" You stand on the corner triumphant, a genius among mere mortals.

Suddenly, the clouds swarm out of nowhere. A mile away from any form of public transportation, the skies open and puke all over you. Your rain-soaked hands let the ice coffee slip through your fingers. The plastic lid breaks off and spills all over your new Dickies. The Gods are bastards.



Once you waddle home, you start sneezing uncontrollably. Your forehead is warming up, ripe for a fever. Sweaty, snotty and about as sexy as the homeless guy sleeping in the corner ATM, you bag any thought of techno induced underwearlessness and hit the sack.

The next day should be the work-free Sabbath. It would have if you did your damn laundry. But no, you had to think you were a playa rivaling Snoop on the ridiculous Girls Gone Wild commercials and put the dirty load off another day. So on a cloudy, soon to be stormy Sunday, you stumble out of bed, toss your clothes into a paper shopping bag and methodically head to the laundromat.

The joint is empty. A few dryers are tumbling but they are the only other signs of life. You smile hoping against hope your luck has done a 180. Sure not to press said luck, you do not bother separating your whites and colors. No need to be greedy with the machines. Finished stuffing the washer to the brim, you close the top, turn the dial to the appropriate cycle and dig for change.

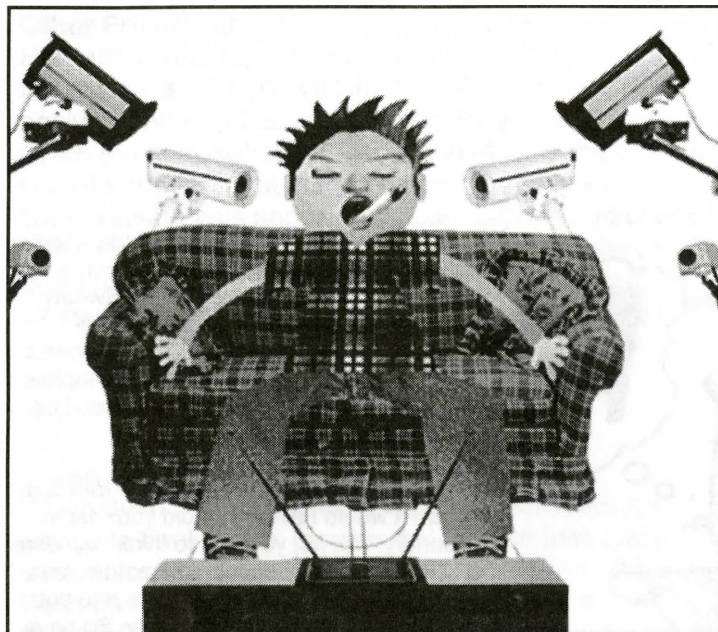
And dig and dig and dig for change. But your caffeine addiction from the horror that was Saturday has screwed you over. You scour the floors in search of spare change. Nothing but pennies, lint and what could be rat droppings but you prefer to think otherwise. You prefer not thinking, period.

And that is when the 180 becomes a karmic full circle 360. The ATM housing the pseudo sexy homeless guy is a storefront away. It is early so he'll still be unconscious. The drunken frat boys can always be counted on for dropping in a quarter or two, three if accompanied by a hot-albeit-brainless sorority girl. By now, you know that whatever you do, you will end up fucked for it. You can opt for waiting in the laundromat and try bumming quarters off other hapless Sunday morning washers staring certain failure in the face. Or you can "borrow" the funds from the near comatose homeless guy, clean your clothes and embrace the rest of the Sabbath from the comfort of your freshly made bed.

Two hours later, you find yourself with a cup of hot coffee and remote control clicking between the Mets unfortunately losing and the Yankees unfortunately winning. But your clothes smell fantastic and your fever is gone. Life is good. Life is the best. Maybe this could be the night you meet that special someone at the club. Hell, even your palm is itchy, a tell tale sign that good fortune is in your future.

Actually it is less an itch and more a burn. Why is your palm red? What is the deal with the pus emanating from it? Why does it wreek of Odor de Toilet? Oh right, the bum's spare change.

You scoff. You click. You sip. You sigh. Gotta hand it to those karmic conspirators.



A Real World Conspiracy

Sean Carswell

On some days, I would smoke enough pot to incapacitate a normal man. And, being a normal man myself, I would become incapacitated.

Mostly, those days came along when I was in graduate school. I was taking a full load of classes and teaching four Freshman English classes a week and tutoring in the Writing Center. It was a pretty relaxed schedule, except around the time of midterms and finals, at which point I'd do an overwhelming amount of work.

So one day after a particularly tough mid-term rush, when all the papers I had to write were handed in and all the papers I had to grade were handed back, I decided that I would smoke pot until I was just shy of shitting my pants. I had a new bag and loaded the bong and smoked it down and repeated until I could hardly walk out of my bedroom and out to the living room. When I got out there, my roommate, John, was watching a *Real World* marathon. I was too stoned to argue and too stoned to do anything else, so I sat there and watched with him.

I was a newcomer to the show, so John brought me up to speed. Apparently, there were six petty people living in a house in San Francisco and a seventh guy—a bike messenger—who liked to do everything he could to fuck up the trite lives of his other six roommates. As anyone who has watched the show would know, things rapidly deteriorated. That's pretty much the point of the show: to group a bunch of people who will hate each other, then watch them fight.

I explained this to John, and he told me to shut up and watch the show. So I did. For about an hour. Then, John went to work.

This meant I had the apartment to myself. John wasn't a pothead like I was, so, when he was around, I did my smoking in my bedroom. After he left, I brought the bong and the bag of weed out into the living room. I made a pot of macaroni and cheese, poured a soda into a 44 oz. plastic convenience store cup, and settled down to try to

understand this *Real World* phenomenon.

At the time, these reality shows were a fairly new concept. This was before MTV followed it up with *Road Rules*, and this was way before *Survivor* and *Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire* and *Brides in Alaska* and the contemporary onslaught of this type of programming. All of these recent shows are a mystery to me, and they're absurd enough to begin with, but in late 1994, when I was stoned and had just finished writing a forty-page paper on the most paranoid book in American literature, *Gravity's Rainbow*, everything was hitting peak levels of absurdity in my mind.

I watched the show and first pictured how I'd look on it, sitting in a brown recliner that had been pulled off a curb—a curb where it rightfully belonged—and wearing the same pair of jeans and same flannel shirt that I'd had on since the beginning of fall, occasionally eating mac and cheese or hitting the bong or reaching under my jeans to scratch my balls. There was no doubt, I'd make a lousy subject for the show. Especially if I had to hang out with those roommates and listen to their petty bickering about doing dishes or about house politics or about him saying this and her saying that. It would be too much for me. I'd spend all of my time either hanging out in my room, reading, or going out to bars—which is pretty much how I spent most of my time anyway—but these delusional kids on the show probably wouldn't understand that drinking and drugs are simply the ceremonies of the working class culture I'd grown up in. It's definitely not a cause for rehab. They'd probably have a house meeting about me and decide to have an intervention, and I'd probably get kicked out of the house. This notion became even more clear to me when I watched the petty six gang up to kick out the bike messenger.

I started to feel an affinity to the bike messenger. He was getting kicked out; I would've gotten kicked out. It wasn't a deep thought. My whole point that day was to have no deep thoughts. As I watched the kid getting booted from his place by his roommates, I started to form arguments to defend him. During commercials, I took my own time in front of the camera, explaining my take on things. Thankfully, the camera was imaginary and my part on the show was imaginary and no one was there to witness it.

As things went on and got worse with the marathon, I started to think how much cooler the *Real World* would be if it were my friends living back in Cocoa Beach. One of my friends, Julie, had an apartment right in downtown Cocoa Beach, about three blocks off the beach. My whole crew back home were always partying at Julie's house, staggering in and out of love affairs, fights, adventures, and all kinds of drama. I started to wish that Julie's house was outfitted with cameras, and as I sat in my living room in Flagstaff, Arizona, I could watch Julie and the whole sick crew engaging in a real world with no capital letters or gen x marketing. That's when it occurred to me: the *Real World* is a conspiracy.

The whole point of the *Real World* wasn't to allow us to be voyeurs. It was to allow the Man to be a voyeur. Put cameras all around your target audience. See how they live. Monitor what they buy. Try to influence their

clothing choices and food choices. Make sure that they get their coffee at Starbucks and their pants at the Gap and their shoes from Nike. Make sure that anyone going beyond the stereotype is ostracized. Learn how to act like a good consumer. Learn to shun a bad one. Oh man, I thought. This is getting scary. I took another bong hit and watched more and realized that the conspiracy went deeper. It was part of the drug war, because look at that bike messenger. That kid was on crystal meth. I was sure of it, and, believe me, in those days my finger was on the pulse of the drug culture. But surely I wasn't the only one who saw it. Surely, the DEA watched the *Real World*. They watched the bike messenger's movements. They could see when he was high and when he wasn't. They could track his patterns. They could see the guarded, just off-camera drug deals. They could build profiles and just cause for search and seizure off of this kid's behavior. Surely the *Real World* could help cops bust drug dealers. This was serious. Some of my best friends were drug dealers.

But it went beyond that, to the whole camera thing. You know how some cultures believe that, when you get your picture taken, the camera captures a little bit of your soul? Well, I thought in my drug-addled condition, they're right. If you need empirical evidence, look at all the actors and actresses in Hollywood. They're the most photographed people in the world, and not a fucking one of them has a soul to speak of. I mean, believe what you want, but the more someone gets his picture taken, the less soulful he becomes. This is why so many people hate to get their picture taken. Inherently, this is why we shy away from cameras and don't trust them. This is a deep-seeded belief in all of us. We know we're supposed to look at the world from inside our heads, looking out, not through the lens of some passive observer who captures all of our light and transfers it onto celluloid. We believe this inherently, but this belief is overshadowed by the natural human tendency innate in each one of us to think that we're the center of the universe. What better way to show that you're the center of the universe than to capture all of your movements on camera and broadcast them out to millions of people? How important must you really be if millions of total strangers are willing to watch the minutiae of your day-to-day life and envy you for it? Who wouldn't sell their soul to be the center of the universe? And that question led me to the most insidious revelation that I got about the *Real World*: everyone's gonna try now. People are going to start putting their own lives on camera. Fuck the soul, get the sales.

It was all too much for me. I put down the bong, went back to my bedroom, and wrote a letter to Julie. I warned her that the *Real World* was a great conspiracy to desensitize us all to cameras, to monitor our lives so The Man could profit off of us or punish us. I sent the letter before I could sober up and get a grip on my own paranoia.

A few weeks later, Julie wrote me back to tell me that I was smoking too much pot and that my theory was way too fucking paranoid. She was right, but that didn't stop me. I'd been working on a novel at the time, so I included my *Real World* conspiracy theory in the novel. As is the case with most of my early writings, whenever I had a thought I thought was deep, I had a carpenter explain it to a stripper. Or vice versa. It didn't matter. For a lot of the nineties, I felt like carpenters and strippers were the only people worth writing about. I'm much better now. Anyway, that's how it works in the book: carpenters and strippers and *Real World* conspiracy. Like I said, Julie was right. I smoked too much pot and was way too paranoid. But the story doesn't end there.

Just a few weeks ago, almost nine years after my original paranoid freakout about the *Real World*, Julie came out to Southern California to run a marathon. It's strange what becomes of hardcore drunks when they sober up. Anyway, while out here, Julie came up to LA and visited me. We were walking around my neighborhood and talking about old friends. At a lull in our conversation, Julie stopped and pointed at the top of a streetlight. "What's that?" she asked.

"It's a camera," I said.

Julie asked me what it was doing up there, and I couldn't answer. I told her that I had noticed several of those cameras around LA, and I didn't know what any of them were doing where they were. In fact, I'd stared at this particular one several times, trying to figure it out. There was a bank nearby, but the camera didn't point toward the bank. There was also a traffic light, but out of the field of vision for the camera. As far as I could tell, the camera didn't cover much except who went in and out of the Burger King parking lot. After a minute or two of staring, Julie came to the same conclusion.

Julie asked me if I remembered my old, paranoid *Real World* conspiracy theory. I did, but I didn't want to be reminded. Like she'd said nine years earlier, Julie said to me, "You smoked too much pot."

We started walking again, and I asked Julie about another of our old friends, Karin. "Oh, you won't believe it," Julie said. "Karin's trying to get onto *Survivor*. She's been training for it lately. We just shot her video last week."

I thought Julie was kidding with me, just trying to spark up some of that old paranoia. But no. She was serious. Karin really was trying to be on *Survivor*. Last I heard, Karin had a legitimate chance to be on the show.

Now, I don't know what to believe.

Sean Carswell is co-editor of Razorcake (razorcake.com) and co-founder of Gorsky Press (gorskypress.com). He also contributes to Ink 19, Clamor, and Flipside. His recent book of short stories is *Glue And Ink Rebellion* on Gorsky Press.

Image by Bryan Kremkau.

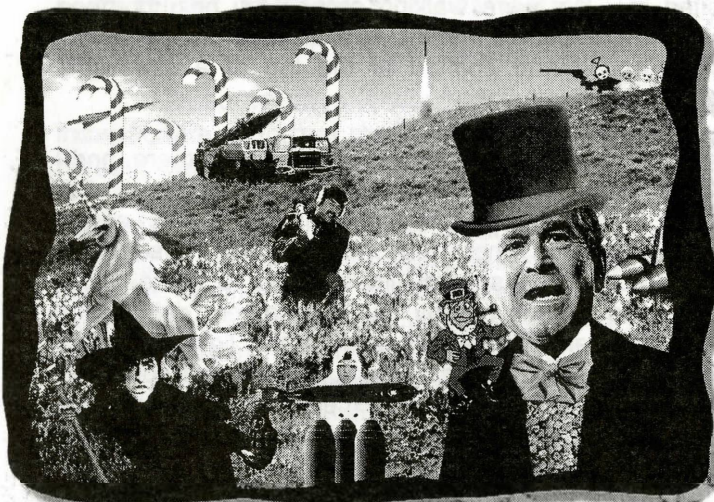
WHERE'S IRAQ'S WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION???



ARTWORK BY: BRYAN KREMKAU
CONCEPTS BY: BRYAN & JASON KREMKAU



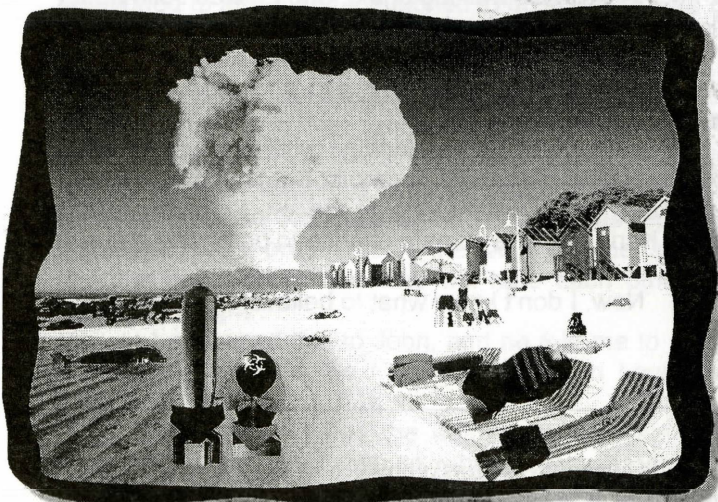
IN A SECRET LOCATION



IN BUSH'S LAND OF MAKE BELIEVE



VISITING THE WHITE HOUSE



ON VACATION



GAME DAY AT SHEA



In John Frankenheimer's film **The Manchurian Candidate** (1962), Laurence Harvey plays a Korean War hero turned brainwashed assassin. Watching the film today, people may see a reflection of Lee Harvey Oswald, yet the movie was released an unlucky thirteen months before Kennedy was shot.

Once the president was killed, United Artists pulled the film out of circulation for many years. Whether out of respect for the film's star Frank Sinatra who was a good friend of JFK or in reaction to reports that Oswald had been heavily influenced by the picture, it isn't hard to imagine a studio acting so sensitively. In recent years, movie trailers and release dates have been adversely affected by tragedies in the news.

The Manchurian Candidate, though, was absent from the public eye for so long that one wonders if there were some larger forces at work. Could it have been that some government organization was the influenced party rather than Oswald? Would it have been too obvious what was going on in the world if the film was more familiar to citizens as more figures met with similar fates? Suspicious connections are made by theorists with every little coincidence from Frankenheimer driving Robert Kennedy to the hotel on the night of his assassination to Salinger's "Catcher in the Rye" becoming a popular alternative to the Queen of Diamonds used in the film.

As with conspiracy theories, movies can sometimes confuse a line between revelation and disinformation. They can also represent a periodic tone in history, particularly times of paranoia and distrust. In the 1950's, while Americans were worried about a communist conspiracy, many films, particularly those in the science-fiction genre, metaphorically drew upon the fears of physical and psychical invasion. From flying saucers to body snatchers, the depiction of our true enemy was safely hidden in subtext.

Don Siegel's original film of **Invasion of the Body Snatchers**

(1956) is important for introducing solipsistic ideas that have continued 50 years later through the influence of writer Philip K. Dick and filmmakers the Wachowski Brothers among others. The film has been interpreted differently as being either communist or anti-communist propaganda, though novelist Jack Finney, whose book the film is based on, has admitted that he never intended a political interpretation.

Now the film and its offspring (remade in 1978 and again in 1993) can be seen to influence general faithlessness in others. A very Cartesian viewpoint of the world, certain conspiracies imply that the rest of humanity could be a number of fallacies including pod people, aliens, robots, figments of the imagination, or just plain enemies undercover. Aside from making us aware of possible infiltration, the fears allow encroachment by a government or powerful group. Movies like **Body Snatchers** could give our leaders justification for Homeland Security issues. Best friends and friendly neighbors could be terrorists. What may come with that anxiety is a willingness to give up personal rights and liberties. From racial profiling to internment to marshal law, the nation could be in a cinematic preparation for acquiescence.

And if the enemy isn't among us, it could be ourselves. Countless movies have shown audiences that anybody can become a patsy with what is popularly referred to as "man-on-the-run thrillers". The subgenre has been around since at least 1918, but it was Alfred Hitchcock who perfected it in many of his pictures. The story is always the same: after being accused of a crime they didn't commit, the protagonists must go into hiding until proven innocent. The greatest representation of this tale on film is arguably **North By Northwest**, but it is Hitchcock's earlier **Saboteur** (1942) which should be witnessed for its display of secret societies.

by Christopher Campbell



Later, as was seen in *The Manchurian Candidate* and then the actual assassination of JFK, it became apparent that a patsy of certain magnitude is better to have certain backgrounds which might give them motive. But if you watch Oliver Stone's *JFK* (1991) you might think that anybody could have been blamed. The film takes a look into the investigation of Kennedy's assassination without pointing a finger at one person or group responsible, yet gives a justifiably confusing plot that could involve any or all of them. Through other films as well, Stone has shown a playful interest in conspiracy theory without coming across as a definite believer. Instead of belief or knowledge or truth, it is in the questions and the investigation which is more fun.

One of the disappointments of *Winter Kills* (1979), an extremely goofy thriller which gives a fictional exploration into the Kennedy assassination, is that the guilty party is revealed. Of course the satiric tone of the movie makes these answers no more convincing than anything in Stone's indirect approach. Still the story's path toward discovery is an enjoyable one. The script, based on a novel by Richard Condon who also wrote *The Manchurian Candidate*, is full of brilliant moments such as a life-size military game for the amusement of Sterling Hayden's millionaire Z.K. Dawson in which he uses real tanks.

Hayden also appears in *Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Love The Bomb* (1964), which is analogous to *Seven Days in May* (1964) as *Winter Kills* is to *JFK*. While *Strangelove* doesn't present too much of a conspiracy other than fluoridation in the water, it shows such an absurd side to military and political control that people may think the possibility of a military coup like the one in *Seven Days* is just as much a joke.

During most of 1960s, the American public was still in a happy ignorance concerning conspiracy and corruption. Movies like *Seven Days* were still optimistically viewed as plausible only in fiction. It took another twenty years and the Iran-Contra scandal for its likelihood to mount. In only ten years, the nation would have a great skepticism towards its leaders. In the meantime, there was still great trust in the government, the media, the corporations, none of whom could have ulterior motives in the world.

One of the first films released by Paramount during Robert Evans' reign as head of production, *The President's Analyst*, satirizes the FBI and other government agencies. While in production, in 1967, Evans was visited by agents insisting that the film be shut down. He ended up compromising bits of the film, but he also announced the reasons for doing so publicly through the media. Phones in both his home and office were subsequently bugged.

A year later, *Rosemary's Baby* opened very successfully for Evans and director Roman Polanski. The film marked the beginning of a lucrative era for Paramount and ushered in a wave of paranoia-themed movies for the studio. In 1969, after Polanski's

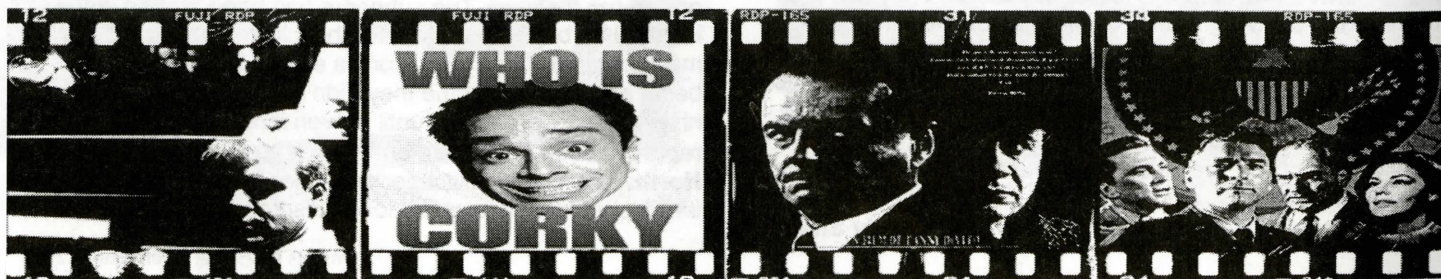
wife, Sharon Tate, was killed by the Manson Family, the filmmaker stayed with Evans. As part of the police investigation into the massacre, Evans' phone was bugged.

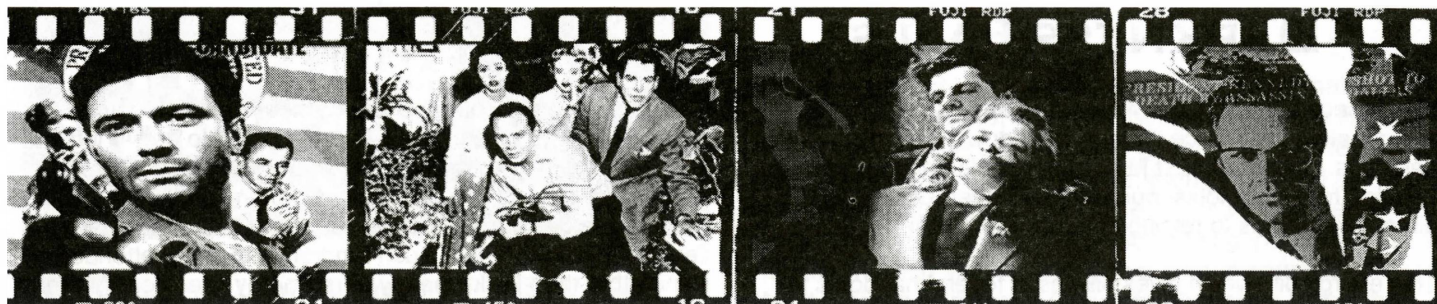
It is likely, however, that the mood of Paramount's films during this time had little to do with Evans and there is no evidence that he even acknowledged such a trend. Yet during his time there great pictures including *The Godfather*, *Chinatown*, *Catch-22*, *Serpico* and *Three Days of the Condor* portrayed some if not many instances of conspiracy and corruption. Though it was one Paramount release in particular which Evans had no influence in, despite its theme involving phone bugging, which would prove relevance more than any other.

Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation* (1974) was a timely film, released almost two years following the Watergate scandal, but at the height of its media consumption. Financed as a result of *The Godfather's* success, it beautifully tells of a surveillance specialist who gets too involved with one of his subjects. Gene Hackman's Harry Caul is the very embodiment of paranoia, a victim of his own privacy and protection. He represents conflicting sides to safe living for both citizens and governments, the desire for anonymity along with the desire for others to be known, the debate over which continues on a daily basis in America ever since the nation's sudden realization of its own vulnerability.

Another current hopelessness which has been more or less ignored since the terrorist attacks is one of suffragist apathy. This parallels the cynicism of the '70s after so many people felt their voices were not important and higher powers would allow horrible things to go on in the world for their own capital or bureaucratic greed. Aside from the gains in certain civil rights, much of the country felt their demonstrations to be inconsequential. The discoveries that news media was even skewed by a greater guidance, corporate or otherwise, and that disinformation was increasing in its ease and success with the public, allowed for complete detachment in believability.

Network (1976) set the stage for this revelation. By the time Sidney Lumet's look at prime-time television news arrived in theaters, nearly every piece of media was owned by some conglomerate. Ned Beatty's corporate executive gives a brilliant speech to Peter Finch's popular rabble-rouser admitting that, "There is no America. There is no democracy. There is only IBM and ITT, and AT&T, and DuPont, Dow, Union Carbide, and Exxon. Those are the nations of the world today." Everything can be edited, contexts can be changed, biases delivered, facts or whole stories ignored. Paddy Chayefsky's script is perfect satire, never feeling dated because the subject matter continues in a downward spiral, the picture seeming more significance today where it once seemed like an absurd notion.





Two other important films regarding media deception are **Capricorn One** (1978) and **Wag the Dog** (1997). The former concerns a faked space mission to Mars. James Brolin, Sam Waterston and O.J. Simpson play astronauts who are forced into a cover-up that goes badly and Elliott Gould is a reporter attempting to expose the truth. Everything that you could ask for in a conspiracy film can be found here from disappearing witnesses to failed brakes to topical allusions. That director Peter Hyams was given NASA support with trademarked logos, uniforms and equipment is devious in itself. Known for only supporting movies that show the agency in a supportive or propagandist way (*Armageddon* for instance), the consent here could be in hopes that the concept is regarded to be ludicrously unbelievable.

Wag the Dog, on the other hand, gave the people a lot more to question, thanks to its pertinence. Dustin Hoffman, playing a motion picture producer significantly modeled after Robert Evans, is hired by the White House to manufacture a war in order to sway public attention from a presidential sex scandal. The picture came out while real-life scandals had people wondering if this sort of thing was common. The script also makes references to the Reagan administration, hinting that history is often manipulated for the benefit of political gain, and unintentionally winking at *Seven Days in May*, which had come before.

By the late 70s, America was treated to a whopping serving of films in response to Watergate. **All The President's Men** (1976) proved the point that the journey is more important than the destination with its telling of Woodward and Bernstein's exposure of the 1972 plot. **The Stepford Wives** (1975) retold *Body Snatchers* as a metaphor for suburban changes as a result of women's lib and the men who want certain traditions adhered to. **The Parallax View** (1974) is a less exciting take on *The Manchurian Candidate* yet the inclusion of an amazing brainwashing film became the greatest non-acting-based scene stealing since Salvador Dali's dream sequence in *Spellbound*.

Other films of interest from this time include **Coma** (1978) involving the greedy schemes of medical practitioners in the commodity of human beings, **Alien** (1979) involving the greedy schemes of corporate practitioners in the commodity of alien beings, **Close Encounters of the Third Kind** (1977) involving the greedy schemes of military practitioners in the cover-up of alien beings and **The China Syndrome** (1979) involving the greedy schemes of corporate practitioners in the cover-up of the dangers to human beings.

The 1980s brought economic prosperity and optimism to enough people to rid the majority's suspicions. *Blade Runner* dealt again with the Cartesian theme. *E.T.* and the sequel *Aliens* dealt even more with corporate and military greed involving extra

terrestrials. Otherwise it wasn't until the mid-90s that conspiracy theory became a downright fad. A number of bad movies dealt with "man-on-the-run" scenarios or plots to kill leaders, many featuring the word 'conspiracy' in the title, but none worse than the aptly named *Conspiracy Theory*.

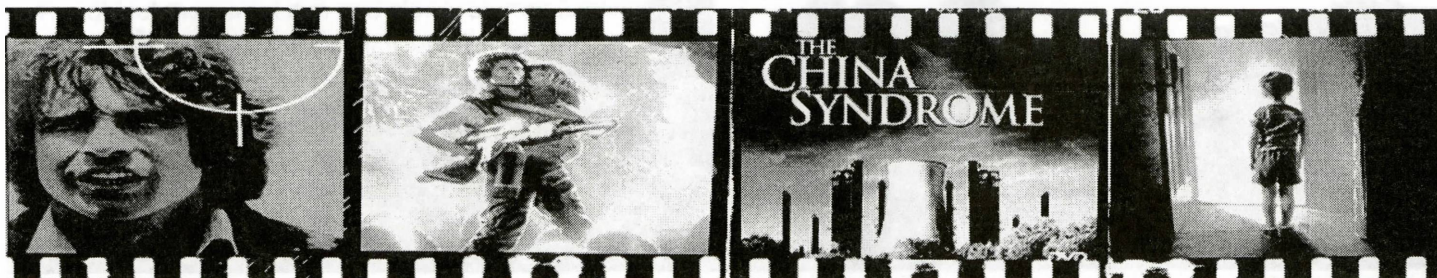
"The X-Files" arrived on television giving viewers a taste of everything they didn't even know they should know about what might be going on in the world. Suddenly, terms like Roswell and Area-51 became part of popular culture where once they were only known by characters in a Richard Linklater film. Movies like *The Rock*, which had slight influences from *Seven Days in May*, would tip their hat toward references that excited the minds of conspiracy theorists everywhere, without actually being about that subject.

Enemy of the State (1998) brought Gene Hackman back for an update in surveillance. **The Arrival** (1996) and the feature length **The X-Files** (1998) brought back fears of alien invasion, speculating that it may have already taken place. **The Insider** (1999) reminded us of the corporate stronghold on the media and public lifestyle. And by decade's end, **The Matrix** (1999) made sure that few people were left to have not solipsistically question their own existence.

All of these films had to be made, whether as information, misinformation or disinformation. It is possible that a number of them are just plain innocent entertainments or speculative warnings, but movies are best when they are mirrors to our current psychological inclination. All these pictures are helpful to both sides of any conspiracy. They can make a person optimistic or pessimistic, strong or weak, discontented or complacent. The important thing is to pay attention. It doesn't matter if we think Robert Evans was a paranoid propagandist or if we think his friendship with Henry Kissinger leads to bigger incentives of if we just think everything is coincidence. What matters is that we look at things from all sides.

National paranoia is building, either against terrorism or our own governments. Fear and cynicism are once again swimming heavily in the atmosphere. There is great worry concerning the internet, corporate greed, and many other things which cause distrust and doubt in systems that surround us. Movies will continue to reflect our moods and put spotlight on our questions. It is no coincidence that 2004 will bring us remakes of *The Manchurian Candidate* and *The Stepford Wives* and if we are indeed treated to another wave of such films, the trend shall be marked by another remake of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

Christopher Campbell is the world's only Discordian film critic. Visit him at LowExpectation.com.



DARKNESS FALLS

Within seconds, 50 million Americans and Canadians were without electricity. Once the sun went down, they were in total darkness. But we weren't just in the dark literally—while we fumbled for our candles, our fearless leader, George Bush, already had plans to reinvigorate his energy bill.

This energy bill, which gives billions in federal handouts to Bush and Cheney's friends in the energy industry, faded out of priority in Congress in 2001. Because of the Enron collapse and questions about how the bill came to be (through secret nudge-nudge wink-wink meetings between Cheney and players in the energy industry), the Bush administration stopped pushing the bill, as it became seen as politically damaging.

The bill is just as disgusting as you'd expect:

- Provides \$20 billion for the construction of an oil pipeline in Alaska
- Provides \$30 billion in subsidies to the nuclear industry for increased nuclear power production
- Provides almost \$11 billion in tax breaks to polluters
- Opens up Native American land for mining and drilling, by excluding Native American lands from the Environmental Protection Act
- Promotes speedier permits for oil and gas drilling
- Promotes further deregulation
- Fails to raise fuel economy standards for the automotive industry

Though it does include some surprisingly "green" provisions, like giving tax credits to purchasers of hybrid cars and solar panels and funding research on cleaner coal, it's really just a bone thrown to the Democrats. After all, the big winner here is Bush's friends and family. So it was blatant and corrupt, and Congress sat on it.

But one of the provisions of the bill was to improve and upgrade the nation's power grid...

And mysteriously, the nation gets swept into darkness and now we are all in agreement that the nation's power grid needs to be improved and upgraded. The bill is now something the ignorant public wholeheartedly backs. And those who opposed it have to approve the bill, or be accused of not caring about the safety of all Americans.

As a result, this bill, which has gone through hundreds of amendments and years of partisan battling, will soon be enthusiastically pushed through and ready for Bush's signature.

So, interestingly, this blackout was the best thing for Bush's energy bill. Bush gained from the blackout; he gained the fire-power to pass a bill that will make his friends richer.

That leads one to think... is it all coincidence?

Since it will take months before it's clear on what happened on August 14 (ample time for the energy bill to be signed into law), we can only speculate. We know now that the first domino to fall over was at FirstEnergy Corp. in Ohio. One of the largest energy companies, Mother Jones points out that FE "execs held a \$600,000 Bush fundraiser in June, attended by none other than Dick Cheney. FirstEnergy President Anthony Alexander personally gave \$100,000 for the Bush-Cheney inauguration, and served on the Energy Department's Transition Team."

CNN reports: "FirstEnergy Corp., a power company that provides electricity to 1.4 million customers in Ohio, said in a statement Saturday that some of its lines failed before the blackout and that an alarm system did not signal a problem." How convenient.

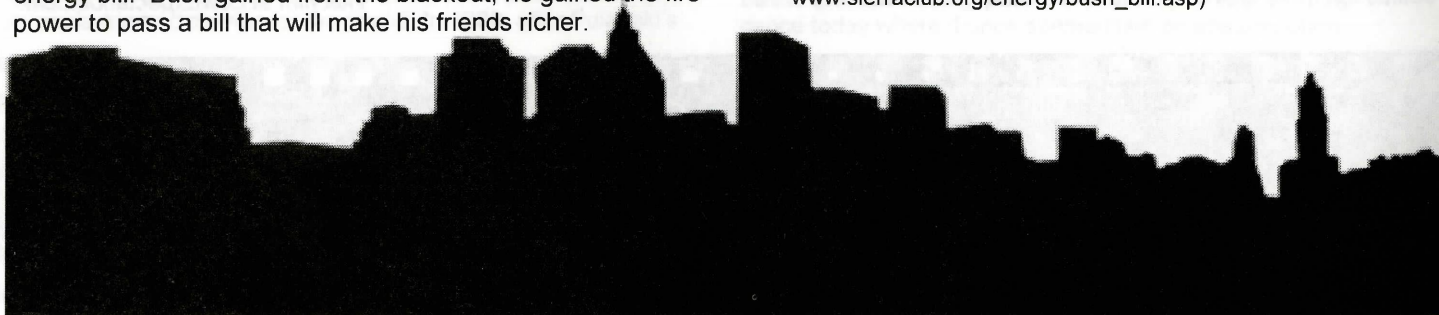
Meanwhile, FirstEnergy is being sued by their investors for Enron-esque deception tactics. FE allegedly misrepresented their earnings and accounting issues, after restating all their earnings from last year, reducing their earnings by \$99 MILLION. So is it beyond FE to flick a switch for their friend George for a few hours? Especially if it means receiving more money in the long run?

Not that they even have to wait for the inevitable subsidies and handouts. US Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham has said that taxpayers should pay for the failure of the electric companies. That's right, me and you. Because taxpayers are the beneficiaries of energy, according to his logic. So the companies get off scot-free for plunging half the country into darkness, receive more subsidies because of it, and taxpayers pay both ends of it—through the energy bill and through rate hikes.

Folks, the lights are back on. Now you just need to open your eyes.

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MY ENCOUNTERS WITH UFO'S

by lauren freedman

Ever since I saw the episode of 'UNSOLVED MYSTERIES' where Robert Stack was talking about aliens and abductions, I've been interested in finding out more about this subject. I would watch movies, read books, watch those shows on the History Channel, I would look for anything and everything I could get on aliens and UFOs. Yet, when I was little, besides being interested, I was also petrified that one day I myself would get abducted.

One night, as I was about to go to bed, I looked out the window, and there, across the street and over the cow fields, was a circle of lights. At first I thought it was a helicopter or a plane, but as I kept staring at it, I began feeling very uneasy. What was I seeing out there? Could it be a UFO?

After all of my hopes of wanting to see one someday, I was suddenly terrified. "What if they saw me?" I asked myself. "If they tried to get me, what would I do? What would they do to me???"

I immediately started freaking out, but, being the fool that I am, flipped my light switch a few times to see what would happen. Well, the damn thing flashed its lights right back at me! I screamed.

This was surely no plane, this was definitely something else. Something that was watching my every move. I ran down to my mother. She saw it too and stupidly did the same that I did and kept flipping the lights downstairs.

The object then went dim and slowly started floating away. Then, before our eyes, it just disappeared.

After the incident my mom just went back to what she was doing, like nothing happened at all. I went back upstairs, turned on all of my lights and thought about what had happened. I was honestly terrified for a LONG time after this. What if it came back for me?

Now was this just a regular plane? I think not. What planes do you know of just float there and flash its lights back at you? Some experimental government plane? Nah. Highly doubt it. (But if it was, then I'm pissed at them for scaring the shit out of me.) This was something not of this world. This had to be something interested in watching human life and trying to communicate with me. Was it there to harm me? Or just to observe? Since that night, I dream about being abducted by aliens. I think I'm scarred for life.

That wasn't the only strange experience that happened to my family.

It was a clear summer night, when my parents were doing what they usually do, driving around for hours on country roads, just looking at houses and scenery. It's just something they love to do. Anyway,

they came to pick me up from work and told me something absolutely terrifying happened to them on their way over to pick me up.

They were driving along on a road of nothing but fields. No stores, no homes, no farms, just plain flat land when my mother pointed out to my dad some lights that were just sitting in the field. They

stopped for a few moments to look and see what they were.

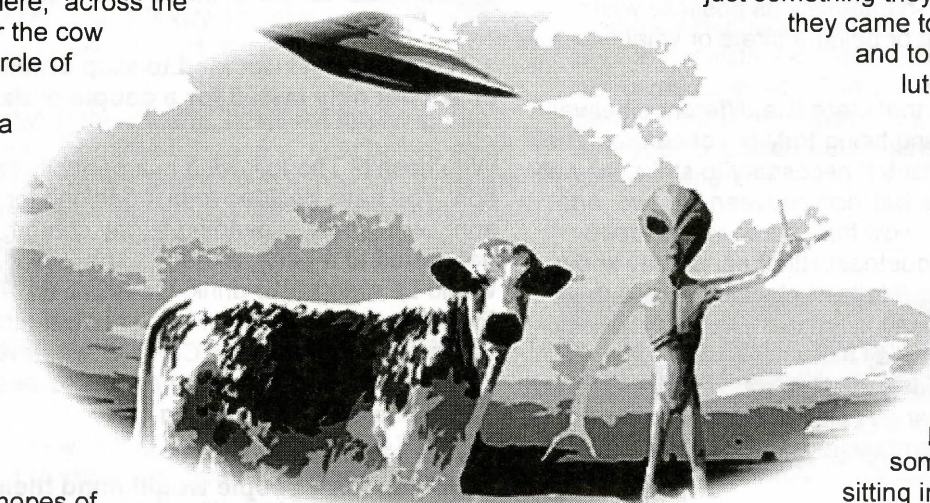
The lights were too far away for them see the lights' source, so they decided to leave. Once they turned around and started driving, whatever it was they saw started to follow them. The faster they drove the faster this thing went. The crazy thing about this was that it wasn't directly behind them, it was above them.

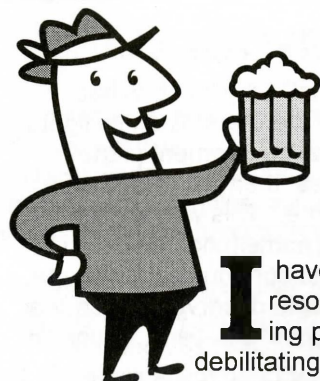
They decided to go home first rather than come pick me up. The UFO followed them all the way to our road. My parents were still able to see it once they got into the house and looked out their bedroom window. For 20 minutes or so, it just floated in the field next to our house.

What exactly did they want? Are they really beings from another universe? Or is the government just messing with us? I wish they would just tell us the truth.

So those are my stories. Did I make any non-believers believe now?

Image by Bryan Kremkau





There Is No Way Two Drinks A Day Is A Drinking "Problem"

by A.L. Van Deerlin

I have always been steadfast in my resolution to never develop a drinking problem, okay, never develop a debilitating drinking problem, because if you do, then at some point you have to stop drinking, which defeats the point entirely. Worse still, you must become a recovering alcoholic, and as anyone who's ever spent several hundred miles on a Greyhound sitting next to one can tell you, recovering alcoholics suck. They're always trying to convince other people that they're actually alcoholics, encouraging their friends to go to those fucking "meetings," and drinking soda or water or whatever it is those people drink as self-righteously as possible while you're peeing in the closet or being a pirate or whatever.

But what they don't get is that there is a difference between manageable alcoholism and being truly out of control. They cannot exercise the self-control necessary to strike the delicate and almost intangible balance between the two, and make no mistake — they know this. Somewhere, deep down in their quisling, milquetoast little hearts, they know that they do not have what it takes to ingest copious amounts of firewater without losing their job, friends, or cutaneous layer of skin. And they hate those of us who are able to accomplish this with regularity and with the approval of our peers, family and various clergy. So they try and bring us down with petty and baseless allegations of chronic oenomania.

Don't be fooled—these sissies are still addicts; they're just addicted to AA meetings or their sponsor or Jay-sis or telling people about their miraculous recovery ad nauseum, instead of booze. They're still looking for something to fill the gaping maw in their soul, and that, not the actual drink, is the problem. Liquor doesn't destroy livers; lame-ass, sack-less addictive personalities destroy livers. Your parents neglected you? Go cry about it to Dr. Phil and leave me alone.

It is important to note that one must permanently be a "recovering" alcoholic, never "recovered." Apparently, in the AA Universe, bad stinky sleazy worthless alcoholics like me and you (yes, you, dear reader, in their eyes everyone is an alcoholic of some sort or another) can never, ever, ever fully recover. This, of course, is a marketing gimmick--they're not selling recovery, they're selling a self-perpetuating recovery lifestyle, complete with newsletters, bumper stickers, t-shirts and anything else you can slap a "serenity prayer" on—except, perhaps not surprisingly, shot glasses or bar towels.

A couple times I've felt the urge to take a little self-inventory of my drinking habits, just to reassure myself that I'm not in danger of having to stop drinking. So how can you tell the difference? I always thought raging, full-on grabass alcoholism meant things like waking up in the alley behind the Circle K (more than once), drinking Aqua Velva, or simply drinking at undeniably inappropriate times (i.e. your cousin's briss, Special Olympics tryouts).

Oh, no no no no, says AA's website. All you have to do is answer "Yes" to four of the following questions:

1. Have you ever decided to stop drinking for a week or so, but only lasted for a couple of days?

Who hasn't? The following is a perfectly reasonable situation: You have decided to quit drinking for whatever reason: Lent, finals, a pending felony charge... but then you get invited to a party, a friend turns 21 (or 28, or 39), and it would be rude not to drink. Or you're on "The Price Is Right," and you win an all-expense paid trip to Alcohol Fantasy Camp or Space Camp or whatever they call it, but it's the place where the winner gets to sleep in the "Ghostbusters" sleeping bag.

2. Do you wish people would mind their own business about your drinking, stop telling you what to do?

I wish people would stop telling me what to do, period. "Tell me what you're doing in my garage!" "Quit selling secrets to the Soviets!" "Give Senator Kennedy back his heart medicine!" "Don't torment retards!" and so forth.

3. Have you had to have an eye-opener upon awakening during the past year?

Oooh, I like Bloody Marys. I must be a fucking dipsomaniac. Actually, Einstein, Bloody Marys, what with their high vegetable content, are arguably one of the healthiest alcoholic drinks available. There's vitamin C, probably some fiber... it's like gazpacho with alcohol.

What, AA doesn't like Mexican

food? Maybe AA doesn't like Mexicans. I can't tolerate that kind of bigotry.

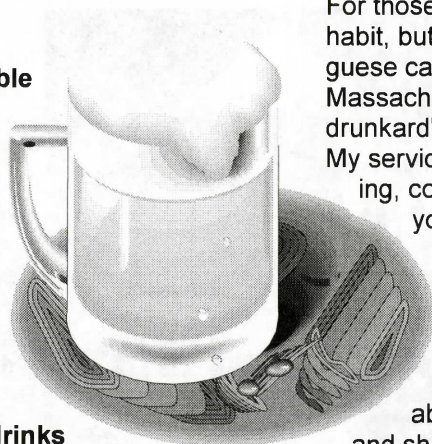


4. Have you had problems connected with drinking during the past year?

Define "problem." Are we talking about accidentally making out with an ugly/boring/otherwise unacceptable person or vehicular manslaughter?

5. Has your drinking caused trouble at home?

Again, "trouble" is ill-defined here. Lost car keys, or say, punching a loved one in the face? (Stop giggling.) Okay, yes, but it has more to do with generalized poor taste in men than the monkey on my back.



6. Do you ever try to get "extra" drinks at a party because you do not get enough?

I'm not too sure what this means, but is AA implying that people who stock up on free booze at a party before going to an establishment where they'll have to pay for drinks are somehow worse drunks than those with the wherewithal to buy round after round of frou-frou martinis for their fat-cat buddies? Fucking Republicans.

7. Have you missed days of work or school because of drinking?

Show me a person who has never called in sick because of a hangover, and I'll show you either a Mormon (fucking Mormons) or fucking Super Karate Snoopy.

8. Do you have "blackouts"?

I occasionally forget things I've said or done while drinking, but I've never believed myself to have said or done something I didn't do, which, mathematically speaking, means I break even on that one.

9. Do you turn to lower companions and an inferior environment when drinking?

More evidence of AA snobbery. What the fuck does "lower companions" and "an inferior environment" mean? That I don't have a problem if I'm drinking in the Oak Room with debutantes? But I'll admit that by their highfalutin' standards, I would probably have to answer "yes" to this one.

Okay, so that gives me a score of eight out of nine, if I give AA the benefit of the doubt on a couple questions, and since eight is four times two, I, mathematically speaking, have enough of a drinking problem that it could be shared by two people. This is bunk. Not one person who knows

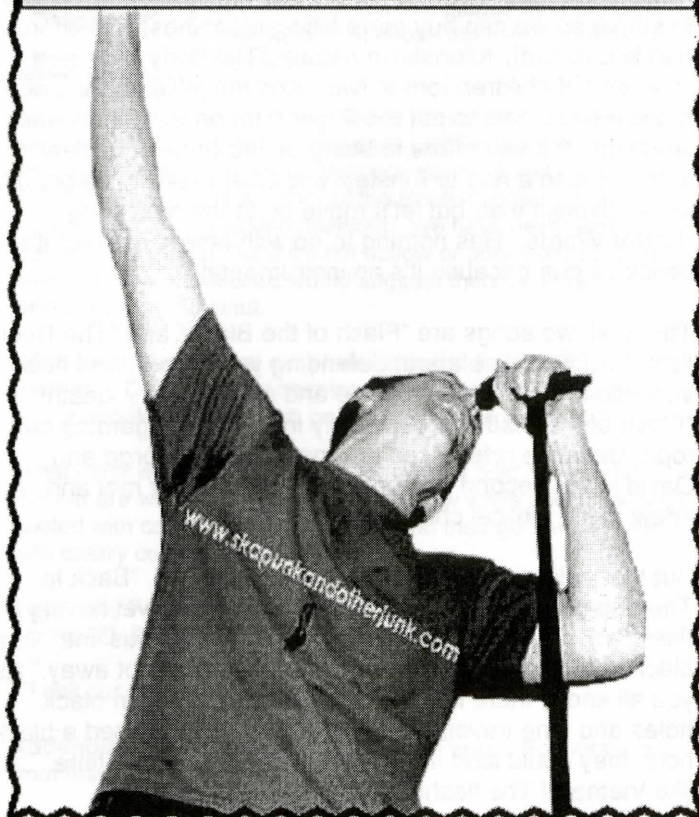
me would say I'm an alcoholic. They might say I like my bourbon, or gin makes me mean, but no one would classify me as someone who needs help. Jesus.

As Public Enemy said, ne croyez pas la publicité conçue. For those of you who are struggling not to kick your habit, but rather to kick it up a notch (to quote that Portuguese carpetbagger—yes folks, Emeril's from Fall River, Massachusetts), I wholeheartedly volunteer to be the drunkard's equivalent of an AA sponsor—your enabler. My services include pressuring, goading, wheedling, daring, coaxing, belittling and any action that will compel you to push the limits of both your alcohol tolerance and good taste.

So the next time some sanctimonious windbag starts telling you to turn your life over to AA (and incidentally, the twelve steps are all about praying, asking God to miracle your flaws and shortcomings away, and turning your life and will over to him-with-a-capital-H. Not exactly a credo emphasizing responsibility, free will or other things that distinguish humans from mollusks), tell Hitler Junior to hand out his boring little tracts elsewhere, you're meeting your enabler for drinks.

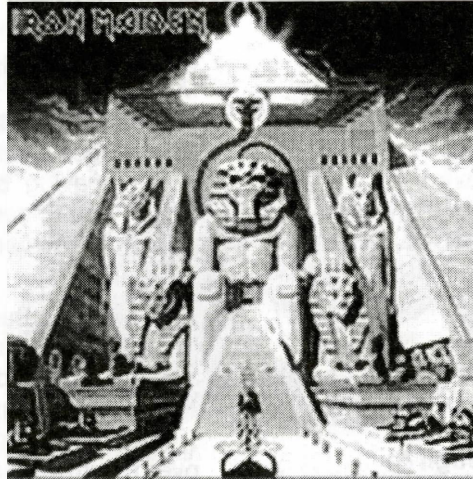
SKA, PUNK AND OTHER JUNK

BEST WEBSITE FOR OUTDATED NEWS
& AWFUL REVIEWS



DID IRON MAIDEN UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF TIME TRAVEL?

Many have claimed to unlock the secrets of time travel, but kept the technology secret to prevent catastrophic paradoxes or history alterations. For instance, Chris created Time Juice in "Get A Life" and stopped Gus from taking a whiz on his boss, resulting in a world of brain-eating zombies. Bulma created a capsulated time machine so that Trunks could warn the Z fighters about the future killer androids, which resulted in a face-off with the much more deadlier foe Cell. Even the Smurfs unleashed the horrors of time travel, though I forgot the details.



Title track "Powerslave" and the epic "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" both refer to the past, and perhaps infer of actually re-experiencing it.

Onto the production of the album. The cover is a photograph of their mascot Eddie being worshiped as an ancient Egyptian god. Was this photo fudged? Can it be trusted? Look inside and you'll find another picture, this one of the band standing in front of a pharaoh's tomb. How did they get there?

That is why Iron Maiden used subtle measures to tell the world that they had, in fact, discovered how to time travel.

The proof is in Iron Maiden's 1984 album *Powerslave*. Each song, and the liner notes themselves, contain hints that pertain to this greatest mystery of the cosmos.

The album kicks off with "Aces High" - about a thrilling dog-fight during World War I. The adrenaline and imagery projected in the song begs us to ask... *were they there??*

Next is the dark and prophetic "2 Minutes to Midnight." While some say it's an anti-war song (e.g. we allow children to starve so we can buy more killing machines), the chorus part is decidedly futuristic in nature: "The body bags and little rags of children torn in two / And the jellied brains of those who remain to put the finger right on you." And while some say the title refers to being on the brink of nuclear war, it is also a nod to Einstein's special relativity theory. I would explain that, but let's move on to the next song. "Losfer Words." Has nothing to do with time travel, but it's a delicious pun because it's an instrumental.

The next two songs are "Flash of the Blade" and "The Duelists" [sic]. Both are about defending your honor, and how violence begets more violence and sometimes... death! "Flash of the Blade" is especially interesting regarding our topic, because references are made to St. George and David in the second person. As if they actually met and knew these biblical characters!

But the major time travel hints are on side two. "Back In The Village" - on the surface about a Vietnam vet having a flashback in his kitchen - contains the mysterious line: "In a black hole and I'm spinning as my wings get shot away." As you all know, there is a deep connection between black holes and time travel. Theoretically, if one traversed a black hole, they could land in another moment in space-time... like Vietnam! The flashback is thus literal.

Thanked in the liner notes are people from Waterloo, court jesters, "traveling fans 'round the world", the singer's parents "who still don't know where he is", and many other shady characters who either "traveled" with them or helped with their "tour" production.

Make no mistake, *Powerslave* holds the secrets to time travel.

(Written after sobering up a bit)

Holy crap, that was the stupidest thing I've ever written. If any album contains the secrets of time travel, it's (obviously) Iron Maiden's brilliant 1986 concept album *Somewhere In Time*. On the surface it isn't a concept album, but when you realize the time connections, every song fits together like puzzle pieces.

Now, I admit Iron Maiden could have been on the brink of understanding the nature of time during *Powerslave*, but it wasn't until this album that they had the applicable knowledge to ride forwards and backwards on the river of time. The proof is in the first song, "Caught Somewhere In Time," which has no clear time setting, meaning they must've time traveled for the first time without any idea where/when they were. While confident that "time is always on my siiiiiide, time is always on my siiiiiide" they then admit to being "caught somewhere in tiiiiime, caught somewhere in tiiiiime... ohh ohhh."

Iron Maiden find themselves lost in time for what seems like years to them. The next song "Wasted Years" chronicles the seemingly never-ending time they spend trapped in the vortex of time. From the first stanza ("From the coast of gold, across the seven seas / I'm travelin' on, far and wide / But now it seems, I'm just a stranger to myself / And all the things I sometimes do, it isn't me but someone else") you realize they have no control yet, and that their accidental history alterations are creating new universes and copies of themselves. But they do realize that al-

though they're wasting many years trapped in time, they still have all the time in the world: "Too much time on my hands, I got you on my mind."

The sea of time is a sea of madness, says the next tune "Sea of Madness." They give up trying to control where/when they end up, and so allow themselves to be carried by the current: "Like a river we will flow, on toward the sea we go."

It gets so bad, that the band either thinks they're dying or that the experience is the dream of someone on death's door: "My body tingles and I feel so strange, I feel so tired I feel so drained / And I'm wondering if I'll ever be the same again / Is this in limbo or Heaven or Hell? Maybe I'm going down there as well / I can't accept my soul will drift forever" And yet this song, "Heaven Can Wait," totally rocks out.



Finally Iron Maiden snap out of their morbid depression. They must stop being time's puppets and learn to control their destiny! That is the moral in "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner" which boasts lines like "I've got to keep running the course / I've got to keep running and win at all costs / I've got to keep going be strong / Must be so determined and push myself on." Kinda similar to Rush's "Marathon."

Iron Maiden finally make it. They are now traveling space-time at whim, but is it really all it's cracked up to be? Everywhere they go, they're not familiar with local customs. They are, as the next song points out, "Stranger[s] in a Strange Land." Ironically, they are free to travel time, but still feel "Trapped here in this prison, lost and far from home."

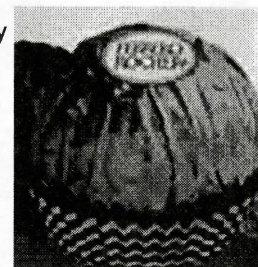
Exhausted and disappointed, they finally return to their original point in space-time. But things are different. Whether their present has changed or they're sensitive to actions in parallel universes they created, they are experiencing extreme "Déjà vu": "'Cause you know this has happened before / And you know that this moment in time is for real / And you know when you feel déjà vu / Feel like I've been here before, feel like I've been here before."

So what was their favorite part about time traveling? Meeting "Alexander the Great" most likely. Here's what they say about the man in our past that impressed them the most in the epic last song on this album: "Alexander the Great, his name struck fear into hearts of man / Alexander the Great, he died of fever in Babylon."

Originally printed in READ #19, the time travel and burrito issue.

Ferrero Rochers: Rich chocolate balls or paradigm for Planet Erf?*

We all agree that the French know their chocolate. But who ever suspected they knew anything about geography—the study of the Erf.



Grounded in its brown base (aka "gravity") the unwrapped Rocher is gold-foiled, just as our planet is rich with golden resources.

The French chocolate people knew something about the structure of Erf, but they had to keep their realizations hidden, or else face the mockings of an ignorant public. Look at the Flat Earth Society. Shunned and laughed at, just for grasping at the truths of our planet. The French knew the rest of the world wasn't ready for their finding, so they encoded their hypothesis into the very chocolate balls we savor.

The next time you buy a Ferrero Rocher, look at it closely. It's wrapped in gold foil, isn't it? Just as we are enwrapped by our rich atmosphere and the golden rays of our sun. The golden ball is lightly glued to a brown wrapper, symbolizing what scientists have long thought to be gravity, as the physical law that keeps Erf grounded. Obviously, it is not gravity at all, but a rubber cement-like substance. Next, notice the bumpy outer layer of chopped hazelnuts and milk chocolate. The chopped nuts, like the land masses, trees, and rocks on our surface; the milk chocolate comparable to our oceans.



In this shot taken from outer space, our Erf appears to be grounded on a Rocher-esque base.

Softly bite off the outer layer. Directly below is a thin wafer, similar to Erf's mantle. This wafer is so fragile, it's hard not break it when biting off the outer layer. This could explain the earthquakes that plague land masses that were built above the thinnest parts of this wafer.

Next is the molten chocolate fudge — rich, creamy, delicious; just like our very own molten lava inside our planet. Finally, in the direct center of the Rocher, is the whole roasted hazelnut. We have never seen the inside of our planet, but if it's not hollow or populated by dinosaurs, Rocher's evidence would suggest there is, in fact, a whole roasted hazelnut.

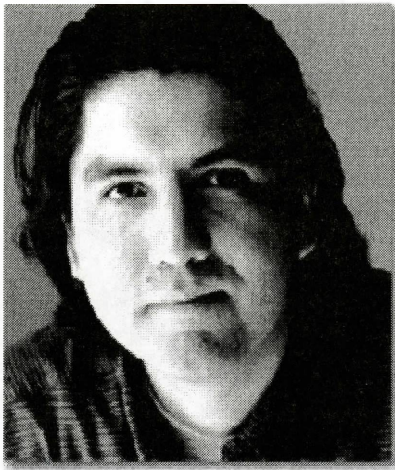
What this proves is that our planet is round (sorry Flat Earthers), DOES have a hazelnut core (sorry Hollow Earthers), and is populated by French people (sorry everyone else).

What other wonders does our solar system hold? Ferrero Rocher are working on that, with their new white chocolate balls coated with coconut flakes (Pluto?), and their gooey large balls with cherry centers (Jupiter?).

To join my Ferrero Rocher Erf Society, write to: Adam Liebling c/o READ, POB 3437, LIC, NY 11103. Send money.

*I call our planet "Erf" because it's funny.

Addendum: Someone just told me that Ferrero Rochers are from Italy. Eh, whatever.



Sherman Alexie

Best known for his breakthrough film **Smoke Signals**, **Sherman Alexie** has had a remarkable output over the past ten years, spanning award-winning novels, short stories, poetry, spoken word performances, music recordings, and screenplays. A Spokane / Coeur d'Alene Indian and raised on a reservation, Sherman Alexie's work attempts to demystify and de-stereotype modern Indian culture through some humor and a lot of heart. Mr. Alexie graciously spoke with us about his new collection of short stories, **Ten Little Indians**, his recent film **The Business of Fancydancing**, and his views on war, politics, rock n' roll, and excessive chest hair.

—Jennifer Kao and Adam Liebling

How's your book tour going?

Oh, I haven't started yet.

I thought you did a couple of dates already?

Oh, that's just college stuff, not bookstore appearances. Two different crowds.

How so?

Well, with colleges, there's more focus, you're usually part of a theme, so a lot of classes come because they've been studying you. At universities, you end up with a lot of people who may never read anything by you again. And bookstore audiences, by and larger, are the fans. So bookstores are much more of a lovefest!

Well, we're big fans, so this interview will be a lovefest!

(Laughs) I understand you have a new book of short stories, *Ten Little Indians*. Can you tell us about it?

It's nine stories (it's called *Ten Little Indians*; I thought that was funny). Eight of the stories are about very successful white-collar Indians—poets, teachers, college students... I really wanted the stories to not focus on social dysfunctions, but rather to focus on their ordinary lives: their love affairs and their ambitions, rather than the way in which Indians are typically viewed as failing, and the way that I have portrayed them as failing. So in some sense I guess it's about how people are good at their jobs, but clumsy at love.

What was your experience like with the filming and distributing of *The Business of Fancydancing*?

It was terrible. (laughs) It was so ridiculously hard to get it played anywhere. I found out that there's not much difference between independent movie houses and a theater in a mall. The business practices are exactly the same.

Like the Angelika?

The Angelika practices the same set of business policies as the AMC 97 in Secaucus, New Jersey. The art of the film may change, but the business practices do not.

How do you go about getting your movie into the theater?

Begging and pleading! And we had the luck of my literary career and the success of *Smoke Signals*. So a first-time director would have no chance to get played where we got played, and get the reviews we did. I mean, when we played in a city, we got reviews in major ways. It certainly wasn't because we had advertising dollars. The movie was really dependent on fans and people who paid attention to what was in their towns. The thing that pissed me off, and it did piss me off so much, even now, was when people would ask, "When is your movie going to play in our town?" "It played in your town for five damn weeks!" I don't know, maybe I'm hyper aware of what's going in my city, but I could tell you what movies are playing, which authors are coming, what bands are around... But I guess other people just don't pay attention. Unless the people who are willing to see these kinds of films are paying attention, it's ridiculous and pointless to even try to be in theaters.

Don't kill us, but we actually missed it too.

Well, yeah! See! (Laughs) It's impossible! When I do it again by myself this way, I'm not even going to think about theatrical. Number one, it's the cost of film and getting the prints ready that ate up 75% of our money. And if we just focused on shooting the movie and getting it ready for DVD, we're set. We could've made this movie for \$100,000 or even less, just thinking of DVD.

Is that the route you'll take next time? Straight to video?

Yep. Straight to DVD. Yep. I'm never going to think theatrical.

I remember a few years ago going to one of your readings, and you mentioned you were working with Miramax on a film, and the opening scene was going to be Christopher Columbus landing in the US...

And being blasted to bits? (Laughs)

Exactly! What happened with that?

By the time Miramax bought and released *Smoke Signals*, and we started developing *Reservation Blues*, they turned into a whole different company. So they weren't really interested in a tiny little film about Indians any more. So it was put in turnaround and now I'm just waiting for the contract to run out so it can be mine again.

So that's it for Hollywood?

I worked on a few projects in Hollywood, and nothing ever happened, so all I do now is script doctor on their stuff. Unless I'm presented with a great opportunity to develop something on my own, I'm not going to do it.

Do you still plan on making *Reservation Blues* into a movie?

In the future, yeah. All by myself, with a little camera and do it the way we did *Fancydancing*, but straight to DVD.

That's one of my favorite books of yours, actually.

Thank you. Yeah, it would be great. In some sense, what it does is open up and become mine again. I might see if anyone in LA is interested... because of *Smoke Signals*, because it's Thomas and Victor again, it's a rock n' roll movie... I'll see if anyone's interested.

I think it's a great premise, and I was wondering where you came up with the idea for the book.

Oh, just frustrated rock star ambitions.

Do you play guitar?

No, not at all. Don't play anything. Can't sing either. I play basketball, that's as close as I get. I can dribble rhythmically.

As a straight man, what led you to incorporate gay protagonists in *Fancydancing* and *The Toughest Indian*?

Sort of the same thing — frustrated rock star ambitions.

(Laughs) Well, because homophobia is so huge in all of society, especially in brown communities and the Indian world, it was pretty much a political move. You know, slap my audi-

ence around. Knowing that a significant portion of Indians is reading my books and seeing my movies, I wanted to go after homophobia in the Indian world.

How have most Indians received those works?

Oh, uncomfortably.

Has anyone indicated to you that their views of gays has changed after reading those works?

Oh, no, no, no.

How did your wife receive those stories?

(Laughs) Well, the first time she saw me read, before we met, her first question was, "Are you straight?" So, I don't mind being mysterious and ambiguous. (Laughs)

I was curious what you thought of *Bowling For Columbine*?

I thought it was entertaining and fun. I liked it.

Did you think it was effective in changing people's views?

No. I don't think we change anybody's views. I don't think people can change their minds about guns... I think that's sort of genetic.

So it's just preaching to the converted?

Yeah. Nobody's minds will change. Perhaps if someone's life was changed by gun violence, say a dad with a gun in the house, and his kid shoots himself or a friend, that probably would change his opinion on guns.

Yeah, but your books change a lot of people's ideas about Indians...

Oh god, I would hope so! I don't know... Sometimes I feel like I'm preaching to the converted, too.

Well, I don't know. I think you shed new light on the contemporary life of Indians, especially in terms of the migration of Indians from reservations to cities. And many don't know anything about modern Indian life, so your works are a learning experience for some, I would think.

Well, I hope so. All I try to do is portray Indians as we are, in creative ways. With imagination and poetry. I think a lot of Native American literature is stuck in one idea: sort of spiritual, environmentalist Indians. And I want to portray everyday lives. I think by doing that, by portraying the ordinary lives of Indians, perhaps people learn something new.

Do the white hippies piss you off? The ones who dress up like Indians, talk about Mother Earth and weave dreamcatchers?

It used to make me angry, but now it just sort of amuses me. You know, people who adopt other identities only want the good stuff. Nobody ever says, "I want to be an Indian—I want to live in poverty!" When you see a white person adopting Indian culture, you're really looking at somebody treating the world like it's a shopping mall.

That's a great point. And you can say the same thing about whites that think they're adopting the ghetto image.

Yeah, it's the mall of America.

I understand you protested the war against Iraq. Has your stance changed since Iraq was quote-unquote liberated?

(Laughs) Iraq has not been liberated. It hasn't even begun! People weren't dying in tens of thousands, like they're going to from starvation and disease, unless things change rapidly and the Red Cross and other humanitarian efforts are allowed to proceed fully. But in protesting... it was funny. I could understand conservative response to it, to anti-war protesting, but what really shocked me was how many liberals were so angry at anti-war folks.

Well, I think liberals have become more conservative since 9/11...

The world is the same place it was on 9/10. The U.S. has changed, but we still live in the same exact world. We are no more threatened than we were before. But it's politically convenient for politicians to make us feel afraid, so it can justify all sorts of economic

and political actions. But the war with Iraq didn't prevent or start anything. It was a completely predictable move. As far

back as October, a month after September 11th, there were all sorts of conservative magazines and conservative theorists who were advocating a war with Iraq then. Everything followed a very predictable path. For anything to really change, we need to do something unpredictable and original and imaginative. The basic need for retribution and revenge is primitive. This war was just primitive. It was fought with the latest technology, but its motivations were primitive. It lacks the poetry we're capable of, and people reacted primitively, from all across the political spectrum.

When you protested, did you receive any negative feedback?

All along, I've gotten negative responses and hate mail and death threats. You know, I'm a Commie-Pinko, cowardly, yellow, anti-troop, anti-American, unpatriotic bastard.

What do you think Bush's legacy will be?

I think it's going to be like Reagan's, in the sense that people are going to re-

member him as some sort of icon, and the reality of it is that Reagan in the end had very little to do with what happened during his administration. And it's going to be the same thing here. Dubya has very symbolic value, but with little policy value. After Reagan left the presidency, he wasn't on any policy boards, he wasn't helping to define or control or promote conservative interests. That was due in some part to his Alzheimer's, but also due to the fact that he's no intellectual. And the same thing is going to happen with Dubya. His shelf life is eight years, and his value will diminish greatly after that until he exists merely as a symbol.

Would you say that most Indians are politically conservative or liberal?

Socially conservative! By and large, Democrats support Indian issues, so we give our money to them, but Indians live conservatively. They're Democratic politically, but Republican in their personal lives. So they're pro-gun, pro-war, homophobic...

Sounds like suburbia—vote liberal and live conservatively.

Yeah. I mean, there are not many differences between white folks in a small farm town and Indians on a reservation.

I understand that you were the National Poetry Slam Champion for a number of years...

Not quite the right term. I was Heavyweight Poetry Champion. National Poetry Slam is something different. The Heavyweight Poetry Bout is between established literary poets, "book poets", and the National Poetry Slam is more oriented toward poetry performers and spoken word artists.

What I find remarkable about your writing is that you always find new ways to describe modern Indian experience. Can you tell us about the creative process that goes into your work?

(Laughs) It's not remarkable! We're human beings — human beings are endless! Every moment that's ever happened in any book or poem or story or movie happens on my tiny little reservation, or in any other place. I could spend my entire career on just one person's life.

What's your process when you sit down and write?

I just write and eventually it takes form. So I'm just writing every day. Stories, pieces of novels, essays...

"All I try to do is portray Indians as we are, in creative ways. With imagination and poetry. I think a lot of Native American literature is stuck in one idea: sort of spiritual, environmentalist Indians. And I want to portray everyday lives. I think by doing that, by portraying the ordinary lives of Indians, perhaps people learn something new."

Do you keep a 9 to 5?

Oh, no. I tend to binge. So for a couple of weeks, I'll work 12-14 hours a day, and then I won't do anything for a couple of weeks.

How much of yourself do you put into your protagonists?

Increasingly less! It's funny, when *Lone Ranger & Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* came out, I was so mad when people would call it autobiographical. But I recently reread it and I thought, this is a memoir! So with *Ten Little Indians*, there are just shades of myself, and in most stories, nothing at all. I would consider *Ten Little Indians* a completely imaginative work.

With which of your protagonists would you most want to spend a day with?

Thomas Builds-the-Fire.

Aw yeah! Is that the character you feel the most affinity with?

I used to... I guess I still do in some ways. I thought I identified most strongly with him, but after Evan Adams played him in the movie, now all I see is Evan. So I'm still Thomas, but Thomas is Evan, Evan is Thomas. So it's all connected. So because I love Evan so much, and I love Thomas so much, it's all in a bizarre love triangle. (Laughs)

What are some projects that you haven't taken on yet, that you would like to accomplish?

Stage play! I'd love to write one. Eventually I'll do that. And I'd love to do a one-man show, defined as such.

Do you have any upcoming projects you'd like to share with us?

I'm working on a mini-biography of Jimi Hendrix for HarperCollins, and a memoir of my dad and my grandfather called *Inventing My Grandfather*.

I understand that they were war veterans. Did that influence

your view of war?

Oh yeah. My grandfather died at Okinawa in World War II, and his wife died three months later, so my dad was an orphan. So I was raised by a war orphan. There's no more powerful reason to be against war than to be raised by a war orphan.

And your father was a veteran too, right?

Yes, he served in between Korea and Vietnam. Actually, he was in the military and they found out he was the only son of a soldier killed in action, and I guess there were military rules that you couldn't serve if you're such a person, so they gave him an honorary discharge.

Wow... To wrap up, what is something about you that your average reader would be surprised to know?

Oh gosh... Umm... I'm addicted to crossword puzzles.

That's not a bad thing.

You want something bad?

Something juicy.


Umm... I have a semi-hairy chest. And I get mad at it. I hate it. It looks floppy to me. So every three or four months I get angry enough to the point where I shave it. And then I spend the next two or three weeks scratching. So I just got a sample bottle of that new Nair for Men, so I'm going to try that out. So there you go – that's personal and gross.

Thank you! And thank you very much for taking the time with us. We appreciate it.

You bet. Thank you very much!

Ten Little Indians is now available through Grove Press and bookstores nationwide. For Sherman Alexie news and speaking tour dates, go to fallsapart.com.

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Point Line Plane

Point Line Plane play a wacky blend of futuristic synth pop and scary hardcore. Answers by Nate Carson, who I assume is in the band. —Adam Liebling

You mix hardcore punk and electronica, sort of reminding me of Blue Oyster Cult, if BOC had mixed hardcore punk and electronica instead of playing their trademark brand of full-throttle guitar-driven rock n' roll. Were they a conscious influence on your music?

When I was 6, I used to run around with an X-Wing Fighter in one hand, blasting stormtroopers off the shelves and cranking "Godzilla". So I'd definitely call BOC an early influence.

Did you know that Blue Oyster Cult's manager, Sandy Perlman, is the one who applied the term "heavy metal" to the music at hand? If you could coin a term to describe your music, what would it be?

I thought the term came from the Steppenwolf song Born to Be Wild. Regardless, we are more influenced by metal than actually playing it. There's not really a good blanket term for what we do other than "aging nerds with open minds and violent tendencies".

Steppenwolf coined the term ("heavy metal thunder..."), but Sandy applied it to the music at hand. Since your music is wacky, are you able to translate your songs live? How would you compare your live show to say, Extraterrestrial Live by Blue Oyster Cult?

Using the universal translator that we hand out at most shows, the crowd is able to digest our music in earthly fashion. But our set is far more comparable to the 1978 live B.O.C. album "Some Enchanted Evening".

What do you think Blue Oyster Cult meant when they sang, "Ohh no, they say he's got to go. Go go Godzilla!"

I think they meant that he's in a little cage with a polka dot skirt go-go dancing to Davie Allan and the Arrows. What do you think?

Is it true that Eric Bloom of Blue Oyster Cult is Howard Stern's cousin?

Shit, I hope not for his sake. That could ruin BOC's otherwise undeniable street cred and could make it hard for them to garner untainted critical acclaim on future albums.

Your music combines sci-fi elements, not unlike Fire of Unknown Origin, Cultosaurus Erectus, and Agents Of Fortune. Why are you ripping off Blue Oyster Cult?

Listen here, it's songs like Astronomy and Flaming Telepaths from "Secret Treaties" that we're ripping off. We drew a line in the sand after 1974.

Isn't it strange that Blue Oyster Cult never really achieved mainstream, mega-platinum status? Would you happen to know of any conspiracy that has kept them apart from sharing the charts with Janet Jackson and Nirvana?

Maybe they should have tried heroin.

Point is first dimension. Line is second, and planes are in the third dimension. Tell me Euclidian physics masters, have you mastered the secrets of time travel, and if so, what does the future hold for Blue Oyster Cult?

Well my smart little friend, I'll have you know that points have NO dimension, a line has ONE, and a plane TWO. That puts us a grade ahead of you, and at least one dimension behind. Back here in Flatland, B.O.C. are still playing arenas and fucking teenage groupies. Must suck up there in cyberzinespace where you live.

Check out Point Line Plane's self-titled debut on Xeroid Records (www.xeroidrecords.com) Visit the band at www.pointlineplane.net.



BONUS INSULTING INTERVIEW The ShiteHawks

ShiteHawks... so you admit you're a flying turd?

Niff: With plenty of crunch!

Your band is from Boston. Would you say you're more of a drunken fratboy idiot, or a Good Will Hunting pretty boy pussyfart?

Actually, apart from our drummer who grew up here, we're more like those assholes that moved here to get a band going.

What can one expect from a ShiteHawks show, besides intestinal cramps and assaults to the eardrums?

Beer, blood, aging punks & skins, and the anti-ShiteHawks. And if you're lucky, we'll butcher an old ska or reggae classic inna punk style.

Good lord, I hope I'm unlucky.. Would you take a batch in the face to further your career?

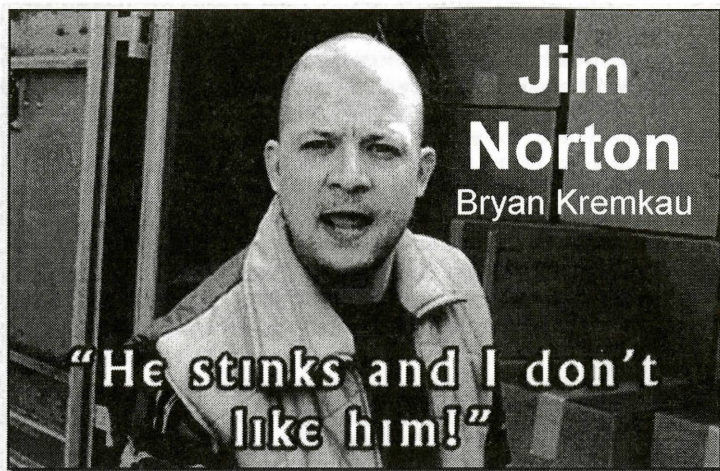
Only if it was yours.

Well there goes my follow-up question. So, anyway, why exactly are you wasting your time?

Heh... with this interview, or with the band? We'd do it all for the kids, but all the clubs that don't kick us out when we play are 21+, so that's out. We'd do it for the women, but there aren't any women in punk rock, so that's out. I'd say free beer but we drink more than they pay us, so that's out too. Must be due to the fact that they'll give us microphones to annoy people with when we're drunk, and that's good enough for me.

Alright, plug your shit.

Um... I hate this part. Go check out [site no longer exists—we'll find out their site and post it on readmag.com] for all you need to know. We've got crunch, we've got soul, we've got rock n roll, and dammit... people hate us! Or at least they should.



What does your parents think about your act?

They like it but wish there were more incest references.

How was it being Lewis Black's bitch in jail?

Fine, he put his aggressive finger in my bum and wiggled it like he does on the daily show.

What are Opie and Anthony doing these days?

Temping?

Enjoying the steady cash flow and waiting to go back on.

What was your favorite moment on the Opie and Anthony show?

Fucking a girl over the toilet back by the offices.

Have you gotten any complaints about your comments on Tough Crowd or with your stand up act?

Only people who've paid to see it because it stinks.

Have you ever seen Colin Quinn get drunk and start sobbing about his life?

No, but he does get drunk and rape me.

How's your Dad, Don Rickles doing? *elbow, elbow*

He's fine *good natured tussle*

Do you think Ozzy mania is going way overboard? Isn't Kelly Osbourne a spoiled Brat?

No and no.

What type of music do you like besides Ozzy and Black Sabbath? Do you like punk rock or ska at all?

I only like ozzy and sabbath, with some old kiss thrown in to straighten me out.

What's your take on censorship?

It blows.

How much are hookers nowadays?

A hundred bucks, unless they're trannys, then they're fifty.

Do you regret anything you did in High School?

Yes, blowing the entire junior class.

Who influenced you more - Rodney Dangerfield, Andrew Dice Clay, or Benito Mussolini?

My biggest comic influences are Rich Vos' hands.

Have any good groupie stories?

No, I am an ugly nothing.

What's your take on the Iraq war?

I love it. Go team.

Jim Norton does stand up, acts, and you can see on Comedy Central's Tough Crowd with Colin Quinn.

Ann Beretta

Interview by Adam Liebling

You guys are a bunch of southern gents from Richmond, right? Why are people from the South so nice? Is it the soothing effect of NASCAR?

Rob: I think southern kids are so polite because we're raised that way. We're brought up to say "yes ma'am", "no sir", "please", "thank you" - all that stuff. It's just how we are.

So what is there to do in Richmond, besides sex with the livestock and rockin out to GWAR?

There's tons to do in Richmond - hang out, drink beer, play songs.. Front porches are big in Richmond - everyone hangs out on front porches to watch girls, play guitar, drink beer, whatever. And I don't think anyone in Richmond really listens to Gwar anymore - they're not even allowed to play in Richmond as Gwar anymore due to obscenity laws.

You recently switched from Lookout! to Canada's Union Label Group. Is there anything in your contract that forces you to listen to Rush?

So far so good. It's still early in the game to say, but everyone at UNION is great, very supportive and into the new record which is great. Our big problem with Lookout! was that they just didn't promote our last record - it just made us not even want to put out records anymore if we were going to work so hard on them and tour to support them just to be on a label that wouldn't put the same effort into promoting the record. It just really sucked and we felt like we didn't have anyone in our corner. We don't feel that way anymore and that's totally cool...and no, we don't have to listen to rush - we just do.

Your brand of punk rock has a lot of ginger and snap.

How did you go from being nice Richmond kids to such peppy whippersnappers?

I don't know. I guess us nice guys just need to vent too.

I was listening to the song "Fire In The Hole" and suddenly it hit me - the song is about being sodomized, right? You have to be kidding - that song is such a long story that we're all so tired of telling... The complete story is available at lookoutrecords.com. [Note: couldn't find the story—Ed.]

Have you ever been sued by a real Ann Beretta?

Never been sued by anyone named Ann Beretta, but we do meet girls all the time named Ann. We thought about turning her into a comic book but haven't had the resources yet. Hopefully soon. A friend of ours has actually drawn a few versions of the

character - kind of a Tank Girl but even more of a bad ass.

What's your craziest experience with the Masons and/or Illuminati?

Never had any run-ins that I know of, but that's the thing about those secret societies - you never really know if you're having a run-in with them or not.

Which bands should call it quits?

I couldn't possibly tell you that without instant bad karma

Should the South rise up again?

Dude, I rise in the south every day.

Plugizzle your shiznizzle.

NEW RECORD OUT OCT 21st- on the UNION LABEL titled THREE CHORD REVOLUTION- BUY IT !!



Moneen

Interview by Adam Liebling

Moneen are considered the Rush of Emocore. Was your Toronto power rock brethren an influence?

Kenny Bridges (vocals/guitar): Well, if I ever started sounding like Geddy then that means someone has already kicked me in the crotch for the reason that I tell people, "If we ever sound like Rush...kick me in the crotch."

Is Moneen hot or not: www.hotornot.com/ml/?keyword=moneen

So I went to the site and I felt kind of dirty...It felt like the girls knew that people were looking at them...so I cannot tell if we are hot or not because I had to close my eyes and let my mom go through the site. But I did find this book called: Hanurilla moneen makuun: harmonikasoiton har-rastajat Suomessa. by Antti Juvonen- great book. it is about the dancing doggies who wear the potato with the dim sum.

Umm.. yeah. Your music is complex, layered, multifaceted. Why? What's wrong with just a couple of power chords and a tambourine?

Well, we tried that but we broke the tambourine and the power went out....of the chords that is!!! HA HA HA!!! We like different things...if we played normal stuff then we would be normal along with it...and Ricky Fitz would never hang out with us.

I don't know who that is. Are you very emotional because you're from Canada?

Canada is a very emotional place...emotional igloos with emotional moose. An emotional leader and emotional goose. We can be sappy at times, but we get angry you know...real angry...we smash stuff...ya! If you were tied up and gagged with dirty socks and made to watch your parents die... then you would go through the same emotional trauma as we did!! ...Wait that never happened... Alright we will stick with the first one...we are just sappy.

You mentioned Canada. Have you ever spotted Bigfoot?

Is Bigfoot Canadian? If so then...umm, yes...yes we have. He actually is not an animal, just a dude who rolled through some furry dirt.

Whatever happened to ClipTrip on MuchMusic? I miss Diego, man.

Clip Trip is still there I thought...I saw my man of the world recently on tv.. are you making fun of the fact that our music station actually plays music for people other than 10 year olds? Or the fact that our music station play music at all!?

Would you rather drink a cup of your own sperm or a quart of someone else's urine?

I am very scared by this question...not because of the question though...but because I really can't decide.



Moneen loves the kids.

What's a song you'd love to cover, but the rest of the band is like "no way"?

Since I don't know how to play any other songs all the way through (not to mention our own songs), if I could play through any they would be happy for me. I can do a mean rendition of the Titanic song...near far where ever you are...oh celine...a bany would have broke you.

Who in the band is most likely to die from an STD?

What the hell is that???? Well I hope any of them.. I mean anyone but me...I mean no one...oh my!

Who would you rather spend a day with: Ian Mackaye or the TATU girls?

Now here is question! Well...both would be great to hang with... On one hand...I could learn a lot about the way of the straight edge and punk rock from Mr. Mackaye which would be amazing...but think about what I could learn about girls from just watching them make out for an afternoon!

Tell us about the one that got away.

I got her back.

Plug your shit.

(low mono tone voice) We have a new album...it is great...buy it now...it is on Vagrant Records...Vagrant Records is cool...you want to be cool...people like people that are cool...be cool...be cool...buy the record...bye.

I want to be cool. I will buy your record.

Thanks yo!!! That was a lot of fun.. I like fun...Keep in touch let me know when this gets put up. Great questions... crazy man.

Moneen's new album "Are We Really Happy With Who We Are Right Now?" is out on Vagrant Records. Visit Moneen at www.moneen.com

Mike McColgan of the Street Dogs

Interviewed by Bryan and Matt Kremkau

What made you get back into playing music again?

I got back into music because of a one Jeff "The Shark" Erna. Jeff, who is the drummer of Street Dogs, called me up about a year and a half ago and asked me if I was up for singing in on some songs with him and Rob Guidotti, our guitar player. And I of course said yes because I have history with Jeff because we played together a long time ago in Dropkick Murphys. Plus I had never really stopped writing lyrics even though I dropped off the radar screen for awhile. I basically had a yen to get back in to playing and writing and the call from Jeff was just the push I needed.

How did the Street Dogs get together?

The answer to question one really is the answer to question two, but in the interest of adding a little more to it... When myself, Jeff and Rob had been playing for awhile, we decided to record a demo just to see if there was any interest out there for what we were doing. Much to our surprise, there was a significant amount of interest so we added a bass player, Michelle Paulhaus (currently the bass player for the Dents), and she played some area shows with us, but due to her commitment with the Dents she could not commit to us fully, so we went with Johnny Rioux (former bass player for Elmer, the Bruisers, Roger Miret and the Disasters, Mike Ness) and we have been pleased with our direction and music ever since. We signed to Crosscheck Records, a punk and hardcore based imprint of CMH records, which is a country and bluegrass label. Our debut album Savin Hill comes out September 23, 2003.

Are you still working as a firefighter? If so, is it something that has lived up to your expectations?

I am still currently employed as a Boston firefighter and the job has totally exceeded my personal expectations. I am very pleased and content with the job. It's a very rewarding profession helping others.

Have you ever rescued an old lady on the floor and she said "I've fallen and I can't get up?"

I have helped out a significant amount of old ladies who have had medical ailments or conditions but I haven't had it happen were an old lady has told me that she has fallen and she can't get up.

What was the worst job you ever had?

The worst job I ever had was washing dishes at a nursing home when I was 14. It was too hot in the kitchen and the dishes just never seemed to stop because the nursing home was huge. It sucked arse let me tell ya!

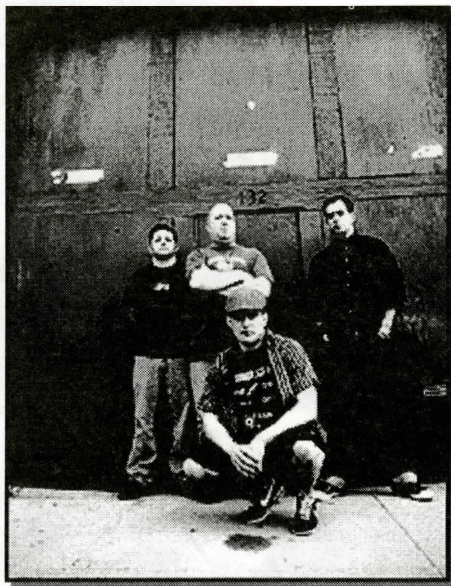
Do you still talk to members of the Dropkick Murphys?

I keep in contact with Ken and every now and then I bump into Matt at Boston Bruins games during the winter. Myself, Ken and Matt are all huge Boston Bruins fans. So every now and then we go to a game or two together.

Would the Street Dogs ever play some shows with DKM? Or do you want to disassociate yourself with them and just concentrate on your own band?

I would not rule out playing with DKM as I am honestly a fan of the

band even though I have left the group. I never anticipated that I would listen to and love the band once I left, but I have and I think Al Barr has more than filled my shoes and Ken's production on the records Sing Loud Sing Proud and Blackout is nothing short of phenomenal. I do, however, want the Street Dogs music to stand out on its own and not be a carbon copy of the time period of when I was in DKM. I am confident that our music will stand out on its own and give us our own distinctive identity separate from DKM. Also, I do not want to disassociate ourselves from DKM in the fraternal sense because we mutually back one another as bands. But musically, yes, I want there to be a difference and distinction.



Was it weird at first, playing shows and recording your CD since you've been out of the game for awhile?

It's funny you ask that because I totally anticipated a heavy amount of rust with my voice and stage presence and early on there was some, particularly at one of our earliest shows as a band at a venue called The Pond in Cambridge, MA. But beyond that show, the band had more rehearsals and shows and I found my voice became much stronger than ever before and I felt way more at home up on stage. So when we did record our debut album, the band

went above and beyond our humble expectations and we are pleased with the results and hopefully other people will be too.

What kind of songs can we look for on your debut album?

Songs about confrontation, songs about work, songs about relationships, songs about motivation, songs touching ever so slightly on personal politics, and finally, songs about booze.

Do the Street Dogs play straight-up punk rock because there are too many Celtic rock bands out there now?

We played punk driven and influenced rock and roll because that is what we wanted to do. That was the "only" reason we made our album that way. If we wanted to go Celtic we would have. If we wanted to do metal we would have. If we wanted to do hardcore we would have. Street Dogs will do whatever the hell we want musically, we will not be pigeon-holed at all.

This might be hard to answer—do you have one band that you couldn't stop listening to when you were growing up?

The answer to this question is easy! The one band that I constantly listened to growing up and still do is the Clash. I have every album, I know every word, every grunt, yell and guitar driven salvo by the only band that mattered!

How do you think the Bruins will do this year? (GO RANGERS!)

Well, my friend, this is our year, not the overpaid and under producing rangers year! It has not happened since 1972 that the Boston B's raised Lord Stanley and I believe this is our year! Honestly, I am just praying for Jeremy Jacobs, the Bruins owner, to go out and get the three missing ingredients for the B's: Goaltending, Defense, and One more goal scorer!!!

Do you have anything to plug?

Of course I do, go out and buy Street Dogs debut album Savin Hill on September 23! Give the Dogs a chance! Plus we don't bite and we are house-broken! Also check out Street Dogs' website: www.street-dogs.com

THE A.K.A.s

TARE EVERYWHERE IT

The A.K.A.s are the hottest band since Foghat. SPOJ's Bryan Kremkau spoke with vocalist Mike Ski about their hot new sound and hot new album, soon to hit your hot 99¢ bin.

Who are you and what do you do in the band?

Hello, My name is Mike Ski... I sing for The A.K.A.s. It's nice to meet you.

I know bands hate this, but could you give us a some history about the AKAs?

Bands really hate this? Maybe that's because they secretly hate their own bands. I love my band, and I loved History because I had an amazing professor. He would bang his head on the chalkboard until he would almost fall down. It was rumored that he lived in his office and slept on the floor until he was eventually fired for his unruly appearance and crass teaching style. It still makes me mad to this day because I think he was the best teacher I ever had. I think he was drunk most of the time. Anyway, The A.K.A.s started when my good pal Lukas and I began to grow musically restless. I had been previously engaged in a fulltime band that had recently met its demise, so I was freaking out with nothing going on. I could hardly go to a show without bumming because I wanted to play again so badly. Also, I felt a strong urge to have some kind of voice in a time where I felt that punk and rock and roll was becoming very watery, when so many important things were going on in the world. Chad (our favorite bassist in the world) worked in the mailroom at my old job and I saw him walking down the street one day and asked him to rock. Nina (our lovely and talented lady on the keys) was Lukas' old roomie (of the homegirl type, not the banging type.) Bobby was an old compadre from back in my home town and was easily coerced into joining our quest and moved to the big city to fulfill his dreams of thumping drums in a rock and roll outfit. We wrote some songs, made a demo, played a bunch of shows, and now here we are.

Who would you say is more your influence: David Hasselhoff or MC Hammer?

I would have to say that neither is an influence in almost any remote way I could imagine. MC Hammer could dance, but he fucked it all up with his solid gold water faucets. I would say that Chuck D from Public Enemy is my biggest influence. I always thought he was a really revolutionary artist for his time and genre. He was one of the first rappers to take on the state of his own music form and flew in the face of his peers and critics, took on the government, the CIA, FBI, big companies like Nike and Alcohol and Tobacco companies for targeting minorities and lower class neighborhoods. Somehow though, they always made great songs that were fun to listen to. I met him a couple years ago when I was on tour... he was sitting in a restaurant eating with Professor Griff and a big posse. When they were done eating I went up and introduced myself

and he was totally cool. I was scared to death that he was going to be a dick, but he was awesome. I always love when someone uses their voice for something bigger than themselves.

How was recording your first full length?

Recording our record was a very dichotomic experience. It was tons of fun at times, other times it was very frustrating and hard work. We all made time in between our regular jobs here in the big apple, so over weeks it was like double duty everyday which can be very tiresome, so it is a record made in a desperate fit. It was also the most time any of us have ever spent making a record, so it was a learning experience having such a huge project on our hands and working with such a talented producer. Tim O'Heir was really fun to make a record with, he was always pushing us to do our best, and I think that's what we got. I was sick the entire time, coughing up giant balls of green slime in between takes. I think I drank about 20 gallons of tea and a lake's worth of H2O. Ultimately we feel really proud of ourselves for making a record that we think is pretty fucking awesome. We were on tour when the record was getting mixed and driving back to NYC to pick up mixes every other night. There was a time when we heard the song "Always On" and everyone was smiling. I think it was Nina that commented that it was the first time that she knew if she wasn't in the band, she would think we ruled.

If I had messy hair and wore black clothing, could I be in the band?

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your recent inquiry regarding a position as a member of The A.K.A.s. Although your messy hair and black clothes seem to make you a qualified candidate for our team of professionals, we regret to inform you that due to a sluggish economy in a post 9/11 recession, we are not currently accepting any new associates.

However, our hardworking staff has provided the following information that will hopefully aid you in leaving behind your unfruitful career as an under-appreciated music writer:

- 1: Keep the all black clothing, shave your head and join Alkaline Trio.
- 2: Keep the all black clothing, become a vampire and join A.F.I.
- 3: Move to Williamsburg and start a mediocre band, you're sure to be famous.

We wish you the best of luck. Thank you again for your inquiry.

Sincerely, The A.K.A.s

Who was your favorite character on Saved By The Bell?

I never really watched it much... I remember that the girls were pretty hot. The one was in that horrible stripper movie right? Oh god, and poor Screech. Talk about typcasting yourself. Fuck, now I'm all depressed.

What other styles of music to you like to listen to?

I think I'm the kind of kid who is constantly starved for music. I'm way too broke to buy records very often, so when I find a new band that I like, I will listen to that record for months. I enjoy a lot of punk, rock and roll, some hardcore, and early hip hop (circa Run DMC/Eric B & Rakim), but I'll listen to anything that speaks to me. I find myself listening to a lot of the records I bought when I was 14 lately and loving it. Dead Kennedys, Angry Samoans, Hanoi Rocks. As a band, we have really diverse musical tastes and interests, everything from Radiohead to Randy, which I'm listening to right now. As Ice T said: "I feel sorry for anyone who only listens to one form of music."

How is your band different from the many other bands out there today?

We sometimes describe ourselves as ideologically reactionary, meaning that most of the time, we are reacting to what's going on around us. Right now is a time where we are constantly bombarded and inundated with whatever is hot at the moment. The music becomes increasingly derivative and the content is more of a 2nd generation cliché. This inherently makes us different because whatever it is that is going on at a given moment, we're usually acting out against it. At press time, we're currently under invasion by thousands of anonymous, faceless emo boy bands and super hipper than hip self-important bad art soundtracks. As a result, our record is not a weepy diary nor an experimental trip on a time machine, more like a musical middle finger. We are constantly at war with trying to have fun in such a depressing musical time. We are in constant search for like-minded bandfolk to create an unstoppable posse of bros and birds. Send your applications to www.theAKAs.com

What's the worst movie you've ever seen?

Charlie's Angels 2: Full Throttle. It was like if someone asked the most creepy readers of MAXIM magazine to describe the top 10 situations they would most like to whack off to and made a really expensive, dumb movie tying those situations together as the plot.

Do you think it was right to broadcast the pictures of Saddam's dead sons, Boo-tay and Sa Da Tay?

I'm not surprised by anything the media will do these days to ensure the majority of our country is made up of fucking weirdos. "Boo-yaaaaah!"

If I said you had a beautiful body would you take your pants off and dance around a little?

Probably. As long as you promise to like it.

Got anything to plug? (Tours, Cds, Etc.)

Of course we do! Our debut album "White Doves & Smoking Guns" hits the streets September 9th on Fueled by Ramen Records (fueledbyramen.com) and vinyl on Law of Inertia Records (lawofinertia.com). We're taking off on tour to spread the virus starting on September 5th (Dates at: theakas.com or fueledbyramen.com). In the meantime, thanks so much for taking the time to interview us and if anyone is reading this... thanks to you as well. You might just love our record. Peep it.

Folly

to do this interview

questions by Bryan and Adam

Um, who the fuck are you?

My name is Jon and I lay down vocal-bangs for Folly. You can call me "Frenchy the Fries" or "Cheesey the steakies." I am a young man.

What kind of crappy music do you play?

We consider our music a good background music for calf-roping, bingo, and other buffoonery. Typically the rock and/or roll is also good for fucking people to.

I had sex with your mom last night. That's not a question, so much as a statement of fact.

My mother died in a car accident several years ago. I know you didn't know that and perhaps you wouldn't have brought that up if you did know it, and I really won't hold that against you. However, meany, if you did your research before your interview, you wouldn't ruin someone's day.

Yeah right. Do you think your music will improve when you grow some pubes?

I shit my pants in front of the toilet.

Who would you say is more your influence: Bacon Brothers, Pat Boone, or Kids of Widney High?

None of the aforementioned. I would say that most of our collective influences come from the most obscure late 80's/early 90's major league baseball players. For instance, Arben owes his being to the talents and endowment of one such Matt Nokes. I go with Chris Sabo, perhaps Ron Dibble.

Bernard Gilkey should smack you upside the head.

Besides Folly, what band should throw in the towel?

All of those pussy ska bands, fuck them all. RUDEBOYS ARE STUPID.

No argument here. What member of your band do you find extremely hot?

Without a single doubt in my mind, and as all the ladies agree, Anthony "The tones that men will forever make" Wille. The young man has an amazing, magical way with his... fingers.

How much are gay hookers nowadays?

I am not entirely sure of GAY hookers YET, but from what an old friend who frequented Vancouver told me, a \$5 blowjob is not out of the question. He told me he once held back the hair of a hooker who went to town on a bellboy's business in the back alley of a hotel.

You suck, what are you going to do about it sucky?

The only domestic animal not mentioned in the Bible is a cat. Rabbits and horses can not vomit. Scorpions can withstand 200 times more nuclear radiation than humans. The United States has never lost a war in which mules were used. Crazy!

Plug your poo will ya!

Goshen sucks!

If you're bored, check out Follynj.com

Last minute update: Folly just signed with Triple Crown Records! (triplecrownrecords.com)

DANNY WOOD

No Longer A Kid

How difficult has it been to shed the NKOTB image?

It is more difficult for other people. I feel that by making this record and doing live gigs, I have already shed the image. I have been shedding the image since the group broke up.

What can you tell us about your new album, *Second Face*?

It is basically a rock record with pop flavors. Every song is about something I went through. It's personal.

Some of the songs on *Second Face* are about male-female relationships, but they could also be about the record industry. Your thoughts?

That is funny you noticed that because I wrote about one thing and people interpret a completely different way. I love that. That is what good music is about - leaving it up to the listener.

What was it like performing again after such a long break?

I felt complete, finally. Nkotb was a great learning experience and I am very proud of what we did, but creatively it was not the kind of music I was listening to or wanting to do. This record is from my heart, so to get up on stage and be able to have opportunity to make people believe what I am singing is incredible.

What have you been up to these past few years?

Making this record and getting through some tough times - fighting for and winning custody of my son, my mom being diagnosed with breast cancer and passing away. It's all there in the songs on the album.

What is it like, being in a group like NKOTB, in terms of your creative freedom and dealings with the industry? Did you have any say in regards to songwriting, touring, etc? Were you forced to uphold a certain image?

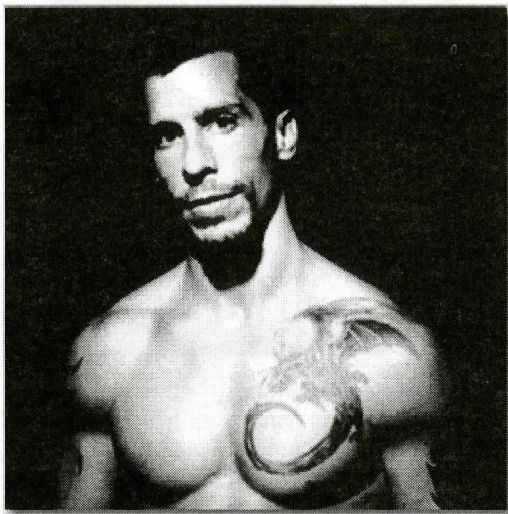
There was almost no creative freedom. We had a producer who wrote almost all the songs. I took full advantage of learning to engineer, write and produce. With the tour we definitely controlled what we did. In a lot of instances we were forced to do things. For example, our Xmas album.

In the States, NKOTB were considered clean-cut, but overseas, you guys were viewed as a bunch of rowdy hooligans. And apparently you've got the stories to back that up. Tell us some crazy groupie stories!

We were always crazy city boys. The media in the States made us clean cut. Once a girl broke into my room and waited for me naked. There are too many stories-we would have to talk about it.

You were always the "quiet one" or the "mysterious one", like the George Harrison of the group. Is it true that the quietest are the wisest?

I don't know. I know I learned the most. I can sit in my studio and make music, cut my own vocals, make a finished record on my own.



Which New Kid did you secretly hate the most?

Jon; I never hated him, I just thought he was never cut out to be in the music business.

What was the single greatest experience you had while in the New Kids?

The greatest was performing in Chile, for 100,000 kids singing all our songs. It was an Amnesty International show.

Fame is like a reverse bungee chord - you get shot up fast and then snap back down. Was it difficult dealing with the backlash?

No, I am a city boy. We have thick skin.

Do you think young teens should be subjected to that amount of fame and public scrutiny?

No.

Have you spoken with Backstreet Boys or N'Sync about these issues?

No.

What advice do you have for future young pop stars?

Get a good lawyer? People will line up to rip you off.

First thing that comes to mind when you hear:

Britney Spears—pop
Marky Mark—who
Cannibal Corpse—heavy
Ska—reggae
MTV—control

What are five things that make you happy, and five things that piss you off?

MAKE ME HAPPY:

1. family and friends
2. performing live
3. music
4. being creative
5. hitting the heavy bag

PISS ME OFF:

1. music industry bull shit
2. unaccountable people
3. lies
4. jealousy
5. closed-minded people

List five things most people would be surprised to know about you.

1. Determined
2. Disciplined
3. Tough
4. Sexual
5. Pissed off

When is the Danny Wood punk rock album coming out?

Never.

Danny Wood's new album "Second Face" is available everywhere through Empire Musicwerks/Damage/BMG. Visit Danny at www.dannywood.com.



I once read an interview with Rush from the mid-80s, and in the intro, the journalist sums up the atypical rock band with this observation: "Rush prefers to dabble in art than in drugs." I wouldn't (and couldn't) say the same about the Bouncing Souls, but that phrase came to mind when Jennifer and I sat down to interview them. Even though they're one of the best punk bands today, they're just not your typical punk band.

For an hour, the Souls (minus Michael the drummer who was doing sound check) answered our pesky questions thoughtfully and conversationally. Even though they got to the club late because their van broke down, and even though they were hungry, they never complained. Even though there was a huge bin of beer, they never got out of their seats to fetch a can.

Pete, guitar, and Greg, vocals, are the two most mellow, soft-spoken punk rockers I have interviewed. Brian, bass, is the most charismatic of the group, but was also laid back, friendly, and without punk rock airs. It's hard to imagine that a few hours later these people would take to a stage and drive the sold-out crowd into a moshing, singalong frenzy.

The interview begins with us retelling the story of running into Pete at our wedding DJ's office (long story). Brian asks about our engagement...

—Adam Liebling & Jennifer Kao

Brian: Let's see your ring!

Jennifer: I left it at home...

Adam: We were scared the punks would steal it for crack.

B: Those damn dirty diamond-stealing punks!

A: Pete, how was your wedding?

Pete: It was awesome.

Greg: I had an awesome time. He had the best DJ. Played great music.

J: What was the highlight of the wedding?

G: The music! And I'm not just saying that because you're picking the same DJ.

P: The highlight was when our friend Jody and Michael, our drummer, went out on the dance floor for "I Like Big Butts" and did this routine that was...

G: Bordering on pornographic!

P: It was bordering on porn and it was not rehearsed and totally off the cuff and amazing. It was like Dance Fever.

B: God, I wish I could have seen it. I left after the service—I had pneumonia.

P: He was the best man, and he came through.

A: Did you teleconference in or something?

B: Yeah, I phoned in the speech (laughs)

P: You can't even laugh, because he was on his death bed.

A: Was it weird having a bunch of punks hanging out with your grandmother?

G: We're used to it! It's our life!

B: It was kind of cool, really. Worlds colliding is a lot of fun.

G: I love that.

A: So I take it your families are supportive of this loud, harsh music you play?

B: They don't really rock out to it as much as we do, but hey, they support us at this point. We're years beyond "Oh, it's a phase." They got through that—it was a phase for them. They accepted it.

A: Would you allow your own kids to follow the same path?

B: Whatever they want to do, I'll tell them they should do it.

A: Let's talk about the documentary. How long did it take to put together?

G: It was process spanning over ten years. It has years and years of footage, but the editing took a good three or four months. We originally had a three-hour version of the documentary, but had to cut a lot out.

A: Is there anything you wish you could've kept in?

G: Oh yeah. There was a ton of old footage... like Ambervision...

A: What's Ambervision?

G: It was, like, Pete and Bryan cruising into a truckstop, and I followed them with a camera. And they were "being dudes" shopping for Ambervision—the sunglasses. Really not much more to it...

They'd try them on, go into the bathroom and look at themselves.

B: Fuck! I haven't seen that in years!

A: Watching all the outtakes and home movies, it's like you guys should've done a public access skit show, or something.

B: Yup! We could've. We have friends who have that exact thing on cable. And it's just skits and whatever they come up with and it's called the Slack Pack.

A: Is there anything in the final documentary that you regretted saying?

P: We cut all those things out. (laughs)

B: There's more stuff that I wish I could've said. Like, I wanted to talk about the truck now. We had a whole big dedication to the Hovelpod, which is awesome, but we have a box truck that we've been living in for the past 200,000 miles.

A: The Hovelpod Mach 2?

B: Yeah, this would have to be part two of the Hovelpod. I wish the old girl could've made it in there...

A: Did you originally pitch the documentary to Epitaph?

G: I thought about it for one minute, and decided to do it ourselves.

B: It's too "ours." Like, they put our records out and they own them. They would own the DVD.

A: Let's talk about the new album. It's of course much darker, much more brooding. Are you guys becoming emo? (laughs)

G: No!

B: Not even close!

P: It's darker and more personal but I wouldn't say it's emo. It has emotion, but it's not emo. But we've always had those moments, ever since the first record.

A: You guys have always had a very... Umm.. What's that word? Starts with a W?

J: Woeful?

G: Waffle?

B: Wonderful?

P: Wowing?

B: Wild?

P: Wicked?

A: Yes, all of those, but... ah screw it. [I was actually thinking of "wistful"] Are you guys happy with the entire shebang?

B: Yeah, it's perfect.

A: Your best one?

B: At the moment.

J: I noticed the cover art is very different, and a departure from your other albums. Was it done in a different way or by someone else?

B: No, it was done by me; I've done all the covers. Somewhere around the end of the process of writing the songs, I come up with a... I try to visualize the record. Around the time the record starts to take shape, I try to find it in my mind visually. And this is what this record looked like. So I pictured it, and I was like, this has to be done with oil paints. Thus, I couldn't do it in my usual graphic, two-dimensional comic-y style. I don't know, it needed to be dark.

A: Have you thought about directing any Souls videos?

B: Ummm... I don't know.

A: Maybe create cool stage sets with giant flaming skulls?

G: Not that kind of dark! Not AFI dark!

A: No black mascara?

G: Little cages with us in straightjackets...

B: Bats! I love bats, though. But it's not spooky like Halloween spooky, it's like dark I might kill myself dark.

A: Are you still doing graffiti?

B: A little bit.. Just like tagging bathroom walls in clubs, throwing up little Bouncing Souls things.

J: Name five reasons why Kate is great.

G: She's really good at math.

P: She loves us... even though we totally suck sometimes.

G: That's the best part about Kate.

A: Suck personally?

P: Just as a unit.

B: Yes, suck as an organization, or lack thereof. (laughs)

G: She helps us communicate better.

B: She has pretty hair. She's more manly than any of us when needed to be. She could kick any one of our asses.

A: Has she ever defended you guys? Beaten anyone up?

B: I think if shit went down, Kate would be there. Kate would not be running into a corner, she would break a bottle and cut someone's face open with it.

J: Have you ever seen each other naked? (laughs)

G: We caught glimpses here and there...

B: You kinda look and you're like uh... I didn't see that... (laughs)

P: If you're on tour, you might walk in on

someone on the toilet or something. And really, what can one say about such a thing?

G: You're like, okaaaay...

B: I once played a show naked, so these guys definitely had to stand on stage and play a show with me naked.

J: Who among the bands you know have the hottest groupies?

P: Us.

A: You can't have groupies!

P: You can have groupies, you just can't, like, touch them or anything.

B: I'm just trying to think if I know any metal bands, cuz they always get the hottest groupies.

P: The Explosion have model hipster groupies.

B: Yeah, that's true. Cutting edge groupies.

P: Yeah, fashion groupies.

J: Like the Strokes. Metrosexuals.

B: Metrosexuals! Good one!

J: Have you guys spent more time in California since

you're on Epitaph?

G: I live there. Lived there for about three years.

J: Wow, what do you think of it?

G: I like the weather. There's not a lot to it, as far as socially, that I care much about.

J: What part of California do you live in?

G: In Los Angeles, in the valley.

J: So I imagine you know how to drive..

G: Yeah, I'm just getting to know my way around after being there for so long. You know, anywhere it's hit and miss as far as people. You find people that are cool, you find people that aren't.

J: What made you move out to LA?

G: Well, I had a girlfriend out there, and we have since gotten married.

J: Ohhh, congratulations! So you're the surfer in the band, then? How did you get into surfing?

G: When I can, yeah. I always loved the ocean, and in the early 90s, we actually moved in with a friend Matt O'Brien, and he surfed, so he's kind of my surfing mentor.

A: Have you guys ever read something in print or on a website about you that was completely wrong?

B: On Napster, or any file-sharing thing, there's a song called "The Irish Drinking Song" by the Bouncing Souls that we never wrote.

P: It was like a ska-Dropkick Murphys mix. It might be Voodoo Glowskulls, I

think. But every few months, at a show we'll hear someone in the crowd scream out: "IRISH DRINKING SONG!! PLAY IT!!!" And it's not even us!

J: Does it sound like you guys?

B: It doesn't sound remotely like us. And people are like, that's the best song you guys ever wrote! Um, thanks?

A: But have you ever read stuff like, "I went to the Bouncing Souls show last night and they were such assholes and they kicked my friend's ass!"

G: It happens very rarely, but sometimes something will leak through.

B: The only misconception is that Greg is wasted.

P: I hear that ALL the time!

B: Yeah, that's like every kid I meet, "Dude, I went to that Bouncing Souls show and Greg was WASTED!" He's just mellow, that's just the way he is.

P: I went to high school with Greg, and Greg would always get in trouble because teachers always thought he was stoned all the time.

J: Then you must really fit in in LA. They're really mellow out there.

G: In a way, they're not, though, because there's something different... Like on the freeways—people are totally insane!

B: Yeah, they're mellow, but they're not hella-mellow. (laughs)

G: From individual to individual, there's an element of LA that's totally psychotic.

J: Who are some celebrities you'd like to meet?

B: Shane McGowan. I'd love to meet him and get drunk with him.

A: Yeah, but he wouldn't remember it.

P: Who cares—you would!

B: And I'd like to meet Bruce, the god-damn Boss, one of these days.

A: Jersey boy over here.

B: Just like John Cusack in High Fidelity, and the Boss just appears with his guitar and answers questions. I just want to have him, like when I really need help, appear with his guitar and be like "Brian, dude, tell her that you love her..." Just sit on your couch and give you advice.

J: Did you hear that John Ritter died today?

G: And Johnny Cash!

P: Sucks on both counts...

A: But more for John Ritter. I mean, c'mon. Who here really listens to Johnny Cash?

B: Umm, you're kidding right?

A: No! I went to all these ska and punk websites today and all these little kids were crying over someone they don't listen to.

B: Hey, sorry man, but Johnny Cash is actually my favorite artist.

G: He's my total hero.

P: He's amazing.

A: You guys suck.

J: Greg, now that you're in California,

Pete: But every few months, at a show we'll hear someone in the crowd scream out: "IRISH DRINKING SONG!! PLAY IT!!!" And it's not even us!

Jen: Does it sound like you guys?

Brian: It doesn't sound remotely like us. And people are like, that's the best song you guys ever wrote! Um, thanks?

what do you think of the whole gubernatorial situation?

G: I haven't been paying attention, to tell you the truth.

P: Jack Grisham!

B: Jack Grisham from TSOL.

G: Yeah, I would vote for Jack Grisham.

A: I dunno, the Joykiller stuff is pretty eh.

B: True, true.

A: What's the best compliment you've ever received? Like, something that made you stand back and go "whoa"?

B: Anybody who has ever said we actually saved their life. We'll see that in the guestbook sometimes with a real story.

Today on the guestbook, a kid posted that his best friend pulled him up on stage during Manthem—it's a song about your best friend. And like, that was his last memory of his friend. And he just wrote an entry about it today. He talked about how his best friend just died and now what Manthem means to him... Music gets into your life. No matter who it is, it locks you in a moment.

A: What bands are like that for you?

B: For different moments, it's different things. Definitely Johnny Cash. Definitely Bruce Springsteen. Bob Seger. 7 Seconds was a big moment. All my punk rock in those years... those were massive years for me. There's too many... narrow it down for me.

A: Rush?

B: Yeah, just really Rush. An all-encompassing banner of rock. (laughs)

P: Rush never really moved me.

J: Rush moved me... away from the radio! (laughs) (Michael pops his head in)

A: I bet Mike's a Rush fan.

Michael: How do you know when a drummer's risers are off-kilter?

G: How?

Michael: The drivel comes out the other side of his mouth. (Pops back out of the room)

G: Drummer humor.

A: So who is your weirdest fan?

P: This guy in Ottawa.

G: He was AWESOME! Tell the story!

P: We were playing Ottawa the day of the blackout, and then the blackout happened and we couldn't play. So we started playing acoustic outside, but there's this kid with this giant red curly fro. He's like screaming at us, like song titles and "YEEAAHHH!! OI OI OI OI!! I'M A HOPELESS ROMANTIC!! AHHHHHH!!!!" Like so loud, and we had no amplifiers. And it was awesome because there were all these kids sitting around us—it was a sold-out show and no one could go back in the club after the power went out. So we went out in the alley and us and Hot Water Music were sitting and playing acoustic guitars, and all the kids sat around. And this one kid was just SCREAMING.

G: FULL VOLUME SCREAMING. It was amazing to see, this

kid.

A: What's the most challenging thing about being in the Bouncing Souls?

B: Umm, we're all challenged.

G: Keeping my ego in check is pretty hard.

A: Shut up and fetch me a beer. (laughs)

B: I feel like I become more and more of a freak every year. Like you had a place in society being a young punk kid, but as you get older, slowly all the people you were surrounded with, as time goes by, all get reabsorbed into society. And you go on, and you're sort of more and more isolated from society.

A: It'll be worse when you have kids. You could be the most punk rock person, but you'll still be an embarrassing dad.

B: You're right, if I was a dad, I'd probably be very, very embarrassing. It becomes more apparent to me though, that I'm a total freak. That sometimes is weird.

J: Do you guys see yourselves doing this for the rest of your lives?

P: As long as we're still viable and writing good songs and good records.

B: Yeah, as long as we still like doing it. I'll always do what I like, and I can't see myself stopping to like this, because every time I write a song, I make a stride in doing it and getting better at it. It's always rewarding.

A: Not to age you guys, but in 9 or 10 years, you'll be eligible for the Rock N Roll Hall of Fame.

P: We better get crackin' at writing some good songs then. Sell some records.

A: What did you think of Rob Santello's book?

B: Awesome, it's great.

A: So you liked the way he portrayed you as... pedophiles? (Laughs)

B: I read a review in Maximumrocknroll and it said the book portrayed us as fratboys.

A: There was a lot of drug use, but it seemed atypical of you.

B: Yeah, we don't do that stuff.

A: The whole book though is about Rob's search for drugs. But then I saw him on the documentary and he was...

B: Well-spoken?

A: Like a college professor in training.

B: Well, that is the essence of Rob Santello. He is a well-read, well-spoken... drug addict! (laughs) He's one of those rare guys who get funnier when you give him a couple pills.

J: What's something about you that your fans would be surprised to know?

G: That I don't drink.

P: I think that's the biggest one, because everyone thinks he's always wasted.

A: All right guys. We'll let you go and eat dinner. Thanks a lot.

All: Thanks a lot!!



Childhood friend Wayne and the anime-haired Kate

Pete stayed behind so we could ask him more questions about his wedding. That mini-interview will be featured in the next READ, tentatively the Wedding Issue. The Souls' new album is Anchors Aweigh on Epitaph Records (epitaph.com). Visit the band at bouncing Souls.com and chunksaah.com.

Photos by Jennifer Kao.



Mr. Spoons

Interviewed by Bryan Kremkau & Lauren Freedman

Hi Mr. Spoons, how did you become the famous spoons player we know today?

Well, because of the depression era, people had no money, so we used almost anything we could find as entertainment. I used to watch my father play the spoons and was inspired. I've been playing ever since.

Have you ever tried playing the spork?

No, never.

I can play the drums with butter knives, is there a person out there that can do that??

Not that I know of.... would you like to start a band?

What are your favorite songs that you like to play?

Bill Bailey, Sweet Georgia Brown, It Had To Be You. Mostly stuff from the 20s and 30s.

What did you think of Soundgarden's "Spoonman"? Did it accurately portray spooners?

Never heard that song but I'm going to try to get it.

So I hear you're friends with Carson Daly. What's he REALLY like?

He's a real regular guy, likes his beer, really nice, and really enjoys my shows. He even started a chant for me once! "Spoons Spoons Spoons!"

What other things can you play? Washboard? Kazoo? Slide whistle?

All of the above! Plus the piano, not so much anymore, and I used to play the banjo. I was actually in this group called Just a Bunch Of Banjos.

How does one become a spoon virtuoso?

With a little practice, mastering the spoons will happen. Holding them steady is the most important thing.

So what about this fanclub of yours? The Spoonies? Are they anything like NSync fans?

Yes, actually! They follow me to the places I play and chant and cheer when I come on. They're always chanting "SPOONS SPOONS SPOONS". The Spoonies are everywhere: Harlem, Manhattan. I even have fans at Chinese restaurants that come out to see me play when I go in for food.

Why do the kids love the spoons?

Kids like to play the spoons because they are familiar with using them and they don't have to take lessons. They can pick them up any time and practice. It's a fun session and not a drudge and they can join in on any kind of music.

Are there any bands you would like to collaborate with? Maybe do a guest appearance on a song of theirs?

I'd love to do something with the Boston Pops Orchestra! I did a show once at Madison Square Garden and played the spoons to "Shake it Fast" by Mystikal with backup dancers and everything. I'd play with anybody. Every band could use some spoons in their songs.

Any plans of putting your music on CD? If so, what songs are you planning on playing the spoons to?

I would like to. Probably about 10 songs. I'd do all the old time big band songs like I named above.

Are you planning any touring soon? If so, where?

I'll go anywhere if I get a show. For now it's the New Jersey/New York area. I've got an RV now so I can go anywhere. I play all occasions! Wakes, funerals, you've got it! I actually played a wake once, everyone loved it and gave me a standing ovation, well except for the person in the casket....

Wanna hear MP3's of the Amazing Mr. Spoons? Go to the Official Original Mr. Spoons Website
<http://www.geocities.com/mrspoons/>

If you want to contact Mr. Spoons, e-mail Lauren at
lalalauren311@yahoo.com



Interviewed by
Bryan Kremkau &
Lauren Freedman

Um...who are you? What do you do in the band?
I'm Parry. I sing and play guitar in the band Nerf Herder.

So tell me about this EP coming out? It's an older one that you guys are re-releasing?

In light of recent scientific evidence regarding the prevention of prostate cancer, we are re-releasing our old EP with some new songs added, most importantly "Fight For Your Right To Masturbate". The idea is to spread the word that it is okay, nay, healthy, to love yourself in a sexual way. This is important stuff! Think about it. The Surgeon General will put a warning sticker on cigarettes saying that "Smoking causes lung cancer", and ban the use of cancer causing agents such as asbestos and radioactive particles, but they continually refuse to put a sticker on anything in order to help prevent one of the deadliest cancers around, cancer of the prostate. I ask, "Why?!?" Partially, it's reverse sexism. If a woman takes off her shirt and touches her own breasts in a self-examination, we think nothing of it, but if a man pulls down his pants and does what he needs to for his own health, he is considered a deviant. So-called "men's magazines" such as Hustler or Juggs, are made difficult and embarrassing to obtain, when in fact they should be distributed freely, or at least affixed with a sticker such as "This Magazine Can Help Prevent Prostate Cancer". Anyhow, I think it is important and that's why we are re-releasing the old EP.

Are you really a fan of Jenna Bush? What about the other one? I'm a twin, you think I'd have a shot with one of them?
I don't know you, but I bet you've got a shot. She seems pretty easy.

How's the tour going overseas?
We are back now. So I guess at this point it is not going so well.

Which member of Van Halen would you marry?
Is this a trick question?

Do you have a "Nerf Crotch Bat?" Or how about a "Nerf Crotch Missile?"
I thought they were the same thing.

Which group gets laid more: Star Wars fans or Star Trek fans?
Are you including Next Generation and Babylon 5? Because that would make a big difference.....

Do you think individual MP3 users should be sued by the RIAA?
Suing is too lenient. They should be forced to listen to the crappy music they download, especially that Staind band. They really suck.

How bad was this interview?
All honesty, it was no worse than many.

Do you have anything to plug?
Did we talk about Jenna Bush yet?

Check out Nerf Herder's website: nerfherder.net.
Their latest is **My E.P.** on Honest Don's Records (www.fatwreck.com)

kittenpants

www.kittenpants.org
SPECIAL INSERT!

Once again, *READ Magazine* brings you the very best of kittenpants. In this special eight-page insert you'll find just a few samples of the awesome hilarity available online at www.kittenpants.org.

Hey kittenpants-ers!

When you're not busy *READ*-ing, check out **kittenpants.org** for all new interviews, articles, letters, and fun stuff. Upcoming interviews:

- Actor-turned-director, and kittenpants ultimate hero, Keith Gordon
- NYC superstars: Eugene Mirman, Rick Shapiro, and the Wau Wau Sisters
- Michael Ian Black, and Thomas Lennon, of MTV's *THE STATE*, among other things...
- K records founder and indie rock's Dad: Calvin Johnson.

Seriously - You totally can't wait!

Also, available online is **KITTY KITTY BANG BANG**, the first ever Kittenpants compilation CD, which will rock you so hard, you won't know what hit you. Buying this CD is like giving your money to ear charity!

Got something to say? Send an email to **kittenpants@hotmail.com** with your stories, letters, ideas, lists, or amusing anecdotes, and maybe I'll print it in the next issue. Maybe I'll punch you. Either way, beats masturbating to reruns of *SMALL WONDER*.

Right?

xoxo,
kittenpants

The KP contributors
in this insert are:



Dennis
Proctor



Sam Forsyth



Kittenpants



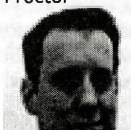
Matt Tobey



Corn Mo



Uncle Sloppy



John Moe



Harley
Jebens



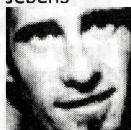
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Farley



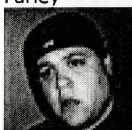
Joel Traylor



Steve
Douglass



Owen Drolet



Matt
Carter



Franky Pelvis

At kittenpants.org, you can write the staff for advice on everything from hot dogs to poop. Our **Letters Forum** is filled with tech support for the troubled soul.

Dear kittenpants:

God I want you, Kittypants. Unless you are too tall, male, gay, straight, bulimic, obese, trendy, blonde, scored less than 1400 on your SAT's, took the ACT, went to Sara Lawrence, wear red shoes, say things like "these days," have any visible scars longer than two inches, and wouldn't just love me for who I am (plus my amazing physique and meaty genitalia).

Eric

Dear Eric:

Sorry, but I'm a straight, blonde, ACT-taker. I only scored 1200 on my SATs, and these days, I don't know how to love anyone who uses the phrase "meaty genitalia."

But you still want me.

You know it.
xo,
kittenpants

INTERVIEW: John Flansburgh of THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

By kittenpants, with some help from Corn Mo, Thomas Farley and Sam Forsyth

They Might Be Giants are one of the few great true-pop bands to succeed for any substantial period of time in the impossible-to-figure-out American music scene. Why? I don't know. They're good. They're real good.

Maybe they've survived so long because their clever lyrics and brilliant musical arrangements are unrivaled in the rock music scene. Maybe it's because they tour so much and play so many free shows. Or maybe it's because they remain technologically innovative and unique, offering fans free phone concerts via Dial-a-Song, and downloadable MP3s online before anyone else did.

Maybe because they're both named John.

Whatever the reason, one thing remains undeniable: the music is really easy to like. So much so, that an entire movie has been devoted to them. Traveling across the country now is the rockumentary, GIGANTIC: A TALE OF TWO JOHNS. While it's probably a case of preaching to the converted, it certainly seems to be critically-acclaimed.

kp: How involved were you in the making of GIGANTIC (other than being one of the two principle subjects?)

JF: We were the subject—just the subject. We were happy to participate, but it is not our film.

kp: How did it come about, and how pleased are you with the outcome?

JF: We let people film us in a lot of different situations, and are essentially happy with the movie, but we had no editorial input or control, and we actually weren't allowed to see it until it was finished, so by the end it was a little nerve-racking.

I think it is essentially accurate. The personal revelation that I never would have considered before seeing the film was that I now realize John and I are cast, by necessity, as the heroes of the film—which of course is very complimentary—but actually we are just human beings with short comings and personality quirks like anyone else. Life is so much more complicated than a story can ever tell.

Honestly, I am grateful it doesn't really present me as a business man—which I kind of have to be in real life to a certain extent. I suspect audiences probably couldn't handle it or would see it as a contradiction of the spirit of what we do. But at the same time, I think I am a pretty good business man for the band, and that is one of the very real reasons the band has been able to endure as a creative entity.

kp: What was the first record you ever purchased?

JF: Hard Days Night, The Beatles

kp: The first concert you attended?

JF: The Eternal Lights at the local temple

kp: Do you have a favorite palindrome?

JF: Nope!

kp: Regarding other 2-person acts, what do you think of Tenacious D?

JF: I think they are very interesting, and obviously very funny, and I am a little jealous of their success.

Sparks?

I will always love them.

Ween?

I like them a lot, too.

Barnes and Barnes?

I don't really know them.

The Smothers Brothers?

Genius.

I love Sparks so much. It's funny because I feel like there isn't too much community among the odd-ball bands that your site seems to feature—and I have to admit I wished they liked us.

kp: What do you think is the best evil robot/evil computer movie?

JF: 2001 is the only evil computer movie I can even think of. Harrison Ford on talk shows seems like kind of an evil robot...

You know, I don't see a lot of that sci-fi stuff, or mainstream movies at all. Just to give you a glimpse into how sideways my cultural intake is, here is just a taste. I have not seen the following movies:

Jaws, Star Wars, The Matrix, Pulp Fiction, Blair Witch Project, Silence of the Lambs, On Golden Pond, Back to the Future, Scream, I Know What You Did Last Summer, Die Hard, Spider Man, The Lion King, Lord of the Rings, Home Alone, Saving Private Ryan, Austin Powers, Top Gun, Rain Main, My Big Fat Greek Wedding, Pretty Woman, Jerry McGuire, Rambo.

I don't think I have ever seen a movie with Tom Cruise or Bruce Willis except fragments on broadcast TV. I have, however, purchased almost every ZZ Top album since Eliminator. I have no explanation or excuse for this random behavior.

kp: That's actually really awesome. What is the last movie you saw?

JF: I saw "The Kid Stays in the Picture" in the theater.

Thomas: It's been like 20 years. Are they, or are they not giants? Would you consider changing your name to "Yes, We Are Indeed Giants" (YWAIG), or "We Apologize For the Misunderstanding, but No We Are Not in Fact Giants" (WAFMNWANFG)?

JF: We'll take both of those into consideration. Perhaps we just do the name change to WAFMNWANFG and not explain why...



Sam: Did you guys PLAN the band of Dans? Did you seek out a bunch of guys named Dan or was it just a monstrously ridiculous coincidence?

JF: It was purely coincidence. We worked with Dan Hickey for a while before the other Dans came on board. It would not really be a reason to hire someone, but it does take the heat off of me and John having the same name.

Sam: How come TMBG haven't written a rock opera yet?

JF: We tend not to think that way, although I love the style of Hair, Tommy, and Jesus Christ Superstar. I've worked closely with my wife, Robin Goldwasser, and Julia Greenberg on a project called PEOPLE ARE WRONG! that incorporates a lot of the rock opera thing.

Corn Mo: What other projects are you and Robin working on together?

JF: The People Are Wrong! thing is a huge undertaking, and kind of hard for me to fit in with everything else I'm doing. Robin is doing a band thing with some friends but that is just starting casually this week. We're talking to producer people about taking it to an off-Broadway theater. I also would love to figure out how to make a flash site incorporating the songs.

CM: Is there a restaurant you two go to for special times?

JF: We eat out a lot, but our foody friends like going to different places in Manhattan. We usually just get Thai to go when we're in Brooklyn, and when we're at our hidden mountain laboratory we grill like fiends.

Sam: I read your essay "Four Eyes About To Rock, I Salute You." It was really good. Do you ever think about writing something for a web literary site? Like, say, Kittenpants or Haypenny.com?

JF: I wish I felt more comfortable writing. I have a terrible memory so I tend to forget really important facts and factors in stories, much to the dismay and disappointment of my friends and family.



CM: Do you (and John L) sit together and write songs, or do you usually write by yourselves and bring them to the table? Have you ever manufactured ways of writing songs?

JF: Our big collaboration is on the arrangement and production. We're too shy to sit in the same room and bash out a song, although it has been done. The song "Mink Car" was done that way. We've handed off songs in various forms of completion-tracks or sometimes just fragments- or a lyric- or samples. "Spider" was some vocal samples Linnell put on a disc and I put the track together from that.

kp: What's your favorite TMBG song(s) to perform live?

JF: I just like putting a show together. I think of it as one big package deal. The great thing about the range of the show we do is I feel like we can rock the crowd in a lot of different ways, with manic songs complimenting quiet ones. It seems to me that shows end up really undynamic and bands become known for only doing one thing well.

kp: Do you have any good "road" stories?

JF: I once was in a club located one block (not an exaggeration) into Tempe, Arizona, on the town line next to Phoenix, Arizona. I did the classically dumb rock move: I said "Hello Phoenix" to which the audience in an almost universal response shouted back "Tempe!" I didn't even know what Tempe was, so I actually repeated what I said, and they screamed back even more pissed off. I felt like a total idiot when I found out what was really going on, but I was so clueless I am sure they just felt sorry for the idiot on stage.

kp: Do you have any questions for kittenpants?

JF: What is this kittenpants?

kp: Your favorite website of all time. I promise!

JF: How long have you known Com Mo?

kp: For a long long long time.

JF: Why did he sell out and change from guitar to accordion?

cm: In the words of Joe Seneca from CROSSROADS, "if you don't play accordion, you don't get pussy."

kp: All I know is, it's a damn good thing.
JF: I am in love under his voice...

kp: Yes. That happens.

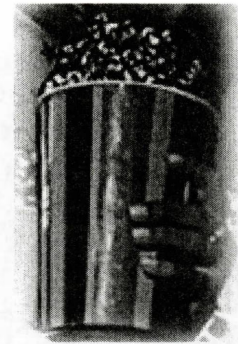
Thanks very much to John Flansburgh. Check out tmbg.com for news, tour dates, and free downloads! See GIGANTIC when it comes to your town, and check out John in the musical adventure, PEOPLE ARE WRONG!!

THE ROYAL "I"

By Owen Drolet and Steve Douglass

An excerpt from the recently-published "Owen & Steve's Big Book of British Euphemisms for Masturbating"

- Dating my downstairs neighbor
- Teatime
- Making a cucumber sandwich
- Performing Hamlet
- Making three quid from a pound
- Pulling a few strokes on the Reginald
- Riding the tube
- Tipping the barber
- Saying "Lord Jones is dead" to people who never knew Lord Jones was alive
- Attending public school
- Touring the colonies
- Dancing with the tubby Dutchman
- Voting Labour
- Peppering the force meat
- Continental handshake
- Making a pudding
- Praying with The Bishop
- Battling Napoleon
- The Royal "I"
- Wrestling in the House of Commons
- A bit of the don't mind if I do
- Rugby
- Phoning me nephew
- Sir Elton's holiday
- Reading me Balzac
- Fighting for Irish independence
- Bangers and mash
- Playing solitaire (with the Earl of Wessex)
- Divide and conquer
- Visiting the servant's quarters
- Fucking my hand
- Spreading the Marmite
- Addressing the Parliament
- Pleating me trousers / Starching me cuffs
- Writing a letter to The Guardian
- Striking two lagers and lime, because I'm fucking my hand
- Lord Havington's privilege



Nominees for the 2003 MTV Movie Awards

By Matt Tobey

Best Wet Breasts

- Kirsten Dunst, SPIDERMAN
- Halle Berry, DIE ANOTHER DAY
- Kate Bosworth, BLUE CRUSH
- Michael Moore, BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE
- Eminem, 8 MILE

Best Performance by a Crystal Meth Addict

- Brittany Murphy, JUST MARRIED
- Brittany Murphy, 8 MILE
- Brittany Murphy, THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS
- Brittany Murphy, BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE
- Michael Caine, THE QUIET AMERICAN

Best [blank]-Boarding Sequence

- XXX (Snowboarding)
- BLUE CRUSH (Surfboarding)
- THE HOURS (Boogie-Boarding)
- ROAD TO PERDITION (Skateboarding)
- MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING (Hover-Boarding)

Best Onscreen Black Guy

- Samuel L. Jackson, STAR WARS: EPISODE II
- Queen Latifah, CHICAGO
- Samuel L. Jackson, XXX
- Michael Caine, THE QUIET AMERICAN
- Samuel L. Jackson, MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING

Worst Hug

- Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson, SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- Yoda and Yodette, STAR WARS: EPISODE II
- Michael Moore + Samuel L. Jackson, BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE
- Nia Vardalos and a goat, MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING
- Renee Zellweger and Eddie Murphy, SIGNS

INTERVIEW: PINK STËËL

By kittenpants and Corn Mo



I first saw Pink Stëël perform at Cathy Cervenka's "Love Bites" Valentines Day show, and I never really knew the power of German Gay metal until that night. How could I not fall for Udo von Duyu and Hanson Jobb - the self-proclaimed "Pink and Black Bareback Attack"? Especially when they perform their tribute to Lord of the Rings (about a giant gay metal robot called "the Frodonator")? Seriously? It's impossible not to adore them.

kp: What were your thoughts upon first meeting? Did you know you were gay metal soul mates?

UV: I think we realized we were gay metal soul mates the minute we discovered we both liked cock. That was good for bonding.

HJ: Let's just say that had I not awoken from my Amyl nitrate popper induced blackout at that exact moment there would be no Pink Steel. K?

UV: But do not understand us wrongly! We have never "gotten together". We have been playing together so long...it would just be weird. It would be like having sex with my brother. Which I have NOT done!

HJ: I have had sex with his brother and it was weird, trust me.

kp: Is "A sausage man" really that hard to find?

HJ: Not as hard as a pickle man, or worse yet a "gherkin man".

UV: You are misunderstand our English. We mean to say that a "sausage man" is always hard when you do find him! It is true!

kp: What's Halford like in the sack?

UV: Difficult to say, unless you do have one of those medical filament-cameras.

HJ: Halford struggled a lot when first placed in the sack. After he burned up all of his oxygen he calmed down.

kp: Have you heard the ATOM + HIS PACKAGE song, "Hats off to Halford"?

UV: No, but have they heard our song, "Jeans off for Gene Simmons"?

HJ: Halford should always wear a hat cuz he is the bald.

kp: Who is more German: Milli Vanilli or Siegfried and Roy?

UV: That is like asking which Osmond brother has the biggest cock.

kp: Who do you remind you of?

UV: Fabio after a lot of Sabbath und crystal meth.

HJ: I sing like a buzz saw and scream like a mimi...so Patty Labelle mixed with Blackie Lawless.

kp: Have you eaten a hamburger in Hamburg? A frankfurter in Frankfurt? Have you eaten ham at the Nutcracker?

UV: Yes, but please do not ask what we ate at Dollywood.

HJ: I once ate Richard Dawson in Minsk.

kp: What was the first record you ever purchased?

HJ: Glockenspiel Nien, First one I stole whoever was KISS: Love Gun

UV: Donna Summer, Live at Oktoberfest. But the first record I ever owned was Drittes Reich Marschieren von Hymnen für Kinder. In English, Third Reich Marching Anthems for Children. It was a gift from my grandfather. If you play track 4, "März des Kämpfende Kinder" backwards, you can hear Hitler getting fisted. It is true!

kp: First concert attended?

UV: Cyndi Lauper (with special guest Kajagoogoo).

HJ: Does Gary Puckett and the Union Gap count?

kp: What metal bands influence you most?

HJ: Judas Priest, AC/DC & Helen Reddy

UV: The cute ones, the scary ones, und the hard ones. So basically all of them but Metallica und Odin.

kp: Do you think Boy George should go metal?

HJ: Have you ever talked to Boy George? He would not even go down, let alone metal.

kp: What about Cher?

HJ: Cher already went metal (in her own way) by f***king that big girl, Ritchie Sambora.

UV: Cher can do anything she fucking wants! Cher IS metal! No, seriously, have you seen all the work she's had done? I think she is part robot now.

kp: Do you have any advice/make-up tips for aspiring gay metallers?

UV: Yes. "Gay metal is not learned. It is absorbed through osmosis, so press your membrane up against mine and prepare to receive!"

kp: Why wasn't "Frodonator" on the LOTR soundtrack?

UV: Politics. Apparently they can have CGI effects right up the mastdärm, but songs about 50 foot gay magic robots destroying Middle Earth don't even get you a meeting!

kp: If I grow a moustache, will you make out with me? Both of you?

HJ: Yes and yes. Hell I don't even need ze moustache just a lotta beer. Once I git drunk and fucked the pussy by accident. Once. Zat Grace Jones bitch is tricky when she is in disguise.

kp: Do you have any questions for kittenpants?

UV: Ja! Ok, Kätzchen lederhosen: Who is your favorite Gay Metal Band OF ALL TIME?

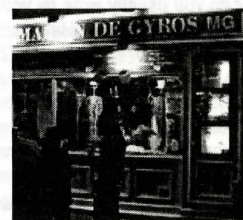
kp: Pink Stëël. After that, INXS.

HJ: How do you know David Cross (I MUST KNOW!)

kp: I met David Cross the same way everyone meets anyone famous: through Corn Mo.

UV: Good Times! Fuck Shit Up!

Thanks UBER so much to Pink Steel for the interview. Check out pinksteel.org (not com!) to find a performance near you, and to download an MP3 of their anthem, "We Fight For Cock."



MAGNET AND STEEL: WHY I LOVE AMERICA By Harley Jebens

In this country, you can walk into a shopping mall food court and stop to get a cheap, shopping mall food court gyro at the shopping mall food court Greek restaurant. And who might you find working behind the counter? A bumptious Ukrainian lass? A bumptious Ukrainian lass, no less, not long in this country from "the old country" and a pregnant bumptious Ukrainian lass at that.

Quicker than you can say "Doss ve dunno ya. Areviderche, Stalin! Why yes, I AM the Nikita Kruschev of camal knowledge!" you're back in the utility kitchen makin' out with her.

THAT'S America. And that's what I love about America.

But then she's all like, "No. I must stop this. My new husband. The baby. The bylaws of Eurobrides.com forbid it."

And you're like, "Whatever, Anna Karenina. All I wanted was my gyro to go anyways."

And then you get your gyro to go, and some chick in gym shorts in the food court is all like, "Hey, have you tried that water massage down on the second level?"

And you're like, "Water massage? Sister, didn't you just see me coming out of that utility kitchen after making out with that pregnant bumptious Ukrainian lass? Did you not just SEE that? After seeing that, WHAT, in the name of all that is holy, makes you think 'water massage'? Jeezum Crow, can't you give it a rest!"

And that is also what I love about America.

POEM ABOUT FRANCE

by John Moe

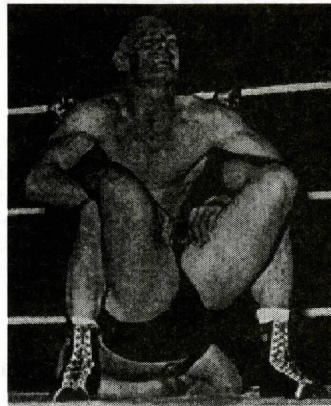
A is for Antoinette, first name Marie
 B is for Bon Jour, good night in Paree
 C is for Cake, Marie said to eat it
 D is for Dejeuner, lunch, you can't beat it
 E is for Escargot, snails for the dining
 F is for France, now quit all your whining



G is for Giscard-D'Estaing, the prime minister
 H is for Hillbillies, toothless and sinister
 I is for Imbecile, the same in both languages
 J is for John, that's me, bring me sandwiches
 K is for Kennedy, revered by the Frenchies
 L is for Louvre, where all art is stenchy
 M is for Merci Beaucoup; that means thanks
 N is for Normandy, stormed by us Yanks
 O is for Ocelot trapped in the pipes
 P is for Paris, the city of lights
 Q is for Que Pasa; that means what's up
 R is for Renoir, he is what's up
 S is for Sacre Bleu, an expression
 T is for Though the French often seem aloof and even patronizing, they are actually very loyal friends when you get to know them. Sure it takes a while but friendship really means something over there
 U is for Underwear, Frenchies don't wear it
 V is for Vichysoisse, just gotta share it
 W? Women, they all like to dance
 X is for X-Ray, go get one in France
 Y is for Yves St. Laurent, a designer
 Z is for Zither, nothing sounds finer

If My Ex-Girlfriends Were Wrestling Holds, What Wrestling Holds Would They Be?

By Steve Douglass



TINA

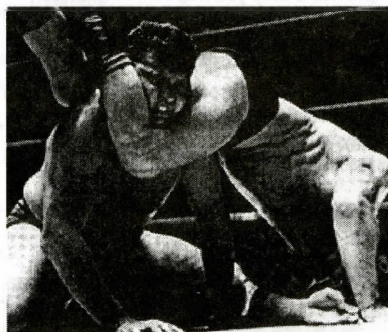
My last girlfriend, Tina, was, for sure, a Boston Crab, in terms of how she dealt with me on an emotional level. This hold, as anyone who's ever been hit with one will tell you, is a real fucking back breaker (not to be confused with an actual "Backbreaker," which, needless to say, is a whole different beast (see Debbie).

Looking at someone caught in a Boston Crab, it's only natural to wonder, "What kind of sick shit had to go down to get that guy in a position where someone could do something as fucked up as that?"

Exactly.

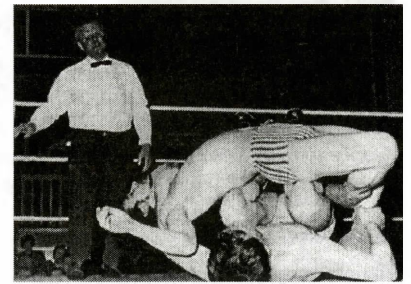
You don't see it coming, I'll tell you (although it is true that, in most relationships, this move is often preceded by the psychological equivalent of a standing leg take-down). One day, everything is fine, and the next day your fucking head's pinned to the mat and you're bent over backwards until you feel like your fucking spine's going to snap in two (along with your heart!). That's how it is with these Boston Crab types.

[If you're reading this though, Tina, why won't you return my calls? Is that too much to ask? Or, if you still refuse to talk with me, how about at least e-mailing me that Julie girl's number? Seriously. I need some, bad.]



CLAUDIA

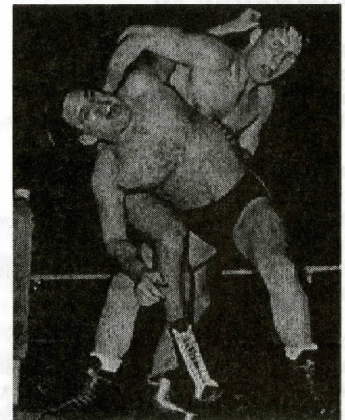
Two words: Head Scissors. This one is obvious, once you understand that, after we broke up, Claudia turned into a lesbian!



DEBBIE

About the only good thing I can say about Debbie is that, although she was, without a doubt, a Backbreaker (with a little bit of a Corkscrew Moonsault or Bionic Elbow thrown in there, too, I think it's fair to say), at least she was not a Tilt-A-Whirl Backbreaker. I'm trying to be nice here but, the truth is, while we were going out, Debbie, classic Backbreaker that she was, was doing it with at least five other guys (including my dad, both my uncles, and, I'm pretty sure, my AA sponsor).

I got such a lift from screwing Debbie that I was blind to the obvious fact that she was raising me up so high only so she could watch me come crashing down to earth with a thunderous, spine-cracking snap that left the entire right side of my body completely paralyzed, emotionally speaking.



GINA

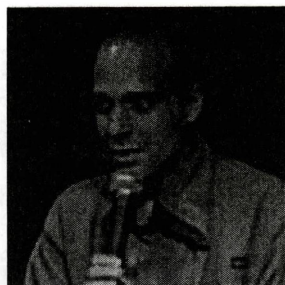
Like "Tina," "Gina" is a slut's name. This is what first attracted me to Gina, but, in retrospect, I can see that, really, Gina was more like an Ab Stretch (sometimes called an Ab Twister or Cobra Twist) than a Boston Crab. Instead of making me metaphorically bend over backwards to get try to get some, Gina made me metaphorically bend over sideways. The end result was more or less the same: I was humiliated.

Next Week:

"Rachei/The Tree of Woe", "Ashley/The Spinning Cobra Clutch", and "A Different Tina/The Mexican Arm Drag"

INTERVIEW: JON BENJAMIN

By Kittenpants



You may recognize Jon Benjamin as Ben Katz ("Dr. Katz, Professional Therapist"). Or possibly you remember him as an inspirational can of vegetables (WET HOT AMERICAN SUMMER). Maybe you don't recognize him at all, since these roles didn't require him to show his face.

Now you can see Jon in person—touch him, even! (Okay, maybe don't touch him). Jon is co-hosting the NYC Sunday-night talk of the town, TINKLE, with fellow funnyman David Cross and Todd Barry.

Barry, had much say about his friend and co-host: "I've known Jon over ten years and I'm still not sure *whether he's taller than me.*"

For the record, I think they're the same height.

kp: Your first name ("H.") is the same as Jesus's middle name. What does the "H" stand for?

hjb: Happy birthday to you...Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday dear Kittenpants, Happy Birthday toooooooo...you!

kp: Do you think that because your most popular work is in voiceover/animation it keeps you hidden from the public eye?

hjb: That and the fact I don't get hired to do much.

kp: Do you prefer voiceover work to other acting jobs or stand up?

hjb: Nah... I like 'em all. I like generating my own material and bringing my own ideas to life, so whatever medium facilitates that...I use the three dots a lot I realize...

Voiceover work for cartoons and stuff really comes from this one company in Cambridge and they keep hiring me and they are great to work for because they're my friends and its fun to do. So, in that sense, it's great, because the work is enjoyable. That's better than being on TV in some show with Jim Belushi or Ashton Kutcher, etc., who I most likely wouldn't hang out with.

Alright, maybe I'd hang with Jim Belushi or Ashton Kutcher but not that other "I" asshole I mentioned.

kp: How awesome is Christopher Meloni?

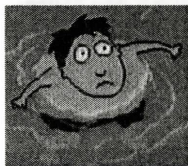
hjb: I envy his work-out ethic.

kp: Whose idea was Tinkle and how did you get together with Todd and David?

hjb: I knew David from being in his comedy group in Boston in the early nineties and Todd and I met when I moved to New York...and Tinkle was an idea I think the three of us, along with Mai Z. Lawrence, just decided on one day over lunch at the Friars Club.

kp: Is it unfolding like you expected? Is the turnout what you expected? (There's the longest line outside Planos every week. It's magical).

hjb: I would love longer lines and higher ticket prices and more magic.



kp: I loved Ben Katz. LOVED. Is it wrong to have a crush on a cartoon character?

hjb: Don't make my cartoon character break your heart.

kp: Too late. What was the first record you ever bought?

hjb: Allman Brothers, Eat a Peach and Steve Miller Band, the one before the famous one that was just as bad as the famous ones.

kp: The first concert you ever attended?

hjb: Ummm (I just realized I didn't have to write that because I'm responding via e-mail) Steppenwolf in Worcester, MA. I love that the first concert I ever attended was a shitty reunion show of a band way past their time. But John Kay proved me wrong with the most harrowingly beautiful version of "The Pusher".

kp: Who's better: Supertramp or Superchunk?

hjb: Well, I'm really good friends with the guys in SuperTramp so I'm gonna say Superchunk. But, I have to also say that I really did like 'Breakfast in America'.

kp: When did you start doing Midnight Pajama Jam, and why?

hjb: Umm, about a year ago, my girlfriend came up with the idea of doing a late-night talk show for children, but more for TV, like a show on Nickelodeon or something that would run at like nine right before younger kids go to bed. So I wrote a show and put it up live, but it was structured just for kids and of course no kids came, just friends of mine, etc. So it was the most awkward 90 minute show ever. Maybe not ever, but you know. Anyway, I made it more for my friends and now it is only slightly less awkward.

kp: Does it keep you inspired, or whatever, having a weekly show?

hjb: Whatever.

kp: Do you videotape all the shows and watch them Tuesday morning, like post-game analysis?

hjb: I'm still out celebrating on Tuesday morning.

kp: When I make my Jeremy Piven/Michael Jeter buddy-cop movie, will you play the evil sidekick to Andy Richter's notorious villain?

hjb: I'll do anything to get the chance to work with 'Sir' Jeremy Piven.

kp: Who are comedy's funniest ladies?

hjb: Cathy, Betty and the mom from For Better or For Worse.

kp: How tall are you?

hjb: 5'6"...I know, I'll try and do better, I promise.

kp: Describe your feelings on the following subjects:

hjb: No, you match your subjects correctly with the corresponding feelings.

1. VAMPIRES	a. envy
2. COCA COLA	b. he's giving the term "undercover cop" new meaning
3. DAVID CROSS	c. piercing blue eyes
4. TODD BARRY	d. pillowy comfort
5. MARTIN AND ORLOFF	e. today's "Lady Day"
6. SARAH SILVERMAN	f. hirsute
7. SARAH VOWELL	g. good will hunting
8. CORN MO	h. dish, dirt and juicy bits
9. ORAL SEX	i. more bark than bite
10. SCOTT FELLERS	j. classic
11. LUMPY	k. Hurt-feelings rolodex

kp: Okay. 1g; 2j; 3e; 4k; 5h; 6c; 7f; 8b; 9d; 10a; 11i

kp: Do you have any strong opinions on pie?

hjb: Use tapioca instead of flour for the filling...it's a better binder...and then leave the rest up to Jesus and his chorus of angels.

kp: You just had a baby. Is that scary or exciting?

hjb: Hey, one more kid in this world ain't gonna kill us.

kp: Do you have any questions for kittenpants?

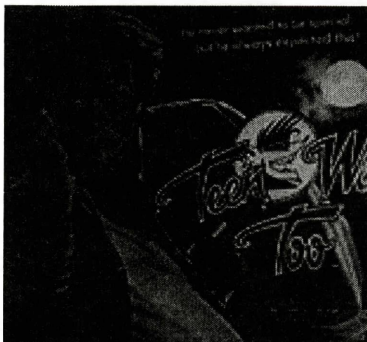
hjb: Is Bruce Willis finally getting his Oscar this year or what? Is he even nominated? Does he still do movies? What's with him and Demi? It's like on-again, off-again, on-again...hey, Bruce, Demi...pick one already!!!!

kp: DIE HARD IV: FUCKING DIE ALREADY should be Bruce's finest hour.

Thanks to Jon for the interview! See him in NYC Sundays at TINKLE (www.tinklenyc.info) or at the next Midnight Pajama Jam (www.midnightpajamajam.com).

MOSTLY...

By Franky Pelvis



My Review of Teen Wolf and Tenn Wolf Too! Bull crap and bull crap too!

What's up with everybody being ok with a giant mutant wolf? I don't know about you, but if Alex P. Keaton wolfed out in front of me I'd crap myself. Why was this not big news outside of the school? Wouldn't the army want... an army of those things?

And what is it about a wolf's super powers that map well to the basketball court? Has anyone ever seen a wolf play b-ball? I have and they f**king double dribble and go out of bounds constantly.

And all the girls in school, especially the hot one who looks like she's 28, are all into Teen Wolf. I thought that was a little unrealistic cause none of the guys in *Tiger Beat* are ever 1/2 wolf, or even 1/4 wolf. And the other girl in the movie, PMPC (Poor Man's Phoebe Cates), is a total tomboy, which in the 80's was almost as hideous as a girl who wears glasses. Anyway, PMPC only likes him when he's not a wolf. What a bitch.

Then there's the second Teen Wolf movie, with absolutely no connection to the first except for this one scene with Alex P. Keaton's Wolf Daddy. And in this one instead of basketball, it's Greco-Roman wrestling, which is a little better, cause wolves are actually pretty good Greco-Roman wrestlers.

And the second movie has Justine Bateman, who's Mallory's real-life brother, So I guess the producers were all "Hey if we can't get Mallory's fake brother I guess we can settle for her real brother"

I give both movies negative 3 1/2 stars.
Teen Wolf: -***1/2
Teen Wolf TOO! -***1/2

CORRECTION: My Review of Teen Wolf and Tenn Wolf Too!

Apparently the word Teen is spelled "teen" not "Tenn". Also Justine Bateman's brother is actually Jason Bateman, not also "Justine Bateman". Though that would be funny if they had the same name.

Kickboxing!

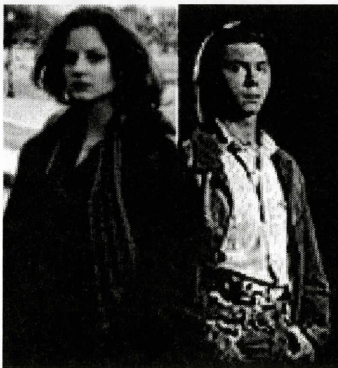
Seriously man, why isn't this sport more popular? It has everything regular boxing has except you kick people right in their stupid faces.

Remember that Jean Claude Van-Damme movie where his brother or maybe his best friend got killed by some evil guys? And the he had to kickbox either 50 guys, or possibly just 1 or 2 REALLY BIG guys? Then he won the title of championship kickboxer and/or won his honor back?

Yeah... I don't either, but i bet it was pretty damn sweet.

Buddy Cops

If I can come up with the next winning Buddy Cop Combo for Holly-wood, the money I'll make will be damn near infinite. I have a few ideas:



Native American Cop & Jodie Foster Cop

Priest Cop & Little Boy Cop

Sunni Muslim Cop & Shi'ite Muslim Cop

Gay Fat Blind Black Cop & Gay Asian Deaf Midget Cop

Jewish Cop & Alien Cop

Cyborg Cop & Android Cop

Identical Twin Cops

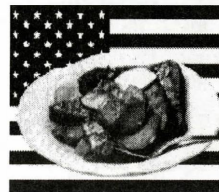
Dead Cop & Andrew McCarthy Cop & Jonathan Silverman Cop

A Real Movie about REAL Hackers

I want to make a movie about real Hackers, but the hero won't be really brilliant, he'll just be kinda pudgy and into Star Trek and Xena. And like instead of breaking into goverment computers, the most intense scene will be when he has to upgrade from Java 1.3.1 to Java 1.4, and he'll be like oh sh't what the hell is this...? And there'll be a "permission denied" error, so he'll have to like right-click something to fix that.

And instead of AcidBurn his name will be Richard, or Ted.

From the Archives...



Freedom Food

By Joel Taylor, Kittenpants, and Uncle Sloppy

Tue Mar 11, 8:10 PM ET WASHINGTON (Reuters) - France's refusal to back a possible U.S.-led attack of Iraq has triggered a verbal food fight in the restaurants of the U.S. House of Representatives as "French fries" and "French toast" are replaced on menus by "Freedom fries" and "Freedom toast."

McDonald's is also getting into the act...

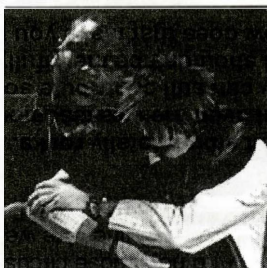
- Hamburger = Liberty Burger
- Cheeseburger = Liberty Burger with American Cheese
- Big Mac = The MOAB
- Happy Meal = Patriot Meal
- Big N' Tasty = Brave N' Tasty
- Crispy Chicken = Homeland Chicken
- McChicken = Coalition Chicken
- Hot N' Spicy McChicken = Honorable N' Spicy Coalition Chicken
- Chicken McGrill = Chicken McRegimeChange
- Chicken McNuggets = Courage McNuggets
- Crispy Chicken Bacon Ranch Salad = Operation Colon Shield
- McFlurry = (still) McFlurry

It's not the first time. During WWII, Americans stopped putting sauerkraut on hot dogs in favor of "Liberty cabbage". Instead of a hamburger, the nation enjoyed "America steaks". Why not love America (and hate Europe) by exchanging all familiar European words and phrases:

- French bread = Amber waves of grain
- Crepes = Fruited plains
- French kiss = First Amendment kiss
- French onion soup = Sovereign soup
- French dressing = My Cold Dead Hands dressing
- Champagne = Citizen-pagne
- German Chocolate cake = Autonomy cake
- Wiener schnitzel = Love it or Leave it schnitzel
- Bratwurst = Apple Pie
- hors d'oeuvres = Independence bites
- sauté = emancipate
- Gesundheit = God Bless You...and America

AMERICAN IDLE

by Matt Carter



It's been several hours since the announcement that Ruben won American Idol, yet I still have that sick feeling in my stomach; that feeling that I didn't do enough to support Clay.

You know what, it's not just a feeling now. As I write this, I know for a fact that I didn't do enough. Only 1300 votes separated Clay from being an American Idol, instead of a second banana. I just don't see how I can ever forgive myself. Sure, I called in and voted 2167 times for Clay, but another 1500 to 2000 votes and Clay wouldn't be crying on the floor of his hotel room right now, laying in a puddle of piss and vodka.

Maybe even those extra votes wouldn't have been enough. I mean, to really show how much I supported Clay, I should have flown to Hollywood and hit Ruben over the head with some sort of blunt object. Or I could have poisoned a Reuben sandwich, and made him eat it. Surely he wouldn't turn down a sandwich. The irony would be almost as delicious as the sandwich itself...

I don't know. I guess I'll just be stuck second-guessing myself for the rest of my life.

SAY WHAT?

by Dennis Proctor

"Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when the bologna sandwich I made grows up to become Speaker of the House."

Christopher Plummer, 1966

"If necessity is the mother of invention, and the father is Willie Mays, then its great uncle is most certainly my sweet-diggity-dong."

Walt Disney, 1961

"Why're you hitting yourself!? Why're you hitting yourself!?"

Mao Tse-Tung, 1938

"Be nice to people on you're way up because sometimes their brothers own a carwash and during the week when it's not busy they'll let you come by for a freebie scrub-scrub."

Oscar Wilde, 1883

"There's bacon, and then there's bacon."

Danish Proverb

"Parents just do not understand."

Charlemagne, 800

"You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool me into thinking that that Scott Stapp dude from Creed isn't a total ass nut."

Pope John Paul II, Today

"War—huh! What is it good for? Absolutely nothing. Say it again."

A fistful of multi-purpose caulk, 1983

TALES OF WONDER

by Corn Mo



Pillows

I was sitting in my cubicle watching my friends' band's video, wishing I was there instead of here when an IM popped up, saying, "Hey buddy, did you see that memo?"

I ignored it but then it popped up again. "Hey man, did you look at it, yet?" So, I went to my mailbox and opened the memo.

"We will be having a pillow fight at 4:00pm today. Those in sales are exempt but all other departments are required to attend. Pillows will be provided. It is important that you attend because sales are down. Team building will occur and you can go back to your desks when you are tagged-out. The last employee standing will get a gift certificate to TCBY."

I got mad and then excited and then mad again.

At 4:00 I showed up for the pillow fight in the conference room and everyone yelled, "Surprise!" and then ate me.

Brownies

Once there was this guy who loved making brownies. He used to eat what he made until he made so many he got sick of eating them. So he put the brownies in bags and gave them away. Although he had a lot of friends, he made too many to get rid of. So, he started giving them to strangers. Some accepted but most refused because he was a stranger.

Soon, he had brownies stacking up inside his kitchen and then the living room. When they reached the bathroom he stopped making them. But somehow they were made without him. The brownies kept appearing. He looked around the kitchen to see who would be making them without him and found nothing.

So, he sat down and waited and waited and waited. Then, he slumbered sitting down. When he awoke there were brownies all over, so much so that it looked like a log cabin in his house but with brownies instead of logs.

He started making blondies.

LAUNDRY 2K3

by Matt Tobey

Are your clothes dirty? Are they dizzirty? Are they even dizzir-tay? Shit yeah, they are. But you're an extreme dude or dudetress, so chuck that Tide and Clorox in the same turd-slot you threw your Linkin Park CDs as soon as the clock struck 2003. That's right, you're washing clothes in 2K3, muthafucka, and this ain't your wrinkled old granny's way of doing laundry. Unless, of course, your wrinkled old granny is none other than Dave Mirra, in which case: Holy fuck, hombre!

Follow these directions, and in no time, your laundry will be more dudical than waterfall-climbing is going to be in like two months.

Step 1. The days of separating your clothes by color are gone, baby, gone. Throw everything in together. And I mean everything. Shirts, pants, shades, skateboards, even if it's not dirty, put it the frig in that washing extreme. [Note: Your washing machine is now called a "washing extreme". It is different from a typical washing machine in name only. Fuck yeah, it is.]

Step 2. Add one can of Red Bull energy drink. I'm talking about the whole, unopened can, my main slice!

Step 3. Add one actual red bull. They're easier to find than you think. If the bull you find is too big for your washing extreme, find a bigger bull. You didn't misread that. If you think putting a bigger bull in a place that was too small for a smaller bull is impossible, then I guess that secret Tony Alva told me about you was true. Now get a bigger bull, pansy-pants!

Step 4. Swim the perimeter of any Great Lake, aside from Superior. If anyone suggests you swim Lake Superior, give him or her a nipple tweaking he or she won't soon forget.

Step 5. You're almost there, bros and broettes. The fifth step involves inviting Steve-O from Jackass over, giving him one-and-a-half times as much OxyContin as he asks for and allowing him to take no less than three whizzes in your washing extreme.

Step 6. Hang to dry!

Angry Amputees

play kick-ass crusty punk with energetic female vox and aggressive melodies. It's difficult to pull off that sound well, and even more difficult when your bassist is a quad amputee. We spoke with punk rock torso **Dalty** about his journey from handicapped to handicappable. —Adam Liebling

You're an actual amputee. How did that happen? You once own a diamond mine in Sierra Leone or something?

You forget I'm not only an amputee, but I got lots of cool burn scars all over. Landmine. Da Nang 72', man. Charlie had dug in deep, took out the whole unit, and I had to crawl through the jungle for three days.

So we know what makes you an amputee, but what makes you angry? Poor airline service?

What, that doesn't piss you off? Incompetence really gets under my skin. On planes, gas stations, liquor stores, I try to go fucking buy a ten bag of rock only to get a fiver... Stupid people not getting it straight on a daily basis and fucking up my whole program. Hell, just go take a look at the idiots living in the White House. That doesn't even warrant an explanation for anger.

By not having fingers, do you prove that anyone could play the bass? I mean, it seems like such an unnecessary instrument - you can't even hear it!

And there you go! Can I even play? It doesn't even matter. Nobody's listening to me anyway, they're looking at Stacey. If it says anything to anybody wanting to play bass it says, "You don't need talent, you just need to look good doing it."

Does it bother you when people use you for a football or throw pillow?

I'm more of a punching bag. You know those blow-up ones that look like clowns that keep bobbing back for more abuse? Yeah, that's me. Really. Stacey beats the crap out of me all the time. But I think it's cool because ultimately, it's kind of a turn on getting beat up by chicks.

Knowing that punk rock fans are total fashion sheep, do you fear kids chopping their limbs off to be like you?

Man, that would be the highest form of compliment. We would then have a real Angry Amputee Army. Billy Hopeless, who used to sing for the Black Halos told



me once he was wearing our shirt somewhere on tour and was completely loaded out of his mind on booze and drugs screaming, "I want to be an Angry Amputee! Fuck all of you!" while holding a machete in his right hand. He was going to lob off his left arm. I guess the rest of the band had to hold him back because he was really going to do it. I thought it was the funniest thing I'd ever heard. But then he ended his story with his head hung low saying, "Yeah, that was a bad night..." I started dying of laughter right there and told him, "Shit! You should've went for it, man!"

You are in an elite circle of "special" musicians - there's the one-armed dude in Def Leppard, that quadriplegic guitarist who writes songs by blinking his eyes, and Fred Durst, who I suspect has Down's Syndrome. Have any of them been an influence on you, in terms of coping with disability? Would you ever consider forming a super-group with them?

Fuck yeah! Rick Allen rules! I can't say his drumming per se influenced me, but he had really cool hair. Just tight mangly locks of fro-dom. When you got that going for you and you pull it off with confidence, that's influential. And he does only have one arm. It's like that line from Commando, "Come on, Bennett - I only have one arm!" I don't know who the quad is, but he sounds kind of boring to

watch, like a shoegazer or something. Hell, I guess what else can he do? Yeah, I'll take him on for a guitarist. Him and Rick. I don't know about Fred though, I don't think he could keep up. That, and the fact that he'd make a really shitty video for us and probably try to get on my girlfriend. No, he can go join The Kids of Widney High. Actually no, that's not fair either. I like that band, and he'd blow their whole program as well.

Is masturbation difficult without fingers? Is that why you're angry?

Naw man. There's no problem in the tugging department. I just had to go from righty to lefty. The old switcheroo. The lefty's got more going for it. It just took a few times to get used to that comfort zone; right vs. left hand, left brain vs. right brain. If I'm not feeling too lazy I'll use both. But I'm usually pretty lazy.

How do you talk groupies into having sex with you?

Easy. Look for the girl that looks uncomfortable from standing too long in high heels at any show and say, "Hey, you want a seat? It comes with free plumbing."

Would you give up the band if you were invited to join the circus?

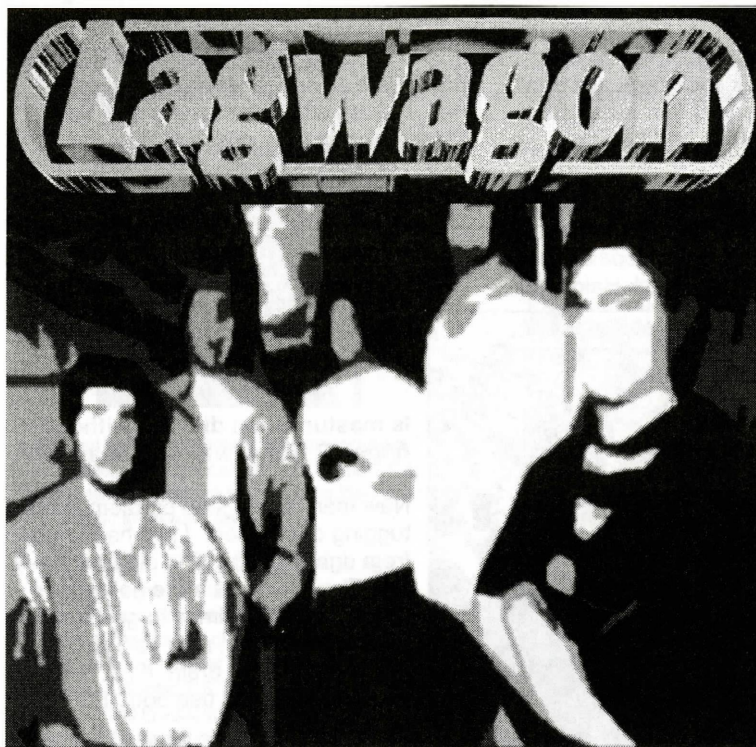
If the money was there, what the hell. Probably more of a moonlighting thing though, we could then plan our tours around circus dates. You know what, I could be pretty good at being the punching bag all dressed up like a clown getting beat by women. I already have experience at that level. And hey, those circus acrobatic chicks are pretty fine. Are we talking Barnum & Bailey here or Cirque Du Soleil?

Your debut album totally rocks. You prove that even the weakest members of society can still contribute something and shouldn't be mercifully put down. How does that make you feel?

Downright horny for the Lovin'. I got more to contribute to the world than just pretending to play bass and looking good doing it you know.

Check out their latest album *Slut Bomb* on Dead Teenager Records.

Visit angryamputees.com for a tour diary, fan club info, multimedia, and more!



Above: Lagwagon using the "cutout" filter in Adobe Photoshop. Filters are stupid.

Adam: It's been about six hundred years since your last album. That's quite a... (get ready for it)... lag. Did you guys forget you were in a band or something?

Joey Cape (vocals): Yes, we did.

You guys have certainly evolved as songwriters. But evolution is not always a good thing. For instance, they say humans will need only one finger down the road. That would totally kill my sex life. My question is, is alienating fans by doing something different ever a concern?

No, not really. We just make music. If people stay with us great. If not, that's life. Bands are just as likely to alienate people by releasing a record that sounds the same as the last. It's a waste of time to worry about these things.

Is it difficult to walk the balance between satisfying yourselves musically, and satisfying the fans? Is it difficult for you to walk in general?

There is no line if you do what comes naturally. You have to evolve to be true to yourself. If you choose to stagnate you have made a conscious choice and that choice is compromise. If you're too concerned with satisfying others you can not creatively satisfy yourself. It is difficult for me to walk in general.

Bad Astronaut - I get a Spiritualized vibe off of the last album. To me, Bad Astronaut is like Pink Floyd gone punk. Your thoughts?

Bad Astronaut is Vin Diesel as Captain Von Trapp in The Sound of Music.

Did Bad Astronaut consider changing its name after the Columbia shuttle disaster?

What? Come on man.

Me First & The Gimme Gimmes suck. Part of me says that because I'm not into novelty acts, but mainly I'm upset they've never covered Rush. Who do I have to blow to get them to crank out some Red Barchetta?

First of all, Lag Wagon or Bad Astronaut would be the ones to cover Rush. Second of all it would be an older song (Probably "Circumstances"). You'll have to blow Fat Mike.

Without thinking too much on it, give me your top five favorite bands, movies, books, and Transformers.

Off the top of my head...

Bands:

Radiohead
Elliot Smith
Rush
Flaming Lips
Ramones

Movies:

One Flew Over The Cuckoos Nest
The Sting
Cinema Paradiso
The Jerk
Shakes The Clown

Books:

To Kill A Mocking Bird
Tin Drum
Choke
The Stranger

Tell me about the last time you gave/received a brutal beatdown.

I don't fight.

Got any pet conspiracy theories?

I think my dogs are conspiring to rid the world of shoes.

Ask me anything you'd like!

Why did you interview me? Do you even like any of my bands?

Lagwagon's new one "Blaze" is out now on Fat. Visit Fat Wreck Chords (fatwreck.com) and pick it up! The band is online at lagwagon.com.



Billy Milano of M.O.D. and S.O.D.

Love him or hate him, Billy Milano speaks his mind. The frontman of MOD and formerly of SOD (which featured Anthrax's Scott Ian and Charlie Benante) is a big, scary, angry dude, but he was kind enough to answer some of my Q&As... —Adam Liebling

You helped found the NYHC scene. Apologize.

For what, I was a part of the scene early on. Like 1981 and hung for many years. It's not the same scene I left. But who cares, I lived it when it was real.

What's the most brutal beatdown you've ever given or received?

I don't fight.

MOD and SOD used satire and irony to ridicule fascist and racist morons. I remember when there was all this controversy because people took the first-person lyrics at face value - do you find that's still the case, or has the world become even more sensitive and PC? Could "Speak English or Die" be released today without you getting firebombed?

I think it's funny that German journalists call me a NAZI. I always say to them, "During WW2 my farther was killing yours". So I personally don't give a fuck what anyone thinks. But some people need to get slapped around. PC IS NOT FOR ME.

Back when you guys first started, like a hundred years ago, did kids in Who shirts show up to your shows on Vespas, thinking they were going to see a Mod band?

NO - in fact, I popped all their tires so they couldn't come.

How do you feel about all these bands trying to fool the fans and make money off your name, like POD, GOD, etc.?

Fuck them - pay me.

Have you spoken to any Anthrax folks lately? Have relations improved since you guys got all pissy with each other?

Scott and I are talking, but Charlie is the biggest pussy I have ever met.

Nu-metal - what will it take to kill it?

A curfew - hahahahaha

Your new album - I heard it's a bit more progressive. Does it sound anything like Rush?

No - I wish, but it will give you a rash.

Who would you rather spend a quiet dinner with - Scott Ian or Courtney Love?

Is it possible to have a quiet evening with Cuntly Love? But at least if I hang with her there is a good chance she might offer to pay. But to expect Scott to pay is unrealistic. He once shoved a penny in his ass and it was so tight it turned into a nickel an hour later.

In 10 words or less, describe your politics.

New Age Conservative. I believe that everything starts with ACCOUNTABILITY.

What's your biggest accomplishment and biggest regret?

S.O.D. - biggest accomplishment - It was meant to be huge

S.O.D. - biggest regret - Because Johnny Z and Anthrax stole everything that was original from it and me and used it in ANTHRAX. Possibly the most boring people I have ever met.

As annoying as any of these questions were, at least I didn't ask what M.O.D. stands for. When people ask that, do you make up fake answers or just beat them to death with a rake?

I give them funny answers, Monkeys On Dope, Menopause Over-Dose, Mothers Of Doom, Meat On Doughnuts, shit like that.

The Rebel You Love To Hate is out now on Nuclear Blast (nuclearblastusa.com)

Enter the politically incorrect world of Billy Milano at billymilano.com. Image taken from that site.

RUBBER CITY REBELS

By Adam Liebling

When you've got such huge punk scenes going on in NYC and the UK, punk rock in Akron, Ohio is bound to go unnoticed. Such was the fate of the **Rubber City Rebels**, who are staging a comeback with their great new album **Pierce My Brain**. I spoke with **Rod Firestone** (who may or may not be related to the last Bachelor... most likely not) about RCR's brushes with punk greatness.

So where've you been for the past 30 years?

Well, 30 years ago I was in school learning something we used to call arithmetic. 20 years ago I was playing all over the country with the Rebels. The band was inactive through the nineties. Now were back and better than ever despite the age thing.

What do you think about all these newfangled changes?

What, like Skateboards, Chuckies, Mohawks, Piercing, Fender guitars, ecstasy, Michael Jackson, Aerosmith, Space Shuttle, Men on the Moon. What are you talking about?

Are you part of the Firestone family? Are you pissed you weren't chosen to be on The Bachelor? Can you give me some money?

You're talking about my nephew Andrew. I am his favorite uncle, but I am also sort of the black sheep of the Firestone family. I was disowned as a teenager. Something about knocking up The Goodyear gal (she blew up like a blimp). Anyway, I'm so happy for Andrew, for a while I thought he would turn out to be a bored rich kid, but now I see he's capable of great things. I wasn't chosen for the part because I'm married with children, which disqualifies me for leads in shows called The Bachelor.

Buzz is the guy who gives his money away. You should ask him. But you might want to put this thong on first.

Who's your favorite dead punk rocker? Well I wrote this song about Stiv Bators, it's on the new album. He was absolutely the coolest guy you ever saw. He always had a joke every time he got on the mike, he cracked me up. I remember him dedicating "Caught with the Meat in your Mouth" to Mama Cass. He really took us under his wing. He took us to New York, showed us the Bowery and how they lived. You can't imagine how funky that post glam, pre punk scene was. It was awesome. He came out to LA once, just him and Cheetah and asked the Rebels to be the Dead Boys for their gig at the Whisky. I really wish I had the tape of us doing Childeaters and Personality Crisis. The last time I saw him I swear he was on Ecstasy or something because he was hanging out with Timothy Leary and he comes up to me and gives me a big hug and says "I love you guys". The funny thing was the Dead Boys were not very popular in Cleveland or LA, now he's totally worshipped. When we first migrated to LA I was shocked to find out they were not well liked. West coast punk was a totally different trip. No glam roots like the Cleveland bands. Anyway he was a like my mentor.

Tell me some cool stories about the early punk scene. Any good groupie stories? When the Rebels started we didn't really know what punk was or supposed to be. We just knew bands we liked. We were into bands like the Dolls, MC5, and Stooges but we also were into a lot of 60's stuff like Blue Cheer, Yardbirds, Pretty Things, and all the Nuggets stuff like "Talk Talk", "Too Much to Dream", "Pushing Too Hard", you know. When we heard the Dictators, Ramones, Heartbreakers and the Dead Boys we were all over it. Then we started hearing the English

bands like The Sex Pistols, Damned and Eddie and the Hot Rods. By the time we went to LA, The "Punk" thing had started to become a little fascist. We didn't fit the part 'cuz we didn't give a fuck about fashion, or what you could play or not. Some people liked our naiveté but mostly the "punks" were unimpressed. Later we found our niche. The west coast punk thing was a weird trip we couldn't get.

In LA we hooked up with Jack Lee, late of The Nerves, and composer of "Hanging on the Telephone" for Blondie, we played some gigs with Fear and The Dogs. We could relate to the Dogs, probably because they were from Detroit. I remember when we were in the audience at the Whiskey and the Dogs were playing. In walks Sid Vicious. Totally fucked up. He walked up on the stage and grabbed the bass away from Lauren's wife. He couldn't play and it was real ugly. They finally just had his bodyguard drag him off. What a dick.

We rehearsed at a place called the Masque. That was the basement of a building on Hollywood boulevard. Bands didn't just rehearse there, they lived there. It was like squatting. The Skulls, The Go Go's, X, Screamers, who knows who else all hung out there. The guy who ran the thing was named Brendan Mullen, one day he showed me a room in the building that had hundreds of giant Vargas prints just warehoused in the room.

The best groupie story I have is about your mother so maybe we should just go to the next question.

Are you pissed at the River City Rebels? Are you going to send your legal team after them? I don't see how they are hurting anyone but themselves.

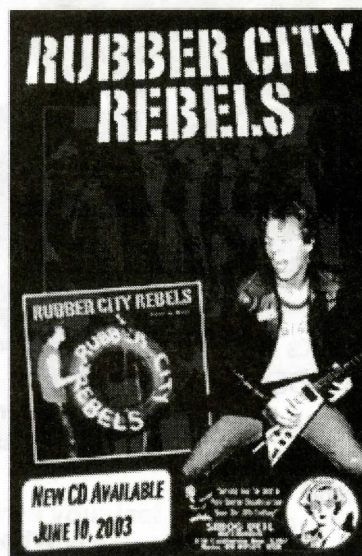
What do you think about today's young whippersnappers who attend your shows? The only whippersnappers I'm interested in are young girls in latex and spike collars.

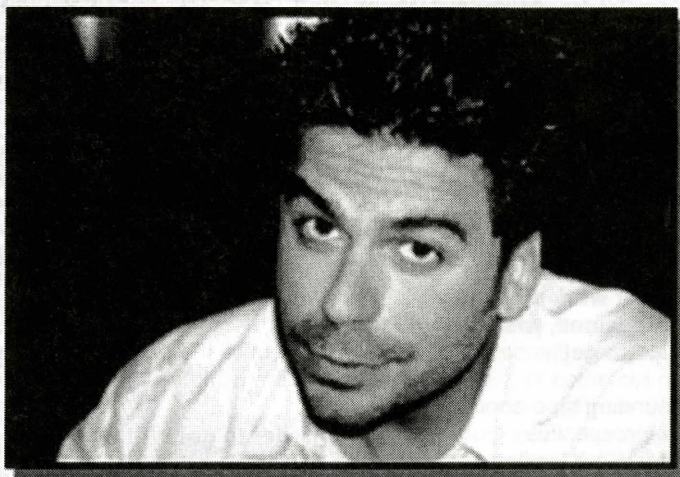
Being older, you are no doubt wiser. Give me some advice, pops. Have no doubt, I was wiser the day I was born. My advice to you is commit suicide now before people start calling you pops.

This is the Conspiracy Issue of READ. What's the best conspiracy theory you've heard about Firestone? Or about the early punk rock scene? You think I'm stupid don't you? You're trying to get me talk about the Chariots of the Pinheads. You think I will give away the secrets of the ancient ones. Forget it. Only the chosen ones will be saved. Your evolved frontal lobes cannot help you when the Pointed Ones return. Your precious technology cannot even decode the instructions embedded on our new CD. Ha Ha Ha Ha Eat Me!

Where does RCR fit in the history of punk? I'll let you in on a secret. The "History of Punk" has nothing to do with what it was really like. The Rebels are still making history today and that's what counts.

Visit the band at www.rubbercityrebels.com





Greg Giraldo

Interviewed by Bryan Kremkau

So you think you're funny? Make me laugh, funnyman.

I'd have to get to know you first.

How did you get involved with "Tough Crowd with Colin Quinn"? Lose a bet?

Yeah. One night, I bet Colin that I could watch back to back episodes of *Yes, Dear* without convulsing in diuretic fits.

Do all the comics on Tough Crowd write out their material beforehand, or just say what comes to mind?

I am a genius so everything I say comes right off the top of my head. Some lesser talents prepare in advance. Actually, it's a combination. We know the topics in advance so anyone who says they don't at least think about what they might say is a dirty lying shit-pig. Of course, with the ADD-addled comics that frequent the show, you never know where the conversation might go and some of the best stuff is spontaneous.

What was the deal with you and Denis Leary? You mentioned "The Job" and he got all pissed. I guess the cancellation of "The Job" is still a touchy topic for him?

I guess he's sort of a star and—outside of Norway—I'm not, so he expected a certain deference which is not the way the show works. It's always nice to be noticed, but really it was no big deal. It was just a little heated moment that passed. We're both cool with it. After the show, we went for a long walk on the beach, gave each other back rubs and shared a root beer float while watching *Two If By Sea* on his big screen.

Who do you think can win in a drunken Irish fight: Colin Quinn or Colin Farrell?

Quinn. He can box and he's an angry near-failure of a man. Farrell has too much to live for to be dangerous.

Would you become a prop comic if it meant furthering your career? How many props and how much further?

Did you try out for Last Comic Standing? What do you think of the comics that got picked?

No, I didn't try out, but I'm flattered you think I might have and not made the cut. I think all the comics on the show are hilarious except for Rich Vos. He sucks!!! Actually, Rich is a friend and I'm proud of him. It's inspiring to see that after twenty years in the business, if you work hard and stay positive, you can beat out six open-mikers for a spot on the most degrading show in the history of comedy. There are some good comics on the show along with some disastrous abominations.

"After the show, we went for a long walk on the beach, gave each other back rubs and shared a root beer float while watching Two If By Sea on his big screen."

—On making up with Denis Leary

Since this is mostly a music website, what kind of music do you listen to?

I played guitar and used to listen to a wide range of stuff. Now I have little kids though, and everything I once enjoyed has been sucked out of my life.....and replaced by something much better, I'm told.

What are some comedians out there today that you find funny?

The gay guy that got kicked off of "Last Comic Standing" is my favorite comic. Also Dave Attell, Dave Chappell and Gallagher II.

I heard your own sitcom, Common Law, didn't even last as long as the Chevy Chase Show. Care to elaborate?

Try to imagine how bad a show airing on Saturday night — when twelve people are watching — would have to suck to be cancelled in four weeks.

Does your family ever ask you when you're going to get a real job? Especially since you spent all their money on law school?

No, but my student loan officer used to ask me that every month. Now that I'm one of the three most famous people alive he's backed the fuck off.

Know any good lawyer jokes?

This divorce lawyer gets smashed in the face with a shovel.

Have you ever said a joke that you regretted later on?

I once called a loud fat toothless cunt a "loud fat toothless cunt." In hindsight, I guess that wasn't very Christian or particularly clever.

Do you have anything in the works, like a sitcom, movie, etc.?

My manager and agent tell me I may have a meeting about something coming up sometime soon maybe they think.

Got anything to plug? Come on, you're a comic, of course you do!

I try to keep a low profile. I think that's important in show business. Watch *Tough Crowd* on Comedy Central, Monday through Thursday at 11:30 p.m.

Visit *Tough Crowd's* website at:
www.comedycentral.com/tv_shows/colinquinn/

READ INTERVIEWS

CARLOS & BEN OF RENO 911

Carlos Alazraqui

You're a standup comedian, voice-over actor, and an actor. Is there anything you don't do?

I don't sing! Except "Santorita" and "Wrong Way" by Sublime at Karaoke!

You are and were a voice actor on many hit cartoons, like Family Guy, SpongeBob, Rocko's Modern Life, and Pokemon, as well as the huge animated films Monsters, Inc., Bug's Life, Finding Nemo... What was it like working on projects that have had such enthusiastic followings of all ages?

I was at first Rocko - and still perhaps my favorite character that I have done up to this point. I just did a new pilot with Joe Murray, the creator of Rocko, called Camp Lazlo for Cartoon Network. I play Lazlo... we shall see... It's pretty incredible to be affiliated with such big projects—surreal at times. My next one is called Happy Feet, a WB feature about penguins in Antarctica. I play a Cuban-sounding penguin named Nestor. It co-stars Elijah Wood and Robin Williams. It should be released in 2005.

How do you prepare for your voice acting roles? Do you do any research?

For voicing all the Mike Wazowski talking merchandise [Monster's Inc.], I watched the Billy Crystal film, "Forget Paris" three times in one weekend! Lots of rewinding and repeating until I thought that I had the voice down. Normally there is little or no research—you literally make shit up!

What I find interesting is that you, a Hispanic, have voiced characters that some people have found very offensive and anti-Hispanic, like Family Guy's Mr. Weed, and of course, the Taco Bell Chihuahua. What are your thoughts on the Taco Bell controversy?

If someone's self-worth hinges on a fictitious character...I can't help that! Most Latinos liked the Taco Bell dog... You will never be able to please everyone.

Have you heard anything about a Family Guy movie at all? If so, will you be involved with it?

Didn't hear anything about a FG movie. I don't think that I'd be involved because

my character died... but there's always flashbacks!

I'd also like to do voice-over work since I tend to do a lot of impressions, what do you recommend I do to get started?

Make a professional sounding tape about 1:30 long and send it to prospective agents with a cover letter. Start looking for interesting characters in old movies and try to impersonate them. Even if the impression stinks, you will still come up with an original character voice. You might think of the Chihuahua as a bad Peter Lorre meets Ren!

How was your transition from voice to live acting?

Easy, because both came from my standup comedy background. I am taping a Comedy Central half-hour special, September 24-28 in New York! Tell your friends!!

Were you excited to be joining the cast of Reno 911 because people will actually see you, and not just your voice?

I love being on Reno and the freedom to cut loose. The creators—Tom, Ben and Kerri—rock!!! I have always wanted to cut loose like this and especially show folks that I have some on-camera chops!!

Were you involved in the punk and ska scene during its hey-day?

I got into Skankin Pickle in 1992—a bit late but then I went back and got Sublime and Voodoo Glow Skulls. Saw the Hippos, Suicide Machines, etc. And of course all the Two Tone stuff. I love irreverent music. I have seen Fishbone three times now and Angelo is still one of the best frontmen I have ever seen!!

Can you remember your first concert?

I think it was Van Halen in 1978. Then Queen and Judas Priest. I was totally drug and alcohol-free during my post high school heavy metal phase. I loved the first two Iron Maiden albums!!!

How short are Thomas Len-

non's shorts on Reno 911?

I feel like a urologist in his presence! 1969 Nancy Sinatra short!!

Has there been any backlash from police since you're portraying them "correctly?"

I don't think so. Most of the real cops at the Carson station dig the show!!

Is there anyone you based Deputy Garcia on?

An amalgam of all the uptight, insecure bastards in the world!

What's harder to do: Writing a funny joke or performing one?

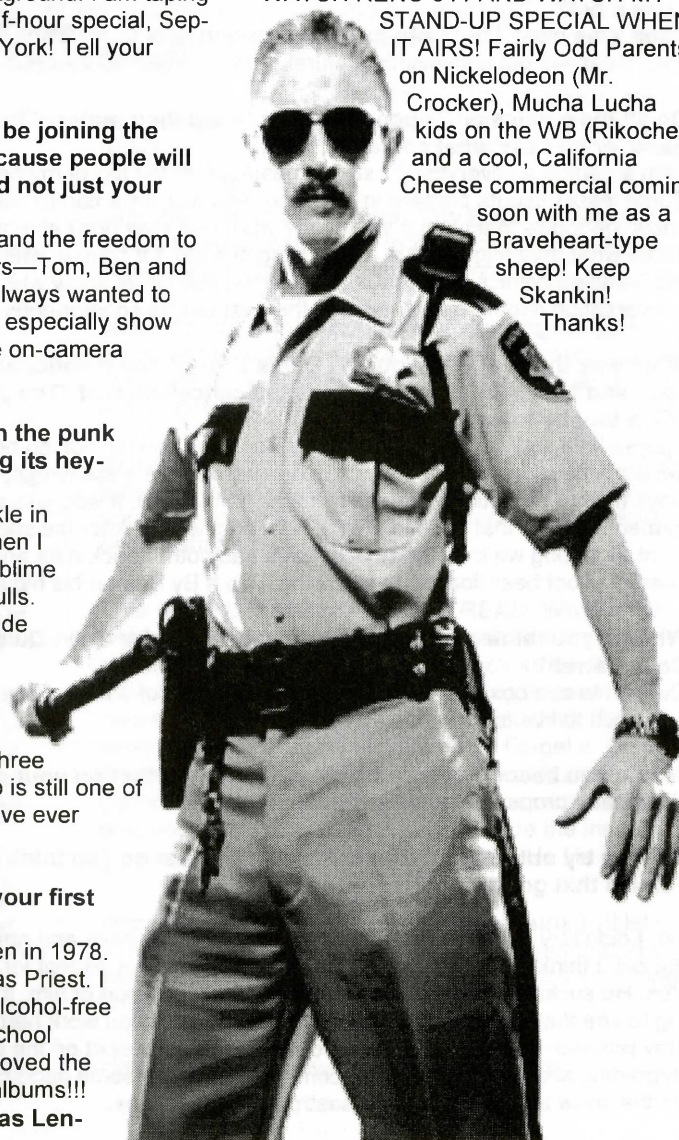
Performing one, because it's dependent on an audience as well!

What was the worst incident you had with the police?

Speed trap on highway 99. I stopped giving to the Police Children's Athletic fund after that!!

Do you have anything to plug?

WATCH RENO 911 AND WATCH MY STAND-UP SPECIAL WHEN IT AIRS! Fairly Odd Parents on Nickelodeon (Mr. Crocker), Mucha Lucha kids on the WB (Rikochet) and a cool, California Cheese commercial coming soon with me as a Braveheart-type sheep! Keep Skankin! Thanks!



Ben Garant

How did Reno 911 come about?

After Viva Variety, FOX wanted us to do a live, prime time sketch show. We cast it, (with our current Reno Cast, minus Wendi), and were four weeks from filming, when FOX changed their mind, and didn't want a live sketch show any more. We still had \$500,000, and four weeks, so we came up with Reno (a sketch show shot like Cops.) As we started improvising, though, the characters of the cops turned out to be more interesting than the preps. So, it sort of became a soap-opera. Fox passed, two years later, Comedy Central bought it.

Is it easier writing for a character that you'll be playing?

We don't really write stuff. It is easier, when you come up with a joke, to fill it out, though -- if you know what the character's reaction is going to be. Jokes is easy. Coming up with decent, likeable characters is hard, especially on paper.

Do you think a parody of COPS type shows are a little too late? Maybe not as relevant anymore?

I think that docu-TV is such a common format, that I'm surprised we were the first ones to do a show like this. The idea seems like just a great, obvious, jumping off point for kinda-out there, kinda grounded sitcomedy.

The State has become something of a cult classic, oddly enough appealing to people who otherwise hate MTV and anything else on it. How does it feel to still have people come to you and talk about it?

I'm glad people liked the State. It seems like it's much more popular now than when it was on. I guess that's always the case in shows that don't last too long. We had a lot of fun doing the State. We argued most of the time, and it really helped you figure out your opinions about comedy. What you think and why. We had to articulate ourselves all day, every day to ten other equally passionate people who usually disagreed with your point.

Was it difficult working with MTV? Were there any skits they nixed?

MTV was a great place to work. We couldn't shoot guns, but other than that -- it

was pretty much whatever we wanna do.

Do you still keep in touch with folks from The State? Any future collaborations down the road?

Got very drunk with Ken and Joe this weekend and watched the Brood. Just like old times. Tom and I write movies together. I see everyone while they're in town.

Any hope The State reruns will air on Comedy Central or come out on DVD?

I personally doubt they will ever be aired again, or come out on DVD. MTV doesn't have the rights to clear the music, and almost every sketch had a top 10 hit in it. They could do sound-alikes—but that would be totally lame. Pants without Cannonball by the Breeders just isn't Pants.

I'm an unemployed person that wants to get into comedy, perhaps do a sketch comedy show like the State or Kids In The Hall, How would I go about starting a show?

Work hard, all the time. Find funny people who you trust to tell you when you're not funny. Be really hard on each other. And work hard, all the time. Rent small performance spaces, do shows, invite as many people as you can. Work hard. Get funnier. Throw out EVERYTHING that doesn't KILL your audience. If you're good, eventually you'll get a following. If you do, then people will come to you with opportunities. There is no right way. There is no wrong way. Cable, public access, commercials, public performances. DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN. Work hard. Get funnier. And in the end—you'll get big, and get picked apart by scavengers.

Viva Variety was fun but ended up not doing well. Do you think American audiences just weren't interested in a mock European-style reality show?

It's funny. Viva lasted way longer than The State did. It had way

more viewers, almost twice as many. I meet just as many Viva fans as State fans. They're just older, and don't start websites. If I could do one of the shows again, I'd definitely do Viva. We had the fucking Bosstones on, man. Shonen Knife, Pizzacato 5. Adam Fuckin' West. I got drunk with Fishbone. It was a blast.

Your writing has really matured, instead of silly sketches a la The State or Viva Variety, Reno 911 goes for a more Christopher Guest, pitch-perfect parody of COPS shows, so the humor is there for those who want it, rather than being forced. Would you agree? Yes.

Would David Cross be up for a cameo on Reno 911 as Ronnie Dobbs?

I love David Cross. He's real funny, and I hope we can get him to do Reno.

Is it fun pretending to beat up people on the show?

...Pretend?

What kind of music do you like? Were you a gutter punk growing up?

I don't know what "gutter" punk means. Is that some term the Kids use? I used to listen to The Cramps, Siouxsie and the Banshees, the Dead Kennedy's, Suicidal Tendencies... I grew up in east Tennessee, so I listened to whatever I could find. The Cramps came to Knoxville, but not many other bands did. Now... I listen to Tom Waits. Elvis. Pizzacato 5, Smokie and Hiho...

Would you write an American Young Ones series, given the chance?

You can't do the Young Ones without Rick and Viv, man. Without the accents, and Margaret Thatcher.... It don't work.

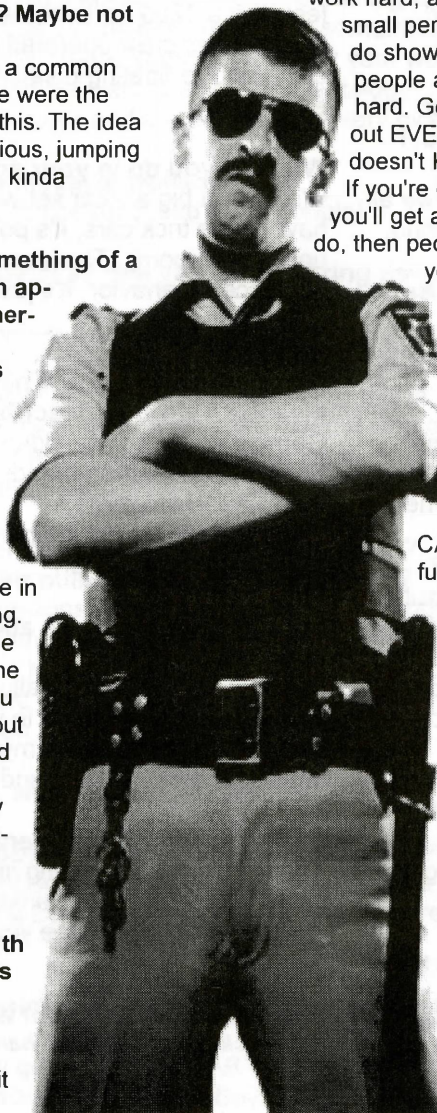
I heard you're writing a film adaptation of Starsky & Hutch. Why Starsky & Hutch?

Have you seen Starsky and Hutch recently? Ben Stiller looks so much like Starsky, that it's kind of spooky. Todd Philips is a funny director. That movie's gonna be good.

Any more writing or acting gigs in the works?

I don't really act (as you know, from watching Reno, and the State.) Tom and I have a movie that's filming right now, TAXI, a remake of a Luc Besson movie. It's got Queen Latifa and Jimmy Fallon. It's gonna rock. We're writing a movie with The Rock. We're writing The Incredible Shrinking Man, for Imagine, with Eddie Murphy.

Check out Reno 911, Wednesdays at 10:30pm on Comedy Central.





The Real McKenzies

The Real McKenzies by Bryan Kremkau

Did you guys name the band after Spud McKenzie?

Who is Spud McKenzie? Listen, if ye wanna talk about DOGS son, you'd better interview a veterinarian. I'm a punkrocker!

How did the Real McKenzies get together?

We were all drinking whisky, telling stories of the things our Scottish parents made us do. After laughing a lot about this, I had the idea to mix these old Scottish songs in a new way... Punkrock. That was the birth of TRM's back in the '92. So we all put on our kilts and started making CD's and touring the world.

Do you guys pretend to be Scottish because you saw Braveheart and decided that was cool?

We don't pretend to be anything! 1995- Braveheart. 1992- The Real McKenzies

What's scarier - the Loch Ness monster or your bagpipe player naked?

I can't tell ye laddie! They both seem equally horrifying to me.

What are some bands that stand out in today's scene?

Which "scene"? There seems to be a few. To tell you the truth, we've been so busy touring and recording lately, it's sort of difficult to keep up with all of them. Perhaps you're referring to "our scene". Which is, of course, "The modern underground independent scene". There are far too many bands we like and they all contribute to the scene a lot. Full kudos to all.

What band member can play the most instruments? Skin flute doesn't count.

We can all play a few instruments. (The skin flute not being one of them)

What can we look for on the new album coming out in the Spring?

Lots of drinkin' songs (cuz that's one of our hobbies). Some shit about history, old Scottish songs, smokin' punkrock and guitars. And of course, excellent bagpipes.

What book are you reading right now?

Grey Seas Under. Published 1960 by Farley Mowat (an award-winning Canadian author) about a gorgeous sea going salvage and rescue tugboat. 156 feet with a 1200 horsepower steam driven engine. She and her crew operated in the North Atlantic rescuing and re-floating disabled ships from 1930 till the early 50's.

What do you do in your spare time?

We have a big slotcar set we like to race on. We have some trick cars, it's portable and we can set it up in hotel rooms. This provides us with gregarious adolescent behavior. It's just as much fun as to watch a race.

I'm going to give you a person's name, and you give me a word to describe them:

George W. Bush: president

Carrot Top: diamondhead

Fat Mike: musician

Anna Nicole Smith: mammories

Joe Pesci: aggro dwarf

Should vegetarians be allowed to eat animal crackers?

Not only should they be allowed to eat them, they should have to be made to watch the Marx Bros film "Animal crackers" whilst munching them down and chasing them with beer and whisky as well.

Anything else to comment on, plug, promote?

Thanks for the interesting interview. We will be looking forward to playing punkrock & recording & partying with our friends. See you all at the show!!

Real McKenzies are on Fat Wreck Chords (fatwreck.com). Visit the band at realmckenziez.com.

Travoltas

Bryan Kremkau

How long has Travoltas been around?

Skokie: Travoltas has been there for a long time now, over 10 years.. There have also been many different line-ups, but the current one has been there for about 3 years now.

Has John Travolta heard you guys yet? Is he a fan?

Ha, I'm sure he has heard of us. I think every once in a while he checks the internet from within the comfort of his very own plane and finds Travoltas for sure! Do I think he's a fan? Well, I really don't know what John Travolta is into, but it's hard to NOT be a fan, don't you think? :)

Are you guys Scientologists as well?

Yes, for many years now! No, I'm kidding. We have nothing to do with Scientology. Not that we disapprove of it, or something. During the US leap of our "Endless Summer" tour last year we played in Salt Lake City and we went to see the Scientology complex. It was very impressive and the people were very nice!

Is there anything that is illegal in Holland?

Well, not that much.. You're not supposed to kill people!

Where are you now musically? Will you be exploring new styles?

That's a tough one! During the years we have developed a very clear Travoltas style, although it is a constantly changing process. That is the reason why I'm sure that we'll be doing this in the future, but it will be partly based on what we did, but also on new things. But we'll never forget who we are and where it all came from, so no worries!

Do pop punk bands ever get into fights with each other? And if so, is it mostly hair pulling and open hand slaps?

I've heard some weird questions before, but if you really wanna know... Yeah, there are some mean fights going on. Scratching, punching, nipple twisting,.. No open hand slaps though, that's more of a girl thing. And we usually do not get into fights with girl pop punk bands. But uh, these days, nobody dares to pick a fight with Travoltas, cause it's known we run over them instantly. If not with the fist, we do it with our music!

With which rock star would you most like to spend a day?

I think I would say Brian Wilson, or Elvis Presley. The last one will be hard though. Maybe Dave Grohl, I think me and him are very much alike...

'Travoltas' Party!' is coming out soon. What can we expect from that album?

What you see is what you get... A f***ing PARTY! Travoltas' Party is an acoustic live album. The Beach Boys actually in-



spired us to make this album. They made the Beach Boys' Party! album (w/ 'Barbara Ann' on it) about 40 years ago and we decided to make our own version. We recorded it a couple of weeks ago during another infamous Travoltas party we had with some of our closest (girl)friends. We had a blast really! We played and sung some of Travoltas' greatest hits and we even threw in a couple of covers, like Bad Religion's 'Sorrow'. I'm really proud of the result. It's a must hear!! Travoltas' Party! is being released through Knock-Knock Records in the US somewhere around the end of April, so beware... By the way, if you want to have your own private pre-listen, just go to travoltasparty.com and check the mp3's!

What's some good local bands over there?

You mean some good Dutch bands? Well, there are lots and lots. You probably know some of them already. The Riplets (girl punk/R&R), The Apers (need I say more), The Dollybirds (poppunk with great vox), The Spades (filthy R&R), Wiseguy (sleaze rock), The House of Destructo (LOUD R&R/punk), Peter Pan Speedrock (what's in a name) to name a few!

If you had to be on a reality tv show, which one would you like to be on?

I really hate that shit, but if I'd had to choose, it would be our very own Travoltas show, I think. Some parts of our lives are quite entertaining. :)

Is Liv Tyler hotter as an elf or just a normal girl?

Probably both, haha! She is of course a very beautiful girl, and therefore HOT as hell,.. uh elf, but off screen she's probably just a normal girl trying to make something of her life. That's what we all do, right? RIGHT!

Do all Europeans hate George W. Bush?

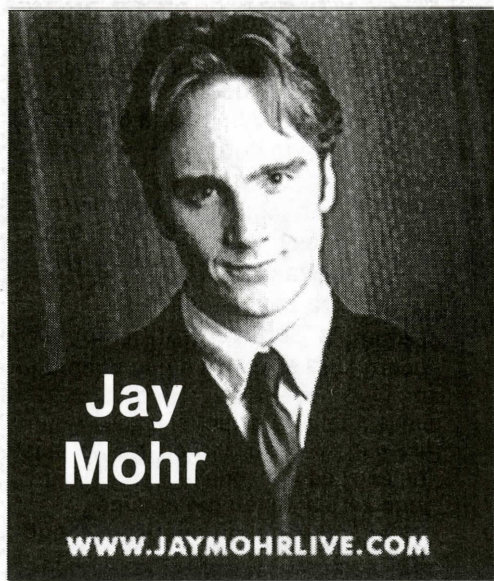
All the people I know think, he's a friggin' moron! I personally think a man like that is not supposed to be the leader of the world! I understand that he might be concerned about the world's safety, but underneath all that, this whole war thing is about oil, economy and prestige.

What's one city you don't like to play in?

Actually, up until this day, there hasn't been a city that I didn't like to play, and I think I speak for all of us, when I say that.Maybe some town in Siberia or something. Brrrrrrrr...

Got any final thoughts? Plugs?

Beware! The Masters of Poppunk will be somewhere around you in no time! If you haven't done so before, be sure to check us out. In the mean time, buy our stuff and don't forget to tell us what you think. The Travoltas are out there!



Interview by Bryan Kremkau

Did you always want to be a comedian/ actor?

Always. I wanted to act in movies at nine or ten years old. I sent my class pictures to all the networks introducing myself and telling them that I was available for work. I didn't know I wanted to be a comedian until I tried it (16 years old).

What was it like being on SNL? Did you leave on good terms?

It's all in the book, "Gasping For Air Time." It comes out in October of '03.

Was Mohr Sports cancelled, or is it just on hiatus 'til the summer/ fall?

It was "not re-newed", which is like being politely cancelled.

What was your favorite skit on Mohr Sports?

Gay rodeo. No doubt.

Is cheerleading a sport? Skateboarding?

Cheerleading, by definition means you are not participating in the actual sport. Cheerleading is very

athletic and burns lots of calories, but no, it is not sport. Skateboarding cannot be denied. It's been long overlooked and now no one can argue against it being a sport.

Do you have a problem with other comedians doing the same impressions as you?

Not at all, I wouldn't have dreamed of doing half of my impressions if I hadn't already seen someone do them.

You're hosting a new reality show about comedians. Can you give us some details on the show?

It's Big Brother with comics. Because it's a contest, I legally can't talk about it too much. Imagine the Real World with ten great comics!

You once had the Mighty Mighty Bosstones on your show. Do you like Ska or Punk Music?

I wouldn't have anyone on my show if I didn't like them. I really love the Dropkick Murphy's. The definition for punk has become so broad, too broad. Avril Cavign? No. The Stooges? Yes.

How does it feel to be in one of the biggest movie busts (Adventures of Pluto Nash) of all time?

It's disappointing but I don't think it bombed because of me. I-Spy came out a month later and "out-bombed" it. That took some of the stag out.

Who was more fun to work with: Christopher Walken, Al Pacino or Tom Cruise?

Walken hands down was more fun, but with Cruise it was the first movie I was in. It was the largest production in the world to me.

What was the worst experience you had while doing stand up?

I got in a fistfight at the Laugh Factory with the audience, literally the entire audience. Someone threw ice at me and I snapped. I couldn't see exactly who threw it, only from which direction. So I walked fists first into that section of the crowd. The director of Suicide Kings came to see me that night. This was BEFORE I had the part. I looked over to where Peter O' Fallon was sitting and yelled out, "Why couldn't you come last night?!"

Any funny behind-the-scenes stories during SNL, or on a movie set?

During Suicide Kings, I had to stand on a couch behind the camera for Christopher Walken's eye line. He had an enormous speech to get out. It was two full pages. He was three sentences from the end. When he smiled, looked up at me and said, "Hey, Jay! You're eight foot man!"

What do you think of Howard Stern?

No comment.

What movie are you doing next?

Zero.

Anything else to plug?

Ska, Punk and Other Junk!

I'll plug for him...visit his website at www.jaymohrlive.com and check him out when he's in your town doing his stand up. Buy his book too!!!

Interview originally posted on SkaPunkAndOtherJunk.com

What is your name?

Tomas Kalnoky

What is your quest?

At the moment, my quest consists of trying desperately to be witty, clever and charming, therefore convincing the readers of your zine that someone with an even modest possession of these attributes is worth listening to. Some of these readers are bound to go out and buy our new CD (because let's be honest, who doesn't want to listen to a band whose lead singer is witty, clever and charming?), thus keeping our label happy and funding our coke and hooker habits.

**What...is the airspeed velocity of an unladen swallow?**

(And you thought I was missing your Python references, byatch)

Why not name yourselves Catch 23?

Isn't that already the name of a book or something?

Seriously, you guys play some good, peppy NJ-style skapunk. What is it with NJ and the skapunk? Hasselhoff has Germany, we have New Jersey. Some geographic locations are inexplicably linked to certain types of music. Come on, you should know this.

Do you guys still speak to the current Catch 22 lineup? Or do you guys have some Shakespearean feud that will end in tragedy on both sides? In the words of the great Walter Sobchak: "they're stonewalling us, Dude" I've tried a few times to make the peace, but I guess it's just not time yet.

Did you ever find Bugs Bunny attractive when he put on a dress and played girl bunny? (shit, I can't think of a clever response to this that isn't a blatant cliché)

You guys sound young, but in the photo in your CD you guys look around 35 or so. Does living in NJ or playing skapunk prematurely age you? Ouch. Jamie's the only one not in his early 20's, he'll love that.

You guys are fast and spirited, and yet your tunes are like six minutes long. What's up with that? We get paid by the minute.

Bon Jovi or Bruce Springsteen?

Despite the rumors, I like girls. But I'm sure they're both very nice young men.

NJ has more toxic waste dumps than any other state (108). How has that affected your music?

Remember that scene in Robocop where that guy fell into the toxic waste and survived, only he was all but melting as he stumbled around? Then he finds his way onto a road, still melting (one eyeball hanging about an inch above his chin) and Clarence Bodikker is speeding towards him in Robo-cop's car. He's all "Clarence, Clarence, you gotta help me, HELP ME" and what does Bodikker do? Runs the fucker over, literally turning him to paste with the impact. THEN (in a move of inspired comedic genius) he flips the windshield wipers on to wipe his now-liquid friend off the windshield so he can see. That's fucked up, man. Not sure if that answers your question, but that was fucked up.

Streetlight Manifesto

No, I hear ya. I have to say, for a small area densely populated by unbelievably shitty skapunk

bands, Catch 22 and Streetlight Manifesto have really done some good stuff. Actually, you're the only ones who have done good stuff. Why do you guys rock and all the other bands suck?

Let me get this straight:

Interviewer: Why are you guys so good?

Artist: Oh, I think it may have to do with blah blah blah blah etc etc.

Interviewer: Ok, thanks

Headline: CONCEITED BAND PHILOSOPHIZES ABOUT HOW GREAT THEY ARE

(I'm not falling for your little zine trickery Mr. Bryan Kremkau, if that's even your real name.)

Thanks for doing this interview, any final comments or anything to plug?

One time, after a show a few years back, we were being interviewed by a local zine. Their last question was "Do you want to plug anyone?" and I said "No, but I'm about to go home and plug my girlfriend". After the zine came out, my girl found a copy in my room and was pretty pissed. Eventually she got over it and saw the humor. In conclusion, I've learned to never plug anyone publicly, as you run the risk of upsetting them.

Check out Streetlight Manifesto's website:

www.streetlightmanifesto.com and buy their new CD "Everything Goes Numb" on Victory Records (victoryrecords.com) now!

*Interview by Bryan Kremkau & Adam Liebling
Originally on skapunkandotherjunk.com*

CD REVIEWS



31 Knots

It Was High Time To Escape

Math rock, for all its focus on musicianship, is rarely influenced by the twin peaks of pure musicianship—jazz and prog. While not any jazzier than your typical math rock band, 31 Knots come close to the edge of prog rock with vocals and lyrics reminiscent of that genre. Like many math rock bands, they do the jerky fragmented melody thing, and they have their dull moments. But many songs, like *No Sound and Without Wine*, stand out, carried by the excellent, wistful vocals.

54 40 or Fight!, POB 1601, Acme, MI 49610

Antifreeze

The Search for Something More

Bright, melodic power-pop punk packed with cheese—I'm surprised these guys aren't bigger cuz they're doing it right. I mean, it personally puts me to sleep, but if you're into the Ataris, you need to check out Antifreeze.

Kung Fu, POB 38009, Hollywood, CA 90038

Asterisk

Dogma

This CD contains every Asterisk song that exists so far. Well thank god for that. I was just thinking the other day, Gee, I would like to listen to really bad Anal Cunt without the humor, or maybe just a lot of 15-second songs of same-sounding guitar/drum noise and someone burping into a mike. I'm really glad this CD has ALL their songs, because I really like that one song with the really fast guitars and drums and the guy growling.

ThreeOneG, POB 178262, SD, CA 92177

At Dusk

The Summer of Promises Kept

Vocals reminiscent of Morrissey and music reminiscent of Sonic Youth and Mission of Burma, At Dusk can be either cuddly or cheesy, depending on your tolerance to soft-vocalled (but not emo) indie-pop. I personally dig it—they're not so much emotional as simply pleasant. It makes a nice soundtrack to a summer afternoon, and doubles as a decent makeout album.

Atdusk.iuma.com, *www.musicfordozens.com*

August Premier

Fireworks and Alcohol

Blink 182-ish, youthful mall punk without the goofiness. The vocals make my stomach churn—it's that irritating mall punk-emo vocal style. People into this music won't mind, but it's a pet peeve of mine. The music itself is decent—they're excellent musicians, but the songs feel long and are hard to differentiate. *Fueled By Ramen*, POB 12563, Gainesville, FL 32604

Avenged Sevenfold

Waking The Fallen

From a punk standpoint, I'm not sure I understand why punk labels are signing metal bands, but the metalhead in me is glad to see metal making a comeback. Avenged Sevenfold are one of the better bands in this new breed of metalcore. They've got melodic dual guitars reminiscent of Iron Maiden, and the vocals are emotive and powerful (not the screaming—the actual singing, I mean). There are many great songs here, but "Desecrate Through Reverance" (sic) epitomizes the best of Avenged Sevenfold—passionate singing, great guitars, and a dark metal sound without being too tough, abrasive, or scary.

Hopeless, POB 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409

(((EDITOR'S PICK)))

The Banned

Imitating Art

Although their name sounds like a 70s oil band, these guys have a slightly eclectic punk sound that works very well. Their songs are a perfect mix of garage rock and old school hardcore ("An Angry Kid In A Rage", "You Better Run"), street punk ("LA Blackout"), and jangly pop-punk ("The Cost of Living", "In Another Place", and the instrumental "Two Minutes to Midnight"). The vocals are clear and a little raspy, reminding me of Jesse Michael, and for all the punk going on, the guitars have a great rock sound (check out "Suckered"). Yet it's not at all disjointed—instead of having an identity crisis, they've carved out their own identity. A really strong debut.

POB 2517, Peter Stuy. Stn, NY, NY 10009

Bear Vs. Shark

Right Now, You're In The Best Of Hands

One of the better indie-influenced hardcore bands, Bear Vs. Shark mix up indie swirling guitars with hardcore passion and emo-ish (but clever) lyrics. The bear is emo and the shark is hardcore and they are wrapped up in this epic battle known as this music. Good band, better name. *Equal Vision*, POB 14, Hudson, NY 12534

Beloved

Failure On

Multilayered, complex emocore that fails to really stick. The parts all work, but nothing works together, and there are no songs that stay with you when the disc is done. Not bad, but maybe trying too hard.

Tooth & Nail, POB 12698, Seattle, WA 98111

Belvedere/Downway

Hometown Advantage split CD

Downway starts things off with five surprisingly good emo-punk tunes—great un-ironic metal riffing, really strong basslines, and some of the best vocals I've heard in this genre (he hits every note perfectly—check out his range on "Under the Same Sky"). Belvedere have a similar sound (good guitars and bass here too), but the songs are less fleshed out and the vocals less remarkable. Five tracks from each band.

Union Label, 78 Rachel E., Montreal, PQ, Canada H2W 1C6

Berzerkers

Cut Throat Words

Somewhat monotonous hardcore, mostly about beating people up. For a tough guy band, their music isn't too thrashy. Besides the monotony, it's fairly decent.

219B Westbury Ave., POB 254, Carle Place, NY 11514

Bouncing Souls

Anchors Aweigh

The Souls no longer like your mom or that quick check girl. They've outgrown the argyle. This is serious, grown-up music on grown-up topics, but delivered in trademark Souls earnest passion. It's not feel-good, upbeat pop-punk like their last couple, nor is it instantly catchy. But here's what it is: mature songwriting that really showcases the most wistful vocals in punk rock. If you're looking for another spirited, uplifting Hopeless Romantic, Anchors will disappoint. But for just good music, this is an exceptionally intelligent and deep album, combining the dark moods of their first couple albums with honest emotions and jarring maturity.

Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd, LA, CA 90026

Editor's Picks at a glance

The Banned *Imitating Art* (S/R)

Chicklet *Indian Summer* (Satellite)

Giving Chase *Nothing Ever Changes* (Jump Start)

Gold Blade *Strictly Hardcore* (Thick)

Helicopter Helicopter *Wild Dogs With X-Ray Eyes* (Initial)

Minus *Minus* (Victory)

Motion City Soundtrack *I Am The Movie* (Epitaph)

Motochrist *Greetings From The Bonnerville Salt Flats* (Heat Slick)

Nerf Herder *My E.P.* (Fat Wreck)

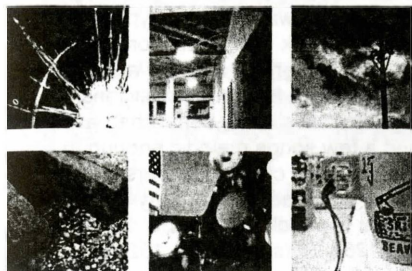
Nicotine *School of Liberty* (Asian)

Snuff *Disposable Income* (Union)

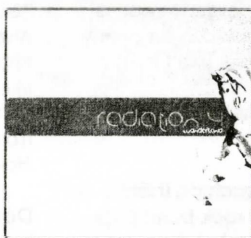
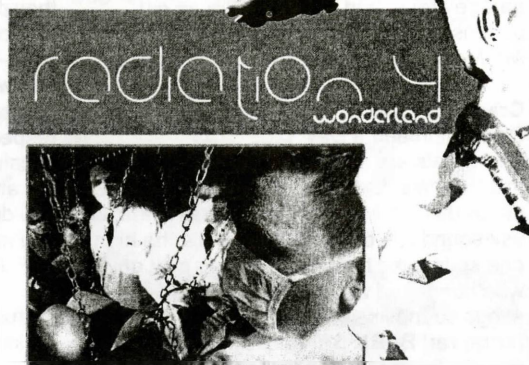
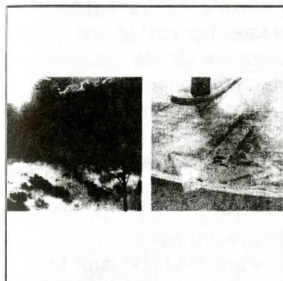
Watashi Wa *The Love of Life* (Tooth & Nail)

HASTE

The Mercury Lift



That which nourishes us
also consumes us.



From rampaging fits of spastic energy to carefully crafted, epic journeys hardcore is about to get an experimental injection via Radiation 4's Wonderland's creative aggression.

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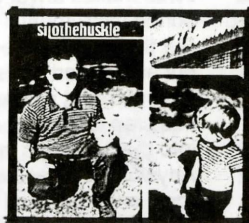
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- New releases from the Light Wires and Cari Clara

Breaking Laces

Sohcahtoa

I remember sohcahtoa from math class. That's about triangles and shit. I fucking hate triangles. Like a triangle, Breaking Laces have four sides to them – some soft rock, some indie rock, some singer/songwriter fare, and umm... the hypotenuse. It's pleasant, if boring after awhile, but something to put on while you're trying to read.

Sidewinder, www.sidewindermusic.com

Broken Bottles

Not Pretty EP

Social D-style punk. At their best they can be fast, catchy and fun ("Not Pretty", "Orange County"); at their worst, they're repetitive and annoying ("I Want Problems", "Cat Killer City"). They also have a cheeky song about Kelly Osbourne (a punk homage to her was so inevitable, it was a cliché before it ever happened) and a dumb song about goth girls.

Finger, 2931 W. Central Ave #D, Santa Ana, CA 92764

Broken Hearts Club

Sciencia EP

This young thrashy band would be pretty good with better production (you can hear only drums, vocals, and bursts of distortion) and shorter song lengths. For doing the screamo thing, the vox are good, but the rest is too faded and murky to comment on.

1088 Park #1021, Austin, TX 78753

Capture The Flag

Start From Scratch

I thought these guys were hardcore, but their new one is mostly melodic pop-punk with inappropriately unrelenting thumping drums and gravelly vocals. I do prefer this sound to bad thrash, but they perform this style sloppily and the guitars are sludgy.

Go-Kart, POB 20, Prince St., NY, NY 10012

CD Truth

Chemically Dependent

Hailing from Akron, OH, the weirdly named CD Truth play a jerky pop-punk with a weird twist – the drumming is fast and peppy, while the guitars are chunky, classic rock riffs. Even though it's done on purpose, it does sound incongruent, as if the guitars can't keep up. It's easy to get over though, as the band is poppy and fun with a geeky, charming quality reminiscent of Devo or Atom & His Package.

Foot In Mouth Productions, 610 Philip Ave, Akron, OH 44305

(((EDITOR'S PICK)))

Chicklet

Indian Summer

Oh man, I'm a sucker for this stuff. Brilliant, bubbly female-fronted rock that's an indie take on 60s bubblegum girl pop. Slightly psychedelic and dreamy in a Nico way, but completely adorable and fun. This makes me wish I was a 60s go-go dancer.

Satellite, 920 E. Colorado Blvd #151, Pasadena, CA 91106

Churchill's Tractor

Cheesy Listening

This is so lo-fi (in terms of production) that I almost broke my speakers trying to hear the music. Which, ironically, isn't lo-fi, but garagey rock, and it sounds like an old dude is singing. Kinda hard to make out.

Mr. Meow, geocities.com/churchillstractor/

Cradle of Filth

Damnation and a Day

The vocals are so dopey, I almost wonder if this is a joke. Like Carcass, these guys utilize dueling low and high voices. The low vox sound like dogs barking, while the high one sound like that little smirking pink guy who hangs out with Jabba the Hut. So the songs sound like BARK BARK BARK rar rar rar! BARK BARK BARK rar rar rar! It's laughable but then they gotta be even more ridiculous with organs, violins, and gospel choirs, giving it such an overly dramatic gothic sound, I feel like I'm in a Castlevania game.

Sony, 79 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10003

Crazy Mary

I'm Not Going To Stop Touching It EP

It seems this psychedelic rock band puts out like two albums a year, but they're getting better. The new EP remixes 5 tunes from their last release, and I dig it more than their usual stuff. It's funkier and the fx mask their darkness and toneless vox. This is a good step in the right direction.

Humsting, 300 E 34 St, 36th Fl, NYC 10016

Criteria

En Garde

Same guy from Cursive and White Octave, so expect some angular, brainy indie. It isn't pretentious boring crap, though—if Criteria have one criterion, it's to stay within the compounds of rock. Though on the rock hardness scale they're practically mica.

Initial, POB 17131, Louisville, KY 40217

The Curtains

Flybys

What makes anyone think I'd want to hear boring instrumental minimalist crappy crap. But then again, after I put this on I spaced out and ended up listening to like 30 minutes of it. But who knows if that's because this crap is any good, or because I just fell into that lethargic, hypnotic muzak state. Anyway, you people do NOT know how to rock, and I demand you learn. *Thin Wrist*, 12920 San Vicente Blvd, LA, CA 90049

Darby Jones

Harmony and Dischord

Harmony and dischord is a nice way to describe all the emo-indie-crap that's been haunting my nightmares, but Darby Jones (band name, not an individual) luckily plays a more straight-forward pop rock. Actually, they're maybe two parts alterna-pop rock, one part butt rock, and only a sprinkle of indie/emo. The result is a refreshing, bright rock sound, completely devoid of edge or bite, but nice in that bar rock sort of way.

RSM, POB 4531, Wayne, NJ 07474

Destruction Made Simple

Terror Stricken Youth

My instinctive reaction to political punk is something like "Ugh, I don't need to hear scrappy teens vent about politics and world events when they prob can't even pass their high school history class." In many ways DMS is typical of their style—fast aggro-punk with lyrics more vague and whiny than thoughtful—but they also have redeemable qualities like great musicianship (especially killer basslines), better-than-average vocals, and a few songs melodic enough to hold the attention of even cynical listeners like me. If you dig Anti-Flag, Pipedown, Pennywise, etc, you may want to check them out.

A-F, POB 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Diffuser

Making The Grade

It's hard to not be biased, but when I hear this, I keep thinking it would make great background music for one of those late-night MTV reality shows. (Actually, "Making the Grade" sounds like an MTV reality show.) On one hand, it's catchy stuff – but it's also not much different from all the other mall-punk power-pop clones.

Hollywood, 500 S Buena Vista, Burbank, CA 91521

Down By Law

Windward Tides and Wayward Sails

I always felt the vocals were too lackluster for the music, but everything seems to fit here—it's a good mix of street punk, hardcore, and pop punk. They really run the gamut in punk style, but no matter what they're doing, the songwriting on this album is top-notch. Wow, I think I'm a Down By Law fan now... weird..

Union Label, 78 Rachel E., Montreal, QC, CAN H2W 1C6

Down To Nothing

Save It For The Birds

Surprisingly good old school sXe. For what it is (tough kids thinking they're superior because of something as trivial as not smoking), it's pretty rockin' and the vocals are dead on. Seriously, he's the second coming of Ian Mackaye.

Thorp, POB 6786, Toledo, OH 43612

Eastern Youth

What Can You See From Your Place

Man, it's unfortunate that emo has influenced bands in foreign lands, but Tokyo-based Eastern Youth do a killer job. Sort of like the Japanese Fugazi, the music is intense and explosive, the vocals full of earnest passion. I can't understand a word, but I do know the international language of ROCK, and they speak it loud and clear.

Five One, POB 1868, Santa Monica, CA 90406

El Centro

Prohibito!

Hey, this is the band whose singer survived that terrorist blast in Indonesia. Cool to finally hear them. They're much softer than I expected—melodic, harmless Cali punk. They have a couple of downtempo reggae-tinged tunes that are pretty groovy, but their punk sound is somewhere lost in limbo. Too much background harmonizing and cheesy choruses. That's not a bad thing if you're pop-punk, but when you've got an otherwise straight-up punk sound, you need to kick it up a few notches. But "Disaster All" is a great song. *Finger, www.fingerrecords.com*

Academy *Making It Personal*
 "Mothers Day", "Dial A Prayer",
 "Champion"... Umm... a little too subur-
 ban for my taste. (*Orange Peel*, POB
 15207, Fremont, CA 94539)

The Bled *Pass the Flask*
 laughs The look like they need to be
 bled some more. Pass ME the flask!
 "The Sound of Sulphur" and "Spitshine
 Sonata". Whatever. (*Fiddler*,
 www.fiddlerrecords.com)

The Break/Let It Burn
 Oh, this is two separate bands. More
 bad high school poetry. "Guzellugh
 (Celebration of the Sun)"? If that's Yid-
 dish, I'm George Bush. (*Doghhouse*,
 POB 8946, Toledo, OH 43623)

The Bronx *S/T*
 Heeey, I drive through this band all the
 time with my windows rolled up. Good
 cover art.. They look like a good bunch.
 Definitely. (*White Drugs*, 7095 Holly-
 wood Blvd #651, LA, CA 90028)

Christopher Jak *Applause of the Rain*
 Oooooo!!! He's cute!! In such an all-
 American, soap opera way. I don't care
 what his music sounds like, he's good
 looking! Can I keep this? Too bad the
 album title is sooo maudlin. "Applause
 of the Rain?" Whatever.
 (www.christopherjak.com)

Cupcake Larry
Success Is Not An Option
 Cupcake Larry sent you a letter! A
 freakin letter! Definitely homemade in
 his basement. Poor thing. Probably
 needs to get laid. I'm going to send him
 a fan letter. Poor thing.
 (Cupcakelarry.org)

Daughters! *S/T*
 Daughters—I'd like to have some one
 day. I don't like their song titles. Stuff
 like "Nurse, Would You Please Prep the
 Patient for Sexual Doctor". Sounds like
 a sexually frustrated bunch. (*Robotic*
Empire, POB 4211, Richmond, VA
 23220)

Todd Deatherage
Dream Upon A Fallen Star
 Do you think that's his real name?
 Death Rage? Dream Upon a Falling
 Star? Another sensitive man CD.
 Maybe I'll take it home... (*Summer*
Break, summerbreakrecords.com)

Desert Fathers *The Spirituality*
 I'm so confused. The Spirituality? I get
 better spirituality at the mall. I'm sorry,
 this is bad. And I don't mean good.
 (*Threespheres*, threespheres.com)

Ingrid's Reviews

We receive so many promos that sometimes we
 can't review them all. In those cases, my friend
 Ingrid takes a look at some and comments on
 them. She only likes klezmer, so reviews are
 based solely upon cover art and press materials.

The Everyothers *S/T*
 Every other what? Every other song
 sucks? *laughs at song titles*
 "Whatever You Want", "Make Up
 Something", "Go Down Soon"... This is
 like a bad date. (*Hautlab*, POB 1639,
Peter Stuyv. Station, NY, NY 10009)

The Forces of Evil *S/T*
 *looks at cover of cartoon animals with
 weapons* Okaaay, a little too much tv
 watching there... (*forcesofevilska.com*)

Kate Hathaway *One Two Three*
 She's a little too clean looking for me...
 Her parents must've spent a fortune on
 her teeth. She looks like she'd make a
 good babysitter. Maybe she and Cup-
 cake Larry should get together.
 (www.katehathaway.com)

Huge *Live At Arlene*
 Slick. Very slick. Recorded at Arlene
 Grocery. I've heard of Arlene Grocery,
 it's supposed to be good. Ooo, they
 have an Indian guy on bass and
 maybe an Israeli on drums. Seems like
 a good combo. They might be huge.
 But noo... I don't think so. But Ravi
 sounds cool. Maybe I'll listen to it for
 Ravi, actually. (www.hugeband.com)

The Love Scene
Blood is the New Black
 (rolls eyes) Are you sure this is punk?
 This looks a little too dark for my
 tastes. (*Fenway*, fenwayre-
 cordings.com)

Motorpsychos *S/T*
 Ugh, these girls need to wash off
 their makeup and go back to
 school. *Points to one angry look-
 ing girl* Especially this one! Sour-
 puss! (*Motorpsychosrock.com*)

Pistol for Ringo
Solid State Neo-Hedonist
 Sounds like an unemployed grad
 student who never got his disserta-
 tion published. Ooooo, "Noir du
 Monde"! He speaks French! What
 an obvious grad student.
 (*Aeronaut*, POB 361432, LA, CA
 90036)

Punishment
Broken But Not Dead
 Is listening to this punishment? I'd
 rather be put out of my misery. But
 they do include their lyrics, that's a
 plus! But too bad it's bad high
 school poetry. (*Thorp*,
 www.thorprecords.com)

Stereo 360
Enjoy Your Life Poolside
 Isn't there some band with 360 in
 the name? No wait, I'm confusing
 them with Stereolab, who I've
 never listened to. Oh my god,
 these guys look soo dorky. And I
 think they spelled "plasticine"
 wrong. And they definitely spelled
 "Vaseline" wrong. At least they
 spelled "stereo" right... But they're
 really ugly so I'm not going to listen
 to them. (*Baby Pea*, babypeare-
 cords.com)

Stunt Monkey *S/T*
 In the publicity photo, the guy sec-
 ond from the right thinks he's
 Freddy Prinze Jr. And I don't like
 their cover art. (Editor's note: I
 ended up checking out this CD and
 it's very good pop/mall punk. A bit
 Green Day-ish with some Nerf
 Herder.) (*UTR*, 21st St., San Fran,
 CA 94110)

A Week In July
Near Fatal Explosion
 I can't find a damn thing in this CD.
 "Without these people, nothing
 would be possible.." Not true, you'd
 still make this CD without them. I
 give up. (*Orange Peel*, POB 15207,
 Fremont, CA 94539)

El Nada

Nothing For Nobody

Fun, sloppy hardcore punk with an old school MexiCali hardcore sound. I love hardcore punk that sounds like this – fun, good natured, but loud and brash. Between the buzzsaw guitars and gravelly voice, these guys just tear shit up. It makes me wish for a time before hardcore became synonymous with metal. *Finger, www.fingerrecords.com*

Electric Frankenstein/El Nada

Electric Frankenstein Meets El Nada

EF need no introduction – they continue spitting out tunes like a freakin rock n' roll machine. El Nada are a surprise – they rock out along the same lines, only harder and faster. Both bands offer up three originals and one cover of each other. *Finger, 2931 W. Central Ave #D, Santa Ana, CA 92764*

Embrace Today

Soldiers

Straight-edge metalcore from Boston. It's good for what it is, and I especially like the metal guitar riffing at certain points. But would I play it at my wedding? No. *Deathwish, deathwishinc.com*

Emmanuel 7

Machines In Routine

Connecticut's Emmanuel 7 play midtempo metalcore. They have a cool groove—whatever else you're doing, you're also slowly headbanging along to the album. They're also able to change gears in either direction – jazzy interludes or insane breakdowns – and it breaks up a style that would otherwise be monotonous. Plus the drummer sounds like he's got a kit that would dwarf Neil Peart's. *Thorp, POB 6786, Toledo, OH 43612*

The End

Transfer Trachea Reverberations From Point At first, it's about what you expect from a Relapse band – metalcore vocals, thrashy guitars, speedy drums. But The End quickly differentiates themselves with melodic and jazzy breakdowns and instrumentals. The songs are structured smartly, especially for a thrash band, and the quirky, jangly parts are refreshing breaks from the harder edged moments. One of the more interesting metalcore bands. *Relapse, POB 2060, Upper Darby, PA 19082*

Enon

Hocus-Pocus

Enon have an interesting sound that elevates them above the usual Bklyn fashion bands. Songs alternate between the two songwriters/singers Toko and John. Toko has a spooky, sweet-Asian voice that is both cute and makes your skin crawl, and her songs match her voice – creepy, electronic and psychedelic. John plays more traditional melodic pop-rock with live instruments and a more organic, if less interesting, sound. Yet the album isn't schizophrenic. It reminds me of the Sugarcubes if that annoying male singer took to the front more often. Mix in a splash of J-pop and some Brooklyn trendiness, and you've got Enon. *Touch & Go, POB 25520, Chicago, IL 60625*

Fairweather

Lusitania

All bands claim that their music progresses and evolves over time, but it's rarely an improvement. Fairweather is the exception. This is a way more developed sound than their debut and Alaska EP, both which were generic if thoughtful emo rock. But Lusitania breaks out of the mold with intensity and brilliantly-executed technical precision. It's expansive and atmospheric, but with joltingly explosive moments, such as on "Letter of Intent" and "Mercer Island". It's a case study in tension-and-release indie rock, but instead of sounding angular like many in that genre, Fairweather have a smoothed-over, soft wall of sound that carries both melody and passion without sacrificing the other. Definitely for emo fans who are looking for something a more challenging. *Equal Vision, POB 14, Hudson, NY 12534*

Famous In Vegas

Peace On Earth

Fun, harmless punk n' roll with dopey lyrics and quirky vocals that remind me of a cross between the Hi-Fives and the Voidoids. *Broken Down Volve of Hate, 4228 Pine St., 2nd Fl., Philadelphia, PA 19104*

Flamethrower

Flamethrower

Full octave punk in the vein of the Dwarves and Zeke. The first thing you notice about Flamethrower is that they sound like Motorhead – the same low-tuned buzzsaw guitars and driving drums, but especially with the Lemmy-ish sore throat vocals on some tracks. (On other tracks, like "Drop Out" and "Mad" his voice is actually kind of grungey a la Kurt Cobain.) There's not much to dislike about Flamethrower – they're loud, they're fast, they riff like crazy and they sound like Motohead! *Dead Teenager, POB 470153, San Francisco, CA 94147-0153*

Flashlight Brown

My Degeneration

This is the major label debut from Flashlight Brown, a very melodic punk band from Canada, and they continue playing top-notch melodic, sanitized punk. For all their mainstream appeal (and similarity to Sum 41), they have been around for awhile, so much respect to them. They also do this stuff VERY well, mixing up dark humor, bright hooks, and driving pop-punk. I'd call it a guilty pleasure, but I don't feel guilty liking them. *Hollywood, 500 S Buena Vista, Burbank, CA 91521*

F.O. The Smack Magnet

Bologna Sandwich

Though there are a couple of really bad tracks when they slip into bad whiteboy rap and funk ("FO's in the House", "Nut Sack" - oy), FO have pretty much refocused their sound on straight-up punk with a quirky and sometimes silly sense of humor. Good production and good amount of original tunes on this self-release. *www.fotsm.com*

The Forces of Evil

Friend or Foe?

I have to admit, this CD is VERY good. It's Aaron from Reel Big Fish fronting Jeffries Fan Club, but the music is like something Moon would've put out in 1995. This is pure, fun, upbeat third wave ska, like Mustard Plug with better vocals or MU330 with catchier tunes. It's so awesomely unabashed about ska, i.e. lots of "pick it up's" and lyrics like "you gotta fight for your right to skank." A surprisingly good album for anyone into third wave. This band far exceeded my expectations. It's a happy ska party that taps into an era of ska that I truly miss. *theforcesofevil-ska.com*

Forever Is Forgotten

The Architecture Is Still Burning

Although too screamy for me, this is a new school hardcore band that really works. They have a slight jazz influence, so there's a lot going on in each song. No chunka-chunka filler guitars – these guys are talented and know how to be creative while maintaining their aggressiveness. I heard the band is looking for a new singer – that's a bummer. As I mentioned, I'm not into thrash vocals, but Christopher Lopez pulls it off exceptionally well. The lyrics are also good and deep. It's always great hearing a smart take on what I consider a dumb (or at least limited) genre. *Thorp, POB 6786, Toledo, OH 43612*

From Ashes Rise

Nightmares

Dark, heavy hardcore that's drowned out in monotonous guitars, but it's otherwise decent. From the song titles, I was expecting scary thrash, but FAR never gets out of hand. *Jade Tree, 2310 Kennwynn Rd, Wilmington, DE 19810*

From Monument To Masses

Impossible Leap In One Hundred Simple Steps Very disappointing. The press release made these seven very long songs seem like turntable masterpieces, full of crazy loops, breakbeats, and dub ambience. Well, for the most part, this is just boring instrumental indie rock. Any electronica that may appear (only on "Comrades and Friends", as far as I can tell) is simple and unimpressive. Mostly, the tunes are just one guitar riff being played endlessly over jazzy drumming and occasional 50s retro old-guy-speaking record in the background. *Dim Mak, POB 348, Hollywood, CA 90078*

Fruit Bats

Mouthfuls

The album is mostly just sleepy vocal harmonies and lazy acoustic guitar and piano, but even though there isn't much variation, it's still a pleasant listen. The various bleeps and bleeps and alt-country twang jar you from completely it tuning out, as the songs themselves are nothing too astounding – they're not as affecting or interesting as The Shins. This isn't for everyone – it took effort to keep myself interested, but when you need a quiet, introspective moment, this album works well. *Sub Pop, POB 20367, Seattle, WA 98102*

Gameface**Four To Go**

Somewhere between radio punk and power rock is Gameface, a band I never much liked but who have impressed me mightily with their new set of crisply-produced hard rock.

There's enough variance between songs to make this their catchiest album yet, plus the vocals have never been better, the lyrics are near poetic, and the guitar parts are pitch perfect. From a punk standpoint, Gameface now have a very commercial and harmless sound, but at the same time, this is by far the best batch of songs they have written.

Doghouse, POB 8946, Toledo, OH 43623

Garrison**The Silhouette EP**

Five new tunes from Garrison. I'm not crazy about the production – the vocals seem drowned out in guitar distortion. The music isn't as interesting as their previous stuff; I don't know if I'm being musically ignorant here, but this sounds like something that would be on the Daredevil soundtrack.

Revelation, POB 5232, Hntington Bch, CA 92615

Ghost Orchids**The King Is Dead**

Put on "Keep Your Secrets" and try NOT to shake yo booty. Impossible! This is great no-wave electronica. Listless punk with simple synths and drum beats, and yet it makes you move. This is kind of like Human League, Depeche Mode, and New Order thrown in a blender to create dance juice for robotic heroin addicts. Great stuff.

Princehouse, POB 410353, San Fran, CA 94141

Give Up The Ghost**Background Music**

I like screaming just as much as the next guy. Oh wait, no I don't. So I didn't like this.

Equal Vision, POB 14, Hudson, NY 12534

(((EDITOR'S PICK)))**Giving Chase****Nothing Ever Changes EP**

Very cool, unique hardcore. The musicianship is progressive without sacrificing any heaviness. They claim Kid Dynamite and Jawbreaker to be influences, but they're almost Frodus-esque in their unique song structures and top-notch talent. They also have some really neat metal riffing, and I don't mean the sludgy crap you hear in metalcore, but actual impressive guitarwork. The production also shines – it's crisp and clean, and even though you don't associate that with aggressive hardcore, somehow it sounds great here. Highly recommended for new school hardcore fans who aren't afraid to listen to something that isn't complete shit. *Jump Start, POB 10296, State College, PA 16805*

Glasseater**Everything Is Beautiful...**

Ever pick up a hot girl, take her home, get down n' dirty, and when you reach for her crotch, you find a giant shlong? That's how I feel about Glasseater in the opposite direction. They play really kick-ass, tight melodic punk, but when the vocalist opens his mouth,

you want to shove some steroids down. I'm not saying the wussy vocals are incongruous to the music; actually, it fits perfectly. But some testosterone wouldn't hurt.

Victory, 346 N. Justine St, Ste. 504, Chicago, IL 60607

(((EDITOR'S PICK)))**Gold Blade****Strictly Hardcore**

Instantly catchy singalong British punk that kicks an impressive amount of ass. They've got an early Clash sound to them (check out "Living Outside the Capital"), but they've also got a little mod in them, with some funky punk-soul tunes like "Hairstyle" and "Soul Power". They can also do street punk perfectly, with rhythms like marching feet. And yet they're also considered a skapunk band in England because of occasional horn riffs and the gruff Buster Bloodvessel-esque vocals (check out "16 Tons"). Although they cover a lot of ground, they shift gears flawlessly. Although they don't have any techno elements, they remind me of Introspect in the ability to write smart punk songs that are different, and yet infectiously catchy (lots of whoaaas). This 15-track CD is a best-of (the band already has some releases in Europe), and if you haven't heard of them yet, pick this up.

Thick, www.thickrecords.com

The Gossip**Undead In NYC**

Being a distortion-heavy minimalist riot grrl band is noisy enough, but recording a live album on what could only be a single General Electric tape recorder placed strategically in a bathroom, well... expect a lot of noise. This is very bootleg quality, and while I respect bands wanting to keep studio polish off of an energetic live set, this album is really cumbersome to listen to.

Dim Mak, POB 348, Hollywood, CA 90078

Graffiti 61**Mind Blossom**

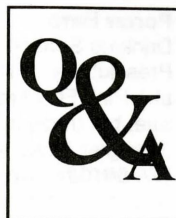
They call themselves ambidelic—a clever amalgam of ambience and psychedelic—and that's a dead-on label. These nine songs are slow swirling soundscapes that I would only be able to enjoy if I was stoned out of my skull. Sober, it's quite boring and pretentious—it doesn't break away from the combo of spooky chanting or whispering over smoky, lo-fi electronica and space age psychedelia. It kind of sounds like what you'd hear in a new age shop or planetarium.

www.graffiti61.com

Guff**Engine Trouble**

O, rarity of rarities: an above-average release from Go-Kart! This is fun, peppy melodic pop-punk. Maybe too mall-punk, but the vocals sound more earnest than the usual Hot Topic stuff. Good guitar riffing, and this is a pop-punk band that isn't afraid to speed things up. Great stuff.

Go-Kart, POB 20, Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012



RISE AGAINST

I notice that your new album sounds a lot like Journey's earlier albums. Was that a conscious decision?

We taught Journey everything they know so their records sound like ours!

Have you played with Journey? Are they cool?

They're dicks.

Can you remember the first Journey album you bought or listen to?

Escape. My sisters were huge Journey fans.

Which one of you had the Steve Perry mullet when you were younger?

Me fo sho. I was/am trendy.

If Journey took you on a journey, where would you go?

Des Moines

Which Journey songs do you like playing the most?

The ones with guitar, bass, and keyboard

Do you think Survivor was as good as band as Journey?

Survivor was Journey incognito.

If you were trapped on a desert island, what Journey member would you want to be with?

Steve Perry so he could lull me to sleep.

Is "Journey Into Imagination" your favorite Disney ride?

Fuck that pussy shit, gimme the Batman ride at Great America.

I noticed your power rock ballads are similar to Open Arms. Does that song make you weep too?

This interview does.

Have you ever fantasized about Steve Perry fondling your ass with a feather?

Only on Tuesdays.

Now it's time for our separate ways, got anything to plug?

Please check out Revolutions Per Minute on Fat Wreck Chords (fatwreck.com). It sounds nothing like Journey.

Porter Harp

Drinking Season

Presskit says: "Think Wilco meets Neil Young at a Pink Floyd recording session." Yeah, that's true, but throw in a bottle of Nyquil too. *Strangler Lewis, 4031 Fremont Ave N, Seattle, WA 98103*

(((EDITOR'S PICK)))

Helicopter Helicopter

Wild Dogs With X-Ray Eyes

H2 have really smoothed out their sound, and their latest is guitar-pop perfection. There is a lot of 80s influence, The Cars, Elvis Costello, and Tom Petty being the most obvious, but H2 keep things fresh with great male-female vocal interplay, dark basslines, and bright, layered guitars. My initial temptation is to relegate this album as a guilty pleasure, like something by Weezer or the Lemonheads, but I enjoy it too much to pretend I don't like it. Anyone weaned on the heartland rock from the 80s or the poppier alternative bands from the early 90s will fall in love with this band by the second song. *Initial, POB 17131, Louisville, KY 40217*

Hoods

Pray For Death

Generic tough guy hardcore, but still way better than generic metalcore, so I'll take what I can get. For a Cali band, they sound very NYHC influenced, so if you like that stuff, see what the sunny coast has to offer. East coast, west coast, this is the soundtrack to walking down a blighted city street while looking as tough as possible. *Victory, victoryrecords.com*

Inhuman

The New Nightmare

New York-centric metal band that calls itself NYHC. They're talented enough – it may be metal, but it's GOOD metal. The lyrics are about what you'd expect from such a band: lots of dark imagery, metal lyrics, as well as the typical self-pitying hardcore fare such as: "And here I stand / A broken man / A lifeless shell / Stuck in this hell!" I'm sure if I called them lifeless shells, they'd kick my ass.

A-F, POB 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Jim's Big Ego

They're Everywhere

With a name like a bad NJ ska band, I was expecting something amateurish and awful. Instead, I was grateful to discover that JBE play fun alterna-pop rock that reminds me of They Might Be Giants. Dorky vocals, cute up-beat ditties about random things. A great mix of pop and quirk with humor and confidence. Good stuff! *www.bigego.com*

The Joykiller

Ready Sexed Go!

A big compilation (32 tracks) from Joykiller's first three albums plus a bunch of unreleased tracks that was originally going to be released under Grisham's other moniker, Gentleman Jack. I'm not really into Joykiller (was never really into TSOL either), and I'm against career retrospectives of bands that have only been around for a few years. But if you're a fan or enjoy crude cover art, it may be worth picking up. *Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd, LA, CA 90026*

Junkyard

Tried And True EP

Wow, this is quite an interesting band. They answer the question: What happens when your band features one dude from Dag Nasty and one whose brother was in Faster Pussycat? These guys start off with some killer mid-tempo punk n' roll that's like Electric Frank meets Bon Scott-era AC/DC, and then they turn into the second coming of Journey. And if you know me, you know I love Journey. These guys rule.

Heat Slick, www.heatslick.com

Keystone All-Stars

Once... And Young

KAS is definitely one of the most underrated punk bands around. Their new one, like their others, is ass-kickingly awesome street punk mixed with peppy pop punk. It's that perfect driving punk n' roll, singalong sound that is so damn appealing, and yet few punk bands can pull it off. If you like the Forgotten, B. Souls, and the more melodic bands on TKO and BYO, you'll love these guys. *Jump Start, POB 10296, State College, PA 16305*

Kids Near Water

Hey Zeus

Swirling post-punk from the UK with vocals that sound like they were recorded in a cave. A lot of the songs are energetic and cool when it's instrumental – but once the vox kick in, the music slows down to boring emo speed. *Candle Light, candlelightrecords.com*

The Kinison

Mortgage Is Bank EP

If you ever get irritated off at your ears, you should put on this EP. It'll really piss them off. Besides just flat out sucking, the vocal and guitar lines are the same. I can't explain why it bothers me so much, but it's like let your guitars do something else, other than follow your vocals. C'mon, am I the only one here? Okay, forget it. *Fearless, 13772 Goldenwest #545, Westminster, CA 92683*

The Last Show

Sleep EP

Good lord, this is awful. Horribly over-dramatic, off-key vocals, and incredibly sloppy musicianship. The music sounds like the bad, fuzzy metal/garage rock we used to play in my basement when I was in junior high. If these guys are more than 16, I'd be really scared. *Solidman, 516 W. 25th St, Ste 500, NY, NY 10001*

Lawrence Arms

The Greatest Story Ever Told

Can I have some macaroni with that cheese? *Fat Wreck, POB 193690, San Fran, CA 94119*

Living Things

Turn In Your Friends & Neighbors EP

Better than most of the out-of-the-woodwork moppy haired garage bands from Brooklyn, and they're from St. Louis! Powerful rock riffs, Iggy Pop swagger, heavily thumping drums and bass, and politically charged lyrics rock this mother out. *Dreamworks*

The Lost Vegas

Neo Psych 7"

Psychedelic jam-band rock. My record player doesn't work, but this looks decent. Very colorful cover art, and the song titles seem interesting. Give it a shot if you prefer drugs to showering. *WorldWide Ocean, POB 82425, Columbus, OH 43202*

MC Kabir

Fuel for the Fire

Real hip hop with something to say, and creative ways of saying it. Kabir has a great voice and lyrics flow effortlessly, whether he's talking about himself and his racial makeup (he's half-Indian/half-Italian, raised in London) or the politics of war. The music is a polished blend of old school hip hop, jazz, soul, reggae and dub, which smoothes the hip hop delivery for those not really into hip hop, but may be a turnoff for those looking for something edgier. *www.mckabir.com*

Me First and the Gimme Gimmes

Take A Break

I still think Me First is a gimmick band, but I have to give them credit on this album as their covers actually sound sincere. Gone is the smirk and wink that are all over their other ones. Also, their tracklist this time is, for the most part, pretty well adaptable into punk songs, so they don't sound as dopey. The only exceptions are "I Believe I Can Fly", "Save the Best For Last", and "Natural Woman", which tarnish the sincere mood. *Fat Wreck, POB 193690, San Fran, CA 94119-3690*

The Methadones

Career Objective

Energetic pop-punk that lacks the instant catchiness of Screeching Weasel, Riverdales, or Queers, but is no less likeable. The reason for it taking more than one listen to get hooked is that Dan Vapid (going by his birth name Dan Schafer) has matured, and his music with it. With songs like "Premature Mid-Life Crisis" and "Say Goodbye To Your Generation", this is clearly a man who has grown out of the "Can't Stop Farting" mentality of some of his older bands. That's not to say Methadones is music for which you have to keep a straight face – they may be more introspective and heavier lyrics, but they're also pure fun. "Generation", "Ammunition", "Far Away", and "Antidote" are just a few that get you going and bounce around in your head long after the album's over. *Thick, thickrecords.com*

(((EDITOR'S PICK)))

Minus

Minus

Vast improvement over Jesus Christ Bobby, which was essentially awful screaming over guitar feedback. They must've realized that any retarded chimp could play that sort of noise so they took the time to write some songs this time around. The results are like night and day. Minus are actually MELODIC now and the

Reviews by Mark Prindle

Frank Black

Show Me Your Tears

SpinART

A long time ago in Boston Town, a portly gentleman named Charles Thompson started calling himself Black Francis and leading a really neat little band called the Pixies. These magical Pixies created something unique and spectacular - a finely-tuned mix of glossy clean guitar sparkle, speedy punk energy, charming and unpredictable vocal humor, brilliant melodic know-how and some crazy whim that a verse should always have 5 or 6 lines rather than the traditional 4 or 8. When Charles "Black Francis" Thompson broke up the band in 1992, he switched his fake name around and broke out on his own to create music that sounded unique like the Pixies, but goofier and lacking intrigue. When this post-Pixies solo rigmarole became a lonely land of pain after three albums, Frank found himself some friends called the Catholics and lay back to pursue a more normal, predictable type of straightforward classic rock sound of goodness.

And that was five years and SIX albums ago! Since then, Charles "Frank 'Black Francis' Black" Thompson and the Catholics have been churning 'em out left and right like a pig making bacon out of its own hind legs. This latest effort sees the men pursuing a more country-ish feel on a good number of tracks, with acoustic and pedal steel guitars enjoying the company of a harmonica, piano and organ as happy ol' pickin' and grinnin' early '70s Stonesy numbers yet again fail to make it onto FM radio where they belong. A few of the songs 'rock,' but not very much, and definitely more in a '50s/'60s goodtime way than you'd expect from the guy that once sang for Venom. I'll grant you that Frank Black never sang for Venom and the last sentence was a bit misleading, but only if you'll grant me that this album is total CLASSIC rock, and deserves to be heard, loved and cherished by rednecks and 6th graders the worldround.

One thing I can't NOT comment NOT ISN'T about, though, is that Frank's songwriting has gotten perhaps a little TOO normal. Once was a time when you could count on him to totally screw with your idea of song structure every time out: the notes you'd expect would be replaced by others, the choruses would be delayed a few extra beats, and nothing he wrote sounded like anything you'd heard before. This simply isn't the case on "Show Me Your Rears, (Old Women with AIDS)." Even if you're too young to notice the "When I Was Young" (Animals) riff in "Massif Centrale" or the "Betrayal Takes Two" (Richard Hell) motif in "When Will Happiness Find Me Again?," surely you can't miss the "Shambala" (Three Dog Night) melody in "Jaina Blues," because you love Three Dog Night and totally always brag about that time Chuck Negron fractured his penis.

To close suddenly and awkwardly, the music of Frank Black and the Catholics is a safe and catchy tool for weaning your parents off of that Andrew Lloyd Weber SHIT they're playing every time I hide behind the headboard and pee on them while they're having sex.

Metallica *St. Anger* AOL Time Warner

"st*anger" it says on the spine. Could easily be misread as "stranger." As in "imposter." As in "NOT REALLY METALLICA AT ALL—THEY'RE OFF SOMEWHERE RECORDING A GOOD ALBUM."

St. Anger. So much to say, but where to begin? Hmmm.... Oh wait, I know! It doesn't have any good songs on it! It sounds completely half-assed, the lyrics are embarrassing, the vocals are far too loud, the bass guitar is (a) not played by either the old bassist or the new bassist, and (b) not audible *at all* on the disc itself!

This record is seventy-five minutes long—and *Christ*, does it draaaaaaaag. But you're in luck if you like part of a song, because they will inevitably return to it seven or eight more times before the song ends! All of the songs are seven minutes long, and for the most part repeat two or three boring detuned chord sequences over and over and over and over and over! And these are all mindless riff-by-numbers running up and down the three or four lowest power chords on the guitar neck in surprisingly similar permutations! They don't even count as songs, do they? Fingers go UP the neck! Fingers go DOWN the neck. Fingers go UP the neck! Fingers go DOWN the neck. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

The band didn't bother to arrange the songs either, leaving Lars to fake an arrangement by indiscriminately speeding up and slowing down the drums whenever he gets the hankering. None of the parts follow each other or have any flow at all and most of the songs eschew vocal melody for ass-dumb shouting or crapping rapping. And Lars has now apparently added a sewage pipe to his drum kit, creating an out-of-tune "CLANG!" noise that permeates the whole album.

The guitars sound completely guttural and are buried under the drums. Some of the songs do have neat crunchy noise parts, but they always return to the actual riffs, which sound like the worst Helmet outtakes ever. (By the way, if you like this shitty album, buy Helmet's *Strap It On* because it's the same minimal low-pitched songwriting schtick, but done *creatively* instead of just plopping three boring major chords together and assuming it will kick ass if Lars thrashes hard enough.)

To be honest, the guttural anarcho-crust guitar tones can sound good, especially in the sick, weird intro track "Frantic." Even that copper pipe that Lars keeps banging his wrench against has kind of a neat (though completely amateurish and moronic) tone to it.

The few parts where they actually branch out a bit, such as a quiet, intriguing part in "Shoot Me Again," and some interesting guitar note tones in "All Within My Hands," stand out as the only parts that sound like any BRAINPOWER was put into this record at all. The rest is boring, predictable blues-metal interspersed with fleeting moments of ham-fisted funk.

Unless you're not really familiar with the concept of songwriting, this album is the musical equivalent of the world's greatest female basketball player—she just ain't no good!

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songs are not only listenable, but enjoyable. Even their heaviest moments are nothing like the painful wall of crap they bludgeoned us with on their debut. I can't believe I'm saying this, but this is a damn good album that successfully mixes up the At The Drive-In sound with hard rock and swirly but contained noise. Fans of the first album might be appalled at this brighter, pleasing offering, but fans of the first album are obviously blithering idiots and shouldn't be allowed to live, let alone critique this album. Check out "Romantic Exorcism", "Flophouse Nightmares", and "Here Comes The Night." *Victory, victoryrecords.com*

Moonraker

Moonraker

Female fronted Boston bar rock that has some funky grooves. "Salimander" is a rockin song; the rest kinda don't go beyond being decent funky bar rock. *Immergent, 2231 S. Carmelina Ave., LA, CA 90064*

(((EDITOR'S PICK)))

Motion City Soundtrack

I Am The Movie

Of all the three-word bands with "City" as the second word, MCS are probably the most universally appealing. Jimmy Eat World, Get Up Kids, Fountains of Wayne... MCS have that same poppy-yet-dorky-yet-indie quality in spades. Their first single "The Future Freaks Me Out" will be huge if it breaks; but if it doesn't, it'll still be a great song. That's what's great about them — they have mainstream potential with the great songs to back it up. Also check out "Perfect Teeth", "Modern Chemistry", "Red Dress", and "Autographs & Apologies". And this sounds weird, but the vocal range reminds me of Sting. *Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026*

(((EDITOR'S PICK)))

Motochrist

Greetings From The Bonnaville Salt Flats Great LA punk n' roll about girls and cars. They're sorta like the Dwarves Lite—not for lack of rocking, but for being a lot poppier and harmonic than their down n' dirty contemporaries. This is definitely less threatening than, say, anything released by RAFFR, or any of the Cali bands trying to sound like Detroit or NYC gearhead punk bands. Motochrist rock out, but they don't deny the bright California sun or the happy poppiness it breeds. And luckily, I like that. No tough guy posturing, no sleazy antics. Just fast, loud, and fun, with loads of rock. *Heat Slick, www.heatslick.com*

Murder City Devils

R.I.P.

Unfortunately, this band broke up just as they were becoming good. Their last album, Thelema, was their best and I was starting to see why everyone liked them. This posthumous release is the live recording of their last show. Well recorded and performed, it's the perfect culmination to an all-too-short, career. The CD actually passed the litmus test for live albums — the live versions made me more curious and enthusiastic about their older music, which I had previously dismissed. *Sub Pop, POB 20367, Seattle, WA 98102*

Murder Weapon

Nervous Wreck

A fairly new band from Richmond, VA, Murder Weapon play excellent hardcore reminiscent of late 80s NYHC. Aggressive without being metal sludge, they keep up a perfect hardcore tempo — fast enough to get you going, but not too fast to slip into thrash. And even though this album of 7 songs clocks in at under 10 minutes, it's a fulfilling listen. *Martyr, POB 955, Harriman, NY 10926-0955*

Naked Highway

Naked Highway EP

This is my buddy Sy's band, so I'm a bit biased. They're a fun electro-dance duo with death-disco-monotone vocals and cheeky lyrics. Good programming, tho the beats are repetitive. Good music to shake your ass to. *www.nakedhighway.com*

(((EDITOR'S PICK)))

Nerf Herder

My E.P.

Haha, awesome! Fun, dopey songs about getting ice cream, masturbating, and a couple X-mas carols including the heartwarming "I've Got A Boner For Christmas". The album is actually a re-release from a couple years ago with some good bonus tracks added. Definitely worth getting even if you have the original. Man, Nerf Herder is like Vandals for dorks. Their music just makes me smile. *Fat Wreck, POB 192027, San Francisco, CA 94119-2027*

The Network

Money Money 2020

Retro 80s new wave that combines the spastic dorkiness of Devo with the European faux-robotic futurama sound of the Buggles. They could stand to be catchier, and their more memorable stuff sounds very familiar ("Right Hand-A-Rama" is practically "Little Bit O' Soul", Spastic Society" is VERY "Whip It", "Supermodel Robots" might as well call itself "Main Offender to the beat of I Like Candy"). A DVD is also included with six videos. In most, the band is portrayed grainy and mysterious, like the Residents but in Mexican wrestling masks. A couple of their worst songs are actually made better by good videos: "Joe Robot" features cute animation, and "Spike" (terrible song) has an excellent video full of animated 50's style clip art. The rest of the videos are sleazy and tasteless, mostly featuring gyrating naked women and lesbian sex, leaving me to wonder if they're not a new take on new wave, but just a new hook in sleazy fashion rock. *Adeline, 5245 College Ave #318, Oakland, CA 94618*

The New Anxiety

The New Anxiety EP

Great name for this band. The frenetic guitar work, snappy drums, and sad-sounding vocals does create a sense of anxiety. They play poppier, more straight-forward indie rock, but the jagged guitars and punchy rhythms do keep you on edge, yet you're simultaneously soothed by simple, bright melodies and non-threatening vocals. *Keep Safe, keepsaferecords.com*

The New Breed

Port City Rebels

I'm normally unimpressed by oi bands. It's such a limited style, that to identify yourself as an oi band, you have to sing about drinking and fighting, say "oi" a lot, and inevitably have songs about being united, being a skinhead, or being part of the working class. But I like the New Breed. Though they're unpolished and not super catchy, they manage to avoid the clichés. Okay, they do sing a lot about drinking and fighting, but it's not so blatant. Their attempts at Celtic folk, tho, are weak. *Thorp, POB 6786, Toledo, OH 43612*

New Mexican Disaster Squad

New Mexican Disaster Squad

Excellent fast punk with a fun 80s hardcore feel and approach. Some of the songs are straight from the 7 Seconds playbook, but most of the others, like "Sexual Fantasies," "Tax Return," and "Ride the Crest" are more on the melodic tip, giving them a catchy edge. In terms of hardcore, this band is exactly what I like: fun, upbeat, enjoyable, punk (not metal), and vocals you can understand. *A-F, POB 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213*

(((EDITOR'S PICK)))

Nicotine

School Of Liberty

Hailing from Japan, but you'd never think it. They play fun, fast-paced pop-punk that's a dead ringer for NOFX or the Vandals (similar irreverent and whacky punk style), with peppy, English vocals. This is insanely fun shit. Even though the vocals have a nasal Atom/Package quality, they never become grating, and in fact, really fit the music well. They sound so youthful and energetic; it's astounding that they've been together over ten years with as many albums. I gotta check out their older stuff — in no time I'll have played this one out. I'm addicted to Nicotine. *Asian Man, POB 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030*

Nigel

Nigel

Piano-heavy indie rock that has a very TFUL 282 twangy/weird feel, due in part to the rimshot and snare-heavy drumming, male-female vocals, and unconventional songwriting. Pretty cool stuff, though I'm not a fan of that much piano. Two great standout tracks are "It'll Happen Eventually" which has really neat duo vocal interplay and "(K)night" which is something right out of "I Hope It Lands". *SilverGirlRecords, POB 161024, San Diego, CA 92176*

On the Might of Princes

Sirens

After a disappointing debut, OTMOP have roared back with an atmospheric, cerebral album that justifies their buzz. It's a heady, challenging album, and not for those who want mindless rock. But if you're into indie prog rock with moments of emo catharsis, you should check them out. These guys are doing it right.

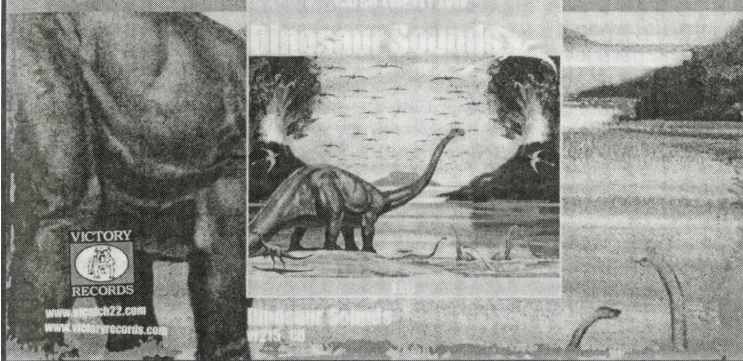
Revelation, POB 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232

CATCH 22

Dinosaur Sounds

IN STORES NOV 4, 2003

"Catch 22 mix jazz, R&B, soul, funk, Hendrix-like guitar licks and even chamber music. These amazing East Brunswick-based musicians easily could hold their own on the punk-ska turf with the likes of The Clash and Rancid." - Kicks



SNAPCASE



"You can't put Snapcase in any category... the only bands you could compare them to are probably the likes of Refused and Fugazi. Bands that are outstanding - when it comes to ideas, music and intellect..." Rock Hard

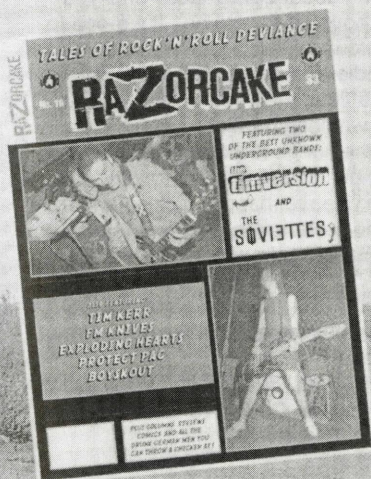
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Paradise Island

Lines Are Infinitely Fine

Ten interesting experiments in minimalism. Just about every song features two or three of the following: simple scratchy guitars, bored-sounding vocals, slow bass lines that sound like Jaws is approaching, and/or Casio drums. And yet each song goes in a different direction, one being a take on punk, another on folk, another on electronica, another on dance music, and so on. They all have the same ingredients but cook up different dishes. Maybe it's too pretentious and not too much fun to listen to, but it is an interesting listen. *Dim Mak, POB 348, Hollywood, CA 90078*

Pleasure Forever

Alter

The hedonistic Pan-worshipping version of Ben Folds Five is back and better than their debut. Darker, more sinister, and fuzzily distorted, *Pleasure Forever* actually rock out and sound pretty cool on Alter, whereas on their self-titled debut they sounded awfully pretentious and wrapped up in themselves. Although a vast improvement in songwriting and approach, this album still makes you want to find the nearest opium den and spend the night in a drugged-out orgy. Or is that a good thing? *Sub Pop, POB 20367, Seattle, WA 98102*

Polysics

Neu

Props to Asian Man for domestically releasing this great Japanese noise-punk album from 2000. The Polysics have an electro-pop sound that's more in tune with Atom & His Package's geek-rock neo-wave than with Spazz's berserker rage or Locust's noise free-for-all. Lots of 80s computer synth sounds, like an arcade game thrown in Devo's micro-wave. Happy and weird, and totally fun. *Asian Man, POB 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030*

Queensryche

Tribe

I'm a big 'ryche fan, but they lost me after *Promised Land*. The music became too uninteresting, not rockin' enough. The same could be said of their new one, except that the tunes are catchier than on the two previous. Don't get me wrong – none of these will make it onto Adam's Completely Kick-Ass Queensryche Mix, but the songs are pretty, expansive, dramatic – sorta like five Silent Lucidities with five slightly more rockin' songs thrown in. But the deeply personal nature of the lyrics has continued, to the point of it being a drag. *Sanctuary*

Radiation 4

Wonderland

Compared to early Mr. Bungle, *Radiation 4* is probably more like *Dillinger 4* – the weirdness, impeccable talent, and twisted humor of the first Bungle album, but with more of a metal-core, hard-edge bent. So it's screamy but not scary. Chaotic but controlled. Highly recommend for fans of D4 or any metalcore band that veers off the beaten course. *Abacus, 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250*

Radio Berlin

Glass

Post-modern dark no wave with a bass-heavy, dark, and garagey feel. Each track seems to cover a different facet of this genre. "Gauze" is minimalist and listless, "A Suitcase" and "The Hyphen" have that 80s no-wave dance sound that I dig, and "DES" and "How Fast Can You Run?" have a synth-heavy goth sound. While each song has an interesting rhythm and sound, the instruments rarely vary within the song. It's a good CD, but I find myself skipping to the next song after two minutes of each one. *Action Driver, POB 610, Toledo, OH 43697*

Read Yellow

Read Yellow EP

Kick ass rock with heavy distortion, relentless drums and a hardcore-ish vocal delivery. Four songs – two are hardcore punk-ish; one has a long indie intro but when it finally kicks in, it rocks; and one garagey song that is thankfully unironic and all about the rock. This band rocks. *Fenway, POB 15614, Kenmore Station, Boston, MA 02215*

Red Channels

Red Channels

I had trouble listening to this as an indie album – the hushed female vocals seemed forced, the echo effects were annoying, and the downtempo music accompaniment was too dark and repetitive. A few days later, it struck me that they reminded me of Siouxsie & the Banshees, and framing them as a goth band seemed to make a lot more sense. I went back to the CD, and sure enough, it was awesome. I was now able to appreciate the cool, dark rhythms of "Now Playing", the creepy Casio effects of "It Was All Static" and the minor key melodies and the Middle Eastern-sounding scales that permeate the album. Some of the slower songs that incorporated creepy synths ("Amer", "Cicadas") sound like a slightly more indie Switchblade Symphony. Indie fans would probably roll their eyes, but Red Channels is a modern goth winner. *SilverGirlRecords, POB 161024, San Diego, CA 92176*

The Red Scare

Eight Pieces of Summer

This is a power indie trio from Vancouver, with the drummer taking on vocal duty. Usually the opposite is true, but I think he just stick with vocals – the drumming is awful. As if he has something to prove, the drums are just all over the place, too fast, and too loud in the mix, drawing attention away from the understated, wonderfully jingly guitar work and dark new wave tone. *Teenage Rampage, 5313 5B Ave, South Delta, BC, V4M-1K4, CAN*

Respira

A Still Silhouette

Darker and more interesting than most emo bands, but still emo. You kind of wish a band this talented would be less wussy. *Exotic Fever, POB 297, College Pk, MD 20741*

Revolution Smile

Above The Noise

This album is copy protected so it won't play in my computer. I think they might be crappy nu-metal, and it doesn't help that they were discovered by Fred Durst. Maybe it's a good thing the disc is encoded... *Geffen, umusic.com*

RobotZen

Alice Meets The Caterpillar

As you can imagine, this is some trippy psychedelic electronica. What's cool about them is that they don't settle for the usual boring soundscapes – they've actually bothered to construct SONGS, and the melodic female vocals (which reminds me of the Evanesence girl) help tie it together. It's interesting to hear straight-forward vocals over crazy drum n' bass and synth effects, but they pull it off nicely, especially on "Hello New Day", "Call Me Eve", *www.robotzen.com*

Rock City Crimewave

Sealed With A Curse

Detroit-style punk n' roll from Boston. They have their moments of fuzzy-distorted, sleazy-swaggered, and dark-humored brilliance, but it lacks much punch overall. You can tell the Misfits are a big influence – "Kill The Lights" and "Zero High" sound like they were wrenched from the larynx of Glenn Danzig, but the music is too slow to keep up with their influences. Most of the songs have a listless quality to them, missing that spark that makes this genre so rockin' and fun. Rock City are cool, they just need to let loose a bit more and rip out their tunes harder and faster.

Pig Pile, www.pigpilerecords.com

Roy

Tacomatose EP

The title isn't about eating tacos until you pass out, though it should be. It's a nod to their hometown of Tacoma, WA, and you can hear the indie and grunge influences of nearby Seattle in their sound. The vocals sound too wholesome for the jittery indie rock, and the songs feel longer than they should be, but it's still a very straight-forward, fuzzy indie release, happily lacking any math rock or emo pretension.

Initial, POB 17131, Louisville, KY 40217

Saosin

Translating the Name EP

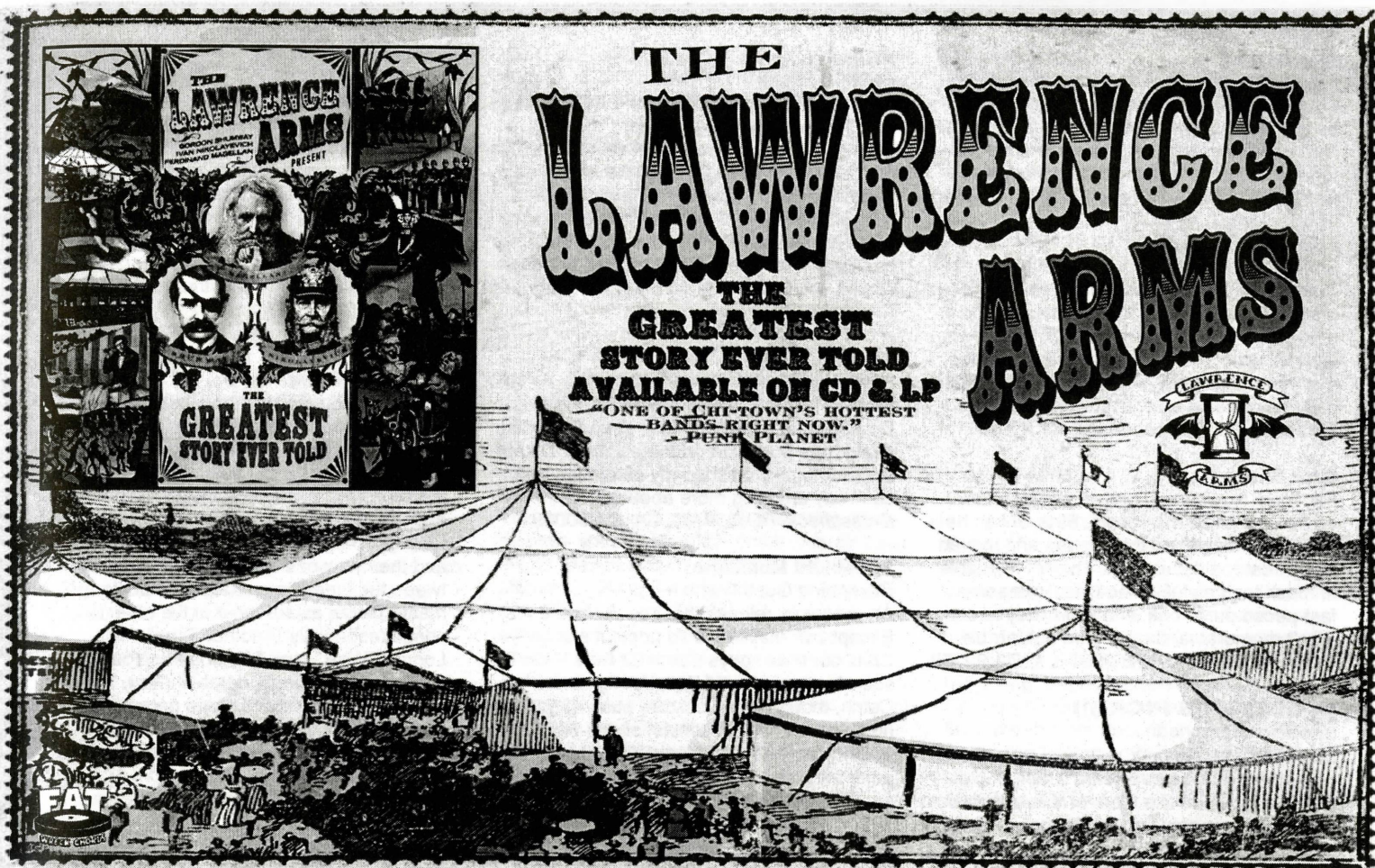
Bad Evanescence. *Death Do Us Part, 8023 Beverly Boulevard #5, POB 440, LA, CA 90048*

Semiautomatic

Wolfcentric

Brooklyn's Semiautomatic sound very much like a Kill Rock Stars band – minor key riot grll-ish vocals that rub roughly against Casio melodies and rhythms. It would be interesting if there weren't a lot more bands like this, but lacking in energy and discernable hooks works against them.

5RC, POB 1190, Olympia, WA 98507-1190



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Sick Of It All

Life On The Ropes

I blame SOIA for the onslaught of metalcore bands, but SOIA were at least pretty good at it. I can't listen to this stuff anymore though—too abrasive, too tough guy, too sludgy.

Fat, POB 193690, San Fran, CA 94119-3690

Silo the Huskie

Sons of Columbus

You get the sense that these guys were a grunge band who later shoehorned in some emo-punk. Not necessarily a bad thing—emo is by all accounts wussy, and having a loud, distortion-heavy bar rock sorta grunge sound definitely gives it a boost. *Tiberius, 4280 Catapulta Dr., Independence, KY 41051*

Slick Shoes

Far From Nowhere

While I don't like the vocals, Slick Shoes have honed and tightened their sound and moved away from the Jesus stuff. They're also able to mask their awfully emo lyrics with some fast-paced punk rock, and while they're songs aren't memorable, they're also not terrible. *Side One Dummy, POB 2350, LA, CA 90078*

(((EDITOR'S PICK)))

Snuff

Disposable Income

It's been awhile since I heard Snuff, and either I've grown to like them or this is their best album yet, cuz now I'm wondering why I didn't keep their older stuff. This longtime British punk band is doing stuff that's both incredibly melodic and yet different and experimental (within the context of punk). They're definitely not as thrashy and noisy as people have said—I've been shaking my ass to each and every song. But they are full-sounding, and the singer sounds like a harmonizing Lemmy. It's like listening to really amazing punk in the middle of a hurricane or wind tunnel. Big-sounding yet contained, exhilarating but enveloping... this is one hell of a punk album. I think I just lost my virginity to it. *Union, 78 Rachel E, Montreal, Quebec, CAN H2W 1C6*

Spitalfield

Remember Right Now

Ooof. Hideously cheesy Vagrant-style emo... They're great at what they do—they're extremely poppy with bright hooks, sugary sweet vocals, and a knack for adorable song-writing, but this is really for sappy girlfriends, virgins, 12-year olds, and other assorted emo fans. I mean, they use a glockenspiel for god sakes. Grow a pair, and I don't mean breasts. *Victory, victoryrecords.com*

Spoken

A Moment of Imperfect Clarity

Give the band some credit for trying. There's passionate vocals, lots of melody, the occasional catchy riff. But it is generic, positive emo. Being a Christian band has never biased me, but I'm a little drunk so I feel I must say this: Jesus Christ is totally not into emo—he's totally a Rush fan. Not to speak for God or anything, but he's really into Hemispheres and Presto and would prefer bands to ROCK. *Tooth & Nail, POB 12698, Seattle, WA 98111*

Squirtgun

Fade To Bright

A somewhat mediocre new one from Squirtgun, from whom I haven't heard much in awhile. There are a couple of standout tracks like "Make It Wreck", "Please Be Mine", and "Trial and Error", but the rest are difficult to differentiate and roll by without sticking. Another positive worth mentioning are the great basslines that give the band a thicker, fuller sound. *Honest Dons, POB 192027, San Fran, CA 94119-2027*

Street Dogs

Savin Hill

Fronted by Dropkick's former singer, Street Dogs cut out the trendy Irish sound and play straight-up punk. Unfortunately, the CD kept skipping until it crashed my computer, so I can't say anything more about it. *Crosscheck, POB 39439, LA, CA 90039*

Streetlight Manifesto

Everything Goes Numb

Ah, a Victory release that doesn't scare me. Except that maybe it's so good, it's scary. Consider these guys Catch 22 Beta V. 2. They sound very similar to Keasby Nights-era Catch, though less hardcore punk. (I guess it's no surprise that SM consist of one-half Catch 22 and one-half One Cool Guy.) This is ska-punk the way I like it—fast and punky without sacrificing horn lines or a fun upbeat. *Victory, www.victoryrecords.com*

Strike Anywhere

Exit English

Striking an excellent balance of melody-driven punk and hardcore catharsis, SA succeeds at playing vegan/political activist music without annoying the fuck out of me. Their best qualities are their positive energy and excellent grasp on melody—I think even the most irritating Earth Crisis songs would rock if Strike Anywhere reworked them. *Jade Tree, 2310 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810*

Suicide Machines

A Match And Some Gasoline

It's been awhile since I listened to the Suicide Machines, and in my mind, they'll always be that awesome skater skapunk band from 1995. Since then, they've gone street punk, hardcore, straight-up rock and everything in-between. They've always done their different genres well enough I suppose, but I could never get into their Hollywood-era stuff. Their new one is another scattered album that ranges from the skapunk reminiscent of their early years (Did You Ever...?, High Anxiety, The Change, Split The Time, Kaleidoscope) to unpleasant hardcore (Keep It A Crime, Invisible Government, Beat My Head Against The Wall) with some street and skater punk mixed in. At this point, I realize that the schizophrenic sound does work for them, and outside of the hardcore attempts, the new one has good flow and catchy tunes. I don't want to begrudge them any longer for moving away from the sound I liked best, and enjoy this album with an open mind has now got me curious about all their albums that I've formerly shrugged off. *Side One Dummy, POB 2350, LA, CA 90078*

Tabula Rasa

The Role of Smith

An excellent departure from A-F's politically charged street punk, Tabula Rasa play an explosive post-punk with relentless, from-the-gut vocals and a swirling chaos of guitars. TR takes the best qualities of emo (thoughtful lyrics, passionate vocals) and math rock (tight, intricate musicianship), shakes them together vigorously, and then propels it all in a fizzy jet stream of ROCK. *A-F, POB 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213*

Teen Idols

Nothing To Prove

Another, and probably their last, great power-pop-punk release. Teen Idols, I hardly knew ye. Even though they're well known, it wasn't until I saw them open for the Queers last year that I heard their stuff and got hooked. Album to album, Teen Idols got progressively poppier and better, and their new one is their best. "Read Between the Lines" is a straight-up power-pop masterpiece, as are most of the other songs (especially "Another Time", "The Longest Walk", and "Waiting For You"). A few tunes ARE pretty damn cheesy, and while I can understand some begrudging Teen Idols for losing their punky edge, I prefer the cheese. *Fueled By Ramen, POB 12563, Gainesville, FL 32604*

Teledubgnosis

Magnetic Learning Center

Straight forward ambience with a dark, jazzy feel. What keeps you hooked is the live drumming, which is, strangely enough, courtesy of Ted Parsons of Prong and Feotus. The hard-hitting rhythms stay in the forefront, with the trippy, sleepy effects delegated to the background, so if trance makes you narcoleptic, this album should keep you up and interested. *Wordsound Recordings, wordsound.com*

The.Story.Of

Trust In Amanita

Zany prog rock that has some elements of electro-dance, New Order, and Dream Theater, but with an indie-synth bent. It's not something that'll attract the ladies, but it's a guilty pleasure. *Thestoryof.net*

Treephort

Buy This Album Or The Terrorists Win

This is the ultimate in nerdcore. The art has tons of argyle, 4/6 of the band wears glasses, and all dress smartly in shirts and ties. A given tune might feature fake violins, horns, piano, synthesizers, or that weird sound from those tubes you flip over and go WeeeeeWaaaaarrrrrrr. But it's all fun, punky, thrashy stuff, reminding me of the Blue Meanies in terms of ska-punk-noise thrash, party spirit, and quirky sense of humor. The music is surprisingly accessible (it can appeal to anyone into ska, punk, or hardcore, so long as they have a sense of humor), but the vocals take some getting used to—they sound like Dickey Barrett with a horrid case of constipation. *Brand Name, POB 17533, Atlanta, GA 30316*

Turn Pale**Kill The Lights**

Bridging the dark space between goth and post-punk, TP are sinister and sparse, but strangely a lot of fun. The semi-tribal drumming works extremely well with the jerky vocals and jagged guitars, and on some songs (like "Peaceable Kingdom"), the combination is actually upbeat and infectious. At first I found the vocals annoyingly pretentious, but the strange mix of Robert Smith and Johnny Rotten (Pil-era) grew on me. You don't hear much goth like this anymore — this isn't supposed to scare you or make you dance, but it's cool and fun and a welcome change. *What Else? POB 1211, Columbus, IN 47202*

Ultimate Fakebook**Before We Spark EP**

Another good release from UFB, who put a fun arena rock twist on Weezer-ish power-pop. The production on this album is darker than usual, but the songwriting explodes with bright hooks and dorky power-pop energy. *Initial, POB 17131, Louisville, KY 40217*

Various Artists**Advanced Calculus**

The tracks on this 2CD were culled from hours of live recordings made on WRCT 88.3 FM in Pittsburgh. This is a good look at almost 30 independent acts in PA, most of whom I've never heard. The most familiar

names: Pay Toilets, The Code, Lorelei, Modey Lemon, and Whatever It Takes.

WRCT, 5001 Baum Blvd Ste 630, Pgh, PA 15213

Various Artists

Bad Scene, Everyone's Fault: Jawbreaker Tribute
Jawbreaker can be blamed for inspiring legions of incredibly bad bands, but luckily this comp features few of those bands. Instead, a lot of good punk bands take their stab, including Bigwig, Face To Face, Travoltas, Riddlin' Kids, and Nerf Herder. Some misses include Bayside, Duvall, Fall Out Boy, and Good Night Bad Guy. Best track is The Affect's electro-dance version of Boxcar. Very cool. I gotta track down their albums. *Dying Wish, 750 Grand St, Suite 3E, Brooklyn, NY 11211*

Various Artists**Beer: The Movie**

This is the soundtrack to an upcoming documentary about a bunch of drunk kids on Long Island. Bands include Northstar, Brand New, Moneen, Taking Back Sunday, Hot Rod Circuit, Movielife, and Allister. It's an uneven comp with flavor-of-the-month emo-punk interspersed with slow indie, slow acoustic butt rock, and down-tempo hip hop. Besides Atmosphere, who are awesome, the hip-hop contributions are of the dopey bitches-and-drinkin variety. I hope the soundtrack isn't an indication of how the movie will be. *Triple Crown, 331 West 57th St #472, NY, NY 10019*

Various Artists**Boston Scene Report**

This is a great idea from TKO—they're putting out a series of "scene report" comps, focusing on local bands across the country. Boston is the first one, and Atlanta, Philly, Portland, Seattle, and more are promised. Only problem: there's only four bands, two tracks each. I'm not sure why anyone would want a 20-minute CD comp, even if it's cheapo. Anyway, bands here are Suspect Device, Tommy and the Terrors, A-Team, and Fast Actin' Fuses. Except for the punk n roll FAF, they all sound like the same mediocre street punk band. *TKO, 3126 W. Cary St #303, Richmond, VA 23221*

Various Artists**Death Before Disco**

I love the wacky death disco genre. New Order, PiL, Alice-era Sisters... You gotta love that tinny pinball-ish synth/drum machine sound, those listless vocals, that thin line between no-wave punk and dance. Well, it turns out there are bands today still doing this stuff, and this comp documents the scene. Bands include Ghost Orchids, Gogogo Airheart, Hint Hint, Dance Disaster Movement, I Am Spoonbender, Paradise Boys, The Lovemakers, more. 15 funky, crazy tracks. *Princehouse, POB 410353, San Fran, CA 94141*

Q&A—Bear Vs. Shark

Answers by Mike Muldoon who plays guitar, bass and keyboard for beavrsshark and by John Gaviglio who plays guitar and bass.

What was the first album you ever bought?

M - Sesame Street sings Saturday Night Fever.

J - The Cocktail soundtrack.

You guys are emo with balls. Why does other emo have to suck?

M - It appears that you already answered the question within the question. If we're emo with balls and we don't suck, and all other emo sucks, then it must be emo's lack of balls. Balls. Balls is the answer.

J - Right now I'm crying.

Bear Vs. Shark reminds me of the epic battle between By-Tor and the Snowdog. Are you Rush fans?

M - I'm not familiar with By-Tor or this Snowdog, but I am with Rush, and I'm a fan of none.

J - If one were to search my cd collection, you would find neither 2112 or Counterparts. However, one may find Rush Chronicles the double-disc superbasss greatest hits of Rush. And if one were to find me late night on a warm summer evening you may be able to find me singing Subdivisions.

Forget bears for a second. Who would win between sharks and dinosaurs? Do you think sharks are responsible for the**extinction of the dinos?**

M - I guess the battle would have to be a case by case comparison considering all the different breeds of both creatures. As for the sharks causing the extinction of the dinosaurs, I doubt it. Though the theory is interesting, I find it faulty.

J - They say the whale shark is a dinosaur. A Diplodocus I think.

Tell me who you think would win in the following battles:**Freddy vs. Jason:**

M - One controls the dreamscape...

J - Freddy.

Bush vs. Dean:

M - Bush seems more aggressive.

J - Bush would kick his ass. I've seen him one-arm bench Cheney.

Gandhi vs. Buddha:

M - Gandhi

J - Since Buddha had laser eyes and could fly, I'll say Gandhi.

Bernard Gilkey vs. Gary Carter:

M - Who's Gilkey?

J - Who?

Goku vs. Gandhi vs. Gilkey vs. Gary:

M - Goku

J - What?

Roe vs. Wade:

M - The hanger industry sure lost.

J - My god.

Hardcore vs. Punk rock:

M - Aren't they both dead.

J - Depends how many weird spinkicks are involved. And if they land. And how many spikes are worn. Too many variables to fit into

battle computer.

Men vs. women:

M - Haven't men already won?

J - Yes they have, Michael.

23 vs. 42:

M - Letter to the Corinthians.

J - 23.

READ vs. Bear Vs. Shark:

M - beavrsshark.

J - Anytime, any place, you pussies.

Say I'm standing in the record store and I see the brand-new Bear Vs. Shark alongside the brand-new Rush, and I've only got enough \$ for one. What could you say to persuade me to get your album?

M - Rush is shit.

J - New Rush is shit.

Would you rather have sex with a bear or shark?

J - A shark, because sharks have vaginas that are the most anatomically similar to a human woman's vagina than any other animal. Although they have rough skin, it's kind of like my cat's tongue. Plus, sharks are hairless, except of course for the Kamchatka Hair Shark, but most are bald.

Plugizzle your shiznizzle.

M - You're starting to get on my nerves.

J - I'm not sure if anything's really been said in this interview worth reading, so if the reader made it this far, I'm very sorry for wasting your time.

Bear Vs. Shark is on Equal Vision Records (equalvision.com)

Various Artists**Krazy Fest 6**

While the CD lineup is good (Bear Vs. Shark, Black Cross, Helicopter Helicopter, Jazz June, Ultimate Fakebook and more), it's a bummer that they were only able to get Equal Vision and Initial bands, especially since the latest Krazy Fest lineup had a lot of other great bands playing (Bouncing Souls, Dillinger Four, Hey Mercedes, Mastodon, Blood Brothers, Reggie & the Full Effect, Hatebreed). In fact, I don't think any EV or Initial bands even headlined the thing. But for a stand-alone sampler of those two labels, it's a strong comp and good look at the diverse releases these two previously static labels are now offering. *Equal Vision & Initial*, POB 17131, Louisville, KY 40217

Various Artists

Every Word: A Tribute to Let's Active Bands I never heard of covering a band I never heard of. After doing some research, I found out that Let's Active were an 80s NC rock band in the style of REM. So the tunes are slightly off-kilter, crisp Southern power rock, and I assume the bands are being somewhat loyal to the original. Decent for what it is, but not exactly essential. If you want to reintroduce Let's Active to the general popular, why not just re-release their out-of-print albums? *Laughing Outlaw*, 8 Victoria St, Lewisham, 2049 Australia

Various Artists**Punk Rock Is Your Friend #4**

Okay, Kung Fu needs to get some new bands on their roster. Seriously. Every sampler is always the same: Ozma, Vandals, Tsunami Bomb, Ataris, Useless ID, Antifreeze, etc etc. They need to go Victory crazy and sign a thousand new bands. Or at least three or four. *Kung Fu*, POB 38009, Hollywood, CA 90038

Various Artists

Punk Seven Inch CD Volume One: 1988-1989 Since I'm a cynical jerk, let me start with a cynical and unfair remark: it seems that Lookout! is reissuing a lot of its older catalog because their recent stuff has been pretty mediocre. They seem to have lost their way in recent years from the exciting, energetic Cali punk they put out in the late 80s, and the brilliant pop-punk from the 90s. That said, this is an excellent collection of their early 7's, featuring long out-of-print songs from Corrupted Morals, Isocracy, Plaid Retina, Yeastie Girlz, Surrogate Brains, and Kamala & the Karnivores. You get 47 songs that are not only a piece of punk history, but unlike *The Thing That Ate Floyd* reissue, these songs are extremely and consistently good and have aged very well (except for Yeastie Girlz – embarrassingly bad girl rap). Tons of gems here (the biggest surprises being fun-loving Surrogate Brains and the girl pop-punk of Kamala & the Karnivores), and it's great to have this all on one disc. But should Lookout! continue looking backwards or focus on what's ahead? *Lookout!*, 3264 Adeline Street, Berkeley, CA 94703

Various Artists**State of the Union Vol. 2**

Our friends from up north are putting out some amazing stuff. This 20-track sampler features the Planet Smashers, Subb, Flashlight Brown, Big D, Chris Murray, Mustard Plug, General Rudie, Snitch, The Kingpins, Nicotine, the NYSJE, and more. Great pop punk, loads of ska, can't beat it. *Union*, 78 Rachel St. East, Montreal, Quebec, CAN H2W 1C6

Virus Nine**Blastin' Away**

Straight-forward street punk about being punk, hating war, being punk, saying fuck you to politicians, being punk, and uniting all the punks. I guess they're punk rock. *A-F*, POB 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

The Von Bondies**Raw And Rare**

Aw yeah. If you've never heard the Von Bondies, now's your chance to be introduced to them the way they should be experienced – live! They're everything a good rock n' roll band should be – loud, raucous, bluesy, and fun. Check out "Going Down", "It Came From Japan", "Cryin'", and "Save My Life" and tell me they don't have the perfect rock sound **DOWN** – I mean, it's like early Blue Oyster Cult meets the Cramps. **120% ROCK!** *Dim Mak*, POB 348, Hollywood, CA 90078

Vortis**God Won't Bless America**

If you think you like political punk, but you hate hearing teenage punk bands whine about OPEC when they probably don't know what the acronym stands for, you need to get into Vortis. This band, like Crass and Dead Kennedys before them, is the real deal. The singer is a 60-something professor of political studies, and he's got the brains to back up his balls. His targets this time are obviously the Bush Administration and their war on terrorism, but there are also some light-hearted tunes, like ditties against the obnoxiousness of cell phones and the new sterility of Las Vegas. *Thick*, www.thickrecords.com

(((EDITOR'S PICK)))**Watashi Wa****The Love Of Life**

My new guilty pleasure. Make no mistake – this is pure, straight-forward pop-rock with sunny melodies, soulful vocals, and wonderfully bright guitar work. This is feel-good, positive tripe, but I swallowed it right up. It'll make the average punk vomit, but sometimes you need a little cheer and cheese in your life. This is music I'd love to blast on my car radio during a long road trip – only I'd keep my windows rolled up so as not to embarrass myself. *Tooth & Nail*, POB 12698, Seattle, WA 98111

The Weakerthans**Reconstruction Site**

I used to think these guys were total wussy weepy emo darlings, but maybe I've gotten it all wrong. Their new album is more like hard rock with some alt-country... they bring to mind a more indie, fuzzier REM. They're still not that interesting, but I'm glad to know my

musical vocabulary has expanded. Alt-country, huh! *Epitaph*, 2798 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026

Westgate**Afire**

Sort of like Lifetime or Vision, they play with a ton of passion and energy, and the music remains hardcore even when the vocals get a little thrashy. It takes a few listens before they really stick in your head, but they should appeal to emocore fans. *Jump Start*, POB 10296, State Coll, PA 16805

Whatever It Takes

A Fistful of Revolution/Stars & Skulls EP Fronted by Anti-Flag's bassist Chris #2, the music here isn't exactly what you'd expect. This isn't loud, fast, obnoxious punk with an overly political message; it's more of a thoughtful midtempo sound with personal lyrics (but still firmly entrenched in punk; they don't come close to toeing the emo line). The musicianship has its cool moments—the guitar playing by Chris #2 is surprisingly intricate and clever for a punk bassist—but is otherwise sloppy. Tempos change within songs as if consistency is an afterthought, and the drumming seems to be doing its own thing half the time. Chris #2's vocals aren't as impressive as his guitar playing, but they do fit the music well enough. There's not much to differentiate the songs, but none of them sound bad, either. This is a big CD that includes an out-of-print EP, so it might be worth checking out if you're into decent snotty punk. *A-F*, POB 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Wooden Ghost

No Minute Gone Comes Ever Back Again Minimalist pop has made something of a comeback, but Wooden Ghost perform it in a serious, unpretentious manner that shames the rest. They have an almost folk, alt-country feel, but without any hint of cheekiness or irony. It's a pleasant listen, if a bit melancholic. *Tuolumne*, POB 320-340, Bklyn, NY 11232

You Am I**Deliverance**

Aussie rockers continue to offer up bright, jingly pop on their sixth album. It's harmless, squeaky-clean indie-pop that may not appeal to the average jaded kid, but it is a nice example of well-crafted songwriting. It may not have bite, but it goes down easy. *SpinART*, POB 1798, NY, NY 10156-1798

Young People**War Prayers**

Pretty female vocals and jazzy drumming that are forced to sludge through irritatingly angular and incongruously downtempo guitar plucking and buzzing. When it works well, as on "Tammy Faye", it has a haunting poetic quality. But mostly, it's just really annoying. *Dim Mak*, POB 348, Hollywood, CA 90078

More reviews on readmag.com

DVDs

Do You Remember?

Fifteen Years of the Bouncing Souls

It's hard to believe that the Bouncing Souls have been around for 15 years (to think—in another ten years they'll be eligible for the Rock Hall of Fame!). This is a band that, even with a bunch of excellent modern punk classics, still sounds young and growing. But I guess 15 years HAVE passed, and that's a nice even number to start reflecting back.

This double-disc does just that. The first disc is a near 2-hour documentary on the band, featuring mostly new interviews with its members and a speckling from various friends and crew (I was hoping for some interviews with the members' families, old teachers, etc.), as well as live footage and home videos spanning their career.

For a band that put out so much amazing punk music, the 1:40 running time seems more than enough to cover their history. Save for living in a cool punk house for a year, and having one member become temporarily drug-riddled and homeless, their story is surprisingly normal. Grew up in suburban New Jersey, were nice clean-cut educated kids, started a band, and somewhere down the line wrote a few of the best punk releases of the past 7-8 years. The stories about their early days are so mundane, they could be Anyband. It's the same story of all unremarkable middle-class high school bands, only they've had the talent, luck, and endurance to escape the garages and backyard parties.

That pedestrian history at first makes this documentary an occasional chore to watch, but ultimately is the reason why the Bouncing Souls are so damn likeable—their unassuming normality makes them incredibly relatable. This isn't a band that's trying to impress you with wild tour stories or a punker-than-thou lifestyle. In fact, any references to overindulgence are told sheepishly and regretfully. This is a punk band you can bring home to your parents.

Regret plays a big part towards the end of the documentary when they discuss the parting of ways with their original drummer, Shal. The amount of time spent on this is exasperating, as the Souls explain and explain, trying to show that every avenue of possibility was explored before finally letting him go. While I can't see many fans caring too much about this, the fact that the Souls cared so deeply to tell this aspect of the story says something about their character. And that's what the documentary gets across best: the likeable traits of an exceptionally likeable band.

The real gem on disc 1 though is the extras—tons of extra footage, silly short movies the band members made, and various other odds and ends that create a better scrapbook feel than the documentary

itself. I didn't get disc 2, which is a live concert, so I can't comment on it. If it's a recent live performance though, it'll no doubt be very entertaining—since obtaining a more proficient drummer and sobering up, the Souls have never been better live.

Chunksaah, POB 974, New Brunswick, NJ 08903 chunksaah.com

The Show Must Go Off! Episode 4:

Alkaline Trio: Halloween at the Metro

Recorded Halloween night in their hometown of Chicago, Alk3 played a tight set of their trademark punk-aroni-n-cheese to a beaming, shiny-faced junior high crowd. I'm not a big fan of Alk3—I think they're great songwriters, but they fall too much in the realm of sensitive-mallpunk-emo-whatever, and seeing the young crowded bopping happily along confirms my horrid suspicion that I'm too old and cynical to enjoy Alk3. But I must give props when they are due: the band put on a great show (though they never strayed far from their mike stands.) Kudos also for using "This Corrosion" by Sisters as their entrance music. DVD features camera angle options, a neat split screen, and behind-the-scenes footage.

The Show Must Go Off! Episode 5

Neil Hamburger: Live at the Phoenix Greyhound Park

Neil Hamburger's shtick is that he's so bad, he's bad. Similar to the way Andy Kaufman (especially his loungey persona Tony Clifton) would create audience discomfort, Hamburger comes out like a 1950s stiff dork-slash-drunk shlub, who, in a deep, colic voice (continually interrupted with phlegmy coughs) delivers purposely bad one-liner after another. He's garnered something of a cult following, who I guess are in it for the irony or to observe the squirming people who "don't get it". Whatever the case, even purposely bad attempts at humor is still bad humor, and I guess I'm not intelligent enough to appreciate the many layers of ironic humor buried beneath the giant pile of crap that's Hamburger's material and delivery. Some purposely bad comedians can be forgiven—The Unknown Comic was fun and juvenile enough to pull it off. Kaufman's Tony Clifton was such an asshole it was sometimes funny. But Hamburger is just painful to watch or listen to, though I'm sure that's his intention—to annoy people like me.

The Show Must Go Off! Episode 6

Guttermouth: Live at the House of Blues

This is the first must-see, must-own installment of Kung Fu's live DVD series. Guttermouth are without a doubt the best live punk band I've ever seen (though I haven't seen them in eight years...). They trade insults (and saliva)

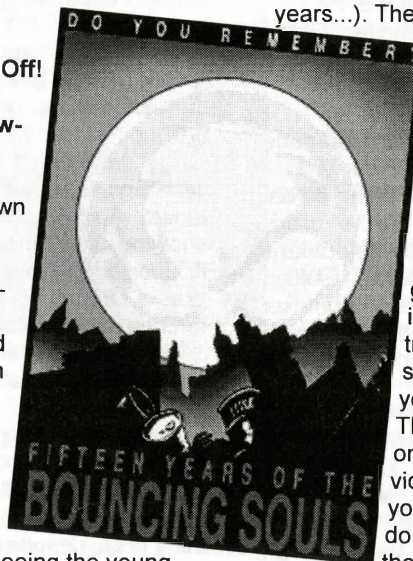
with the crowd, dance around like fools, crowd surf, and generally offer up an hour of complete mania. Known to offend PC-punks, sXe'rs, and just about anyone else who takes themselves too seriously, Guttermouth have gained a reputation for being complete assholes. The truth, though, is that they simply don't give a shit beyond having a great time. This DVD captures that—it's one of those rare concert videos that you not only wish you could be there, but you do feel like you're there. But the concert isn't even the best

part: the commentary from the band is the funniest I've ever heard on ANY DVD. They make fun of themselves and their punk rock pretensions as much as they do the crowd, and it makes sense. Punk rock is stupid, punk rock fans are stupid, and playing to them is stupid. Their sarcasm and wit is laugh-out-loud funny: "Oh look! I spit water! That's what punk rockers do!" And their self-jabs and honesty is also hilarious: "Why the hell am I dancing like that?" "Some people make mistakes. Some people have kids. Others make an album called Gusto..." Rarely do you get a great feature AND GREAT commentary—this one's got both. Recommended!

All Show Must Go Off! DVDs are on: Kung Fu, POB 38009, Hollywood, CA 90038 kungfurecords.com

Turn-On, Tune-In, Lookout

I believe this video collection came out a few years ago on VHS, but this is the DVD debut with new videos added. The MTX videos are adorable and cartoony (as well they should be), the Queers' videos are fun (if low-budget), and Pansy Division is hilarious. Plus Bratmobile, Hi-Fives, Donnas, Squirtgun, and the Smugglers. There's also some of Lookout's newer bands, like Ted Leo, The Pattern, Pretty Girls Make Graves, and Oranges Band. The videos range in quality from professionally produced to one-camera home videos, but just about all of them are entertaining, which is rare for any video collection. Good stuff! *Lookout!, 3264 Adeline Street, Berkeley, CA 94703*



MOVIE REVIEWS

Gigli

Directed and written by Martin Brest
Starring: Ben Affleck, Jennifer Lopez, Justin Bartha, Al Pacino and Christopher Walken

Gigli is not the worst movie ever made, nor is it the worst movie of the year. It doesn't even come close to being as bad as the paraded opinion of the critical bandwagon. It isn't good, by any means, in fact most of the film is stupid, insulting, offensive, infantile, awkward, confused and nauseatingly narcissistic, yet it's not much different than a majority of comedies released these days.

The setup of Gigli is quite preposterous. Larry Gigli (Affleck) and "Ricki" (Lopez) are two of the most unbelievable gangsters ever to grace celluloid, and because they are both infamous in their reputations as screw-ups, they are paired up, despite the importance and difficulty of their assignment. The scheme of checks and balances their boss sets up is disastrous since they have little in common aside from enormous self-love and lack of teamwork. Their job is to kidnap Brian (Bartha), the mentally-challenged brother of a federal prosecutor who has been making trouble for a big-time mob boss (Pacino). Brian is not tied up nor treated like a victim at all. The three eat dinner and spend time together like a dysfunctional family, going from spite and malice to love and understanding by film's end.

Once everything is introduced and established and accepted for being some distant dimension where reality exists in a much different plane than found on Earth, the movie has a pitiful charm like that of an intergalactic petting zoo. Though a voyeur could not like or be interested in any of the obnoxious characters, there is still an intrigue into what kind of nonsense may come next, whether it be the form of another monologue by a main character on their sexual preference (not orientation) or another monologue by a random character with little or no significance to the story.

Gigli is like a mentally-challenged person. They can be funny, intentionally or not, and regardless, people will always feel discomfort in their decision to

laugh. People don't want to enjoy or find amusement in the movie because it is not socially acceptable to do so. Other recent movies have the equivalency of a thirteen-year-old boy, immature and disgusting and socially accepted as such. Yet, people aren't being as polite with Gigli as they might be with a misfortunate human being, especially those showing their ignorance by pronouncing it incorrectly. They would rather treat it like a freak or a monster, wielding torches and pitchforks in their critiques.

Sure Gigli is annoying and you want to cover your face in embarrassment watching a lot of what goes on. The score is constantly inappropriate, giving mixed signals for how to feel at any given moment. Still, I felt sorry for it. I wanted to give it a big hug and tell it that everything is ok, despite it not fitting in. But it is a movie, not a person, one that I think has an audience out there to give it some acceptance. Even *Serving Sara* had an audience. I would rather watch Gigli any day over a film that still thinks stepping in cow shit is funny or a film that stages extreme situations involving people walking in on characters doing something that looks embarrassingly like something else.

Don't get me wrong. I didn't really like Gigli nor would I recommend it to anyone I respect. I do, however recommend it to that majority of America that continually attends movies that are ten times worse. With anonymity available in online video renting or purchasing, these people who are afraid they might like something they'll be ridiculed for should give it a chance. —Christopher Campbell



Above: Ben Affleck trying to look like Vince Vaughn.

Pictures of Hope

The Secret Lives of Dentists

Directed by Alan Rudolph
Written by Craig Lucas
Based on the novella *The Age of Grief* by Jane Smiley
Starring: Campbell Scott, Hope Davis, Denis Leary and Robin Tunney

American Splendor

Written and directed by Robert Pulcini & Shari Springer Berman
Based on the comic book series *American Splendor* by Harvey Pekar and the comic book series *Our Cancer Year* by Joyce Brabner
Starring: Paul Giamatti, Hope Davis, Harvey Pekar, Joyce Brabner and James Urbaniak

To compete in the packed world of independent film, a picture has to be creative and clever. It shouldn't have to be, but it seems this is the way it goes lately in the time of backwards narratives, inventive twists and surprise endings. Eventually films arrive that are just too clever and, in their cleverness, are actually cliché and trite.

Alan Rudolph is rarely a director who appears in touch with what is novel, what is funny and what is a maximum tone with which to tell a story. He has almost ruined my favorite book (*Breakfast of Champions*), my favorite actress (Emily Watson in *Trixie*), and now has almost ruined all faith I have left in him with his latest wreck *The Secret Lives of Dentists*.

David Hurst (Scott) is a dentist, a profession which deals with the importance of maintenance in the prevention of decay. One day, he discovers that his sustenance isn't up to what it should be. A patient (Leary) makes an embarrassing scene in a full auditorium declaring that his new filling has fallen out, and worse, he witnessed David's wife Dana being intimate with another man. It doesn't involve even a kiss, but the event is enough to spark extreme paranoia over the future of their family.

They have three daughters, the youngest of whom is going through a phase where she hates Mommy and constantly cries for Daddy, who has to hold her so much she seems to be an extra limb. The oldest daughter is often nauseous, a result, her physician says, of family problems. David associates both worries with the affair that Dana may or may not be having. He begins to notice more and more when she goes out alone or comes home late.

The family drama is intense and genuine and Scott and Davis play the couple with convincing affection, comfortable yet detached. If the story stuck with this alone,

it could have been admirably tender. But it doesn't. The embarrassing patient becomes an imaginary conscience for David, one of vulgar and inimical advice. He comes across as an evil Jiminy Cricket crossed with Dean Stockwell's Al on *"Quantum Leap"* (because the children can sometimes see him, I think), crossed with *Fight Club's* Tyler Durden, whose wardrobe is completely mimicked here.

Every time Leary is on screen, and it reaches past the point of excess, the movie fails. Then there are moments which attempt black comedy and are neither dark enough nor funny enough. Take, as an example, David's pondering of the term, "kick out" which Rudolph plays out literally with Davis getting booted out of a doorway and then disturbingly kicked in the stomach by Scott while the girls cheer him on. As unnecessary as this is, even more fumbled is the musical segment which takes place during a climactic week with the flu that brings the family together. David imagines his dental assistant Laura (Tunney) as a nightclub singer belting out "Fever" during what could have been the most gut-wrenching scenes involving the middle daughter's near fatal temperatures.

Whether screenwriter Craig Lucas missed the whole point of Smiley's novella or thought it could use a boost of misguided style, there is no reason for Leary's character to exist so profusely nor is there a need for comedy unless somehow achieved by a better filmmaker. Other elements, like the introductive and conclusive voice-overs involving facts about teeth and dental work, are too common in these kinds of pictures to create any sense of achievement aside from a showcase of talent from the two leads. They are consistent, though, and deserve to be seen in far better films.

American Splendor is a rare film which is so clever it goes past being too clever and comes back to being brilliant. As a concept it seems way too convoluted, yet in delivery, directors Pulcini and Ber-man craft a perfect collage of storytelling through narrative, documentary and bits of animation.

Harvey Pekar tells his life story through a voice-over while Paul Giamatti portrays him in reenacted scenes from his autobiographical comics. He has lived in Cleveland all his life and worked until his recent retirement as a file clerk in a veteran's hospital. In the early 70s he happened to meet Robert Crumb (Urbaniak) who was on his way to becoming the famed underground comic book artist recently celebrated in Terry Zwigoff's acclaimed documentary. Pekar became friends with Crumb and pitched an idea for a comic book about everyday life, as perceived by him, and together they created *American Splendor*.

He became a minor celebrity with the comics and many appearances on *Late Night with David Letterman*, but he continued to work at the hospital because his dream job never did pay the bills. He meets Joyce Brabner (Davis), a fan of his, and thanks to his pathetic charm, she falls in love with him comparatively to the many women who have been attracted to Charles Bukowski or Woody Allen.

As unbelievable as anything in the film appears, the documentary footage defends each and every character. We are treated to the real Harvey and Joyce as they bicker and make fun of each other in a way that you know they were meant for each other. You also get to see the real Toby Radloff, long-time friend and proud nerd who is first introduced as a character that appears so exaggerated there seems to be no possibility of his existence. Yet there he is when a shot ends and the camera pulls back to show a behind-the-scenes moment in which Giamatti and Judah Friedlander (Radloff in the narrative) observe their unlikely models from a distance, occasionally chuckling to themselves.

Aside from showing moments behind the camera, drawings by

Crumb and the rest of the *American Splendor* artists are animated into some sequences and later a play is shown with Donal Logue and Molly Shannon portraying the couple. *American Splendor* is almost so postmodern and self-indulgent that it almost gets confused inside of itself, but it always maintains clarity. In a possible comment on recent

biopics which go great distance to reconstruct familiar television appearances or events, all the David Letterman appearances are actual clips with the real Pekar shown on a TV screen while the fictional Brabner watches from the green room.

It will remain to be seen if the film is as sharp and funny on repeat viewings. A lot of the picture shares its honest approach with *Ghost World*, another underground comic adaptation which has lost some of its original appeal and lacked the multiple levels that give an edge to *American Splendor*. Whether that edge will serve beneficial or not in time makes its cult potentiality more questionable.

For now, though, this is a movie to be seen. There is nothing like it, despite some similarities to Ang Lee's *Hulk*, using concepts which work far better here. Don't be scared off by the conceit or pretension that you might expect from how the film is described. Every bit is entertaining and never seems contrived. Like the existence of Pekar's world, some things just have to be believed. —Christopher Campbell



Above: Hope Davis trying to look like Vince Vaughn

Survival of the Fittest

Dirty Pretty Things

Directed by Stephen Frears

Written by Steve Knight

Starring: Chiwetel Ejiofor, Audrey Tautou, Sergi Lopez, Benedict Wong, Sophie Okonedo

28 Days Later

Directed by Danny Boyle

Written by Alex Garland

Starring: Cillian Murphy, Naomie Harris, Christopher Eccleston, Brendan Gleeson, Megan Burns

It is possible that Stephen Frears doesn't like the English. I first became familiar with him through his very Irish Roddy Doyle adaptations (*The Snapper* and *The Van*) and then grew bitter at his Americanized film of Nick Hornsby's *High Fidelity*. Now, his new film *Dirty Pretty Things* is actually set in London yet barely features English characters.

The film takes place amidst a London most people ignore despite its certain visibility. "We are the ones who drive your cabs and clean your rooms and suck your cocks," adverts Okwe (Ejiofor), an illegal immigrant who works two full-time jobs, cab driver by day and hotel desk clerk by night. It is a mystery why he has left his Nigerian homeland as he had there been a doctor and now offers his medical expertise for charitable purposes within the migrant underground. He rents the couch of Senay (Tautou) another alien, she from Turkey, who works at the hotel as a maid, the two passing one key back and forth, residing in her apartment in separate shifts. The rest of the cast is filled out like a delegatory stage play with a Russian doorman named Ivan (Zlatko Buric), Spanish hotel manager Sneaky Juan (Lopez), Chinese pathologist Guo (Wong) and Cockney prostitute Juliette (Okonedo). The cinematography by Chris Menges complements this diversity with a broad palette of bright color.

An excessive plot begins when the saintly Okwe finds a

human heart in a toilet which reveals to him a black market organ trade going on beneath his nose. On top of that, Senay quits her job and vacates her apartment after being investigated by a pair of goof-ball Immigration officers. Everything comes down to a contrived yet entertaining climax involving all the minority characters.

If you dismiss the main storylines of the film, *Dirty Pretty Things* is a decent examination of human behavior. At one point, after Okwe finds out Senay is enamored with him, he tells her that in their lives, there is no time for love, only for survival. He is otherwise almost too good-natured, like a foreign Atticus Finch, perfectly moral and altogether perceptive. When you find out the true reasons he has abandoned his prestigious life in Africa, it's nearly too much.

Ejiofor plays the character with an honesty that gives his existence believability and his choices involvement, though. Watching him merits the film's story, though the picture could have fared well entirely on his relationships with the other characters, particularly Guo whose connection is never explained more than convenience to the script, yet is of interest because of the wisdom and cleverness exerted in his dialogue. Audrey Tautou, speaking with a Turkish accent, is ever charming and shows much acting talent lately, though she performs with a disappointing amount of emptiness here, as if working so hard on the pronunciations of her lines that she forgets to put her soul into the work.

While Frears still sees no problem with directing inflated roles and situations, a problem more apparent in *High Fidelity*, there is nothing too outrageous in the movie to get so distracted by, despite a few bloated performances (Buric might make a good Kolehov in a production of *You Can't Take It With You*, however).

The film is not without its entertainment value during its course. Like most of Frears' films, it only seems bad when thinking about it afterwards. Yet *Dirty Pretty Things* has much to recommend it. The film questions the natures of survival most of us take for granted and makes one wonder what they would do just to get by.

Danny Boyle is another director who returns to England with his new film, *28 Days Later*. Instead of asking us to wonder what we would do to survive, it shows us what we must.

Jim (Murphy) wakes up from a coma 28 days after a biological disaster hits England. He walks through empty London streets what may be the most hauntingly beautiful digital videography ever seen before meeting up with other survivors, including Selena (Harris), who fill him in on the apocalyptic tragedy which has killed off most of their country's citizens with a rabidly violent infection. Some people are still suffering from the malady, and it is them who Jim and Selena must flee from throughout the story until joining a Frank (Gleeson) and his daughter Hannah (Burns), who have heard about a military asylum up north.

Their haven is not without difficulty anymore than is their venture. Once clear of the afflicted, Jim and the rest must deal with their host of men led by Major West (Eccleston), an ideological enemy who has promised his troops women with which to repopulate the world.

Compared with zombie and monster movies, *28 Days Later* plays much more fittingly as a science fiction masterpiece which puts into perspective the differences between humans and animals, emotion and instinct. While thrilling at times, it is no more a horror film than *Frankenstein* and the confusion of its marketing is disappointing. The picture is a more credible cross between *12 Monkeys* and *Reign of Fire*.

With his return to a dark, psychological setting and story, Boyle has made his best film since the underrated gem *Shallow Grave*. It is a shame that many people might be turned off by what is expected, as *28 Days Later* is one of the most intelligent and stunning pictures to come out this year. —Christopher Campbell

More of Christopher "The Film Cynic" Campbell's reviews on www.LowExpectation.com

Freddy Vs. Jason

Directed by Ronny Yu

Produced by Sean S. Cunningham, Wes Craven

Starring: Robert Englund, Ken Kirzinger, Monica Keena, Jason Ritter, Kelly Rowland

When I first heard the brain trusts of Hollywood were planning on making a film focused around a penultimate battle between horror icons Freddy Krueger and Jason Voorhees, I wanted to vomit. Being an unapologetic independent film snob, I thought of all the fledging screenwriters out there, myself very much included, writing important, meaningful scripts, scripts which in all likelihood will never be produced. Trust me, this is not my way of paying homage to Project Greenlight, a show with no other purpose than to remind us how devoid of talent Ben Affleck and his boyfriend Matt Damon truly are. Alas, I digress.

Yet as is often the case, my pop culturally whorish persona, a side known only to those closest to me, beat the indie snob within to a bloody pulp with increased vim and vigor as the release date for *Freddy vs. Jason* neared. While I never understood the fascination with the socially inept, hockey loving, machete wielding Jason, Freddy was my biggest childhood mind fuck. At 26, I was curious if everyone's favorite child killer still had it in him. To my shock and delight, and I say delight in a not-a-fan-of-murder-sort-of-way, he does. And Jason isn't too shabby himself.

The plot is simple enough, a good thing considering I went to the theatre with a two-bong hit high and a cabernet sauvignon buzz. Nothing says thrilling movie going experience like being a paranoid viewer, freaking out over people hopping up and down the aisles for popcorn and nachos. Yes, you could get nachos at my theatre. Back to the plot.

The children of Elm Street are all grown up, many with pimply faced high schoolers of their own. Heartwarming. More deathly afraid of nightmares than smack or hand guns, the parents have been giving their kids drugs to prevent them from dreaming. Obviously, Freddy is far from pleased. I mean, where's the fun in that?

To right the wrong done upon him, Freddy taps into Jason's REM sleep. OK, nobody gets how Freddy knows the hero of Camp Crystal Lake and nobody cares. Over the next 80 or so minutes, torsos and heads fly around like planes departing JFK. Blood splatters, naked women cry, B level actors try their best and the audience joyfully eats it all up. In one of the funniest scenes in recent memory, Jason, in the middle of slaying frenzy, runs into two stoners unfazed by the goalie attire. One of the potheads, a Jack Black wanna be, delivers the soon to be classic line, "Check out this guy!" That scene alone is worth the price of admission.

As is the case with big stars, egos get in the way. Freddy, pissed that Jason is stealing the murdering spotlight, decides Jason has to go. But Jason's not going out without a fight, hence, the final showdown at the aforementioned Camp Crystal Lake.

I'm not giving anything away, at least nothing you couldn't figure out barring a lack of brain cells. Bet on a sequel to the sequel. When it happens, I'll be the first guiltily pleased indie snob in line. —Tara Meehan

Summer Movies at Kew Gardens

Camp

Directed and written by Todd Graff

Produced by Christine Vachon, Katie Roumel, Pamela Koffler, Danny DeVito, Stacey Sher, Jonathan Weisgal

Starring: Daniel Letterle, Joanna Chilcoat, Robin de Jesus, Sasha Allen, Tiffany Taylor

Swimming Pool

Directed by: François Ozon

Written by: François Ozon and Emmanuelle Bernheim

Produced by: Olivier Delbosc, Marc Missonnier

Starring: Charlotte Rampling, Ludivine Sagnier, Charles Dance, Jean-Marie Lamour, Mireille Mosse

In the middle of middlebrow Queens, there exists an oasis for cinema lovers. Located at the intersection of Austin and Lefferts in the heart of Kew Gardens is a gem of a theatre, catering to more discriminating tastes in movie fare than you would find in your local multiplex. What was formerly a decent neighborhood theatre playing two second-run films and double features in the seventies, and then an infamous porno-emporium it was reduced to in the eighties, the Kew Gardens Cinema has been resurrected miraculously in 1999 as an ambitious alternative cinematic venue showing current foreign and independent films.

Two of the films that I happened to have caught at the Kew Gardens Cinema this summer are *Camp* and *Swimming Pool*. *Camp* is the lesser of the two; a big hit at Sundance (not usually the best source for determining a film's true worth), but ultimately a weird updating of "Fame" with lots of theatrical shmaltz as well as a heavy dose of trendy gay sensibility and attitudinizing blended in.

The film focuses on a group of New York youths who travel to a camp upstate where they put on amateur productions of famous musicals and plays as a way of interring their burgeoning thespian and/or vocal gifts. There is a seriously pockmarked Latino cross-dresser whose character is a real drag (no pun intended), and a plain Streisandesque wallflower of a girl, who are both competing, not just for the love of the craft, but also for the attentions and affections of a strikingly handsome and sexually ambivalent guitar player named Michael.

As played by newcomer Daniel Letterle, Michael is certainly the most interesting character, especially as he seamlessly flirts with both the boy and the girls in a most narcissistic manner. However, even his appeal is cut short when he has to reveal his psychological shortcomings in a protracted self-confessional sequence. There is one moment, however, that cuts through the feel-good triteness of the project and adds a needed dose of vitriol to the proceedings.

A has-been alcoholic, one-hit wonder of a composer whose life and art is relegated to his being the in-house instructor at the camp, suddenly and viciously unleashes a verbal attack upon the starry-eyed students. However, even he is won over and converted to their idealistic sweetness when Michael has the camp perform one of his unproduced and unpublished compositions he rescues from the

musical numbers, some original (only fair), and others from well-known sources such as Burt Bacharach and Stephen Sondheim.

(Mr. Sondheim makes an awkward guest appearance at the climax. The man who is responsible for revolutionizing the American Musical Theatre should, at all costs, be prevented from ever playing himself again.)

François Ozon's *Swimming Pool*, a French import sleeper hit, should be seen for one reason — Charlotte Rampling.

In the late sixties/early seventies, Ms. Rampling's cold, Anglophile beauty could be seen ubiquitously and decorously across modern movie screens. However, if she had any acting talent or staying power as an actress, it could not be predicted from her choice of appearing in features that are quirky (Zandor), trashy (Night Porter), or commercial (Orca, the Killer Whale). What was apparent about Ms. Rampling was that she possessed an uninhibited European penchant for on-screen nudity.

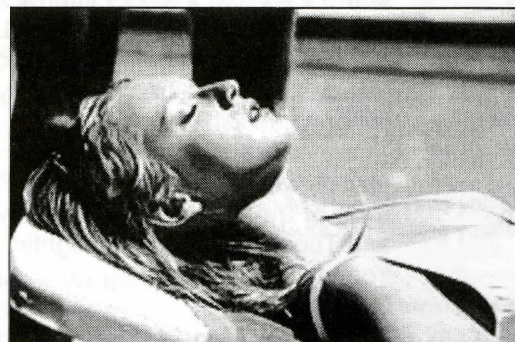
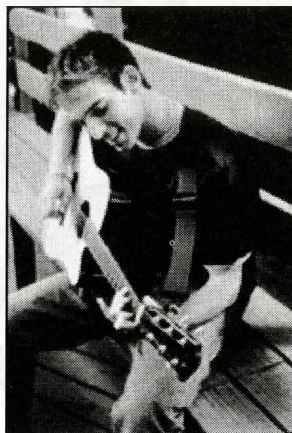
Now, let us jump over twenty-five years later when I rented a movie called *Under the Sand*. This was an earlier film by the same director which garnered good reviews due mainly because of Ms. Rampling's majestic performance. *Under the Sand* told the not very original tale of a middle-aged woman's tragic crossroads in life when her husband suddenly disappears one day on the beach. Despite the director's heavy-handed gothic overtones, Ms. Rampling's performance was heartbreaking and true.

After *Under the Sand*, Ozon helmed *8 Women*, a humorous confection that is best remembered for starring some of France's most ageless beauties like Catherine Deneuve, Fanny Ardant and Isabelle Huppert.

In *Swimming Pool*, Ozon once again casts Ms. Rampling. This time, she is a mystery writer who is blocked. Upon her publisher's urgings, she decides to stay at his scenic villa in the south of France for inspiration. What transpires is a deliberately deceptive, sometimes silly, albeit always watchable mélange of character study and murder mystery. There is also a palpable, erotic undercurrent to the film that is due in large part to Ms. Rampling's unfettered and fearless performance. Rarely have I seen a mature actress so determined to look her age so bold to reveal herself emotionally and physically. For the record, Ms. Rampling's looks and figure have weathered beautifully and enriches the frank portraits of modern, older women she has been blessed to play.

On a final note about the Kew Gardens Cinema: Although it might save you a trip to Manhattan to patronize the cineaste, yuppie horrors of the Angelica and other theatres of its ilk, you will also have to contend with the octogenarian, blue-haired brigade of neighborhood yentas who frequent each one of the five screens every day of the week (especially on \$5 all-day Tuesdays and Thursdays).

—Leonard Steven Dickson



Snap

snap judgments
of movies
we haven't seen

by adam, bryan
& lauren

The Alamo—The Alamo doesn't have a basement?? (Pee Wee Herman joke there for you youngsters.)

Anything Else—Would be better than watching this movie.

Bubba Ho-Tep—Finally, the truth about Elvis and JFK and a soul-sucking mummy. Bruce = God.

Cabin Fever—The Ruby Ridge story.

Cold Mountain—Brought to you by the cold refreshing taste of Mountain Dew.

Dickie Roberts: Former Child Star—Which is ironic, because David Spade is a former star too.

Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat—I will not watch this in a box. I will not watch this with a fox. I will not watch it for ten bucks. I will not watch it b/c it sucks.

Duplex—A couple tries to kill an old lady in NYC to get a cheap apartment. I should try that!

The Fighting Temptations—Cuba Gooding thinks Beyonce will save the church choir. Did he not hear her solo album?

Freddy vs. Jason—You would think that they would close down Camp Crystal Lake by now. I mean, just think of their insurance rates.

Good Boy!—The most common phrase from a Boston priest.

Gothika—Halle Berry wakes up in a mental asylum. I guess if I filmed a sex scene with Billy Bob Thornton, I would go insane too.

Haunted Mansion—Eddie Murphy gets scared by ghosts. Yeah, well we're still scared of Pluto Nash!

Intolerable Cruelty—Intolerable cruelty? Is this the sequel to The English Patient or something?

Kill Bill—The vast right-wing conspiracy goes after Clinton.

The Last Samurai—The last samurai will always be John Belushi.

Lord of the Ring: Return of the King—Finally! We can watch them walk some more! And walk. And maybe something will happen!



Cuz sometimes you don't need to see it to know it sucks.

Love Don't Cost A Thing—It sure costs a lot for me...

Marci X—What a wacky interracial pairing! But seriously, watching Lisa Kudrow rap is just below ripping off testicles off with a hammer on my things to do list.

Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World—Russell Crowe and Tugger go sailin' and fightin' 'round the world.

Matchstick Men—Do we really need another "Three Fugitives"?

Matrix: Revolutions—Ten bucks says Neo kills himself in some Christ-martyr symbolism crap. I'd kill myself too if I was in this movie.

The Medallion—At some point, Jackie Chan will fight someone with a ladder. It's in his contract, I think.

My Boss's Daughter—Knowing Ashton Kutcher, forget your daughter and keep an eye on your grandma! And by the way, if I want to see Tara Reid, I'll just wait until she does Playboy in two or three years.

National Lampoon Presents: Dorm Daze—This is not Animal House. This is not even Madhouse. Lampoon, stick to what you're used to: giving Chevy Chase work for food stamps.

Once Upon A Time In Mexico—Please stop making movies with Johnny Depp in other countries. The poor guy has enough trouble remembering his original accent already.

The Order—A young priest uncovers a church conspiracy. Insert obvious punchline here.

Prey For Rock And Roll—Lori Petty plays a lesbian punk rocker. That's sort of like me playing a sexy zine editor.

Radio—Cuba Gooding plays a mentally handicapped man. What a stretch.

The Rundown—I hope The Rock and Stifler are RUNDOWN by a train.

Scary Movie 3—This time, David Zucker spoofs scary movies like Zoolander, Corky Romano, and Country Bears.

The School of Rock—Remember those five or six minutes when Jack Black was cool? Go away now, Tubby. You bore us.

Stuck On You—Matt Damon is joined at the hip by someone other than Ben.

Timeline—Add this to your timeline: November 26th-29th. That's how long this movie will be in theaters.

Under the Tuscan Sun—American lawyer goes to Italy to find love. More lawyers should leave America.

Uptown Girls—Spoiled rich girl is forced to get a job. To research the role, Brittany Murphy looked up "job" in the dictionary.

More on skapunkandotherjunk.com

TELEVISION: THE FALL SEASON!

With the fall season almost upon us, it's time to take a look at the tripe major networks and basic cable are dishing out:

ABC

World's Funniest Tommy Lee Home Videos

You won't believe what neighbors caught on tape! Watch Tommy Lee slip on his naked ass! Watch him whack himself in the nuts with a cat-o-nine-tails! Check out the blooper of Pamela using "too much teeth."

CBS

Amazing Superior Race

Jesse Helms, Louis Farrakhan, Ariel Sharon, and Yassir Arafat compete in a battle royale wrestling match on which race is better.

Survivor: Israel

Things get unkosher when contestants have to live in the desert, avoid suicide bombers and surly border soldiers, and eat falafel for immunity.

FOX

ALF: Alien Autopsy

Were these images faked? Or did U.S. army surgeons really dissect ALF? "I kill me!" No, the NSA killed you. Find out how on FOX.

Fair & Balanced News

Feature stories include "Bush Rules, You Pinko Traitors!" and "The Middle East: Bomb 'Em All & Take Their Oil."

NBC

Celebrity Castrations

David Arquette, Andy Dick, and Carrot Top have to find one redeemable thing about their careers, or else...

Whoopi

No, this is serious. There is actually going to be a Whoopi Goldberg sitcom this fall. Yes, there is no God.

CNN

Crossfire

On the left—50 Cent. On the right—Jay Z. Who will die in the crossfire?

Comedy Central

Colin Quinn's "Change Mister?"

Colin Quinn is out of a job and needs a jug of cheap wine. Watch people give him nickels so he won't tell any jokes.

I'm With Busey

A retarded kid hangs around the blithering and psychotic head-injury known as Gary Busey. What? They actually made this??

E!

E! True Hollywood Story: Colin Farrell's Penis

Find out what has Hollywood shrieking in delight and terror. We talk with family members, his fiancé, girlfriends, ex-girlfriends, girlfriends' ex-girlfriends, and strippers he hardly knows. We take you behind the hood of... Colin Farrell's Penis.

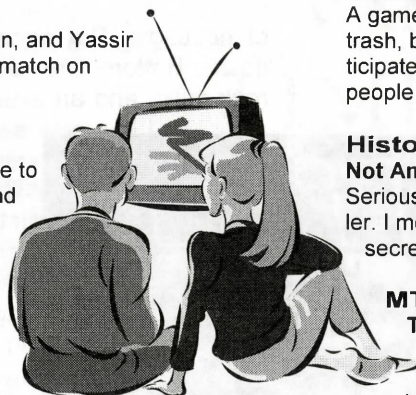
ESPN

Fat Girl Dodge Ball

Big rubber balls get pelted at large women at high velocity. It's like shooting fish in a barrel. Which brings us to...

Bass Masters for the Lazy

Shooting fish in a barrel.



The new fall lineup is sure to be a hit with morons and people who still can't afford the Internet!

by Bryan Kremkau & Adam Liebling

FOOD Network

Nigella Orgasms

Nigella Lawson takes her sultriness to a new level as every dish includes the use of an "eggbeater".

Game Show Network

American Gladiators- Pregnant Women Edition

Self-explanatory.

Weakest Stink

A game show consisting of fat people, crack addicts, white trash, bums, and French women. The live studio audience participates and tries to find the person who smells the worst. The people with the weakest stink will be sent to the showers.

History Channel

Not Another Hitler Documentary

Seriously, every time I turn on History Channel, it's fucking Hitler. I mean, cmon, who cares about the long-lost diaries of his secretary's daughter's dentist?

MTV

The New NEW Tom Green Show

Tom Green gets more and more irritating and less and less funny with yet another new show! See how long he can stretch out his fifteen minutes!!

Real World: Liberia

This week: Brandy gets raging mad at Erik for eating her groceries. Things steam up in the hot tub when Sammi and Josh play a naughty game of Truth or Dare. And Bolaji gets his arms chopped off by rebel soldiers who seek to control the local diamond mines.

Video Music Awards: The Pre-Pre-Pre Show

Beginning a week after the most recent VMA's, and ending just before the next VMA's, this show will play the same "most outrageous red carpet" clips over and over and over again. Strangely, they all include Li'l Kim fellating Carson Daly.

Nickelodeon

Batshit Insane Creepy Cartoon

Bug-eyed, shrill characters, terrible animation, and insane storylines will delight children and scare the shit out of parents.

TLC

Trading Boxes

Homeless people get their trash bins made over. Interior designers Hobo McGee and Bus Station Lou return next week to demonstrate how to cover that uriney smell with some pine tar.

TNN

Olymp-hicks

See how many beers you can crush on your head while beating your wife and kicking your children. Hosted by Kid Rock.

VH1

VH1's Top 100 Most Annoying Top 100 Countdowns

From the Top 100 Worst One-Hit Wonders to the Top 100 Girls With Red Hair Who Like Cheese, this ultimate top 100 revisits all the top 100s you regrettably sat through... for hours on end... because you're a fat loser who can't get off the couch.

I Love the 40s

The hilarious and nostalgic trip down memory lane continues with the 40s—a decade that brought us such crazy fads as the atomic bomb, Chinese Communism, genocide, and 54,000,000 killed in warfare.

More at SkaPunkAndOtherJunk.com

BOOK REVIEWS



EDITOR'S PICK

Milk It!: Collected Musings on the Alternative Music Explosion of the 90s!

Jim DeRogatis

Da Capo Press, 384 pages, \$18

Raised a metalhead, the "alternative" explosion of the 90s destroyed all that I held dear. Before I had a chance to really absorb the brilliance of Sacred Reich and Queensryche and any other "rike"-sounding band out there, the metal scene was invaded, and then overthrown, by the likes of Alice In Chains, Stone Temple Pilots, and Soundgarden. By the time Pearl Jam hit with "Jeremy" and wiped out the last vestiges of metalmania, I had already gotten into punk by way of the Ramones and Misfits. Soon, I would get into ska and bypass 90s rock entirely, blissfully ignoring it but always resenting it.

Whether it be my alterna-lovin' fiancée, or the feeling that "alternative" is now so uncool that it finally *is* the alternative, or that 21st century music is so terrible that even Oasis sounds good (okay, not quite), over the past few years I have been turning my ear toward alternative, or more specifically, the true alternative before 90s pop took that label. I'm now a huge fan of groups that my metal up-bringing and punk/ska elitism would normally have forced me to snub, like the Pixies, the Vaselines, Galaxie 500, Sugarcubes, Bjork, the Replacements, etc.

But this book did seem to be about the mainstream 90s music that killed metal and ruined the good name of alternative—Kurt and Courtney, Eddie Vedder, Smashing Pumpkins, Lollapalooza, Tori Amos, Nine Inch Nails, Dave Mathews Band, Spin Doctors, the whole pile of crappola from Seattle grunge to female singer/songwriter fare to the "Second British Invasion" to retro-hippy rock. It looked like it was tapping into the ever shortening gap between actual events and nostalgia. Milking it, like the ironic title.

The cards were stacked against me liking this book. I don't like 90s music, I don't like people making a buck off

of nostalgia. But once I started reading, I couldn't put it down. Bottom line: Jim DeRogatis is a great subjective rock critic, and an even better writer (perhaps for being so subjective).



This book collects many of his essays, interviews and reviews during the alternative period, categorized by sub-genre and tied together with interesting introductions that help place things in context. His pieces are written artfully and insightfully, if often cynically, which not only make them interesting to read today but prove his observations were dead-on when viewed with the power of hindsight.

What I like about DeRogatis is that he tells it like it is. He never joined the sheep that automatically had to love every hip band that came along. Pearl Jam are self-righteous and oh-so-important, Smashing Pumpkins whiny and absorbed, Rage Against the Machine hypocritical. He doesn't hesitate to call out a band as being a fraud or a clone or contrived. He reviews albums based on how he felt about the music, not by how many units were sold (and

that integrity got him fired from Rolling Stone, stemming from an against-the-tide negative review of Hootie & the Blowfish).

DeRogatis also offers a lot of coverage of bands that preempted the alternative movement and those that survived it. For the former, there's Big Black, John Cale, Brian Eno, and Pere Ubu. For the latter, Flaming Lips, Weezer, Spiritualized and others, showing that the alternative explosion didn't happen in a vacuum, but was and is part of a long continuum. While it's obvious to music lovers, that vital point is never mentioned by most music writers who lazily play off trends like it's this revolutionary new big thing.

But even the necessary inclusions in this book—Nirvana, Courtney Love, Pearl Jam, Smashing Pumpkins—are enjoyable because of DeRogatis' observations of their music and personalities, and his interviews with the movers and shakers of the alternative scene are much more illuminating than any fluff piece in any mainstream music rag.

—Adam Liebling

The Man Who Found Time: James Hutton And The Discovery Of The Earth's Antiquity

Jack Repcheck

Perseus Publishing, 247 pages, \$26

We all know the story of two individuals who called the wrath of the Church on their heads for daring to scientifically theorize on the nature of the universe. Galileo was tortured by the Inquisition and had to recant his theory that the planets moved around the sun, and Charles Darwin was so nervous, his theory on evolution wasn't published until he was on his deathbed.

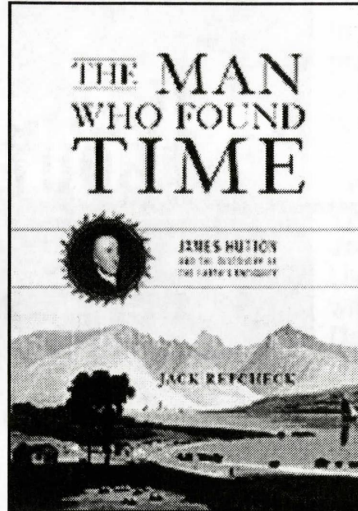
But between Galileo and Darwin there was another person who made a revolutionary discovery contrary to Church doctrine that completely changed how we think about the world. James Hutton, a Scottish farmer and forefather of modern geology, became the first to guess the real age of the Earth as not being 6000 years, but millions.

This discovery was important for its time because no other scientist argued the years set out by the Bible. In fact, scientists shoehorned their observations to fit into the Bible's timeline and even Isaac Newton wrote a biblical chronology. And in a way, it was more blasphemous than Galileo or Darwin: Galileo made the center of the universe the sun, not the Earth, and Darwin shed light on the nature of man, but Hutton's research and claims invalidated the stories of Creation and Book of Revelations and completely changed our concept of man's place in the history of the planet. Instead of man being created on the sixth day of the Earth's being, our history is a drop in the bucket of the planet's history. Hutton, correctly, deduced that in terms of man's presence, the Earth practically has no beginning nor end.

James Hutton's work set the stage for geologist Charles Lyell and the early fossilists, who would use and verify Hutton's ideas, which eventually became accepted. Unfortunately, Hutton was soon forgotten in the annals of history, mainly because he only published one major work that was too academic and indecipherable and went largely unread.

Jack Repcheck does a great job in returning credit to Hutton, and fleshing out his life and times given that there's very little information on him. Either to offer background information, or more likely because there are so few facts about Hutton and he didn't want a book full of speculation, the book digresses into many interesting directions. Repcheck gives an excellent and fascinating history of biblical chronology, and discusses in detail the Scottish Enlightenment of which Hutton was a part (along with David Hume, James Watt, Adam Smith, and Joseph Black). There is also an interesting account of Scottish history during this time and just preceding it, including the rebellion by Bonnie Prince Charlie, as well as an epilogue on how Hutton's ideas influenced Lyell and Darwin.

Not counting the appendix, this is a short book of 200 pages, half of which directly discusses Hutton's life, but Repcheck's writing is so fluid and interesting that you won't mind. Recommended. —Adam Liebling



Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution Transforming Cultures And Communities In The Age Of Instant Access

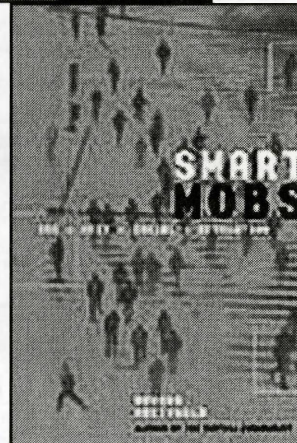
Howard Rheingold

Perseus Publishing, 266 pages, \$26

Howard Rheingold is the premier thinker on the potentials of technology and their effects on culture. In the early 80s,

he wrote about PCs and predicted its widespread use and effect on work and home culture, and again the 90s, he correctly predicted the huge impact of the Internet. Now he sees another technological revolution approaching: ad hoc social networks through mobile internet and communication.

Even though we've had cell phones for years, and they've really exploded over the past couple years (completely changing the telecommunications industry, infrastructure, and people's sense of decency), Rheingold envisions an already happening future when our phones, computers, and internet are one, when people can gather spontaneously and communicate in a variety of ways on the go and in clusters (this book was written and published before the phenomenon of flash mobs).



This sort of easy and cheap access leads to a lot of opportunities, both social and commercial. Most interestingly are Rheingold's ideas of a virtual world—not our traditional ideas of putting ourselves INTO a virtual world, but overlaying one on the existing physical world, and augmenting it. Meaning, if our Palms or cells can be designed to read bar codes or

information chips, and chips were planted all around the world, we can point our handheld at a restaurant and their menu and rating will pop up. We can point it at a street sign and a map will print out. Zapping a movie theater with it can bring up their showings and times. With GPS technology added to our phones/Palms, we'll always know where we are, where our friends are, and how to get to where we're going. And with WiFi hotspots, people can be constantly hooked up to the internet, a virtual reality, while moving around in the physical world. But with opportunities come threats to our individuality and privacy, which Rheingold also discusses.

The book begins with the popularity of text messaging (texting) in different parts of the world, but it's the later chapters that are extremely thought-provoking: the sociological and technological implications of virtual reality, wearable computers, and WiFi, as well as an out-of-place but still fascinating history of cooperation theory. As his ideas begin popping up in the marketplace and elsewhere, this book looks increasingly like a necessary blueprint of the future shapes of our social structures. —Adam Liebling

New Ideas About New Ideas

Shira P. White

Perseus Publishing, 336 pages, \$13

One of the few books I gave up before finishing, *New Ideas* lacks any original ones. I guess its goal is to describe how companies benefit from innovation and creativity, but unfortunately, the book is too poorly written and organized to even get THAT out in a clear manner.

The author, an "innovation consultant" (whatever the hell that means), just spews jargon all over the place like "spark soup," "H3s," "bubbling" and even "innovation" (that word finds its way into almost every paragraph), while rehashing case studies that usually have nothing to do with innovation. For instance, AOL's quick entry and overexposure and its obvious result in gaining the lead market share is attributed to innovation, when really it's just business as usual. (In fact, AOL gained so much market share, not from customer satisfaction or a superior product, but because they just kept dumping it on people.) Other dubious companies, like ImClone and Enron, are praised highly for their innovation, which is sort of like praising Stalin in a book on leadership.

Worse yet, she brings up companies and artists in a random, chaotic way, confusing readers and complicating her point, if she has one. I finally put the book down, not out of frustration, but from the realization that it wasn't written to be insightful but, like other marketing jargonheads, to be self-advertising.

This book was a bad idea and should never have evolved out of the primordial "spark soup". —Adam Liebling

When The Game Is On The Line

Rick Horrow with Lary Bloom

Perseus Publishing, 211 pages, \$26

Rick Horrow is one of the most successful and best-known sports brokers, earning millions in talking cities into building sports arenas and moving around teams like chess pieces. His story is told in the typical style of any rich boorish suit who sits next to you on a plane or at the bar: full of overconfidence, smugness, and self-importance, with a thin veil of good-heartedness and civic-mindedness.

By that, I mean Horrow speaks with confident energy and genuine interest in his projects (just like any mover and shaker) but he repeats the justification clichés so much, you wonder if he actually believes them. (Justification clichés: "Spending millions of taxpayer money on this stadium is GOOD for the city! It will create jobs! It will boost the local economy!") You would think his high-stakes and high-rewards wheeling and dealing was philanthropic. But the permeating "I

built this place" hubris washes out any credible fraternal love of mankind and urban revitalization—heck, he'll spend 30 pages on the birth of a stadium, but only has a sentence or two for the birth of his children.

Of course, this isn't a memoir—only a few pertinent background information pages are dedicated to Horrow's life. It's also not exactly a business book or self-help book—there are few life lessons that you could ever apply. It's simply a dealmaker talking about the deals he made. It is interesting, just as any juicy tell-all about a shadowy and unsavory industry is interesting. And while the huge odds he had to overcome in many situations are impressive, as is the urban renewal many of his deals created, overall the book feels shallow and self-congratulatory.

—Adam Liebling

Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change (2nd Ed.)

William Bridges

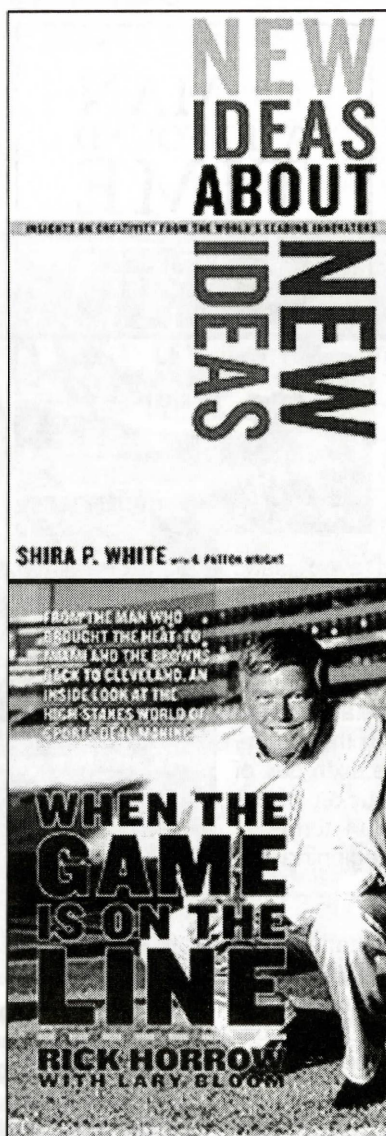
Perseus Publishing, 164 pages, \$17

Poor managers tend to think only of the economic and physical effects of organizational change. Whether it be mergers, acquisitions, bankruptcy, layoffs, promotions or any other type of organizational restructuring, the bottom line is the bottom line.

But as this book shows through case study after case study, managers who don't take into consideration the psychological effects of changes on employees are never prepared for the variables that can eventually lead to a major hit in the bottom line. For example, if you acquire another company and restructure the organizations, you create a lot of uncertainty and fear among the employees. Even if there are minimal layoffs, the changes' effects on the workers can create enough distress, resentment, and disloyalty to severely hurt productivity, corporate culture, and eventually profits.

As Bridges explains many times, transitions are different from changes. A change is a switch from old to new, but transitioning is the actual process and the resulting tension of pushing people toward the new while they still cling to the old. This book is more like a manual to help managers understand and recognize this basic psychological tenet, and to offer ways to ease or avoid the negative impacts of any transition.

This is a book that you wish all upper management would read. Most of it is common sense, but in the corporate world of bottom lines and hard numbers, most bosses just care about common cents, not considering that a little empathy and understanding goes a long way. —Adam Liebling



Afterglow: A Last Conversation with Pauline Kael

Francis Davis

DaCapo Press, 128 pages, \$12

Interviews have their place in literature but it is unnecessary to release individual conversations as books. Collections and compilations exist for this type of record. At little more than 100 pages, *Afterglow* is a quick read and could probably be skimmed through in the bookstore. Though a fine tribute to the influential film critic, Kael's collections of reviews are much more interesting for those wanting to become familiar with her work.

As a young film critic, I was not able to follow her career as it happened and when I finally read her reviews, I usually disagreed with her opinions of the old films I began visiting for myself. Yet she was known for being a good writer more than she was known for her opinions because she had a love for movies which was shared with readers every week. She always appeared like someone who you'd love to talk with.

The conversation between Davis and Kael is fun but there is not a whole lot of in-depth talk of films. The critic brings up Altman, and *Nashville* in particular, a bit much. There is a closeness that develops, though, helped by a beautifully memoirist introduction and you really get to feel a basic understanding of Kael that isn't always prevalent in her work.

The book may only be a delight to fans of film and film criticism and yet still of very little importance to us. There must be a number of interviews like this one that could fill up a whole volume and be worth the price, but sadly, this sole work is insignificant by itself. —Christopher Campbell

The Flow Chronicles

Urban Hermitt

Microcosm Publishing, 200 pages, \$8
www.microcosmpublishing.com

Similar to her excellent perzines, Urban Hermitt's first book is an autobiographical (I think) journey through shitty scenes, shitty relationships, and shitty jobs to finally reaching some level of self-discovery. The writing is top-notch perzine material—think *Cometbus*: a young person being part of an urban setting, part of a close-knit music scene, and yet still be alienated and alone. An urban hermit.

Instead of punk, though, the Urban Hermitt spends most of her adolescence in the hippy scene, where highfalutin spiritual concepts and drugs and free love are really

just ways for older, creepy, long-haired guys to get laid. Throughout the narrative (interspersed by hilarious fake letters that move the story along), Hermitt slowly wises up but has trouble breaking out of the same scene she becomes cynical of. On top of growing up and out of that scene, she also deals with the growing confusion of her sexual identity.

The book is funny and clever and achieves a self-journey without becoming self-absorbed. In that sense, it reads more like a collection of great short stories than a memoir, but the writing feels very genuine and personal. Definitely for fans of *Cometbus*. —Adam Liebling

No Horizon Is So Far:**Two Women and Their Extraordinary Journey Across Antarctica**

Liv Arnesen & Ann Bancroft

with Cheryl Dahle

Da Capo Press, 251 pages, \$26

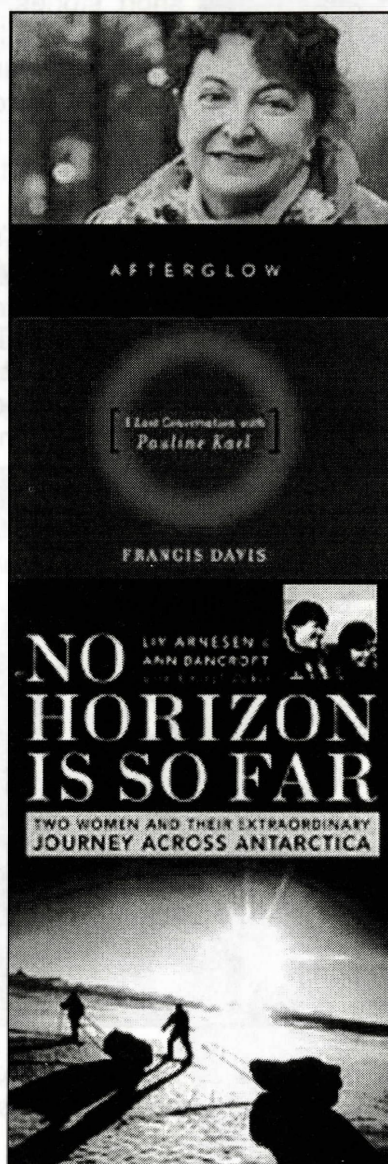
Being allergic to any exercise or physical exertion whatsoever, I was never interested in the physical feats of others. "Because it's there" seemed like an idiotic justification for life-threatening expeditions that serve no other purpose than to put your name in the books and inspire others to follow your suicidal footsteps. I can't get very excited over tales of close calls and death-defying action, because it's hard to be sympathetic over what I consider irresponsible behavior.

That cynicism aside, what these two women did is nothing short of amazing. They became the first women to traverse Antarctica by foot. The entire continent. Just before winter. This was a 1700-mile journey, and not only did they face 30-below temperatures, frostbite, injury, blizzards and other harsh environmental conditions (including the occasional frigid personality conflict), but they did all that while schlepping their 250-pound supply sledges! Jeez, and I complain about walking to the subway every day... Not only that, but this expedition was highly publicized, so they were also under pressure to keep a

brave face during these months in hell, to inspire the children (especially young girls) who were following their trek.

The three-month expedition is beyond impressive, but the book... well, isn't. Arnesen and Bancroft take turns telling parts of the story (dictated to Dahle), with connecting parts written by Dahle. It ends up reading more like a round robin interview than a book, and the long passages confuse the narrative. But I'm admittedly not used to these types of books, so perhaps I shouldn't be expecting Jack London. In any case, it's a fascinating story of two remarkable people. Maybe I wouldn't buy the book, but I do recommend the inevitable made-for-tv movie that this story will inspire.

—Adam Liebling



Freud's Alphabet

Jonathan Tel

Counterpoint, 175 pages, \$24

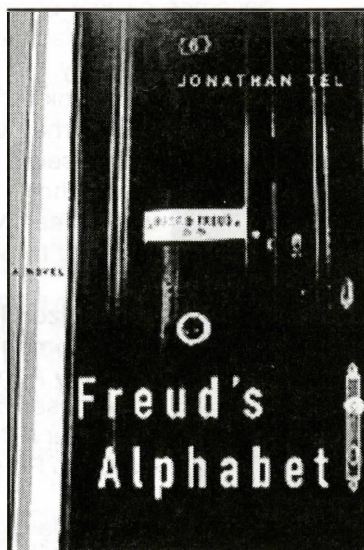
Sigmund Freud never wanted to leave his homeland of Austria. Finally, surrounded by Nazis, he was left with no choice and allowed himself to be taken to London to die. This book in a way chronicles his last days in a foreign land he couldn't stand (or understand), tormented by cancer and a painful prosthetic palate.

But this isn't your Irving Stone historical fiction. The book is a collection of 26 short stories or episodes, each with an alphabetical Freud-appropriate theme per letter (Id for I, Sleep for S, etc.). The stories themselves are dreamlike; there is little dialogue or action, but hazy descriptions of Freud's internal and external environment. Moods and settings are painted well, but in short and choppy Celine-ish sentences, giving off a feeling of what must've been a zoned-out time for the heavily drugged and dying doctor, perceiving a bleak and unknown London days leading up to WWII.

Freud's Alphabet doesn't offer too much historical insight into Freud's last days (you wouldn't be able to reference this book for a school report on Freud), but you do get a powerful sense of that disorienting stranger-in-a-strange-land feeling, compounded by his pain, a zombified morphine state, and the lurking shadows of war. If you were wondering about Freud's attitudes toward his work or place in history, you won't find it here. But then again, perhaps these stories do more accurately reflect what must've been a very dreamlike mind-state.

It's a short, breezy book and not worth the hefty \$24 price tag, but you may want to take it out of the library. It's not just for Freud fanatics as it is less of a book on him than an interesting look at pre-war London through his eyes. And more than that, it's a lovely showcase of Jonathan Tel's imaginative style.

—Adam Liebling

**Punch & Pie**

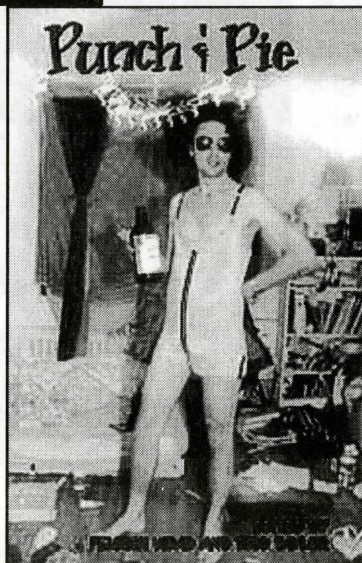
Edited by Felizon Vidad and Todd Taylor

Gorsky Press, 153 pages, \$8

www.gorskypress.com

I was at first apprehensive toward this collection of short stories. Packaged as something rebellious ("Punch and Pie" referring to La Resistance from the South Park movie), I assumed all the stories were about rebellious youth and punk rock, and I'm really too cynical to enjoy that type of fiction (I imagined a lot of Richard Allen hack writing).

Sometimes it's good to be wrong. The 15 stories here differ wildly, except that they're all highly readable and either fun or affecting, depending on the purpose. There's a humorous redneck roadtrip, a sad look at an overage amateur porn model, a promising piece on tagging along on an urban exploration (lame ending), an extremely sweet column about the author's grandfather, and interesting excerpts from a travel diary of Belize.

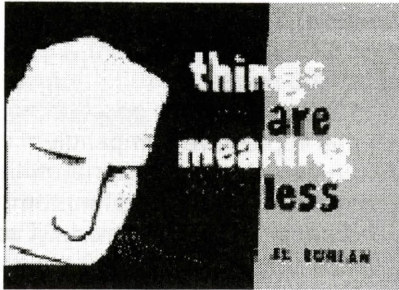


It's rarely the case, but true here: the editors also offer up the best contributions. Todd Taylor's "A Foregone Contusion", a touching and funny tale of old friendship, follows the quest of two men dedicated to making the world's fastest lawnmower. But Felizon Vidad has the best piece in the book—an easily relatable story about being that friend-of-a-friend who's dragged along to an outing

with the friend's other friends, and being the only one to see the lameness of this gaggle of idiots.

There are a few misses—James Jay and Seth Swaaley both have throwaway pieces that are tough-to-read and harder-to-care-about character sketches, and Travis Fristoe has a short but uninteresting frozen-moment snapshot of a party. But overall, this collection is worth its \$8 and then some. The pieces mentioned are excellent, and the book succeeds in being the punch and pie that lures you to discover underground and up-and-coming writers.

—Adam Liebling



Things Are Meaning Less

Al Burian

Microcosm Publishing, 150 pages, \$7

"Existential despair abounds." That's a phrase in this comic strip, and it pretty much sums up the whole caboodle. What an overdramatic, self-absorbed clichéd strip of Gen Y angst. For the most part, this strip follows the main character around different cities as he broods about stuff, looks darkly at things, and ponders his existence.

This is what I think. A lot of cartoonists discover later than they should that independent cartooning won't fill their pockets. They become unemployed and poor, but because they're intelligent and artistic, they begin wondering what sort of cruel world is alienating them, torturing them. Because they're not working, and because they're so smart, they start waxing philosophically about the meaningless of life.

Well, here's a suggestion: GET A JOB! Stop wasting my time with your boring self-pity. A 9-5 will actually give you plenty of money and time to pursue your creative interests, and you no longer have to trudge through life like a freakin' martyr, drawing comics about how you only have 75 cents in your pocket, not enough for a slurpee or burrito or whatever you suburban-yet-poor youth culture is into these days. You are not better because you refuse to join the mainstream workforce—YOU ARE LAZY!

For all my ranting, there are some positives. This is a thick book, and for a comic, it's a lot of reading, especially for only \$7. Burian has many interesting social observations, and his writing has that sad, bittersweet good perzine feel. I couldn't stomach the non-adventures of his main character, but I did enjoy the pieces about him as a young metalhead. Those strips had a dorky sweetness compared to the annoyingly tortured angst of the strips featuring his older counterpart.

—Adam Liebling

Off the Cuffs: Poetry By and About the Police

Edited by Jackie Sheeler

Soft Skull Press, 281 pages

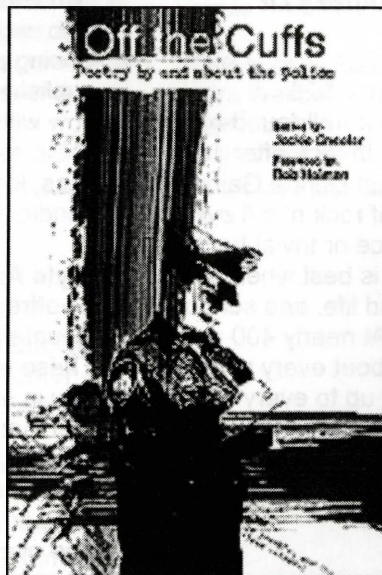
The police are traditionally, or at least over the past 40 years, easy targets to vilify and demonize. Most of us (at least here in NYC) feel uneasy around cops, if not outright hate and fear them. Whether it's justified or not, we're quick to paint the lot of them as anything from rude with a bloated sense of entitlement to brutal, racist and corrupt. And yet most of us know at least one cop, a family member or friend, who is the antithesis of our mental image of that a-hole authoritarian law enforcer.

But the police must have done something to change the public's opinion of them from protectors and peacekeepers to power-mad perpetrators. This isn't a case of a few bad apples ruining the batch—there IS something about the job that hardens ordinary people in the very least, and slowly turns them into what they hate in some Nietzschean fashion in the very worst.

That can be debated, and *Off the Cuffs* initiates debate by offering new perspectives into the lives and behaviors of the police by letting them tell their own stories. Alongside anti-authority poems are also poems FOR the police, as well as poems BY the police. Certainly, bad behavior isn't justified, but the pieces by the cops offer more understanding, mostly about how putting their lives in danger daily affects and desensitizes who they are. Many of their poems are disturbing, describing horrible images and experiences that most sane people would

rather not encounter. That is not to say the police paint self-serving, sympathetic portraits. Some of the poems are machismo cowboy swagger, and a few are downright nasty and even racist in tone. But even those poems that fit the negative views of cops also offer a rare personal glimpse into their psychology.

The poems by the cops are by the far the most interesting part of this collection. Anti-police poetry has become passé, and while a couple of the poems may be stirring, most are just annoying. And in most cases, the cops prove to be better and more interesting poets than the activists and poets themselves.



Written and edited before the hero worship resulting from 9/11, this book is a ballsy move from a leftist publisher, and yet it seems like a no-brainer to invite people from the other side of the fence. The inclusion not only improves understanding of both sides, but also greatly enhances what would have otherwise been a typical and boring cop-bashing poetry anthology. —Adam Liebling

Autumn Rhythm:**Musings On Time, Tide, Aging, Dying, And Such Biz**

Richard Meltzer

Da Capo Press, 209 pages, \$23

People will like this comical book on aging, just as people like Erma Bombeck and Dave Barry. Personally, I find observational humor inexplicably irritating—even George Carlin doesn't translate well into print and should stick to stand up. But while Bombeck has that frazzled housewife charm, Barry's a loveable dork and Carlin's hilariously politically incorrect, Meltzer writes in a gonzo style that I find ridiculously smug in that very uncool I'm-so-hip way. As far as I'm concerned, Meltzer did one excellent service to mankind—he discovered Blue Oyster Cult. Aside from that, his rock reviews, anecdotes, essays and poetry are too irritating to read to find any value in. —Adam Liebling

I, Lucifer

Glen Duncan

Grove Press, 264 pages, \$13

This novel has a really neat premise: Satan is given a chance to reenter Heaven for eternity if he can behave himself on Earth for one month. The body he possesses on Earth is that of failed writer Declan Gunn (anagram for Glen Duncan). The adventures that follow are fun and clever, and the narrative is interspersed with Lucifer's comments on biblical history and the modern world. The execution, though, is a bit clunky. Lucifer, the first-person narrator, is so over-the-top, it's almost cartoonish, and there is an undercurrent of silliness that gives the book a Christopher Moore feel. —Adam Liebling

A Misfit's Manifesto: The Spiritual Journey Of A Rock & Roll Heart: A Memoir

Donna Gaines

Villard Books/Random House, 390 pages, \$25

For an I-was-a-social-outcast-until-rock-n-roll-found-me type story, rock n' roll is oddly missing. In fact, after 150 pages of every banal detail of sociologist Donna Gaines' childhood and teen years, I wondered if rock n' roll ever plays a role outside of guest appearance or trivial backdrop. But Gaines is a great writer, and is best when she paints a vivid picture of family life, friend life, and school days in New York in the 50s and 60s. At nearly 400 pages though, I'm not sure who would care about every minutiae of her life, from every guy she's kissed up to every childhood memory of her parents. Even as an insightful and confessional writer, Gaines still has trouble making us wonder why we should care at all. —Adam Liebling

Looking For Maya

JD Fleishman

Abaton Book Company, 32 pages, \$10

A short chapbook to showcase Fleishman's photographs of prostitutes-as-goddesses with an accompanying journal short story and interview by other authors to fit the theme. I'm not sure how blurry crotch shots inspire images of wild goddesses and "temple priestesses", but then again I don't subscribe to the view that prostitution and other sex work is somehow liberating to women. —Adam Liebling

The MOJO Collection: Third Edition

Edited by Jim Irwin & Colin McLearn

Cannongate Books, 868 pages, \$25

From the editors of MOJO (Britain's *good* version of Rolling Stone) comes this impressive compendium of great albums spanning the decades. While it may not be the "ultimate music companion" as the tagline promises, it is a fun book to thumb through, and there is a LOT to thumb through. The Collection includes over 700 reviews of the most seminal records, as well as many cool surprises (Mull Historical Society?). While there isn't anything here that is shockingly insightful to the average musicologist, the reviewers are dead-on with most of their observations and seemingly always factually correct. I'm not sure if this book is any more essential than those music Rough Guide books, but music critics who know what they're talking about is always rare and refreshing.

—Adam Liebling

The News About The News:**American Journalism In Peril**

Leonard Downie Jr. and Robert G. Kaiser

Alfred A. Knopf, 292 pages, \$25

Downie and Kaiser, veteran reporters for the Washington Post, explain not only why American media focuses only on trivial local items, celebrities, crime, and sensationalism, but how that affects our culture by misinforming and misleading. Also, because of 24-hour cable news and the Internet, accuracy has been replaced with speedy coverage, and latching onto stories has created redundant, idiotic chatter and debate shows, instead of using the time for broader coverage. The authors illuminate their points with countless (to the point of tedium) examples, but they also make a great case for improving journalism by convincing publishers that good journalism can sell. I hope publishers and editors closely read this book, because now with gossip news blogs, annoying blurry tickers on cable news, and everyone trying to mimic Fox News' success, journalism seems to slide further into laziness and mindless populism. —Adam Liebling

Style And Faith: Essays

Geoffrey Hill

Counterpoint, 218 pages, \$25

These essays of literary criticism are similar to Hill's poetry in being too impenetrable and academic to enjoy. I feel that good writing should explain or describe difficult concepts in a simple way; conversely, bad writing describes simple concepts in a difficult way, and the latter is Hill's specialty. This book focuses on how poor word usage over the years has veered word definitions away from their original etymology, and how it is the responsibility of literature to be diligent to the actual meanings of words. Some would disagree and say that language is a living system, and that creative usage of words doesn't betray language but enhances them. (The fact that Hill takes the other point of view shows that he's much more an academic than a poet, and explains why his highbrow, stodgy traditionalism permeates his writing.) Philologists will find this book interesting, but I wish it was written in a more accessible language. —Adam Liebling

Persepolis:
The Story Of A Childhood
 Marjane Satrapi
 Pantheon, 153 pages

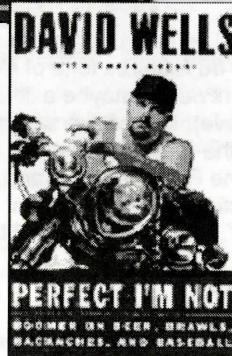
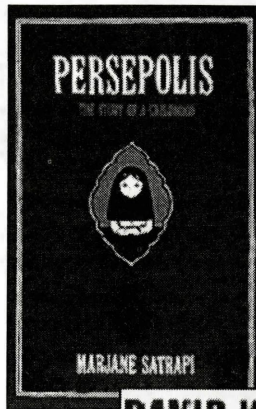
Just ask Adam, I generally drag my feet when it comes to writing reviews but once in a while there comes a book that I feel compelled to write about. *Persepolis* is a book that's garnered rave reviews both locally and internationally and it's easy to see why.

This book is a collection of comic memoirs about life in Iran between the end of the Shah's regime and the Islamic Revolution through the perspective of a precocious young girl growing up under the wing of committed Marxist parents, and it provides much needed insight into the events that unfolded in Iran during this period.

Against this backdrop, Satrapi takes the reader through the hardships imposed by the Iraq-waged war on the country during the 1980s, a time when Tehran and other parts of the country were bombed repeatedly and young Iranian boys were lured to their deaths on the battlegrounds.

The comics are excellent both in their graphic and narrative content, and while parts of the book are hard to stomach in a similar vein as that of *Maus*, other portions I believe will pleasantly surprise the reader in its depiction of the protagonist's youthful rebellion. The book is alternatively grim, poignant, humorous, and heartbreaking. I highly recommend this book for both comic-readers and non-comic readers alike.

—Jennifer Kao



Perfect I'm Not: Boomer On Beer, Brawls, Backaches, and Baseball
 David Wells (with Chris Kreski)
 Harper Collins Publishers, 414 pages, \$26

I've never been a fan of any Yankee player, but I now LOVE David Wells. I'm thrilled this was the only book I read this year. This autobiography details his 16-year career including the heartbreaking trades, endless back pain, pitching his perfect game in May 1998 (half drunk after an all night party with the cast of *Saturday Night Live*), his blunt opinions of teammates and the availability of steroids running rampant through the major leagues.

Perfect I'm Not made headlines when Wells was fined \$100,000 by the Yankee organization for "tarnishing the Yankee image." Wells glorifies his drinking outings and raves about New York being his "personal playground." But the much publicized comment about pitching his perfect game half drunk is mild compared to his other statements. Wells states that amphetamines are commonplace and if you "stand in the middle of the clubhouse and walk 10 feet in any direction, chances are you'll find what you need." Besides revealing clubhouse secrets, Wells is outspoken and makes unfavorable comments about teammates and other players. He points out that if he were Mike Piazza, the broken bat that Clemens threw at him "would still be shoved up Roger's ass", and agrees if Armando Benitez is pitching on your team, you'll pretty much lose the game. However, being that he put an All Star lineup at the end of the book shows that Wells has respect for all major leaguers, even those who had a lot of success against his pitching (case in point, the slim and handsome Mo Vaughn).

This book is full of energy and highly entertaining. I admire Wells for being so honest and for having the courage to speak his mind. Good job, David! It's a home run in my book. —Spankie

Tons more reviews on Readmag.com including:

Despite Everything: A Cometbus Omnibus
 Aaron Cometbus
 Last Gasp

Drawing The Line
 Steven M. Wise
 Perseus Publishing

Ghost Rider: Travels On The Healing Road
 Neil Peart
 ECW Press

**I Put A Spell On You:
 The Autobiography Of Nina Simone**
 Nina Simone with Stephen Cleary
 Da Capo Press

In The Blink Of An Eye
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 Dee Dee Ramone
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We Won't Budge: An African Exile In The World
 Manthia Diawara
 Basic Books

You Are Being Lied To
 Edited by Russ Kick
 Disinformation Company

ZINE REVIEWS



Atrophyzine #11

Mini, 32 pages, \$2

A cute minizine about all the crushes and relationships the author's had. It's obviously influenced by Cometbus with its tales of punk rock love and loss, not to mention the rare ability to talk about sappy stuff in an interesting and non-pathetic manner.

P.O. Box C-11, New Rochelle, NY 10804

The Autocast #2

Digest, 24 pages

A nice chapbook of poetry, a few of them full of generic angst, but most of them are genuinely original and good.

SevenTen Bishop, 710 N. Bishop, Chicago, IL 60622

Chord #22

Full, 100 pages, \$4

A good music mag that covers an eclectic mix of mainstream and underground acts from all scenes. They have a bit of an identity crisis: they'll have a rant about MTV and then feature an interview with Metallica conducted by Sum 41. But whether or not they admit it (and they won't), they are an edgier take on Spin. This ish features interviews with Freeway, The Distillers, Rocket from the Crypt, Jackie "The Jokeman" Martling (who has a very descriptive groupie story), Sick Of It All, Me First, Meshuggah, Thursday, Deftones, and loads more. Plus tons of press kit-ish writeups and album reviews. Like most glossy California music mags, it doesn't stretch past music. If you're looking for variety, go elsewhere. But for good music journalism on a wide range of genres, Chord is a stand out.

POB 3184, San Diego, CA 92163

Copper Press #15

Square, 120 pages, \$5

This is a beautiful publication. Always exquisitely designed. Lots of visually appealing and well-conducted interviews. Indie coverage includes Retisonic, Rizzudo, No Knife, Frank Black, Converge, more.

Copperpress.com

The Great Brain Rebellion

Digest, 80 pages, \$4

This is one of the most brilliant comics I've ever read. It's a parable about a brain that gets loose after years of neglect and tries to find his place in modern society, only to discover that he just doesn't fit in. The

story is simply told with stick figures, but manages to hilariously cover the stupidity in everything from the entertainment industry to the military. Highly recommended!

POB 122, Royersford, PA 19468-0122

Hoi Polloi! Skazine #8

Digest, 64 pages, \$3

HP is back! The best cut n paste ska zines around, HP #8 features tons of ska news and record reviews (maybe a little too overly positive), and conversational interviews with the Planet Smashers, Dave Hillyard & the Rocksteady 7, and more. Full of infectious energy and fun!

POB 13347, Rochester, NY 14613

Off-Line #23

Digest, 60 pages, \$2

An extremely good lit/personal zine featuring a great eulogy for activist Phil Berrigan, a fantastic piece on being a substitute teacher (best piece in the zine), a gripping story called "Secrets", and a way too long article on working for the FSC/DISC Tax Association. Very engaging read.

Cocco/Romano, 35 Barker Avenue #4G, White Plains, NY 10601

Off My Jammy

Digest, 32 pages, \$2

This issue has a recycling theme, and they're really clever with it. They ask bands like Cursive, American Hi-Fi, and The Mole 2 questions on recycling and thrift stores, and have cool recycling scene reports from Brazil, Japan, and Italy. There's also stuff on used book stores, a neat interview with the founders behind the well-publicized Punk Rock Aerobics classes, and an interview with Dress For Success, a great non-profit that provides interview/job clothing for underprivileged women. This is a lot of reading for 32 pages, and I love the theme and what they do with it. Great zine!

POB 440422, Somerville, MA 02144

Parties and Brunch #1

Digest, 36 pages, \$2

Fun perzine with lots of quirky and cute articles, including pieces on being a "cigarette girl", starting an all-female rock band, perverted cab drivers (my favorite piece), and a bunch of cute comics.

POB 2366, New York, NY 10009

Razorcake #14

Full, 106 pages, \$3

What I like about Razorcake is that it's one of the only LA-based music zines that of-

fers more than just publicist-approved writeups, interviews, and reviews. You do a lot of actual reading with Razorcake, and in this issue you've got loads of columns (the highpoints being Rev. Norb's AWESOME list of top 50 girls in punk, and a very interesting piece on the Martin Luther King assassination, which would've been perfect for this ish, damn my short-sightedness in not asking for a reprint!). Plus a Nardwuar interview with Elijah Wood, and band interviews that are actually worth reading.

POB 42129, LA, CA 90042

Wonderland #2

Digest, 64 pages, \$1

This zine is a steal for "\$1 or a mixtape, trade, letter, etc." Thick and full of articles both blurby and interesting, including a defensive piece on NJ ("First of all, what DON'T we have? Purple mountains majesty, alabaster cities gleaming, fruited plains..." Okaaaay.), an informative did-you-know list about NJ (it has more toxic waste dumps than any other state and is considered the diner capital of the world), some activist stuff, a cool clip art montage of different communication symbols and signs, a good argument against "feminist" porn, a piece on loving office supply stores (I can relate), a cute comic on how to be a ninja, and some good tips on fighting depression.

Alice, 18 New Freedom Road, Medford, NJ 08055

Your Mama's Not Home #1

Digest, 40 pages, \$2

This funny odds-n-ends zine begins with a very clever and cynical piece called "If I were a perzine", which makes fun of all the typical perzine traits. Then the zine quickly becomes a perzine itself—short hand-written poetry, pieces about dreams and being a vegetarian (including the wouldn't-be-a-perzine-without-it hummus recipe), horoscope stuff, health/beauty tips using household items, and a... umm... descriptive piece on female masturbation (I enjoyed reading that one!). But there are some fun items in this cut n' paster: a cute Mad Libs, a funny search-a-word using genitalia euphemisms, and a neat how-to on making your very own disco ball. For all the girly perzine clichés, it's an entertaining read. I think this zine actually came out a couple years ago, so hopefully the POB isn't defunct.

POB 2366, New York, NY 10009



Friendster... or FIENDster?!!

Sy Boccari

Let us consider this. Whenever something too good to be true comes along, it probably is. No, you won't find \$500 a month studios in the East Village, even though they're advertised in the Voice every week. And your chances of getting struck by lightning are greater than you ever winning the Lottery. Dreams cost a lot more than a dollar, baby.

I remember when Hotmail first came along. Wow, free email! And right when the internet was starting to bloom. So, yeah, I signed up. No sooner did Microsoft take over that I was flooded with emails from hot horny bi-curious co-eds. It's all about the dollar.

So what is the deal with Friendster? "Dirk has invited you to join Friendster!" was the email I got that hooked me on the site. An invitation... how special! How exclusive! What better way to keep in touch with your friends besides my cell phone, pager, LAN line, email, web site etc. Let's add Friendster to the mix!

Friendster has its good points. You can keep in touch with your old friends and make new ones too. You can post bulletins about parties or chat-up not-so familiar faces with similar interests. I've even gotten several Friendsters to come see my band's shows.

However, no sooner did I join that I started receiving invites from friends of Friendsters for a little "fun." "Yeah, I saw you at the party last night. You're hot," or "Hey I know you through so-and-so, wanna mess around?"

Not bad, I thought. It's not like I'd be hooking up with random psychos, as

on other dating sites. This time I'd have one of my friend(ster)s to blame.

Needless so say, my sex life has gotten a boost. Six Friendsters and counting. I'm glad Friendster wants to keep me laid, but why? What do they get out of it?

Is Friendster a conspiracy? That's debatable, but Friendster is a marketing ploy to gather detailed information about just about every horny person on the planet.

Think about it... they know you. They know me. They know my demographics. They know where I live, my favorite films, books, and bands.

Friendster is now a huge database of individual profiles that can be grouped, bought and sold, and we're just feeding them info for free. They've got the goods on everyone, and they'll sell all their info the highest bidder in no time.

In addition, Friendster has begun selling ad space on their site. My friends pay twenty-one dollars a month for AOL and are confronted by a barrage of advertisements upon opening their browser. You think you've become numb to all of this, then why did you run to see the new J. Lo flick. It's all subliminal. Sure it's all good fun, but at what cost. The powers that be are purchasing the priceless ad space in your subconscious. Friendster is an accomplice to a much bigger conspiracy. It all goes back to the dollar.

And worst of all, they know my friends. If I was on the run, they now know who to ask of my whereabouts. And they know at whose house I'd be laying low. I'd be a marked man!

Friendster Testimonials for Adam Liebling and READ:

Adam is not only cool and chill enough to hang with me, his talent and craftiness is also comparable to my own. This guy has proved his friendship and sincerity on countless occasions. Crack open this dude's noggin and have good conversations. straight up, this guy rocks!

—Ray

Adam's my soul mate —which is why we're getting married of course! Adam's one of the nicest, smartest, most talented people I know (and as you can see by his photo he's cute to boot :). His zine, READ is one of the best around. He also has an irreverent sense of humor which gets him in trouble sometimes (he certainly has the tickle marks to prove it ;)

—Jennifer

READ Magazine is an excellent zine! And I'm not just saying that because I do MOST of the work for it! haha. :)

—Bryan

Adam's zine READ is the most fabulous thing ever! I get lots of free shit from the good people at READ. All the cool kids read READ. It's the hip thing to do. Don't miss the boat! Subscribe now so you can say, "Man, I subscribed to read back in 2003!" Oh yeah, Adam's a swell guy, too, even if he loves Rush and hates Victor Ruggiero.

—Larissa

Adam took me in like a stray dog and gave me a shot. Now my face is all sticky. Thanks a lot Adam.

—Christopher

I would not have gotten through college without Adam! He helped me sabotage the Ticker, he prints my silly musings in the VERY EXCELLENT READ MAGAZINE (readmag.com) he's a kindest, coolest, hep-cat I've met! Life is better for knowing him!

—Sy

Adam and Read are the rox!:P YAY definitely the greatest zine out there. I'm not saying this because I was told to...really I'm not :D

—Lauren

from the journals of... Gregjaw

Subway. 8:10 A.M.

I've caught myself looking in the window on the subway train again. I am a mess of lines and shadows, the window distorting my face and making me look like a sleep-deprived gnome. There is a woman sitting to my left. She is munching on a bag of Fritos and staring blankly at the floor. Her legs have been pummeled into discipline with gray lycra sweatpants. Her torso is fighting a winning battle against her tee shirt, which reads, "Do I look like a FUCKING people person?" Her face is torn apart, battered by years of boredom. Above her head is an enormous beer advertisement. It portrays the People Who Do Not Exist enjoying a merry evening of harmless debauchery, tinged with the promise of fellatio and cunnilingus, as long as the beer keeps flowing in happy rivers down tanned and chiseled throats. The bottles themselves look as if they will get laid, long, hard, and ready for action. I feel my eyes dry up. Next to this beer advertisement is an advertisement for Con-Ed, which portrays a gloved hand, thumbs up, with the phrase "ON IT" written boldly above it.

A large stalk of celery, draped in a leather jacket sits on the bench next to the Fucking People Person. The celery is smoking a cigarette and looking at the floor. Apparently he (assuming it is a he) is unaware of the New York City laws regarding smoking, let alone smoking on a subway train. He catches me looking at him and wanders over to where I am seated.

I don my usual defensive stance as he sits next to me and says,

"This city, plagued with apathy, tormented by the insincere bantering of these foul advertisements, oblivious to its own disintegration, and void of even the smallest ounce of foresight could give a shit less whether or not it understands its own true nature, let alone whether or not that lady sitting over yonder is really a Fucking People Person. The people of this city are connected by invisible cords to the depths below. There are invisible gray lines running from their backs down down below, into the subway tunnels, where snickering rats are tapping out morose Morse code into people's cords, up to their spinal columns, and into their brains, where it translates to pain and anger, hatred and contempt, sadness and depression. The rats are laughing at most of us I tell you. The concern is always that happiness here is just like inhaling fresh helium. You float up into the air above the city, but you still are attached to the cord, and hover like a balloon, and man do you sound like

an idiot when you open your mouth in that state."

I smile bleakly and bum a smoke from him, completely aggravating the woman sitting across from us, who growls in disgust, foam beginning to drip down her canine mouth, an angry red rash developing around her loose fitting fake-diamond studded collar, er uh, necklace.

The men and women of the A train seem exhausted, legs stretched over seats, faces sagging, dribbling drops of drool dropping from drooping mouths, clothes thrown on slipshod, backs aching; sword swallows choking themselves in their final performances, slicing through the soft meat of the larynx and punctuating their failures with dull groans of surrender.

I am no different.

The Celery Man is no longer sitting next to me. He has gone between cars to urinate.

There are hordes of insects sleeping in between the seats on the car. There are swarms of rats scraping fleas from their nether regions as they prepare to scour the ground of the subway tunnels for bits and pieces of leftover filth and human castoffs. The fleas on the rats pick at the dead skin they have amassed on their front legs. The microscopic mites who live on the dead skin of the fleas scrape at their diminutive hook like feet. Amoebas swarm toward each other, crashing with inaudible GOOPS and PLOPS as they ruin each other's existences.

The Con-Ed advertisement was correct. They are indeed ON IT, they are ON EVERYTHING, they are UP IT, OVER IT, THROUGH IT, and UNDER IT.

The Fucking People Person is a micro-bial summer home.

The floor of the subway car looks like a baby's unwashed ass. It is a smorgasbord of stains, sticky slop, and various bodily fluids. It is a bizarro art masterpiece, a whorish Mona Lisa, hung upside-down in a condemned museum.

I can sleep on this train better than in my own bed. The momentum rocks me to sleep like a little baby. In the midst of the conspiring filth, I find my slumber. I wake up not alone, but rather, surrounded by my new family of degenerate microscopic pirates. I will take them home and unknowingly put them onto the side of my beer bottle, which will no doubt make me sexy and beautiful with time. They are ON IT.

The train skips quasi-violently as Celery Man falls between cars and is pureed underneath its steel wheels, bathing the windows in a warm soup of moss green and nicotine brown.

Visit Gregjaw at:
www.livejournal.com/users/gregjaw

And check out his band The Brides:
www.thebrides.net

POETRY CORNER!

Sabotage
Jennifer Kao

There's a conspiracy to sabotage our love
You arrived five minutes after I left—you got held up in traffic, I had given up
There's a conspiracy to sabotage our love
You never received that e-mail I sent
The one where I confessed I was smitten and how tempted I was to kiss you that night underneath the rain
There's a conspiracy to sabotage our love
Your apartment was robbed the day we were supposed to meet, robbing any hope I had of seeing you and of any resolve I had left to tell you how much I liked you
There's a conspiracy to sabotage our love
Your subway got delayed, rolling blackouts prevented confirmation, the snow storm upstaged our rendezvous, I bit my tongue when I shouldn't have.
There's a conspiracy to sabotage our love
Because I am not yet with you.

POINT

Marriage is a Conspiracy Against Women

Jennifer Kao

While the popular belief is that marriage is a shackler of men, the reality is that the reverse is frequently the case. Women are raised to have starry-eyed visions of marriage—the ideal is to find your Prince Charming, to wed, and to live your life happily ever after. Few girls escape this daydream and this ideal persists through adulthood, if not perpetuated by the female herself then by those around her: friends, peers, or family members (particularly the latter).

Admittedly, I myself am not married and, in fact, will be marrying the writer of the column below. However, I can say that I am entering into this union not uninformed about what the reality of married life for women can be. And that reality can be summed up in one word: work (and stress, if two words are allowed). While housework is the obvious form of indentured servitude, the general term housework does not do the reality of housework justice. Housework isn't just cooking and cleaning, but comprises a whole range of tasks, from grocery shopping to ironing to keeping track of countless

lists and birthdays. And this doesn't even include all the work associated with having children, which women, of course, assume the majority of responsibility.

While males often believe playing with children fulfills their role as parents, the woman is left to take care of the day-to-day unglamorous responsibilities of child rearing. A hefty responsibility in itself, but when you throw in the need to earn income to raise said children, the amount of work required can be staggering. And despite common perceptions otherwise, marriage actually enhances the lives of men—no longer do they have to return home to apartments with empty refrigerators and dirty floors; now they can count on three meals a day, clean clothes, and floors bereft of the sticky remnants of yesterday's dinner. Studies have, in fact, shown that married men have significantly longer lifespans than their single counterparts. And who has longer lifespans than married men? Women, of course! And it's the women who frequently have to look after their husbands once their health begins to decline, which generally happens before the reverse is true.

So before you start ribbing your married or recently engaged male friends, keep in mind it's the women you should be sympathizing with.

COUNTERPOINT

Lies! All Lies, Devil Woman!

Adam Liebling

It used to be that marriage was a pretty sweet deal. Women used to be easy to get along with, and were often very helpful and supportive. They would wash and iron your clothes, cook you meals, treat you like a god, make you some babies, and give you plenty of nookie. If you were lucky enough to be from another part of the world, there could even be some goats in it for you.

Marriage was a win-win situation, and everyone was happy. The men were working hard and deserved the kindness of their wives. The wives appreciated their hard-working husbands and doted on them. What sort of sick and twisted group would try to ruin such a mutually beneficial, peaceful coexistence? Women!

Not content with leaving good enough alone, they had to become ambitious. Shirking their biological shortcomings, they entered the workforce. "Go ahead," we men smiled. "See how much you like it, you cute little things."

So they worked. And strangely enough, they kept on working. Dishes piled up. Carpets went un-vacuumed. But women still weren't happy. "We want equal rights!" they said.

Sure, go ahead, we said. Go run for office and get killed in war and own property.

And they did. They did all the thing that we men hate, and rather than run back to the comfort of keeping a home, they stuck it out. But now the novelty of seeing women truck drivers and women prisoners of war has faded, and we're still stuck in messy houses with some weird kids that smell bad and probably need a bath or something.

Marriage now doesn't make much sense. Women are all demanding and nagging, and they have long since forgotten the golden rule of "don't speak unless spoken to, or unless agreeing with me". Marriage is no longer a simple way to keep a clean house and get sex on demand.

If you think about it, marriage is now a conspiracy to enslave men. We are the financial support, the go-to guy to get things off the top shelf or to fix stuff. If we slip into old habits, sex is withheld and we get verbally emasculated.

Marriage is a woman's world now, and we're just there to mow the lawn.

ANTI-FLAG

THE TERROR STATE



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time to light a fire with the fuel
that's the conscience movement in our hearts"

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