

THE PORNOGRAPHIC FLABBERGASTED EMUS

by Wred Fright



Previously in The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus:

A college student named Ted moved unexpectedly into a house occupied by other college students--Alexander Depot, Funnybear, and George Jah--most of whom also happen to be in The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus, a rock and roll band. To make room for Ted, the housemates had to boot the previous tenant, The Witch, who had stopped paying rent, in a traumatic eviction.

Introduction

Welcome to the second installment of the serialized novel The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus! I hope you enjoy it! This issue includes three chapters. Since the novel is completed, this format should speed up its release (seven issues on a quarterly schedule).

The first issue was released at this year's Underground Publishing Conference in Bowling Green, Ohio, which was fitting since that's the town where I first started playing in bands, the experiences upon which much of this work of fiction is based. The response to the first issue was grand. Thanks to everyone who read it, especially Paul Houston, Steve Kolcow, Sean Stewart, and Karl Wencas for their thoughtful and kind published reviews. Thanks also to Michelle at Echo Zine Distro (P.O. Box 11102, Shorewood, WI 53211-0102 echozinedistro@yahoo.com www.geocities.com/echozinedistro) and Suzanne at Mac's Backs Paperbacks Bookstore (1820 Coventry Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118 info@macsbacks.com www.macsbacks.com 216.321.BOOK) for carrying it.

Thanks to Michael Dee (mp_escuela@yahoo.com) for the great cover image! I'm responsible for everything else herein.

Cheers!

Wred Fright :)

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#3
The Invisible Guitar Player
b/w
Roommate No. 5

*"Likes to talk the rock when down at the bar,
But when it's practice time, there's no guitar."*

Intro--Alexander Depot

Even my keyboard is bored. It turns itself off with the powersaving mode as I drool on myself nearby.

It's our big recording session, planned for weeks, and Leroy Shell from My Favorite Terrorist has brought his four track over to our practice room. We're all set up. We're all ready. We're all here.

Except Lenin. The showoff has turned into a noshow.

I look at my watch. Then I look at Bear behind the drums. Bear looks at Jah leaning against his bass amp. Jah looks at Leroy sitting at the four track. Leroy looks at me slouching near the keyboard.

We all shrug our shoulders and do it over again.

Lenin didn't show up for the big practice before the recording session either. When Jah called him later on and asked him why, he apologized, said it had something to do with his campus conduct session for fighting the preacher, and swore he'd be at the session. Jah believed him, but my bullshit detector was going off. At the last practice he was at, he took his amp home with him too, not just his guitar like he usually does. That gave me the feeling that Lenin, being the flake that he is, was going to flake off, and now apparently he finally has.

"He's not coming," I say.

"He'll be here. Let's just wait a little while longer," Jah says.

"He's not coming, Jah," I say.

"Yeah, I get that feeling too," Bear says, "Let's just record some stuff instead of sitting around."

"Without the guitar?" Jah says.

"You see a guitar player, son?" Bear says.

"It'll sound like shit," Jah says.

"That's better than sounding like a whole lot of sitting around doing nothing," Bear says.

"Jah's right. We need the guitar or it'll sound like something's missing," I say, "How about I run upstairs and get Ted? We'll teach him a couple of easy ones and he can be our session guitarist. We only need a couple songs for a demo anyway."

"What if Jon Lenin got in an accident?" Jah says.

Bear ignores Jah, and says to me, "O.k., what do you want to do?"

"What if he's lying in a ditch at this very moment strumming his guitar weakly?" Jah says.

"How about 'I Voted For The Rubber Scrubber'? That's an easy one," I say, ignoring Jah.

"What if he's in jail?" Jah says.

Continuing to ignore Jah, Bear says, "Nah, dude, let's not do a slow one. I wanna rock. How about 'Refried Dog'?"

"He could be taking it up the arse right now by a large man named Tiny," Jah says, "And we apparently could care less."

Bear turns to Jah. "That's not true, son, I'd care about that," he says, then flashes a big grin and nods, "In fact, I'd pay to watch!"

Jah is stymied. I fear he's going to get more delusional and not accept the fact that Samuel Beckett's *Godot* will show up before Lenin does, but he actually brings up a good point, "Jon Lenin has the money anyway. How are we going to pay Leroy?"

Oh, fuck. That's right. Lenin was supposed to pay for the session too, or, more accurately, his rich Dad was, the guy who whenever we see him (which is unfortunately more often than we would like to see him which is, say, never) always tells us "Don't quit your dayjobs, guys!" and laughs like it's a brand new joke he just came up with (I guess if everyone around you is paid by you and always laughs at the boss's jokes no matter what, you don't have to work on actually being funny or something). Lenin's dad would probably find it funny too that Leroy doesn't charge much for recording, but it's still more than any of us can afford at the moment. Ha, ha, ha! Note to self: Mug Lenin next time I see him to make up for this financial setback.

Fortunately, Leroy just looks up from the four-track and says, "It's no thing. I'm already here and set up. We might as well record. I know you brothers are good for the money. You don't have to pay me today."

Leroy pauses and smiles, "I'll just hang on to the tape until you do."

"O.k., get Ted," Jah sighs, then adds defiantly, "But we have to do 'I Love To Smell You Baby' or I quit!"

Don't tempt me, Jah, don't tempt me.

Verse--George Jah

I've had girlfriends do this to me in the past. But this is a first for someone I wasn't fucking.

Jon Lenin is avoiding me.

Someone did once say that being in a band is like dating several people at once. If that's true then I guess I've just broken up with one of them. In any case, it's just like breaking up with a girl: the hurt feelings, the suspicions, the sadness, the anger, the awkwardness.

I call. He's never home. I see him on campus. He ducks the other way. I send him an email. He never answers it. I'd send him a letter in the mail, but it'd probably come back stamped "return to sender." Anyway, I don't have any money for a stamp since he screwed us over on the recording session.

We even both get jobs at The Coffee Catheter and when he sees me, he quits on the spot. The harried lady that runs the place, Donna, asks me what's wrong with him, and I can't help having a diva moment. I tell her, "He's the son of a millionaire. He can't help it. He's allergic to manual labor. Washing out coffee cups is too traumatic for him."

Then come the rumors. I hear from people that he quit the Emus. Some of the reasons they give for why sound like they might be true but others get pretty ridiculous. That's just how the grapevine works in Rock.

"He said like being in a band is like so last year."

"He said you're manipulative and only liked him for his money."

"He said he's really into the political thing and rock and roll is too commodity driven cultural capital bourgeois bullshit to ever challenge the system."

"He said the band never liked his songs."

"I heard he was scared of Funnybear."

"I heard Alexander told Jon that he'd slit Jon's throat if Jon didn't turn down his amp."

"I heard you slept with his girlfriend."

"He said that since the university has exposed itself as the fascist institution it is by prosecuting him and not the preacher that he's living under heavy manners and doesn't have time to be in a band anymore."

"He said you guys sucked."

"I heard he wanted to form a new band that was more political."

"I heard you were gay lovers and he couldn't stand to listen to you sing songs about your love affair once you broke up."

I stop listening to the rumors. I still want to know but I want to hear it from him.

He's not talking though.

Alexander and Funnybear say he's quit the band and let's just get a new guitarist but I don't want to do anything until I know for sure if he's in or out. They say I'm being delusional. Ted even tells me one day at breakfast that French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan would say that I'm only looking for recognition from the other or my mother or something.

The whole thing just makes me sad really. Jon Lenin and I started the band together in the dorms. Just me and him, playing guitars in my room. It took us forever to find a drummer. Then we got Funnybear and then Alexander joined and we started playing out. It was great. I don't know what happened.

Something must have. I guess it makes sense. It wasn't me and him anymore, like it was in the dorms. Funnybear and Alexander didn't really like him, and Alexander certainly made that obvious. Jon Lenin was the only one of us who didn't live in the house. Maybe he felt like the odd man out. Or maybe he just changed. Maybe music was just a fad for him, and now he's onto politics. Whatever it is, it happened. I just wish he'd talk to me. In my head, I rehearse what I'm going to say when I see him again. Sometimes I even fantasize about kicking the shit out of him.

But, you know, at least I'm not bitter.

This goes on for days until the next week when I literally run into him at The Toon Tavern. He's coming out and I'm going in. He's with his political buddies and I'm with my friend Bonnie from sculpture class. Praise be I'm not with Alexander or Funnybear. They both want to kill him over skipping the recording session and sticking us with the bill. We didn't even get to finish since I had to sing songs he sang and I couldn't remember the words.

He bumps into me and says, "Sorry."

He looks up and sees it's me. He looks sheepish and somewhat terrified. Am I really scary or something?

"Hey," I say, leaning back.

"Hey," he says.

"So, what's going on?" I say.

"Oh, not much. Just came out for a beer," he says.

His buddies are all quiet. So's Bonnie.

"How are you doing?" he says.

"Pretty good," I say.

I'm debating whether to ask him pointblank if he still wants to be in the band or not when some drunks come out of the Toon Tavern. We're in the doorway so we have to move.

He says, "Well, good seeing you, dude," and heads out.

I nod, "See ya," and head in, after the drunks have filed past.

When we're inside, Bonnie asks me if I'm all right. I say I'm fine but I'm not. I'm really angry, but act calm on the surface. For I know the moment for confrontation, if there was going to be one, just passed. It came up on me by surprise and I wasn't ready. I accept it now that he's quit. I don't know why and I probably never will, at least not until somewhere down the road when I won't care anymore anyway. Whatever. It's over.

I wonder if they have any absinthe in here.

Chorus--Alexander Depot

I'm ready to join the Glee Club I'm so happy Lenin is out of the band. This annoys Jah to no end. "You don't have to be so fucking glad about it," he keeps telling me.

"Sure I do, Jah," I keep telling him, "Sure I do."

Jah's not over his delusion that Lenin is still in the band, but Bear and I are already looking for a new guitarist. We invite some people over for auditions by asking them in the magic code words if they "want to jam." We play with people we knew in the dorms, from the bars, and from other bands. Nothing really clicks though so by the time Jah accepts the fact that Lenin is gone, we're still looking for our new guitar player.

Eventually three leading candidates emerge. Unfortunately, we deadlock because each of us supports a different one.

Bear wants a woman in the band. In fact, that's his sole qualification for the position. If you don't have a y chromosome,

you're in. You don't have to own a guitar. You don't have to know how to play the guitar. In fact, you don't even have to know what a guitar is, as long as you're female and breathing. I'm equal opportunity myself, but I am a stickler for one thing: our new guitar player has to play guitar. This proves a challenge for Bear to overcome, but he does.

He writes the most awful personal ad disguised as a musician wanted ad that I've ever seen, and hangs it around campus. It's shameful or shameless, I'm not sure which. Under influences, he only lists musical artists that he knows women love. A few of them are even acts that he would choose death by a painful means of torture over listening through a whole album by one of them. Anyway he gets a call from some woman named Birgit, who is an alcoholic and works in a porn store.

Bear asks her if she dropped out of heaven.

Unfortunately, she has a boyfriend, but since hope springs eternal, Bear says she should be our new guitar player, even though she's never even played with us yet. I remind Bear that when he demanded that our roommate for the summer be a woman, we ended up with the witch, but he says he's got a good feeling about this one.

I don't ask him where.

Jah picks some guy from one of his art classes. That's all I need to hear for a veto. Fuck. One artist in the band is enough. Jah brings him over though, and he plays all right. His name's Chuck, and he looks more like a mook than your typical art school type.

I'm not sure if that's a good thing or not but Jah's pretty adamant about Chuck being our new guitarist for some reason. Sometimes I think Jah looks upon the band like it's his art project, and we should just do what he says like paint and pencils do.

For myself, I choose an in-house candidate: Ted. I jam with him almost daily, and I like the tunes he comes up with. I also think it'll be great having all the members of the group living under the same roof. It'll make scheduling practice a snap.

But if Ted joins the band I may have to start calling him by his last name. Say, what is his last name anyway?

Verse—Theodorable

My last name's Abel I tell Alexander. Why?

Nothing, he says, and we go back to playing the Devo song we were playing.

I think it's something though, something to do with joining the band. Maybe he's figuring out a stage name for me. How about Theodorable?

Blecchh.

Anyway, I'm not sure I want to join the band. I mean it looks like it would be fun, but living with and working with these guys might be a little too much too much.

No, I see them enough as it is. I don't want to join the band.

Besides living here is already challenging my studies enough. When I lived in the dorm, school surrounded me, but now once I walk off campus it's like I forget school exists. When I get home, if I'm not playing music with Alexander, I'm watching tv with Funnybear, or cooking a meal with George. School seems to be another world far away. And I'm on scholarship, I literally can't afford to fall behind in my studies. If I joined the band, and then got a "B" or, even worse, a "C" on my report card, I know what Mom and Dad would blame it on, even if it wasn't true. They're already predicting disaster for moving off-campus.

No, I've got to study; I can't join the band.

I'm too busy anyway. Joining the band would make me even busier. They're always doing something. Even without a guitarist, it's hectic. They're always practicing. Then there's recording, then there's making tapes, then there's booking shows, then there's making flyers, then there's hanging flyers, then there's playing shows, then there's writing songs. It looks like fun, but it also looks like a lot of work. And I'm busy enough with school and the new job I got at the tv station, playing videos over the closed circuit network on campus to classrooms.

I'm too busy. I won't join the band.

Playing in the band also looks expensive. They aren't making any money from the band, but they sure are dropping a lot in. There's equipment. George seems to trade in his old bass or amp every week for a new one, losing a little bit of money each time. They're also always buying smaller musical equipment like guitar strings and drumsticks and stuff like that. Funnybear, despite never seeming to have any money, somehow seems to come home with a new cd every day, "to keep up with the competition" he tells me. Plus they photocopy flyers, buy blank tapes and cds to put their music on, and have to pay to record. Just living in the house is expensive enough. It seems like there's always another bill coming in. We no sooner

pay one than another one shows up. Electricity, gas, telephone, cable, internet, water, trash, the rent. It feels like a neverending treadmill. I thought living off campus would be a little cheaper than on campus but I guess I was wrong. And I don't get paid until the end of the month so I'm broke. I'm still working on getting that security deposit back from that place I was supposed to live too, but the landlord tells me he's got to wait until the insurance money for the fire comes in.

No, I can't afford it. I shouldn't join the band.

I wish they'd hurry up and ask me to join.

Chorus--Alexander Depot

His majesty has convened the houses of parliament for an emergency meeting to discuss the kingdom's finances.

"Gentlemen," Jah says, "We're fucking broke."

A hush falls across the living room.

"But," he says, "I have a plan."

Applause breaks out.

Jah whips out a chart and a pointer like H. Ross Perot. It's a map of the house. He points to the practice room and the living room, "We have untapped resources here and here."

"I propose," he continues, "that we move the band equipment into the living room, and move a fifth roommate into the practice room."

Someone in the audience gasps.

"We charge that fifth roommate the same sum that we all pay individually for rent but we don't pass it on to the Blanks, our absentee landlords who bleed us dry every month. No, instead, we divide the fifth roommate's rent among ourselves, split equally among us in four parts."

Applause breaks out again.

An objection is heard however. Bear speaks up, "Your royal highness," we all giggle here because Jah has just done a bong hit, "where will we put the couch if we move all the musical equipment to the living room?"

We almost have to have a no confidence vote, before Jah answers, "I don't believe we'll need to move the couch. The easychair however will be relegated to the porch."

Scattered applause breaks out.

Wait, another objection. It's the new M.P. from Rockshire,

The Honorable Ted. He says, "Your solution, sir, seems ingenious but you'll pardon my hesitation in approving it until I have an adequate explanation of how we ended up in these dire financial circumstances, which may I remind you also occurred under your reign, sir."

These young whippersnappers are radical with their ideas about accountability.

Jah seems undeterred however, "We have been living in our budgetary bounds, but dastardly foreign parties have conspired to undermine the value of our currency. I speak of course of the witch . . ."

Boos and hisses.

Jah continues, ". . . And that traitor Jon Lenin."

The living room erupts in rage.

With his pointer, Jah pounds some zines on the coffeetable, "Order, order, gentlemen control yourselves, let's bring this session back to order."

I step forward and Jah recognizes me, "Honorable speaker, you mentioned 'foreign parties' a minute ago. But as distinguished leader of the opposition, it falls to me to ask that once we have restored the Emu kingdom to financial health may I have your assurance that we will have some domestic parties?"

The loudest applause of the evening breaks out.

Everyone holds their breath as Jah leans forward, "Yes, we will party. We will party hard."

As applause breaks out, I shout, "I propose a national unity party then and call for a vote."

It's unanimous, then we all do another bong hit, and recess.

MIDDLE EIGHT--JON LENIN

SOLO PROJECT TO FIGHT THE MAN.

WHOEVER SAID I NEED A BAND?

I GET MY DRUM MACHINE, GUITAR, . . .

IS MY EFFECTS BOX IN THE CAR?

NO, I CAN'T FIND IT ANYWHERE.

FUCK, THE EMU HOUSE, IS IT THERE?

DAD'S CUT ME OFF SO I SHOULD CALL.

DON'T WANT TO, BUT MONEY AND ALL . . .

Verse--Funnybear

Jon Lenin actually has the balls to call up and ask if his effects box is over here. Funnybear tells him no and hangs up on him.

Funnybear doesn't tell him that Funnybear sold it to The Musician's Purgatory yesterday.

Finding that thing was the only good thing about lugging all the equipment from the practice room to the living room.

The living room? It's the rocking room now. Funnybear's drums dominate the space, sitting in the center of the room. The amps, guitars, and keyboard surround them, obviously directing one's attention to the focal point: the funky drums of the funky drummer.

There's also a couch, tv, vcr, stereo, a bookshelf with books, a coffeetable, and the easychair (ultimately pardoned from the porch exile) crammed in the room, and it kind of looks like a music store exploded inside of a living room, but, damn, those are some goodlooking drums.

And now, with no one else home at the moment, it's the perfect time for the inaugural drumarama to sonically baptize the new practice space of The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus.

Well, after Funnybear turns the air-conditioning on. It's a hot and muggy late summer September day.

Now Funnybear is ready to rock.

Wait, Funnybear is supposed to close the drapes to keep down the noise so the neighbors won't call the cops.

Now, Funnybear is ready to rock.

Wait, it's so hot. Funnybear is sweating already and Funnybear hasn't even started playing. Well, no one's home and the drapes are closed. Until the air conditioner cools it down, Funnybear needs to do something to keep down the heat.

Funnybear gets naked.

Now Funnybear is ready to rock.

And rock Funnybear does.

From James Brown to Rush, from Helmet to Public Enemy, from Sheila E to Eno, from hardcore to jungle, Funnybear's rocked them all.

Funnybear is the rhythm. The drums sound to Funnybear's heartbeat, and Funnybear's heartbeat sounds to the drums. Sound, noise, music, John Cage, there is no such thing as silence. Quiet is the loud. Loud is the quiet.

All of a sudden Funnybear is not alone anymore. Alexander is

waving his hands in Funnybear's face. Funnybear quits playing.

Alexander says he's showing a prospective roommate around, Gao Miao from China. Then Alexander looks terrified for some reason that Funnybear can't figure out.

Here comes Gao Miao now.

Gao Miao is well-dressed and smiling.

Funnybear gets up from behind the drums to shake Gao Miao's hand.

Gao Miao sees Funnybear and stops smiling. Gao Miao looks at Alexander who is holding his face in his hands and shaking his head. Gao Miao makes some hand motions and appears to be cursing Alexander in Mandarin. Gao Miao runs out the back door.

"What's wrong with him?" Funnybear asks.

Alexander makes Funnybear promise not to get naked in the living room anymore.

Chorus--Alexander Depot

Between my Chinese and his English, it takes a long time to convince Gao that I wasn't trying to trick him into a homosexual group sex club. Apparently, his father warned him about something like that before he left China to study in the U.S. He's also decided that the American family he's staying with isn't that bad after all. He says our living room is too cluttered to let the energy flow through the house. I tell him that the electricity works fine, but he says that's not what he means and he doesn't move in.

But he's apparently recovered enough from the sight of seeing Bear, uh, bare that he comes out with us to the bar on Friday night. We even get Ted to stop studying long enough to go out too. He and Gao are both underage but it's Vic's Happy Hour Club ("Where every hour is happy hour") where you just have to pay an extra dollar on the cover charge if you're underage and wink at Vic in the restroom as you wash off the magic marker underage "X" off your hand.

So we're still looking for a fifth roommate and we're still deadlocked on the new guitarist, but at the moment none of us care a whit. We're getting lit.

Tonight's bill is a good one--All American Kids Club, Kill The Hippies, The Plague Dogs, and Blank Schatz--so we're rocking out

too. Funnybear says, looking at the stage, "Son, I wish we were up there tonight. Let's get this guitar nonsense sorted out."

"How?" I say.

"Let's invite them all to join," he says, finishing off his plastic cup of Zurp Beer ("If afterwards you burp, it's probably a Zurpl").

"What?" I say.

Bear burps, "Yeah, it can be like Band Of Susans or My Bloody Valentine. A guitar orchestra."

I look pained I'm sure. I'm not sold. Still, it would be nice to start playing out again, and we seem to be at an impasse otherwise.

"What about Jah?" I say, "You think he'll go for it?"

Jah's like the devil, you mention his name and he pops up. He rolls across the dance floor to us with a full pitcher.

"Hey!" he shouts, even louder than he has to to be heard over the band playing.

Bear points to his empty cup. Jah's drunk. He fills it up but spills half the pitcher on the floor doing so.

"Son, I think you're tee-rashed," Bear says.

Jah hiccups, and shouts, "That's cause I'm celebrating!"

"Good news!" he continues, hiccuping, "I got Chuck to move into the house."

"Chuck?" both Bear and I say.

"Yeah!" Jah shouts, then hiccups.

I look at Bear and Bear looks at me. We shrug. We can live with an art student who looks like a mook when bribed enough.

"Did you ask Ted?" I say.

Jah rolls his eyes, hiccups, and shouts, "Of course. He said if he lived with 500 people in the dorm, he's pretty sure he can live with five in the house!"

Very good Jah.

"One thing though," Jah says, not shouting anymore, "I had to kind of, hic, tell him, hic, you know, to get him to move in, that, hic . . ."

Oh fuck, here we go.

Bear burps, tells Jah to fill up his now empty again cup again, and says, "Spit it out, son!"

"Look," Jah says, not hiccuping, "Chuck's in the band. That

was the only way to get him to move in."

"What?" Bear says.

"What about Ted?" I say.

"Ted's already in the house," Jah says, then hiccups, "We need the money."

"Jah," I say, "We need to talk about these things before you just do them."

Jah strategically disappears into the dance floor.

"Well," I say, "What do you think?"

"I think," Bear says, "Jah just agreed to our idea of inviting them all in."

Fuck, yeah.

Coda--Alexander Depot

Birgit only shows up for practice once. After that she's our invisible guitar player. The time she does show up though she brings her friend Hildegard, and let's just say that Hildegard and I hit it off. We hit it off. We hit it off nightly. Fuck, yeah. We hit it off so well that my keyboard's probably bored again, not to mention, lonely.

#4

Eight-Legged

b/w

The Husband And Wife Siamese Twins

"Eight arms, forty fingers, eight legs, and forty toes,
And some people whisper that it's even got eight of those!"

Intro--Funnybear

Funnybear wanted a girl in the band but not like this. It's the middle of practice and Chuck's girlfriend, Wendy, walks in, taps him on the shoulder, beckons, and he puts down his guitar and follows her out of the room. The song being played, "The Shave My Gail Bladder Blues," dribbles gradually to a halt, and Funnybear and the rest of the band stop and wait for Chuck to return.

Funnybear says to Alexander, "Meow! Here kitty, kitty, kitty. Snapcrack! I think someone's a little pussywhipped, don't you?"

Alexander looks dreamyeyed and is staring off at a corner of the living room. He shakes his head like someone gently waking from a pleasant slumber and says, "What's that, Bear? I'm sorry, I was thinking about what Hilde and I are going to do tonight."

"Uh, nevermind," Funnybear says.

Funnybear forgot that Alexander's in love. He doesn't notice anything that's going on because he's too busy thinking about his new girlfriend when he's not with her, and too busy being with her when he is with her. Unlike Chuck, however, Alexander at least doesn't bring his girlfriend to practice.

Funnybear looks around. Has anyone else noticed how annoying Chuck and Wendy are? Uncle Teddy's reading a book. What's it this time? Funnybear squints. Kathy Acker. Empire Of The Senseless. That cat's always studying. Well, it beats picking your ass while waiting for Chuck, Funnybear guesses.

George looks annoyed, but he'll never admit that bringing Chuck in was a bad idea since it was his idea. A sillyogism:

George is a genius.

Geniuses don't come up with bad ideas.

Therefore, George doesn't come up with bad ideas.

Funnybear believes that this shows the limitations of Western empirical

logic.

Funnybear instead trusts Funnybear's gut. Blind obedience to authority is a bad idea and Funnybear tends to resent authority in general. Except for Funnybear's bowels. Funnybear likes having authority over Funnybear's bowels. And Funnybear's bladder. It's nice not to poop and pee on oneself. Unless of course one wants to. Which Funnybear is not ashamed to admit has happened. But only on the trampoline in the backyard after Funnybear's drunk two or more bottles of Dead Crow whiskey.

In fact, Funnybear doesn't mind authority at all when Funnybear is the one who is the authority. That suits Funnybear just fine. Funnybear just resents authority when Funnybear is not the authority. Except for Funnybear's gut. Funnybear is happy to follow Funnybear's gut. Funnybear thinks the gut is omniscient even though Funnybear is not even sure what exactly the gut is. Perhaps it's what other people call the soul, or the conscience, or what talked to Moses out of a burning bush, or maybe it's just Funnybear's small intestine. Funnybear really doesn't care, as long as it steers Funnybear right.

This time, the gut speaks out of the floor tom tom. It says, Funnybear! Chuck is your roommate. Why does he have a roommate, which means you have a roommate who doesn't pay rent, in Wendy? Funnybear! Why do Chuck and Wendy ignore everybody else in the house when they're together, pretending no one else exists? You can talk to them and they won't even answer you. Funnybear! Why do Chuck and Wendy make smelly, awful, big meals in the kitchen, and then leave the remainder out uncleansed for days afterwards until the stench becomes unbearable? You aren't a model of cleanliness, but even you are disgusted by this! Funnybear! Why does Chuck on the rare occasion he is alone, act all nice and want to have a conversation with you, after pretending you don't exist for days on end when he's with Wendy? Funnybear! Why is Wendy here when Chuck is not? She doesn't live here! Funnybear! Drive them out! The Temple of The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus has been violated! It cries for revenge! Sacrifice a goat!

A goat? Funnybear thinks.

O.k., maybe not a goat. Just get them the fuck out of the house and burn some incense to get out the smell afterwards. You can skip the rest of the stuff in Leviticus too.

Make sure you kick him out of the band though.

**Funnybear thanks Funnybear's gut. Now Funnybear needs a plan.
For that Funnybear turns to Funnybear's mind.**

Funnybear's mind says just make it up as you go along.

It's what Funnybear's mind always says.

Chuck comes back in the living room and picks up the guitar. "You guys ready?" he says.

"Uh, yeah," George says.

"Chuck?" Wendy's voice sounds from the kitchen, "Can you come here for a second?"

"Yes, sweetie-poo!" Chuck says.

Funnybear wonders how much a goat costs nowadays.

Verse—Theodorable

My friend Ishmael comes over to watch us practice. "Call me Ishy," he tells the guys.

He's been complaining that I never hang out with him anymore, but I can't help it, between school and the band and work, the days just seem to roll on by. I was supposed to live with Ishmael this year too so we would have spent a lot of time together, but then the house we were supposed to live in burned down, and I moved in here instead. Ishmael moved back in the dorms. He was in the house when the fire happened, and he tells me that he's convinced that he's now living on borrowed time. So he's trying to cram as much living in as possible before the debt gets called in, and as a result, he's growing his red hair out, he's dressing like a stoner instead of a prep like he used to, and he's picked up a new nickname, "Insane Ishmael." He used to be kinda shy before so this is strange that he's so gregarious now. In fact, he talks constantly. I don't think he's shut up since he walked in the door. He even gets Chuck and Wendy to talk with him, mostly by just absolutely refusing to be ignored.

"Dudes, so how'd like you two meet and shit?" he says to them.

They try to ignore him, but the new Ishmael apparently is not to be ignored.

"I heard Chuck had Down's Syndrome, and that you met at the Special Olympics when Wendy was helping with the pole vault. Is that true, dudes?"

Wendy, who is somewhat mongoloidish, finally answers him annoyed, "No! We met in Painting 101!"

"Dude, Down's Syndrome is nothing to be ashamed of. Chuck looks good, I'd never know if someone hadn't told me."

Chuck has to utter the phrase, "I don't have Down's Syndrome!" several times in a row before Ishmael lays off.

Actually, this is one of the reasons I asked Ishmael over, although this isn't exactly what I had in mind. I want to hang out with him and I want him to hear the band, but I have an ulterior reason in that I want an outside observer to tell me if Chuck and Wendy are kinda weird or if it's just me. I'm new to living off-campus, but they don't act like the others in the house. They act like they live by themselves or something. Like nobody else matters but them. I don't like it, but I haven't said anything yet. I want to check with Ishmael first to see if he picks up on anything.

Of course, he is called "Insane Ishmael" now so I'm not sure his judgement is the best, but still he is an outside observer.

The practice goes well. Ishmael cheers us on, and says, "Dudes, you rock!" Chuck keeps having problems though. The strings on his guitar keep breaking, but Funnybear refuses to let us wait for Chuck to fix them. He says he's only got a little time before he has to go to the library to study so he insists we keep going. I've never known Funnybear to be so concerned with school before. Maybe all my studying is rubbing off on him. Anyway we mow down the songs. Chuck never does catch up. Anytime he gets the string fixed, and starts playing again, another one breaks. Eventually he throws down his guitar in frustration and leaves. I hate to say it, but it sounds better without him, mainly because he's never learned the songs real well because Wendy's always interrupting practice. I sure don't miss waiting for him during practice either while he and Wendy are having a quickie or whatever. Nobody says anything, but I get the sense that nobody else in the band misses him either since we're all joking around and stuff, having fun, instead of just standing around being annoyed.

After practice, I'm hanging out with Ishmael in the kitchen when we start hearing noises from Chuck's, er, Chuck and Wendy's room. He's yelling and she's crying, and it sounds like stuff's being thrown around the room.

Ishmael even stops talking, which I was beginning to think wasn't physically possible, and we look at each other warily.

Alexander comes into the kitchen. He hears the sounds too and stops. He listens for a moment, then smiles and looks at us, saying, "Ah, young love! It's beautiful!"

I'd think he was being sarcastic but next he just waves at us, and says, "See you stallions, I'm going to see Hilde!" and rolls out the door, whistling like he's in a Hollywood musical.

Ishmael and I just look at one another.

George staggers into the kitchen. He's holding his head in his hands. He doesn't appear to hear the ever-more horrific sounds from Chuck's, er, Chuck and Wendy's room. He says to us, "Did you bring a cat with you, Ishmael?"

"Uh, no dude," Ishmael says, "Why?"

"My allergies are acting up," George says, sniffing.

There's more screaming from Chuck's, er, Chuck and Wendy's room, but George appears not to notice. He opens cupboards and drawers, presumably looking for a cat, then says, "I'm going outside to see if there's a dog under the porch," and leaves, still holding his head.

Ishmael and I look at one another.

Funnybear strolls into the kitchen. He hears the thumping and bumping from Chuck's, er, Chuck and Wendy's room, and says, "You know, I'd slap him around too."

"They could keep it down a bit though," he adds, a moment later, "Well, see you fellows, I'm going to the library."

Ishmael can't take it any longer. He pounds on their door, "What's going on in there?"

We can hear Wendy sobbing while Chuck opens the door a peep. He's wearing a wifebeater undershirt, and yells, "Shut your piehole! This is none of your business, Ishmael!"

He slams the door. The noises start up again and Ishmael's about to bust the door down but I tell him to stop. I'm going to call the police before this gets out of control.

George is on the phone in the living room. I explain it's an emergency, but he just tells me that Chuck and Wendy are doing performance art and not to worry. She's an artist too he says, and this turns them on. Then he goes back to talking on the phone.

I go back to the kitchen and tell Ishmael that it's performance art rough sex. I'm still not sure I believe George but the noises do stop. Ishmael and I listen for a couple minutes but we don't hear anything. Then there's some shuffling and Chuck and Wendy come out, shut their door, and start cooking, acting like nothing's happened. They only talk to Ishmael and I when we're standing in front of a cupboard they need a pan from or something and they need us to move. The rest of the time they hold an inane conversation about lawn furniture between themselves.

Ishmael looks at them and says to me, "Dude, the rent would have to be pretty fucking cheap for me to live in a halfway house like this."

Chorus--Funnybear

Now this is Funnybear's kind of library! Funnybear thinks upon entry to the Bawdy Books, Naughty News, Vile Video, and Porn Palace Superstore. Sadly, this isn't a purely recreational visit. Since Funnybear can't keep filing down Chuck's guitar strings without him catching on, and other than snipping the speaker wires, which is too obvious, Funnybear is too frightened by the possibility of electrocution to mess with the amplifier, Funnybear must now choose a different approach.

Funnybear thinks a steady stream of hardcore pornography on the living room vcr accompanied by the worst industrial noise music Funnybear can dig up on the stereo should do the trick of driving Chuck and Wendy from the house.

Plus Funnybear will enjoy it on its own merits.

Funnybear strolls through the dildo department to the video department. Ooh, *Afghani Anal Annihilation Vol. 10* is out! Funnybear's been waiting for that one!

Funnybear ambles accidentally into the gay section. The mustachioed sales clerk is instantly behind Funnybear.

"Can I help you, sir?" he says, winking and pulling at his tie.

"Yeah," Funnybear says, "What's the smuttiest thing you've got?"

The man starts to unbuckle his pants.

"No, no, I meant for sale in the store," Funnybear says quickly.

The man looks disappointed and says, "Oh."

"Well," he fixes his belt, "You want gay or straight?"

"Sexual orientation doesn't matter. This is the twenty-first century," Funnybear says, "Just bring the smut."

"Well, in that case, I think the gay grappling series will do you. The loser of the wrestling match has to be the bottom. Vol 6 is the best in my opinion. It's all Japanese Death Matches and subtitled 'Pinfalls and Penetrations.'"

"That sounds good," Funnybear says, "How 'bout some dyke stuff next."

"Ooh," the sales clerk smiles, "We just got the new *Cuntherbury Tails* volume in."

"Smut!" Funnybear barks, "Not a love story."

"O.k., o.k.," the sales clerk pulls a volume from the shelf, "How about this?"

Sod Him And Give Me Some More A: Lot And His Daughters.

"It's not 100% girl on girl but the incest and the fact that it's adapted from the Bible make it particularly smutty."

Funnybear and the sales clerk saunter into the straight video section.

"The Beaver Of Love: The Animated Series is good for cartoon smut."

"I'm not into funny animals," Funnybear says.

"How about the Hooker On Phonics Sexual Alphabet Series? The C Is For Cleveland Steamer volume is pretty smutty."

"C'mon, son," Funnybear says, "You must be holding out. Where's the real smut?"

The sales clerk eyes Funnybear carefully, and sniffs, "You don't smell like bacon, so o.k."

"C'mere," the sales clerk whispers, and directs Funnybear to the sales counter.

The sales clerk looks around and presses a button. A drawer pops out in front of Funnybear. "Hurry up," the sales clerk says.

"Yeah," Funnybear says, looking at the items in the drawer, "Those are pretty smutty."

"Hey, what's that?" Funnybear says pointing at a package in the drawer. It looked like a pair of underwear with a superwide strap on dildo in the front.

"That's the Dong Thong Spiffy Stuffy Soaker Water Gun. Illegal in 49 states including this one."

"Where's it legal?" Funnybear asks.

"Alaska," the sales clerk says, "It's too cold most of the year to use anyway so they didn't bother making it illegal."

Funnybear passes the sales clerk the credit card Funnybear's Mom had given Funnybear for emergencies. Clearly, the Dong Thong Spiffy Stuffy Soaker Water Gun was an emergence. About ten inches of one.

"Do you want it gift-wrapped?" the sales clerk asks.

"No," Funnybear says, "I'll just wear it out of the store."

Verse—George Jah

It's got to be the house. I feel o.k. whenever I'm not there, but the minute I walk in the door, my nose stuffs up, my face swells up, and I get a headache. I'm beginning to think I have elephantiasis or something. It doesn't make any sense until the day I pull into the

driveway and see Chuck and Wendy having a cookout in the backyard. Ah, how cute. Just the two of them.

And a dog.

I say hi when I get out of the car.

They don't say anything, much less offer me a burger. They just sort of vaguely glance in my direction.

Sigh. We'll have to do this the hard way. "What the fuck is that?" I yell, pointing at the little brown mutt.

Chuck looks at me, "Uh, a dog."

"I know that," I say, "What's it doing here?"

"It's Wendy's," he says, "She doesn't like to leave it alone at her apartment."

"Then why doesn't she stay at her apartment?" I say.

"I can go where I want," Wendy says.

I put my sunglasses on my head and look at her, "I'm sorry, I wasn't aware we were on speaking terms since you usually pretend I don't exist."

I turn back to Chuck, who's getting in all territorial pissing mode because I talked rude to his girlfriend. I don't care. "I told you when you moved in that you couldn't have pets because I'm allergic."

"It hasn't been in the house," Chuck says, hyperdefensively.

"You better not be fucking lying to me," I say, and he's mortified. He's never seen me like this before.

I can see him get scared so I tone it down a notch. "Did the mail come?" I say.

He's confused. "Uh, I didn't check."

I go around the house to the front porch and get the mail. Of course, there's bills, and what looks like some wedding invitations marked return to sender. Weird. Must have the wrong address. None of us are getting married, unless Funnybear sent for a mail order bride from Poland or something. I throw them on the coffeetable when I go in the front door to the living room.

Funnybear's in there. He's watching hardcore pornography and listening to something that sounds like my car when it won't go into gear. He used to just do this kind of stuff alone in his room. I wish he'd go back to doing so. But everybody in the house has been weird since Chuck, and his attached at the hip girlfriend Wendy, moved in. Ted studies even more than ever. Alexander's never around because he's always with his girlfriend (I hope he's not driving her roommates insane like Wendy is us). I've been breaking out in hives. And Funnybear's been making the private public. I guess

Chuckwendy--for they seem more like a cyborg or siamese twins than two distinct individuals--changed the chemistry of the house, and not for the better. To be frank, not to mention Sinatra, it's been sort of miserable here and not just because of my allergic reactions. It's like an oppressive atmosphere with those two around. The only good thing is that since Chuck stopped showing up for practice, the band has been really clicking. I think this the best we've ever been. I can't wait to play out.

"What's that?" I say to Funnybear, pointing at the screen.

"I believe that's a penis, son."

"What happened to it?" I say, turning my head sideways to get a better look.

"It's got a finger puppet on it," Funnybear says, "They're doing a puppet show."

I don't really want to see anymore so I go into the kitchen.

And, this I believe is a first. Probably not for anyone, anywhere, but certainly for your correspondent.

I step in dogshit indoors.

I go apeshit. But very logically and methodically. I make sure to get the oven gloves from the kitchen drawer first and put them on. Then I run out the back door like a screaming maniac.

I push Chuck out of the way in front of the grill and grab a hot dog. I throw it at the dog. I miss and it's all happy sniffing the hot dog until I smack it in the face with a hamburger next. Chuck yells "What are you doing?" and tries to get in my face, but I grab a hot dog and threaten to stab him with it.

Then I do stab him with it.

It breaks off on his t-shirt, leaving a nice hot greasy stain. He backs off. I toss the rest of the stuff from the grill at the dog. Then I pick up the entire grill itself, and charge the dog.

It's pretty smart. It breaks its leash with a hot dog in its mouth for a consolation prize and takes off running.

I hurl the grill but it misses and bounces off into some bushes.

I hear Wendy shout, "What is wrong with you?" but when I turn I realize that she's yelling at Chuck, not me.

"You're so fucking cheap! I told you moving in here was a bad idea!" she continues, and then books after the dog.

Chuck screams, "Honey! Wait!" and runs after her.

I pick up a hot dog off the grass and take a bite. Not bad! Thirty more seconds it would have been perfect.

Chorus--Funnybear

Assmunch 1 and Assmunch 2 are out the door. Funnybear and the rest of the house and band, the house band?, have a meeting before practice, since practice is the only time Alexander's around. Everyone votes to kick them out at the end of the month, except for Alexander who abstains because "Hilde and I were hoping to go on a double date sometime with Chuck and Wendy and we don't want any hurt feelings." Another vote is taken on whether to get another fifth roommate. Only Uncle Teddy votes against it, arguing that the pickings are so slim at this point in the semester that we're bound to end up with another problemcase. Funnybear and the others vote for it, arguing that Chuck probably would have worked out all right on his own.

Actually Funnybear thinks Chuck pretty much has the personality of a dead hamster, but Funnybear liked the money from the rent kickback.

Then the band practices. It's good. The band is coming together. It's becoming an eight-legged beast. Mass mind. One can sense what the others are thinking. Synchronicity. Four hearts beating as one to the rhythm. A postmodern tribe.

If Funnybear was a psychologist, Funnybear would think that the band unity is being helped by the presence of an annoying other in Chuck and Wendy. The band has something to define themselves against, and this eases the formation of the new social ties. Funnybear imagines that Chuck and Wendy have a similar phenomenon in their couple against the world mindset. Unfortunately, individual human beings and couples and bands always exist in the wider world and the illusion that any one such entity can do it alone will ultimately be shattered, and the longer one persists in the insularity illusion, the more difficult the transition to a successful reality of living in a larger social network. Some indeed never make it and are destroyed.

But Funnybear's not a psychologist, he's a drummer, so Funnybear just thinks, getting rid of Chuck is the best idea Funnybear's had in weeks! It always pays to listen to one's gut!

MIDDLE EIGHT--CHUCK AND WENDY

WENDY SAYS, "THOSE GUYS ARE ASSHOLES,
BUT CHEAP RENT WAS AMONG OUR GOALS."

CHUCK SAYS, "AND FAKE LIVING APART,
FOR APPEARANCE'S SAKE, SWEETHEART.
BUT SOON WE'LL BE HUSBAND AND WIFE.

THIS SATURDAY STARTS OUR NEW LIFE."

WENDY SAYS, "YES, OUT WE'RE HEADING,
BUT FIRST THEY MUST HOST A WEDDING."

Verse--Alexander Depot

When I get home on Saturday afternoon, I find some old guy rooting through my sock drawer. When I ask him what the hell he's doing in my room, he says he needs a pair of black socks because he put on white ones this morning by mistake. I kick him out and tell him this isn't Mart Mart. Then I try to figure out what's going on. The house is filled with people I don't know. Old people too, not just college students. And they're all dressed up. Jah is working at the Coffee Catheter and Bear's no doubt still sleeping, so I go ask Abel if we're having a party or something. He tells me Chuck and Wendy are getting married.

"Today?" I say.

"Yeah," he says.

"Where?"

"Here, I think," he says.

He says nobody told him anything about it. All these people just started showing up at the house starting about ten in the morning. While Abel was brushing his teeth, Chuck's great uncle, Chester, who must be senile, thought Abel was Chuck and started telling him how beautiful Wendy was and told him tips for the wedding night.

Abel almost puked through his toothbrush. That's one dirty old man.

Then Uncle Chet told Abel not to worry about those scumbag housemates because the ushers, apparently Chuck's old high school football buddies, are going to make sure they don't get into the backyard during the wedding.

"So we aren't invited?" I say.

"Uh, no," Abel says, "Chuck's father is a preacher--he's going

to marry them--and Uncle Chet said he said a special prayer last night at the rehearsal dinner that the devil-worshipping jungle beat heathen rock band not prevent the unity of this couple."

"I guess that means they won't go out on a double date with me and Hilde either," I say.

"Uh, probably not," Abel says, "I think now that Chuck just pretended to like us and join the band so they could move in and have the wedding here."

"Some nice Christians, huh?" I say.

"Well, he did join the band for a while," Abel says, "He is a Promise Keeper."

"WWFD," I say, "What Would Funnybear Do?"

"I don't know," Abel says, "He's still sleeping I think. The groomsmen are watching his porn in the living room though."

"Where's the bridal party?"

"They're in George's room. They're using his video camera to tape the wedding."

"That must be the parents of the bride and groom in the dining room I saw then," I say, "They're drinking my coffee."

"The reception's here too so I suspect they're going to clean out the fridge of food as well," Abel says, "They got some cool bands to play, Vambo Marble Eye, The Flaming Toasters, HoTu, and Satan Tortilla--I think Chuck told his Dad they were Christian Rock--maybe we can watch them from the window."

"So basically we're prisoners in our own house while Chuck and Wendy get hitched in our backyard?" I say.

"Yeah, we're outnumbered," Abel says, "I don't see that we have any other choice."

"Son, we all have free will," Bear steps through the door, looking like he just woke up, "What have I told you about the power of positive drinking?"

Chorus--Funnybear

Funnybear must be a softie because Funnybear lets Chuck and Wendy kiss before Funnybear soaks them with the Dong Thong Spiffy Stiffy Soaker Water Gun. Funnybear is standing on the roof wearing it so Funnybear has a good vantage point while Alexander and Uncle Teddy keep the water supply flowing.

Just for George, Funnybear hits the dog, who served as the ringbearer, next, plus this means Chuck and Wendy's limo gets to smell like wet dog on their way to the honeymoon. Then Funnybear pops Chuck's dad, the sinister minister, with Funnybear's kind of baptism.

After that Funnybear just sprays indiscriminately throughout the crowd until Funnybear realizes--must have had too much Dead Crow whiskey beforehand--that the bridesmaids are wearing white so after that Funnybear aims for them trying to get an impromptu wet t-shirt contest going. Even with those long dresses they can run and hide pretty good, so this pretty much results in everybody getting wet.

The backyard clears out, with people running for their cars, but whether this is from the force of the spraying water or the sight of Funnybear wearing only thong underwear with a ten inch superwide schlong sticking out in the front, Funnybear doesn't know. Up on the roof, Funnybear kind of feels like Gargantua, but don't tell anyone that Funnybear is that well read or Funnybear will come spray you with the Dong Thong Spiffy Stiffy Soaker Water Gun.

The soaking wet ushers finally make their way in the house and up the stairs though and they push Funnybear off the roof. Luckily, Funnybear lands on the trampoline and bounces off into the middle of the backyard, spraying away. Even after Funnybear runs out of water, Funnybear's presence running around the backyard like Bacchus in a fertility ritual with his big woody, though it's really made of plastic, scares off the remnants of the wedding guests.

Funnybear likes the Dong Thong Spiffy Stiffy Soaker Water Gun. Funnybear likes the Dong Thong Spiffy Stiffy Soaker Water Gun a lot.

Coda--Funnybear

Some supergenius calls the cops from a cellphone. Unfortunately for that supergenius, this ultimately results in the wedding party leaving under threat of a trespassing charge since Chuck and Wendy aren't on the lease. Alexander is magnificent while dealing with the cops, claiming that only he and Funnybear live here, that Chuck and Wendy are performance artists pulling an illegal stunt, and that the Dong Thong Spiffy Stiffy Soaker Water Gun is a sculpture by Chuck, and not the real illegal in Ohio and 48 other states Dong Thong Spiffy Stiffy Soaker Water Gun.

Of course, this only works because Chuck and Wendy are too busy making sure one another is all right and kissing to talk to the police

coherently.

Funnybear supposes it all works out as well as it can for everybody, Chuck and Wendy get married, the band gets them to move out, etc., all's well that bends well, eh? even though Uncle Teddy's not happy about now being Funnybear's visiting cousin from Pennsylvania.

But then Funnybear's not happy about the police confiscating the Dong Thong Spiffy Stiffy Soaker Water Gun either but what can you do?

Funnybear, Alexander, and Uncle Teddy are the only ones left in the backyard when George finally pulls up in the driveway from work, looks at the wet grass and mud, and says, "Did it rain over here or something?"

"Hey Chuck! Watch this!" Uncle Chet yells as he starts pissing off the roof. A second later, he falls off onto the trampoline and bounces there spraying like a fountain all over himself from the three pots of Alexander's coffee he drank.

Funnybear's done that before Funnybear thinks. It's fun as long as you don't land wrong side down. Then the eight-legged beast lumbers inside, leaving Uncle Chet to dry in the sun.

#5

The Practice Space Blues

b/w

Here Comes The Neighborhood

"We really liked the room above the barber shop,
But the barber said he'd shave us bald if we didn't stop!"

Intro—Theodorable

It's 3 a.m. and George is in the middle of the living room, wearing headphones and screaming into a microphone. It goes like this.

"You got crotch crickets, baby!"

Pause. Silence.

"You got crotch crickets, baby!"

Pause. Silence.

"You crot gotch gickets, baby!"

Stop. Laughter.

"Ohh, I messed up, let's do it again."

Leroy Shell yawns. We've been recording since midnight when Leroy got off work, and we're hung up on the next to last track we need to put vocals on, called, what else?, "Crotch Crickets." Leroy, Funnybear, and I keep suggesting that George just skip it, do the last track, and then come back, but George refuses. He says, "I think by building the frustration level, it creates a constructive tension, and when I do hit it, it'll be the perfect take, and we'll like all bliss out."

Leroy rewinds the four track tape and says, "I hope the great leap forward is just around the corner then, but if it ain't, don't think I'm pulling another all-nighter tomorrow just to listen to you sing 'Crotch Crickets' 37 more times."

We're wrapping up the recordings we did the first time I played with the band, which only needed vocals to be done, but it's taken a few weeks to finish them up because Leroy's and our schedules never seemed to work out. Finally, we all said toss it and we're recording through the night.

I'm not even sure why I'm still up though. I finished all my background vocals. I should only be studying if I'm awake at this hour on a Tuesday night, er, Wednesday morning in early October. And really I should be asleep.

Of course, it's difficult to sleep when someone is screaming about crotch crickets downstairs.

George starts recording again. During one of the pauses I hear footsteps on the porch. Did someone order pizza? I'm so tired I can't remember. I hope whoever it is doesn't knock and ruin the take. The phone rang once tonight, ruining a take of "Where Have All The Boogers Gone?" After that, we took the phone off the hook. You can't exactly do the same for the front door though.

George is doing well too. So far, no spoonerisms, no singing the third verse in place of the first, etc. I'm crossing my fingers. I can still hear the footsteps on the porch, but no knock yet. Maybe it's Alexander coming home from his girlfriend's place.

George finishes the take. We all cheer. I go to the door and open it. There's nobody on the porch. I look around. I glimpse somebody hurrying down the block and going into a neighboring house, but nobody else is around. Weird. Maybe I was just hearing things.

I close the door and shrug, and we move on to the next and last track, "Bartenders In New York City Think I'm A Lousy Tipper (But I Think They Just Have Inflated Self-Worths)," which George hits in only ten takes this time (the line, "You're not very nice and the beer is overpriced" keeps tripping him up for some reason).

While he's doing it, I hear footsteps on the porch again. I creep across the living room and as soon as I hear George sing the last line I throw open the door to surprise whoever's there.

It's a cop. I'm stunned. The cop's not though. He's looking off into the street somewhere and hasn't even realized that the door is now open. So he knocks with his billyclub on my face.

"Oh God, I'm so sorry," he says, helping me up afterwards, "I'm Officer Trahan, and I think the noise violation should be written up in the lead singer's name. What do you boys think?"

Verse--Funnybear

Funnybear thinks that the noise violation sucks, that's what Funnybear thinks. They're expensive and unless Funnybear and the rest of the band want to start a collection of them, the noise violation means no more practicing at the house. Officer Trahan said that a neighbor called it in, but wouldn't tell Funnybear who it was.

Looks like Inspector Funnybear is going to have to go door to door then. You see, when Funnybear has a problem with the neighbors, Funnybear goes over Funnybear's self. Funnybear doesn't wimp out and call the police. And right now Funnybear has a problem with the neighbors.

The leading suspects:

1) The old guy next door who mows the lawn on his riding lawn mower every other day, wearing no shirt and drinking beer. Motive: Goes to bed at sunset every day. Alibi: Passed out from drinking beer all day.

2) The multiracial family next door whose members yell to converse with one another. Motive: The children have to go to school in the morning. Alibi: Their arguments usually last all night and are louder than the band practicing, which resulted in the unwritten pact of "You no call the cops on me, I no call the cops on you." Karmic Bonus: Funnybear's household is the only one on the block that doesn't refer to them as "the zebras."

3) The large friendly couple across the street. Motive: Holds a suspicion that Funnybear's household are causing property values to decline. Alibi: They're deaf.

4) The single mom across the street who publishes the neighborhood Christian newsletter. Motive: Rock and roll is the devil's music. Alibi: Hmm . . . Funnybear can't think of an alibi.

Bingo, my homey Watson! Funnybear goes to the bathroom and takes a shit sherlock and digs out the last newsletter the single mom dropped off from the toilet newsstand. There's a Bible Study group meeting every Wednesday evening. In fact, it's going on right now. Perfect! Funnybear will head over there and give her the gospel of Funnybear 3:16.

Funnybear heads across the street to her house and rings the doorbell. The New Testament was a kinder, gentler sequel though. Maybe Funnybear will tell her and all her divorced Christian buddies something from the Old Testament instead like "Thou shalt not call the cops on your neighbors who are in a rock band unless you want them to call the cops on you every time you roll around on the front yard speaking in tongues." Yes, a rant would do Funnybear good.

Then her teenage daughter answers the door. The dark-haired cutie says, "Are you here for the Bible group?"

Funnybear says, "Hallelujah."

Chorus—Theodorable

We have a band meeting to figure out what we're going to do about practice. Because we now also have to load all the equipment in our cars, drive to wherever we're practicing, unload it, set it up, practice, tear down, put the equipment back in our cars, drive back across town, unload it, and bring it back in the house, practice is going to take longer so we're figuring

out a new schedule for it.

"How's Wednesday night for everybody?" George says.

Funnybear raises his hand, "I can't. I've got my Bible study group then."

We all stop and look at him.

"What?" Funnybear says.

We finally decide on Tuesday and Thursday nights, and Sunday afternoons ("As long as it's after church," Funnybear says). Now we just need a place to play.

"How about the music building on campus?" Alexander suggests, "There's an outdoor stage with electrical outlets behind the recital hall, and when it rains or the weather gets cold, we'll just find an empty classroom inside, and pretend we're a jazz ensemble or something."

Since no one else has any other ideas beyond George's suggestion that we just play very, very, very quietly inside the house, we load everything up, and drive off to the music building. It's a nice night too. After we have everything set up on the large stage, I say, "Hey! There's lots of room and we can walk around instead of being crammed into the living room. This is great!"

Everyone agrees and we start rocking out under the milky way tonight.

Some passerbys stop by and watch. Some people come out from the music building too and others watch us from the windows. This is pretty cool I'm thinking until somebody throws a tuba case at me.

I look up and an old music professor is holding a conductor's baton and slapping it against his thigh. When we stop he yells, "You musical illiterates have just ruined a senior recital. Right in the middle of a beautiful, sweet, quiet passage came this roar of atonal noise. The audience was horrified, and the poor student burst out crying and couldn't continue. Who said you could play here? Tell me, who? I will kill him, her, or it! Painfully! I will stick reeds under his, her, or its fingernails and brass down his, her, or its orifices! I will play the devil's note until the vibrations shatter him, her, or it into pieces! I will make him, her, or it listen to 24 hours of the most boring ethnomusicology samples ever collected until he, she, or it is begging for mercy! Why, I will make him, her, or it learn how to play the gamelan solo, and make him, her, or it perform in front of the most critical Indonesian audiences ever! Why, I'll even teach him, her, or it my latest avant garde symphony and then fail him, her, or it when he, she, or it does so--because if he, she, or it plays the symphony correctly, he, she, or it has proved that he, she, or it obviously doesn't understand the postmodern musical theoretical

concept I'm attempting to communicate because it's incommunicable so there's no sense in playing the music to begin with! Why, even worse I'll make him, her, or it do the notation and arrangement for my next commissioned piece for a robot string quartet!"

"Is this a joke?" George says.

"No," the old prof screams, going apoplectic, "This is no joke! This is thousands of years of musical aesthetics being flushed down the toilet by morons with a jungle beat and electrical amplification."

We really don't know what to say to that, but Alexander plays a little "Roll Over, Beethoven" quietly on his keyboard.

The old prof charges the keyboard but a couple music students hold him back while we pack up. "I'm going to call the police and get you all arrested!" he yells.

"Be sure to ask for Officer Trahan," Funnybear says.

Verse--George Jah

So we're banned from practicing on campus, and we can't play in our own house without getting fined. I think there's a conspiracy against us. We're just too rock, too roll, too real, and people can't deal with it.

I know I can barely deal with it and I'm in the band.

So I publish a zine about how The City of Rock is a fascist state and how Roll State also has the totalitarian flavor. Because I notice that when all the trashy dumb townies drive around with no mufflers on their cars, they don't get noise violations. And when the old man next door mows the lawn at seven in the morning, he never gets a noise violation. And when the loud guy next door works on his motorcycle in the driveway and keeps revving the engine every ten minutes, he never gets a noise violation. And when the deaf people across the street watch television and don't realize the volume is on at an ear-shattering level, they don't get a noise violation. And when the Christian woman from across the street holds a conversation about Jesus with the neighbor three doors down and neither of them leaves their own porch, they don't get a noise violation.

But when we do something intelligent and artistic like playing garage rock, we get a noise violation.

So I guess if it's socially sanctioned like television, lawnmowers, and Jesus, it's not noise even though the technical definition of the noise violation is any sound that goes across one's own property line and can be heard on another's property. Which is

the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. Literally. I mean if it's summer and the windows are open and it's quiet out and the guy next door poops in his bathroom, I can hear the water splash.

And if I wanted to stop the couple across the street from leaving food out for the birds because the birds make noise that I can hear on my property, the cops would look at me as if I was crazy, yet they can tell me I can't play music in my own house. They're the crazy ones. I don't walk around town with a gun all the time telling people to keep it down.

I hate sonic Nazis.

So I write this all down and cut out some pictures from the magazines in the toilet newsstand to make a collage protesting this selective enforcement of the noise violation in the city code (you know with like cartoon cats being chased by the president and movie stars), and then I go down to the copyshop but my friend Bonnie isn't working so I can't get any free copies so I can only afford, thanks to the noise violation, to make two copies of my zine, which is called "Why Can't The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus Play Here?: An Analysis Of Wack Local Politics."

So I keep one copy for myself and go down to the police station and give the other one to Officer Trahan.

He says it's cool, but I should really give it to the Mayor or City Council since he doesn't set the law, he just has to enforce it. It's the usual "I just follow orders, I don't have a mind of my own" line, but he's nice enough and even gives me some cookies left over from the police officers' ball (What do they do at that thing anyway? I can't imagine cops dancing. Maybe they just play games like Good Cop, Bad Cop Strip Poker; Plant The Evidence On The Suspect; Radargun Fastpitch; Who Wants To Be An Informant?; and race policedogs or something). Zining is hungry work so I thank him and go over to the mayor's office which is in the same city hall building. I choose the mayor because I don't have enough money to make copies of the zine for all the fascists on city council.

Amazingly enough, the mayor sees me right away. I thought I'd have to stage a one man sit-in or something in her office.

She looks at my zine and says, "Did you send this to the newspaper?"

"No," I say, "Why? Are they fascists too?"

She says if I don't sue, we can play the arts festival next year.

I flash her a "Heil Hitler!" salute and hold out until she says some of our friends like Phantom Circus, Yeast?, Harriet the Spy, and

Pickle can play it too.

Chorus—Theodorable

So George has been playing Mr. Smith Goes To Washington and saw the mayor. She said that we can practice at the house again once it gets cold because no one will be outside to hear us and complain.

George said that was unacceptable.

So the mayor started talking about the zoning code and how in certain neighborhoods such as the one we live in, no more than two unrelated people can live together in a household.

George thanked her for time, said to give us a buzz if she ever needs entertainment for her reelection campaign, and left before she could ask how many people lived at 666 Cobain.

Then by promising local band These Fags Are Pissed! a spot at next year's city arts festival, for which he is apparently now the musical director, George wrangled us a Sunday afternoon practice at the T.F.A.P. house.

"House" however probably isn't an accurate description. "Hovel" is more like it. Or "shack." Perhaps "shithole." Or even more dead-on, "Building Most Likely To Be Condemned In The Next Ten Days."

I can't imagine how these guys live here, but they do. There's holes in the walls, holes in the ceilings, holes in the floor, holes in the roof. The floor in one room upstairs is almost completely gone and they've just balanced couches on the remaining support beams so that one has to surf across the couches to cross the room. And the couches, like the rest of the furniture in the house, have been all retrieved from the trashheap or dumpsters so you can imagine how awful they are. The whole place smells like a giant litterbox too from the fifty or so cats that share the house with These Fags. Once I'm inside the place, I'm afraid to walk around for fear the walls will tumble in around me and I'll be suffocated under mounds of cat hair. The only good thing about the place is that it's located in the industrial district so there's no noise violation worries.

Instead there's other worries like how to get into the basement where These Fags practice since the stairs to the basement have all rotted away. We have to actually climb down a rope to get down there to practice. "Sorry dudes," one of These Fags tell us, "The ladder broke last week."

Fortunately, These Fags are letting us use their equipment, and in this damp, dark, dank, disgusting basement, sitting up on rickety, broken down, wooden pallets above puddles of water are the biggest amplifiers, most expensive guitars, and nicest drumset I've ever seen. The only thing we have to airlift in is Alexander's keyboard, and Funnybear almost drops it when he

catches it from Alexander's lowering it with the rope because Funnybear's too dazzled by the sight of this incredible equipment in the middle of all this dereliction.

One Fag says to me, "We figure why spend money on rent when we can spend it on getting bigger amps and better guitars."

Another Fag says, "Unfortunately, since the stairs rotted away, we haven't been able to play out because we can't figure out how to get the equipment out of the basement without damaging it."

"But practice kicks ass," yet another Fag says.

Practice does kick ass, at least until Alexander trips over one of the loose pallet boards while dancing to our funkarama "Help Me Rwanda" and his glasses go flying across the basement and plop into a puddle. Then about fifty rats come out of the darkness to see if it's food, then the fifty cats in the house jump from the first floor down into the basement after the rats, and it's sort of like Guernica and Gallipoli and Gettysburg and every other famous battle that begins with the letter "G" all wrapped into one down in the basement.

We don't practice there again.

Middle Eight--Antigone Dadadadadada

We met at Mom's Bible study,

Now he's my neighborhood buddy.

When he found out I'm just sixteen,

He called me "Jailbait" and got mean.

But we made up and now hang out,

'Cause Mom still thinks that he's devout.

Actually, he's deviant,

Me too so that's convenient.

Verse--Alexander Depot

I don't know what I find creepier, that Bear's new best friend is the sixteen-year-old girl from across the street, or that they both scope out the same women together. Right now they're reviewing my girlfriend while they set up the drums and I set up my keyboard in the back of a comic book store, Britpulp And Other Graphic Traffic, our latest "practice space."

"Your girlfriend's hot Alex," Antigone says.

"Yeah, I'd second that emotion," Bear says, putting a cymbal

on a stand.

"Bear," I say, "Easy now."

"I love her eyes," Antigone says.

"Her eyes are good," Bear says, flicking his hand to test the snare, "But I'd have to say her derriere is her best feature. That ass is sweet!"

"Jesus Christ" I say, "Will you guys lay off?"

"You should come to my Mom's Bible Study too," Antigone says, "Then you'd know not to take the Lord's name in vain."

Since killing a minor will probably prevent me from going to heaven and since setting up my keyboard takes less time than setting up Bear's drum set, I stroll to the front of the store to get away from the Cobain Street Christian Casanovas.

Nigel, the store owner who's from England, is up front chatting with Hilde, my girlfriend, who I had to bring to practice because we have to go out immediately afterwards to some family shindig her parents are having.

Nigel is showing Hilde some comics, "You'll love this one. It's British like all the best things."

"Hey," I say.

"Hi, hon," Hilde says, "Nigel's showing me some comics. I never knew there were so many cool ones."

"Hey," I say to Nigel, "Thanks for letting us practice here again."

"Oh, no problem mate," Nigel says, giving me a wink, "I'd do anything for George. He's going to make me a commercial on his video camera in return."

He looks at Hilde and runs his eyes over her like a paintroller, or, say, a troll, "Maybe Hildegard can star in it. We all know comic book readers are suckers for beautiful women."

Hilde tee-hees.

"Uh, great," I say.

I hear Bear pound out a beat from the back room. "Well, I better go practice," I say.

"O.k. hon," Hilde says and gives me a peck on the cheek.

"You'll be all right?" I say.

"Oh, of course, it looks like I've got a lot of comics to catch up on."

"Don't worry mate," Nigel says and winks at me again, "I'll

take good care of her."

I told Jah I wanted to wait until it was cold out and we could just practice in the house again. But no, he said, we've got the demo tape done, we can get some gigs, we've got to practice, and my friend has a back room we can use in his comic book store, blah blah blah. Jah didn't tell me his friend's superpower was a made-up British accent to pick up women. England, huh? Try more like Akron.

"Whoa, dude," Antigone tells me when I get in the back, "That Nigel dude is like totally hitting on your girlfriend."

This is the first and last time we're practicing here.

"Don't worry dude," Antigone says, "I'll go save her."

Great.

"Plus I want to see if her ta-tas are real anyway."

Note to self: Consider quitting band.

Chorus—Theodorable

I feel like I'm in The Fantastic Four because we start arguing in the back of the comic book store after practice, just like they do in the Baxter Building or Four Freedoms Plaza after they defeat the baddie.

"What?" George says.

"I don't want to practice here again," Alexander says, putting his keyboard away.

"Why not?" George says, putting down his bass.

"I just don't like it," Alexander says.

"What's not to like, son," Funnybear says, sitting behind the drums, "It's a practice space and we don't have another."

"Do you know how hard I've had to work to find us these practice spaces," George says, "You're always with your girlfriend."

He looks at me, turning off my guitar amp, "He's always studying."

He looks at Funnybear, "He's always at Bible Study or watching porn."

Funnybear nods, guilty as charged.

George points at himself, "I'm the only one who does anything for the band anymore."

"I'm sorry, Jah," Alexander sighs and lights a cigarette, "I just don't trust Nigel. He seems like a weasel. He's hitting on my girlfriend as we speak."

"Son," Funnybear says, "Who asked you to bring Yoko to practice

anyway?"

George turns to Funnybear, "Actually Yoko Ono was a really cool artist even before she met John Lennon. The other Beatles just felt threatened by her genius."

I pipe up, "Can we not have the Yoko argument again?"

"Anyway, forget Yoko, what about Jerry Lee Lewis over there on the drums?" Alexander says, looking at Funnybear, "What's up with bringing Miss Teen Lesbian USA to practice?"

"They have a Miss Teen Lesbian USA pageant?" Funnybear says, "I wouldn't mind tuning in for the muffdiving competition."

"I quit," Alexander says.

"Stop it!" I yell, "Flame On! It's Clobbering Time! Stretch!"

Everyone looks at me.

"This is stupid," I say, "We only need a practice space for a few more weeks until it's deep enough in the fall that we can play at the house again, so let's just chill out. We can practice here until someone other than George finds us a better space."

Everyone mumbles assent.

"All right," I say, "How about a group hug to make sure there's no hurt feelings."

Funnybear makes a disgusted face.

"All right," I say, "Maybe a handshake instead."

Antigone's back in the room, "In the Old Testament, the men held each other's penises to seal a deal. Shaking hands is just like a PG version of that, so why don't you go for the real thing because I'd like to watch that."

Everyone makes a disgusted face.

"I thought you were a dyke," Alexander says.

"I'm bisexual dude," Antigone says, "I believe David Bowie said it best when he said, 'It doubles your chances for a date on Saturday night.'"

"The British always are good for a quip," Nigel says, popping into the room, "And a whip," he adds, raising an eyebrow at Antigone.

"She's underage, son," Funnybear says, "You wouldn't want to get busted by Officer Trahan for corruption of a minor would you?"

"It depends which minor," Nigel says, "Anyone for a spot of tea?"

"No thanks, I only drink beer," Antigone says, as Funnybear passes her a Zurp Light.

"What's this?" Nigel says, "Corruption of a minor, innit?"

"She was corrupt long before I met her," Funnybear says, opening a beer for himself.

He burps, "Original sin, you know?"

"There ain't no thing as an original sin," Antigone says.

"Elvis Costello quote?" Nigel says.

"No," Antigone says, "My Mom said it at Bible study last week."

"Sounds kinky," Nigel says, "If the mother's as cute as the daughter, then I might start showing up for Bible group too."

"Which Bible is it you guys are studying anyway?" George asks.

"I need a ciggie," Alexander says.

"You're already smoking one, dude," Antigone says, "But I'll smoke it for you."

Alexander digs out another cigarette and lights it. He smokes both at once, "Sometimes one just won't do."

"I feel the same way about women," Nigel says, "Nudge, nudge."

"We'd better go," Funnybear says, "I'm about to unleash a sequential fart on the sequential art."

"Oh don't worry about it," Nigel says, "We'll just smoke some clove cigarettes to cover it up."

"Oh," Antigone says, "Can I have one?"

"Of course, dearie," Nigel says, winking, "If you're good, I'll let you have as many as you want."

"Son," Funnybear says, "Did the new issue of Deportation Comics come out yet? It's the one where the guy from Britain gets beat up for messing with an American girl."

"No," Nigel says, "That's been resolicited. Jealous Lout is new this week though. It's the one where the big dumb guy in the team gets bigger and dumber."

"Hey Kids!" Hilde comes in the back, "It's Me!"

"Dudes, it's too bad she's not a comic book," Antigone says, "Because I'd like to bag and board her."

Coda--Theodorable

After Nigel asks Antigone if she'd like to come upstairs to his apartment and see some of his etchings, Funnybear joins in with Alexander in vetoing practice at Britpulp And Other Graphic Traffic. I kind of like practicing there because I can read comics for free. Some of them are pretty cool so I start reading a couple a week, all I can afford, even after we quit practicing there. Nigel's actually not so bad when there's no females around, and since it's a comics shop that's usually the case. Anyway, since 50% of the band think Nigel's a wanker, George has no choice but to score another practice space if he wants to practice since Funnybear and Alexander both seem more interested in their female pals than the band at the moment and are

content to wait until it's cold out and we can safely practice in the house again. So George, in a town that seems to have quite a shortage of practice spaces, somehow manages to scrape up yet another one for us, this time at the queen of thrift store glamour Karen Tinseltown's apartment. She has an attic above her apartment we can use. It's hot up there and lugging our equipment up the stairs to the top of her building at the initial practice is no fun, but we soon settle into a regular routine of rehearsals rehearsals. Since Karen's a fashion/art major, she says she feels like she's Andy Warhol, the attic is The Factory, and we're the Velvet Underground. But I think the only reason she puts up with the noise and four guys who smell from sweating in her attic playing music is because she has a crush on George. I think she has another space she'd like George to practice in, but so far he seems oblivious to her like she is to me. I even start singing more of the songs since it's easier to play guitar and sing than it is to play bass and sing, or play drums and sing, or twiddle the million knobs, levers, switches, and keys on the keyboard and sing but only her cat, Camus, seems to notice me. It's the bass. It's gotta be the bass. I've heard that the bass player is always a sexual magnet because of the long, rhythmic thunderstick. Either that or I have to practice more than just my guitar and vocals.

Yips!

1) **Radar Secret Service's Stop Communication cd** (On/On Switch Records, 780 Post St., Suite 54, San Francisco, CA 94109 www.ononswitch.com \$10)--These guys have always been great live but now they've made a great record too! The music is reminiscent of postpunk (Joy Division, Gang Of Four, etc.) mixed with youthful energy and ace songwriting and playing. The packaging is way cool too with a foldout paper and felt cd case.

2) **Below Critical Radar** edited by Roger Sabin and Teal Triggs (Slab-O-Concrete)--This is a scholarly look at zines and alternative comix since 1976. Very engaging and well-presented with plenty of illustrations. The numerous typos and incorrect details cast doubt on their major conclusions, but still a solid piece of work and an interesting idea to look at the crossover between zines and comix.

3) **Gil Mantera's Party Dream** (www.partydream.com)--This Youngstown area band is hilarious. They're indie rockers trying to be a boy band, rocking with electronic rhythms, running around the venue manically, and stripping down to g-strings when they've drunk too much.

4) **The Nyabinghi** (www.nyabinghi.com)--This is a cool club in Youngstown. It reminds me of The Gargoyle, a coffeehouse in Warren that once featured national and local acts at the high tide of grunge rock. Only this place has booze too so it's probably better. Great jukebox. One night I was here and a ferret walked into the bar . . .

5) **Box Office Poison** by Alex Robinson (Top Shelf, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282. www.topshelfcomix.com)--A mammoth collection of this comic series about twentysomethings finding their way in the big city. Much better than the description sounds.

6) **No Such Thing**--Hal Hartley films are always bizarre, but worth watching. This modern day fairytale about a monster and the media is no exception.

7) **Babel Ezine** (www.babelmagazine.com)--This online publication puts out lots of edgy fiction and nifty political conspiracy theory. Plus they're nice to cats, Crazy Carl, and me!

8) Angry Young Spaceman by Jim Munroe

(jim@nomediakings.org www.nomediakings.org)--This sci-fi meets Gen X novel about an interplanetary English as a Second Language teacher is lots of fun. And if you wrap your tentacles around it, you support a self-publisher from Canada.

9) **Plants**--They make fresh oxygen and are usually well-behaved unless they're ragweed, in which case they should be exterminated.

10) **EBay**--Somebody out there wants the old Peter Himmelman vinyl record I don't want anymore. Ebay helps them get it. Hip Hop Hooray!

Yips! Are Good Things!**Zine Yips!**

1) **Out Of The Blue #10** (Larned Justin, PO Box 471, House Springs MO 63051 candidcartoons@yahoo.com \$2)--Fun zine/comic anthology. Publishes monthly! Yikes! Will also be publishing a review zine called **The Blue Review**.

2) **Slush Pile: The Second Coming!** (\$5 from PO Box 42077, Philadelphia, PA 19101-2077)--This is the Underground Literary Alliance house organ edited by Steve Kostecke across the Pacific in South Korea. A story of mine, "A Sentence Of Grace" starring Harold Grumblebunny, is in it so I'm predisposed to liking it. Nonetheless, I had a very pleasant afternoon reading the entire zine (88 pages) in one sitting.

3) **Go Metric! #15** (15-A South Bedford Rd., Pound Ridge, NY 10576 gogometric@yahoo.com \$3)--This zine is spunky and features lots of ginchy stuff: The Kinks, The Replacements, Jack Cole and Plastic Man (Cole was from New Castle, PA--he's our coolest claim to fame), Chris Butler of Kent/Akron, Ohio rock fame (Tin Huey, The Waitresses, met him when he was playing with Otis Ball and the Chains in Bowling Green, Ohio, and he seems as wacky now as he was then--they drove all the way from New York to Ohio with a donut on the antenna of the van to see how long it would last. I think it made it if I remember correctly), and whatever happened to **Trouser Press** magazine. A fun read!

- 4) **Thoughtworm #8** (Sean and Malinda, 1703 Southwest Pkwy, Wichita Falls, TX 76302 sean@thoughtworm.com www.thoughtworm.com \$2)--Aptly named, a very thoughtful zine. #8 features essays on clutter; Columbia, SC; and life after grad school. There's also a cool interview with a zine librarian. And this issue features a different baseball card on each copy. I got Indians pitcher Dave Von Ohlen on mine. Nope, I never heard of him before either, but now he's my favorite!
- 5) **Fathers Day, Kate And Leopold, Old School Good Times Illustrated**, and many other zines (Robert Newsome, Second Period Industries, 895 North Chase Street, Athens, GA 30601, takingrobotstotheprom@yahoo.com \$2 a zine)--Robert and friends are a zine army. Fun comics, serious writing, and more all filtered through a wonderfully zany sensibility. Nutty good stuff.
- 6) **Empires Fall and Book Of Letters** (Rich Mackin and Rosie, PO Box 976, Jamaica Plain MA 02130, empiresfallzine@yahoo.com www.richmackin.org \$3 a zine)--**Book Of Letters** is Rev. Rich Mackin's zine that humorously harasses corporations through the postal service. Very funny, socially conscious writing. **Empires Fall** sees Rich team with teen wunderkind Rosie for longer more thoughtful pieces on activism and daily life.
- 7) **The 2nd Hand** (info@the2ndhand.com www.2ndhand.com)--Any zine with a hilarious logic puzzle wins my approval.
- 8) **Retail Whore #8** (Kat Raz, POB 688, Evanston IL 60204 retailwho_re@hotmail.com \$2)--Kind of like a theme perzine all about cars the publisher's owned. Great writing, plus naked pictures of grandmothers pregrandmotherhood on the cover.
- 9) **Mujinga** (mujinga@volny.cz www.volny.cz/mujinga)--Thoughtful perzine from a Brit expat living in Prague. Topics include veganism, cats, and vegan cats.
- 10) **The Ten Page News 31** (Owen Thomas, POB 9651, Columbus, OH 43209 vlorbik@aol.com members.aol.com/vlorbik \$2)--**The Ten Page News** seems to be twelve pages long but more of it is a good thing. #31 features reviews of cool reading and an article about organizing a college faculty union. Keeping central Ohio real for closing in about a decade now I think.

Zine Yips! Are Good Zines!

Oh My Gosh, It's A Letter!

Dear Wred,

Many thanks for sending me The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus. It's a good read, it carried me right through, and although I was one of those geeks who lived four years in the dorms when I was in college, it provided me a good picture of life "on the outside." Since I dote on ghost stories and the like, naturally I was fascinated by the story of the witch. I guess she's disappeared from your novel in the opening chapters. Too bad. Funnybear is a memorable character. "Theodorable" kept making me think of Alvin, Simon and Theodore.

Emus was nicely produced. Electronic text I read for information, rarely for pleasure. I find it almost impossible to do more than scan fiction in electronic text. But a brochure or book can still hold my interest.

Emus is more substantial than anything I do for N.A.P.A., because of the high copy count (220) required. I'm enclosing a copy of the con report I did on the Cincinnati convention held this summer. Average age of the attendees is way up in the 70s, if not pushing 80. These folks dress for their final evening convention banquet. But they are nice people.

The publishing underworld is a fascinating domain, wide enough for Emus and Aftermaths. Your thesis is a big addition to understanding this world. It's good that it's on the Internet (Ed.--look on www.zinebook.com). Despite the groans of oldsters like I who still love the printed page, I think cyberspace is going to be the locale for most self-publishing in the years to come. One only has to look at the cost and distribution factors. All the best,

Ken Faig, Jr. 2311 Swainwood Drive, Glenview, IL 60025-2741

The letter page's first letter, Ken! Thanks for writing! I enjoyed Aftermath quite a bit, and find it inspiring that people publish zines/a.p.a.s into their seventies! I too lived in the dorms all four years; there's nothing wrong with it. Living with a band really didn't take until grad school, although I spent a fun summer in undergrad, living off-campus with my fellow Escaped Fetal Pigs. And, the witch may be gone, but she's not forgotten! Wred :)

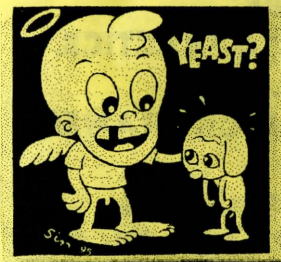
Merch Table

The next issue (#3) should be out by the end of December, but email me first to make sure. I enjoy trading with other zine publishers so it's usually a done deal but please email or write first to make sure. Otherwise it's \$3 postpaid. Additional copies of this issue are \$3 each postpaid as well. Issue #1 (32 pages) is available for \$2 postpaid.



Yeast?--Dick Bennett 7" Ep. This puppy's on clear vinyl and has four songs on it: "Johnson Wants To Rant," "Generic Smokes," "Big Daddy Pane," and "Warm Fuzz." \$2 postpaid. There's only 100 or so of these left and I'm hoping to sell them out before the tenth anniversary in 2004 so I can repress it and drag it around for

another decade.



Yeast?/Porpoise 3 Split 7". This one was sold out but then the P3 threw out about 50 of them so I dug them out of the trash and brought it back "into print." There's three songs from each band and the record labels are cute. \$2 postpaid.

Pick up both Yeast? singles for \$3 postpaid! Wow! What a bargain! It must be 1994-1995 all over again!

Well-hidden cash, checks/money orders to "Fred Wright," or Paypal. Prices are for those residing in the USA. If you live elsewhere, please write first and we'll figure something out.

Wred Fright
1413 Neshannock Blvd.
New Castle, PA 16105
USA
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THIS IS A FICTION. THIS IS A SERIALIZED NOVEL. THIS IS THE SECOND ISSUE. THIS IS ABOUT A GARAGE ROCK BAND CALLED THE PORNOGRAPHIC FLABBERGASTED EMUS. THIS IS QUITE SILLY. THIS IS \$3 POSTPAID.

"THE INVISIBLE GUITAR PLAYER"/"ROOMMATE NO. 5" IS THE THIRD CHAPTER AND CONCERNS THE BAND'S NEED FOR A NEW GUITAR PLAYER AND SCAM FOR A NEW ROOMMATE. ALEXANDER DEPOT CONVENES PARLIAMENT, THEODORABLE WORRIES ABOUT BILLS, GEORGE JAH BREAKS UP WITH HIS OLD GUITARIST, AND FUNNYBEAR GETS NAKED.

"EIGHT-LEGGED"/"THE HUSBAND AND WIFE SIAMESE TWINS" IS THE FOURTH CHAPTER AND CONCERNS THE NEW EMU LINEUP JELLING AND THE SURGICALLY ATTACHED GIRLFRIEND OF THE NEW HOUSEMATE. FUNNYBEAR VISITS A PORN SUPERSTORE, THEODORABLE INVITES AN OLD FRIEND TO PRACTICE, GEORGE JAH HAS AN ALLERGY ATTACK, AND ALEXANDER DEPOT HAS TO POLICE HIS SOCK DRAWER.

"THE PRACTICE SPACE BLUES"/"HERE COMES THE NEIGHBORHOOD" IS THE FIFTH CHAPTER AND CONCERNS THE BAND'S SEARCH FOR NEW PRACTICE DIGS AND BIBLE STUDY AT THE NEIGHBOR'S. THEODORABLE GETS A CRUSH, GEORGE JAH FIGHTS CITY HALL, ALEXANDER DEPOT DISLIKES A MAN WITH A SUSPICIOUS BRITISH ACCENT, AND FUNNYBEAR PICKS UP A SIDEKICK.

THIS SHOULD BE PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER. THIS IS NOT REALLY PORNOGRAPHIC BUT DOES CONTAIN LANGUAGE SUCH AS THE WORD "SPIFFY" WHICH MAY OFFEND SOME READERS. THIS IS COPYWRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR EXCEPT FOR THE COVER IMAGE WHICH IS COURTESY OF MICHAEL DEE.