

BUNNYHOP

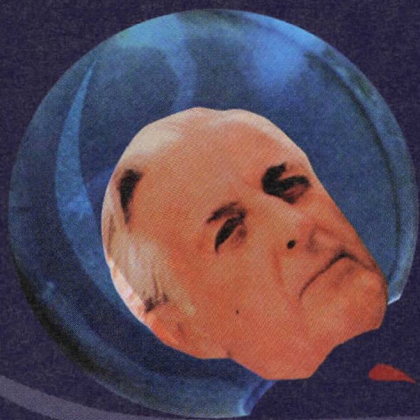
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ISSUE NUMBER 6 • \$3.95

The
NORMAL
issue



"Mr. Jenkins lost his head
when things got Cosmic."



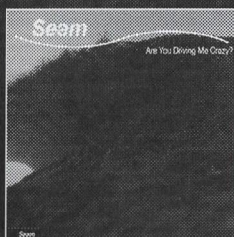
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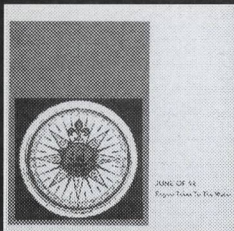
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June of 44
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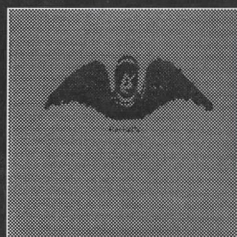
The Denison/Kimball Trio
Soul Machine
GR22 Lp/Cd



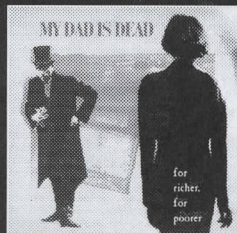
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Dirty Three
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BUNNYHOP

The "Normal" Issue.

Noël Tolentino as *Ward Cleaver*

Seth Robson as *Eddie Haskell*

"There Goes the Neighborhood" kids

Sean Beaudoin, Sara Bellum, Sean Bokenkamp, Wendy Bryan, Ian Connelly, Darby, Glenn Donaldson, Joe Donohoe, Jacob Estes, Dale Flattum, Joshua Glenn, Michael Gorgei, Jennifer Lehrer, Michele Mantynen, Rob Reger, Leah Reich, Steve Smith, Niklas Vollmer, Jason White, Jason Yakich

Much needed assistance courtesy of

Sean Bokenkamp, Wendy Bryan, Molly Gallagher, Michele Mantynen, Kevin Mathieu, Rob Reger, and Tiffany Romain

Cover Art

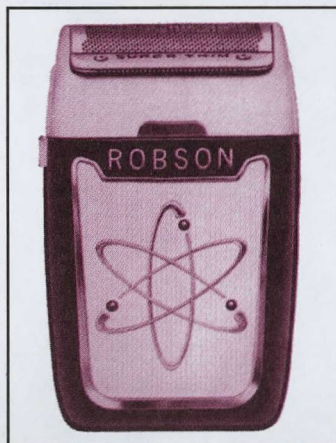
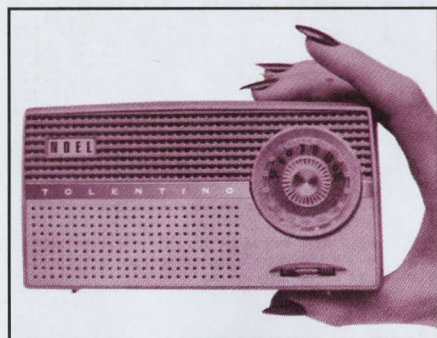
Noël (with apologies and respect to Bil Keane)

Friendly Advice

Don't be a dick, dick.

Distribution

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Advertising rates available upon request.

Copies of this issue are available for \$5 ppd. via first class mail. In stores, this issue is available for a mere \$3.95 + applicable sales tax, so if the store charged you more, demand a refund for the difference. That kind of behavior won't be tolerated in this house.

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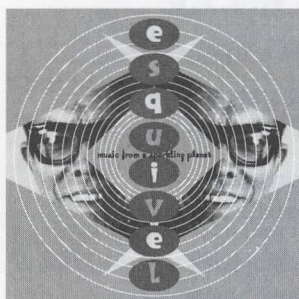
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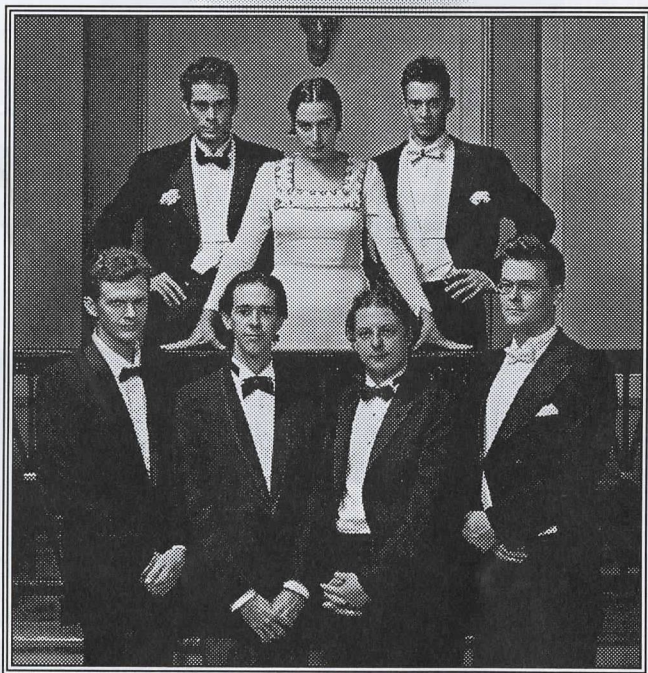
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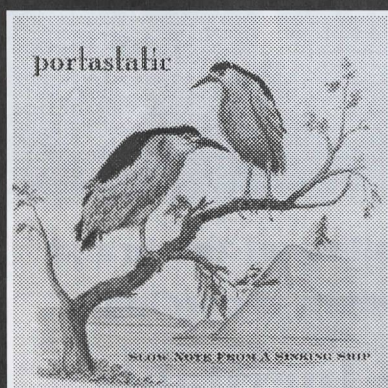
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- 1 shallow end
- 2 mower
- 3 on the mouth
- 4 cadmium
- 5 who needs light
- 6 ribbon
- 7 foolish
- 8 100,000 fireflies
- 9 invitation
- 10 makeout bench
- 11 baxter
- 12 connecticut
- 14 throwing things (acoustic)
- 16 night of chill blue
- 13 lying in state
- 15 i'll be your sister
- 17 forged it
- 18 home at dawn

(whatever, it's just a bunch of songs)

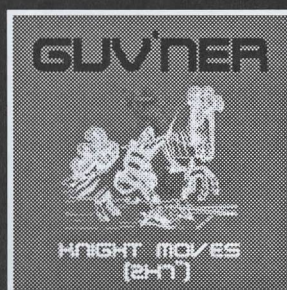


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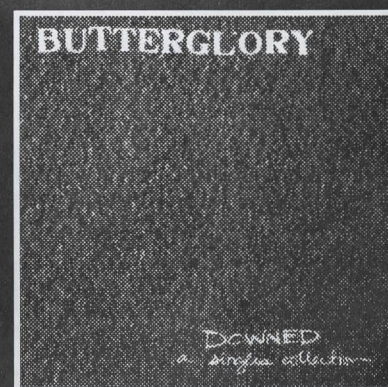
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Dear Bunnyhoppers,

It took me **2 weeks** to read *Bunnyhop* because I would only allow myself a few pages a day as a special treat. Now I'm finished and am basking in the warm, blissful after-glow. It's so great I... I can hardly write right now... give me some time to recover and I'll write again soon.

Your new fan gal,
Michele Mantynen
San Francisco, CA

A few weeks later...

Dear Noel,

I just picked up *Ben Is Dead* and noticed that you're working for them as well. Busy busy busy! *Bunnyhop* made me feel perky over many a long Muni commute to my dead-end desk job. Here's what struck me about it:

— Great Mr. Rogers interview! I'm glad you asked him the questions you did. I used to laugh at him too, and then I realized that he's one of the few TV personalities who is 100% sincere about helping kids. He's corny, but hell, little kids *are* corny. (I'm glad you asked him about the children's dress-up / transvestism thing; it was cool the way he took it in stride and answered it honestly.)

— The cover made me buy it, to be honest. I didn't care what was inside, as long as I could have that cover. (I'm so glad the contents surpassed my expectations!)

— The short personal stories were fun and damn well written.

— You're a really good interviewer, dang it! Smart questions leading to interesting answers. Kerri Kenney, Dan Clowes, Combustible Edison (whose recordings I must buy now)... all impressive.

And and and... golly, I dunno, it's all just a thrilling package of delights sprinkled with a cheerful, slightly silly / cynical yet wholesome

and perverse attitude that made me want to buy an extra copy and wrap it up in mylar like the finest comic-nerds do.

To wrap up, two Peeps-related stories for you:

Uno: The latest baseball fan insult is to buy marshmallow Peeps, slice 'em open, stuff 'em with pennies, and throw them at the players. Don't know what this means, but it seems funny.

Dos: Last week I saw a big pile of dog poop on my street that had bright pink Peeps smeared into it. Either a dog ate a bunch of Peeps and they came out fairly whole, or someone smeared them into it... ew, I don't want to speculate on this one any more...

xxx,

Michele Mantynen

Noel-

Mister Rogers interview - A++

Pac Man article in *B.I.D.* - A+++

♥ Steven

Seattle, WA

Noel,

Just read *Bunnyhop* 5 and I must say, well done. Painfully funny and potentially psychotic flashback inducing. Luckily I got over high school a couple of years ago. I'm 33.

As a junior I quit football by yelling "**Fuck you Wheeler!**" (the head coach) at the top of my lungs near the end of practice one day. This made me a hero, an outcast and a respected psycho all at once.

I got over it.

Wheeler didn't.

Good luck,

Ken Howells

Dear Noel,

I saw an ad for *Bunnyhop* in the most recent *Beer Frame* and while thinking about sending

away for it, I ran across it at a record store a couple of days later and picked it up. Very nice piece of work. I especially like the Daniel Clowes and Mister Rogers interviews. I could definitely identify with the theme, as my high school was very cliquey and athletic talent was the principal arbiter of male social status. Feeling much more at home in the classroom than on the playing field, I was pretty low in the pecking order. But I'm not convinced that geeks and jocks can't mix. I had two good friends in college who were both football players in high school (and one in college) and were both valedictorians. While they may not have exhibited the signs of severe testosterone poisoning that continue to plague many high school athletes, they were certainly "jocks" and yet never lost touch with their geek side. My point is that I think it may possible to mix the two to some degree and trying to make things too black and white just lends itself to the sort of fascistic thinking most often associated with the "jocks". In fact despite my impeccable geek credentials I am (and have always been) a big sports fan. Despite the fact that I can't play them well, I still do find sports entertaining to watch and follow.

Sincerely,

Todd Bennington

Minnetonka, MN

Todd,

Perhaps you didn't read everything in Bunnyhop #5. I felt it was quite evident that there was much geek/jock crossover, in interviews as well as personal accounts. If you think about it, people like John Madden and Jimmy the Greek are big time nerds. The same applies to the majority of baseball card collectors and record collectors; both types inundate themselves with trivial matter regarding their particular heroes. In other words, a nerd is a nerd. Some recognize it and embrace it while others try to cover it up with machismo and mustard. - N.

Hello Noel,

I just finished reading *honeybunnysockhop* and congratulations, it's a beautiful bouncing bunny (all ten fingers + toes + batteries not included.) Wow! It's flabbergasting stupendous + if I ran the circus it would win the biggest lion trophy in the world!

♥ Shamira

Santa Cruz, CA

Dear Noël Tolentino-

...I was working behind the counter of a small

press store (Reading Frenzy) here in Portland, OR, and I took time to sample the wares. What a fine, upstanding publication you have here. A veritable powerhouse of good reading. I can see that the yearbook theme runs rampant through your pages as well. Well, I won't kick your ass for it. **This time.** Would you like to trade the fruits of our endeavors? If so, let me know & I'll send you #3 in May. If not, no sweat, I don't take any of the compliments back. Thanks for putting (it) out.

A fan,
Sean Tejaratchi
Portland, OR

Hey Noel,
Thanks for the *Bunnyhop*! You did a great job with this—I like the design, content, humor, etc.... Well done, m'boy!
Best to you,
Dan Clowes
Berkeley, CA

Noel,
I'm always sick. I used to never get sick. I suck. I've got serious jock mentality. I want to beat up everybody, buy a gun, kill certain people. The huge amount of geeks in the underground make me feel tough. I'm thousands in debt and feel frustrated with petty concerns like parking tickets. I missed out on the whole high school experience but I kind of know what you're talking about. (Flunked out.) Mikki H. was nice to *The Probe* in *Ben Is Dead*. If she is really interested in geek guys and knows girls who are... I know the perfect guy. I've lived with him for over 5 years but he's nothing like me. He is tall, long hair, 165 IQ, plays on the internet and those games too, Trekky, no girlfriend *at all*, hasn't kissed a girl in years, but he's really good looking. (Just too desperate—scares them away.) He just got a raise to \$37,500 a year as a computer analyst for some company, plus they are sending him to college to keep him from leaving for another company. **He also has an 8 inch dick.** Nice guy, 24 years old. I don't have his computer address right now. Oh yeah, name is Todd.

I just put a classified in the *Guardian* for black girls in the San Leandro area. My 19 year old "rocker chick" girl kind of blew me off.

I almost jerked off at the photo of Cake Like, then I read the interview and was glad I didn't. They got to rock.

I'm positive I can hit a baseball farther than Seth. That was my life for years. Couldn't play high school ball, cut for grades. Broke my leg twice at 14 and 15 and then destroyed my

shoulder (throwing arm) playing tackle street football. My Babe Ruth coach was arrested for screwing the players. (Team swim partner.) The Cows... great interview. Blues Explosion, too, great taste in music. I still doubt I'd like Cake Like.

I don't like funny fiction geek articles like Celeb Moments. 7) e 12) a 18) b were the only survey questions I saw an answer for. Boring, huh? Lisa Carver stopped writing me back.

Thanks again,
Aaron Muentz
editor of *The Probe*

Aaron,
Okay, you asked for it. We're going to have to settle this like real men—down at the batting cages at the local Castle Golf & Games. While you're in the neighborhood, I'll skool you at air hockey, too. And Cake Like rocks just fine, thank you very much. — S.

Greetings Earth Noel.
Here I am sending you notes to do with.
To spread.
To use.
To ignore.
As
you
wish.
Every effect has a counter effect and I am full of hooley.
I Love you
Spaz

Dear Mr. Noël and Mr. Sether,
I christen *Bunnyhop* the finest publication since *Polymer News*. Thanks again for making me lose sleep 'cause I had to read, ya rascal. Grrr. J. Spencer & C. Edison turned out so great (content & layout-wise). Made me sad that I didn't get to chat it up with the Millionaire, too. Thanx fer bein so "special" (I swear I was on the verge a tears w/ Mr. Rogers. That man is all about love).

♥ Always,
W.

W,
How could we possibly compete with Polymer News? They're pretty tough over there. — S.

Hi Noel
Happy belated VD day. Hope love dropped a heavy safe on yr face. Yummy.
Holy shit.
Got the new shiny beautiful *Bunnyhop*! So far I'm havin' a blast. Don't ever change!

See ya this summer!
We're lucky you shine your love light on us daddy-o.
Just a short note for now.
Hope all your ice cream don't melt b/f you finish the cone.

xoxoxo
♥ Jessie Jones
P.S. I have this beautiful old musical snowball bunny. It plays "Here comes Peter Cottontail" and it's so old that the pink and yellow and blue and green bits of "snow" are mixed in w/goeey dust. It's cloudy and sad and beautiful and everytime my friend Evan sees it he throws it on the floor or tries to hide it from me.

Hi kids:
Well, the new *Bunnyhop* is absolutely FABULOUS. Simply wonderful! All of IUMA was grabbin' for it. First hand accounts below:

Beach said, "I'm so glad that stuff like this is out there."

The "How to Get a Geek Guy" personally spoke to Rob Lord. He's determined to xerox and distribute it to all his geek friends.

After giving *Bunnyhop* a quick read, Will Hobbs remarked, "Noël, that guy's crazy." He then retold stories of first year at Porter and all the wacky pranks you and your roommate were always up to.

Brandee gets her *Bunnyhop* fix every night, reading another page or two before getting some shut-eye.

take care my little bunnies,
Brandee
CEO, IUMA



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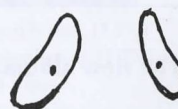
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ROCK

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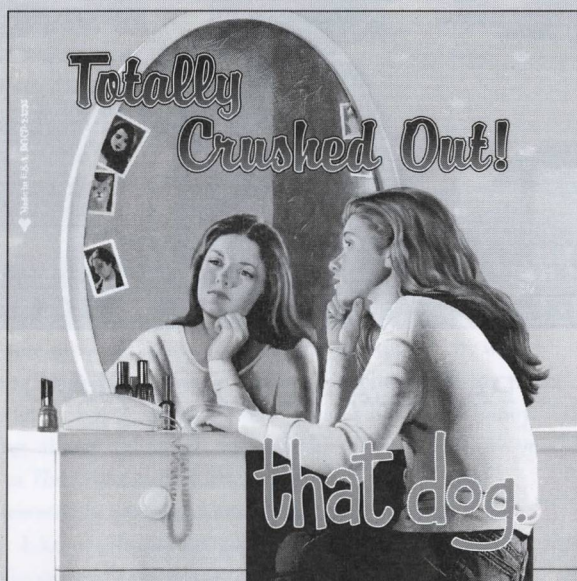
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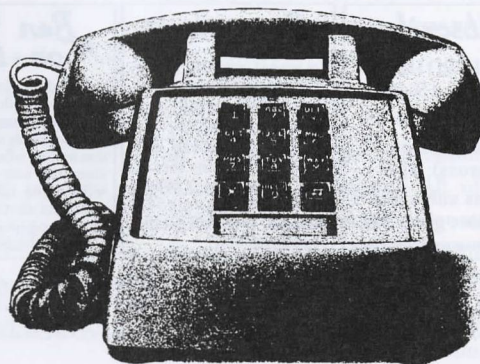
“he’s kissing christian.”



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It's about that time again, you bozos!



BUNNYHOP

Survey Results

Hello there, dear reader. The following are the results from our wonderful reader survey from the last issue. The survey was aimed at people who live, or have lived, in the San Francisco area, but that didn't stop all of these other clowns from faking it. **Enjoy!**

Age: 1-29 (80%), 30-39 (15%), 40 and beyond (5%)

Sex: female (60%), male (40%)

Sexual Orientation: heterosexual (50%), other (30%), declined to state (12%), John Travolta (5%), hairy sweaty guys (3%)

Occupation: administrative assistants, students, musicians, busboys, computer analysts, publicists, artists, low-lives, "imagineers", sex workers, brokers, bellhops, etc.

Hobbies / Interests: reading, writing, beer, steak, pussy, music, girls, cars, Yoko Ono, zines, Las Vegas, stuff, cartoons, accordion music, Icees, photography, television, etc.

1. When you think of San Francisco, you are immediately reminded of...

- a) Rice-a-Roni (55%)
- b) Diane Feinstein
- c) cable cars
- d) Johnnie LeMaster
- e) Zodiac Killer (25%)
- f) Karl Malden (20% "...leading to boners")

2. Word was out that MTV was bringing *The Real World* to San Francisco. You...

- a) got horny and applied. (15% "got horny when Noël applied")
- b) applied because you thought this was your chance to make a difference.
- c) applied because you thought it would be funny in a post-modern sense. (10%)
- d) didn't apply and called everybody who wanted to apply a sell-out. (20%)
- e) didn't apply because you're too cool. (30%)
- f) didn't apply because you're a junkie. (5%)
- g) other (20%)

Notable "other" answer: "...just knew it wouldn't last; SF was the only good *Real World*, 95% because of Puck being a real human being"

3. If the San Francisco Giants left to play ball in San Jose, I would...

- a) jump up for joy.

b) move to San Jose.

- c) miss them sorely. (10%)
- d) start rooting for the Oakland A's.
- e) barely give a shit. (75%)
- f) loot stores for a pair of Fila's. (5%)
- g) other (5%)

Notable "other" answer: "All my male friends would whine."

4. The most famous person you know in San Francisco is...

- a) Huey Lewis (10%)
- b) Lisa Palac
- c) Eiso (20%)
- d) Jaina A. Davis (25%)
- e) Puck (5%)
- f) "Mister" Jennings
- g) Yourself
- h) other (Elvis Herselvis - 20%; Noël - 20%)

5. There is a lot of lame shit in San Francisco. My long list includes...

- a) the smell of piss in the streets. (15%)
- b) Counting Crows. (10%)
- c) parking problems. (30%)
- d) hippies who just can't get over it. (15%)
- e) the lack of all-ages venues.
- f) limited job opportunities.
- g) all of the above.
- h) other (40%)

Notable "other" answer: "Mill Valley"

6. The most desirable character on MTV's *The Real World* is...

- a) Rachel (5%)
- b) Judd
- c) Cory (5%)
- d) Pedro
- e) Pam (5%)
- f) Mohammed
- g) Puck
- h) the little lost dog Puck found on the streets (85%)

7. I read the personals in the *Guardian* and the *SF Weekly* because...

- a) I'm lonely and pathetic.
- b) the people that place them lie about themselves

and that's comedy.

- c) I actually think I can meet someone.
- d) there's a sucker born every minute and I'm only three and a half seconds old. (25%)
- e) where there's a will, there's an "A". (25%)
- f) other (50%)

Notable "other" answer: "Sarah Jacobson swears by them."

8. I have an office job. I found out that fax machines are good for...

- a) mooning people with your xeroxed butt. (15%)
- b) playing tic-tac-toe. (10%)
- c) business. (30%)
- d) the economy. (10%)
- e) Little Twin Stars shows. (10%)
- f) other (25%)

Notable "other" answers: "Flirting with record distributors." "Sending silly drawings to Teen Beat."

9. I used to be...

- a) punk rock (15%)
- b) death rock (10%)
- c) a hippie
- d) a yuppie
- e) into Dio (18%)
- f) Shirley Maclaine (7%)
- g) other (50%)

Notable "other" answers: "...into Bon Jovi." "...New Wave, but please don't tell anyone."

10. People who shop at Sanrio are usually...

- a) cute (35%)
- b) Asian (15%)
- c) art students (15%)
- d) Riot Grrrls (25%)
- e) pasty and need lotsa color in their life (15% "...who like the smell of erasers")

11. The "scene" here in San Francisco is made up of...

- a) handsome and healthy kids.
- b) ugly and sickly kids. (10%)
- c) handsome and wealthy kids who try to look ugly and poor. (15%)
- d) ugly and poor kids who try to look handsome and wealthy.

- e) sickeningly ugly kids who are handsomely wealthy. (10%)
 f) a bunch of jerks. (55%)
 g) other (10%)
Notable "other" answer: "...trust fund babies."

12. I want to be famous for...

- a) all the right reasons. (30%)
 b) all the wrong reasons. (20%)
 c) fifteen minutes.
 d) fifteen seconds. (20%)
 e) being dismembered. (7%)
 f) other (23%)

Notable "other" answer: "...all the right reasons in bed." "...the Little Twin Stars." "...fathering objectivist children."

13. I think I'm pretty alternative. I have...

- a) a large collection of obscure music that nobody else likes. (45%)
 b) a tattoo of Tattoo.
 c) fashionable genital warts.
 d) pierced nipples. (10%)
 e) my asshole clamped with a bear trap. (25%)
 f) eight pairs of high-heeled silver clogs.
 g) other (20%)

Notable "other" answers: "...free jazz boyfriends." "...rather large testicles."

14. I left my ___ in San Francisco.

- a) heart
 b) wallet (45%)
 c) brain
 d) family (10%)
 e) past (10%)

- f) car
 g) other (35%)

Notable "other" answers: "virginity", "pale and pasty attitude"

15. My diet consists of...

- a) pasta and super burritos (40%)
 b) paste
 c) salad and water (10%)
 d) milk and cookies (10%)
 e) coffee and Egg McMuffins
 f) salmonella and E. Coli (10%)
 g) other (30%)

Notable "other" answer: "...cookies and Coke"

16. Mayor Frank Jordan is...

- a) doing one helluva job.
 b) not doing me any good. (9%)
 c) not doing me anymore. (8%)
 d) quite smashing in his Speedos. (23%)
 e) at his best when he wears that fluffy bunny out fit. (50%)
 f) other (10%)

17. I consider myself to be...

- a) a "10".
 b) hecka sweet. (5%)
 c) the cat's meow. (20%)
 d) a born loser.
 e) pussy-whipped. (10%)
 f) not very accomodating in bed. (15%)
 g) swell.
 h) other (50%)

Notable "other" answers: "...selfish and completely right." "...clowny."

18. San Francisco 49er quarterback Steve Young...

- a) is better than Joe.
 b) is okay by me. (20%)
 c) totally sucks. (10%)
 d) should get his leg broken like Joe Thiesman. (1%)

- e) shouldn't make any underwear commercials any time soon. (60%)
 f) other (9%)

Notable "other" answer: "...is a wuss."

19. When I grow up, I want to be just like...

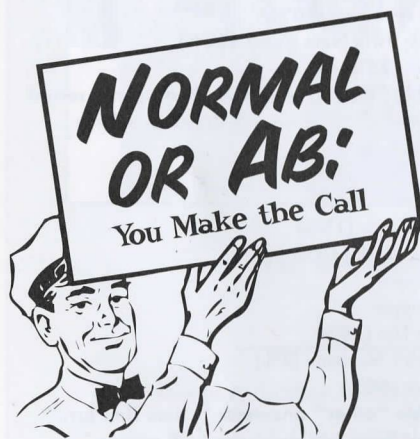
- a) Mike
 b) the girls on *Baywatch* (20%)
 c) Ralph Wiggum
 d) Heaven (15%)
 e) Bruce Lee (45%)
 f) Sarah Purcell
 g) other (20%)

Notable "other" answers: "...Phil Milstein." "...Bruce Lee with breasts." "...Nancy Drew."

20. My favorite landmark in San Francisco is...

- a) the Golden Gate Bridge.
 b) Coit Tower.
 c) the Transamerica Pyramid. (10%)
 d) the "Free Advice" guy on Columbus Street.
 e) an empty parking space (with an hour left on the meter). (30%)
 f) that little falafel place at 16th & Valencia. (20%)
 g) Noc Noc.
 h) other (40%)

Notable "other" answers: "...my ass." "...toy stores in the Mission." "...El Castillito Taqueria."



By Michael Gorgei

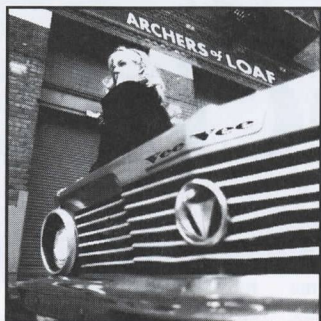
- Painting your fingernails black.
- Pulling your fingernails out with pliers and sending them to someone you secretly admire.
- Drowning puppies.
- Crying your eyes out every time someone mentions the word "popcorn."
- Having wet dreams involving Hootie and the Blowfish.
- Piercing your nose.
- Piercing your head with a javelin.

- Showing your breasts to a trucker on the freeway.
- Showing your peter to a mother and her children at a local mall.
- Sometimes, but not always, shitting in the wastebasket next to the toilet instead of in the toilet, then letting it sit for weeks.
- Collecting eight-track tapes.
- Collecting broken chunks of asphalt.
- Passing out drunk on railroad tracks.
- Calling a Fundamentalist Christian network's 1-800 number at 3 a.m. and making what you believe are demonic noises.
- Sending a complimentary letter to Edie Brickell.
- Having sex with a person you've met hours or minutes before.
- Getting a corporate logo tattooed on your forehead.
- Changing your name to Goose Geesenow, Private Eye.
- Wearing a big jester's hat with bells on it around an outdoor amphitheater where seven or eight "alternative" bands are playing.
- Locking your keys in your car, killing the first person who offers you assistance and

then getting caught because, well, your keys are locked in the car.

- Hanging up your clothes before you got to bed.
- Ignoring your profusely bleeding ears because "doctors cost too much money."
- Writing your old priest a thank-you letter for helping you "grow up faster."
- Sawing your foot off and replacing it with one of those giant foam rubber hands people used to wave around at basketball games.
- Being in a rock band and overdosing on heroin and dying.
- Making hot soup for the homeless man outside your apartment window and then dumping it on his head.
- Pulling out a toy gun when you get pulled over for speeding and getting shot because of it.
- Disrupting family functions by running around, windmilling your arms and screaming "Aieeee! Aieeeeeeeee!! Aieeeeeeeeeeeee!!!"
- Swallowing whatever change is in your pocket at the end of the day.
- Pretending your life actually means something. ☹️

Ahhhhhhh!



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Eggs-istential Cocktale

by Sean Bokenkamp

Chewing the Chicken Fat.

The Hindus described the beginning of the world as a cosmic egg. First came nonbeing and then the nonbeing became existent and turned into an enormous egg. When the egg hatched, the earth and sky spilled out. Consciousness comes from the question, "How did I get here?" Through this question the mind is born out of the nonbeing as a distinct and separate entity. Between the known present and the unknown past lies a void that the human need for order has to fill with myths, science, and stories. So the chaos of the unknown is simplified into the duality of what once was and what is now. This cosmic duality can be best expressed in the question, "Which came first, the chicken or the egg." Out of the egg came the world, just as people create gods who then create people through creation myths. By applying the Cosmic Chicken-question to all this we find that humanity becomes the chicken, hatching stories and inseminating the void of the unknown with words.¹

The birth of consciousness comes from the human need for order and the need to believe that people are different from animals. Pliny the Elder, 23-79 AD, argued that it was Man, "...for whose sake all other things appear to have been produced by Nature." He also thought that all things were either useful to Man or could at least provide a moral lesson. As with the chicken and the egg, it is hard to say whether this need to mentally separate humans from animals came from the urge to eat animals or whether it was the other way around. Levi-Strauss saw fire as a universal tool used by humans to transform "food," (by which he meant "meat"), from a natural state (bloody) to a culturally palatable state (burg-

er). He saw this culinary point of evolution as the line marking the emergence of humanity. Anthropologists often conjecture that early "uncivilized" Man ate nuts and berries and scrounged for vegetables until He got smart enough to use tools to kill and hunt animals. So hunting is equated with civilization and technology (weapons and fire). Early women, on the other hand, were associated with the less civilized vegetable collecting and child-bearing. Early humans often believed in fertility goddesses. So then, the move to hunting and more aggressive and male gods of war is associated with evolving into a higher level of civilization.² In order to convince himself that Man is superior, he puts himself at the apex of the food chain and at the head of the household. It is the male who carves the meat during the special holiday rituals of Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. And it is the man, armed with A-1 sauce and a spatula, that plays the role of provider and protector in the wild out-back of the backyard on summer barbecues.

Whereas hunting is associated with red meat and sexual conquest, the white meat of chickens is perceived as more clean and pure. Chicken meat, drained of blood and relatively free of visible veins and fat, is easier to stomach since it less resembles human flesh.³

While chickens are not hunted, they were domesticated fairly early in human history. Due to this, people have had the opportunity to observe the chicken and its habits in depth whereas only a fraction of a wild bird's actions might ever be seen. Chickens have been praised, worshipped, studied, eaten, and talked about for centuries. As the object of so much attention, the chicken frequently represents

those things that people are looking for. Perhaps because of this, almost every part of the chicken's body was thought to be useful for medicine, food, or magic.⁴

One of the things that fascinated people about chickens was the egg. To explain why no chicken emerged from unfertilized eggs, the Greeks came up with the idea that the wind had impregnated the hen. Such eggs were called "hyponemia oa" or wind-eggs. Pliny the Elder thought that hens conceived unfertilized eggs "by mutual imagination of lust among themselves" or sometimes from dust. To men, the egg was seen as a strong symbol of the mysterious and often threatening power of the female to create life.⁵ As such, men tried to explain the egg and to claim it for their own. The abnormally small eggs that were sometimes found in hen's nests were thought to be "cock's eggs." In reality this weird egg results from improperly formed eggs where skin tissue has accidentally been encapsulated in shell. It is significant though that men looked for a male counterpart to the female power to lay. Perhaps this egg-envy magnified the need to believe in the power of the strutting, cocky cock.⁶ Before sperm counts or genetic testing, it was thought that what decided whether a man's sperm impregnated a woman or not was his masculinity or macho-ness. Thus the cock, due to its promiscuity and the resultant fertility of the hen, has been used as an aphrodisiac and symbol of male sexuality for centuries.

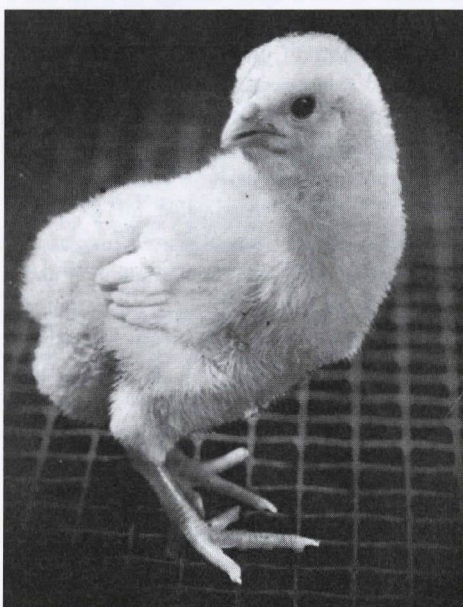
The chicken and the egg are interlinked and each half of this equation holds a strange fascination for people. There is a saying or thought or myth for practically every part of the chicken's body. Receiving a wish by snapping off the larger part of the "wishbone"

might have originated from rituals where chicken bones were used to predict the future. Or it might just be one of those creepy practices picked up from contact with UFO's full of aliens who glory in doing likewise with human bones. People have often gutted chickens, looking for answers amongst the entrails. Chickens, and particularly white chickens are seen in many religions, such as Hoodoo, as possessing powerful magic. Chicken feet, feathers, blood, hearts, and everything in between are used in sacrifices and spells. Yet even live chickens were used to divine the future. The Greeks and Romans often kept flocks of cocks in order to read the omens before starting off on a military campaign. If the cocks rose with the morning and went about eating, which almost always happened, the omen was good. But if the men couldn't get their cocks up, they decided to stay home and toss the ball around with the little boys for awhile. Which isn't too far off the mark, since older men in Greece and Rome also gave cocks as gifts of love to young boys who they were trying to seduce. Why say it with flowers when you can go straight for the cock?

The chicken's magical power comes in large part from its sexuality. The Greeks thought that it was the cock crowing that actually made the sun rise. Which is a pretty heroic feat of sexual will (i.e. crowing so loud that the whole world gets up.) The hen, on the other hand, is revered for its amazing fertility and the fierceness with which it protects its young. The perception of these qualities in the hen and cock also mirror what traits were valued in human men and women. The fierce virile male and the protective mothering hen.

Poultry power, sexual or not, was also perceived as having tremendous healing capabilities. Before the Enlightenment and its Objective Scientific Reasoning, the chicken was used as a remedy for almost everything. Part of this association between health and chickens comes from the fact that hens were sacrificed to Aesculapius, the Greek god of medicine. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, was fond of four egg whites beaten and taken in three quarts of water as a laxative. The cure for an inflamed penis was a mixture of cumin and eggshells which were cooked together and then applied to the afflicted area. Cock's testicles were ground up in water and prescribed for epilepsy (the first cocktail?). A cock's heart, freshly plucked and still beating, was tied to the pelvis of a woman in labor in order to hasten birth.⁷ Eggs, to be applied with rose oil and a lint bandage, were used to heal ulcers or abscesses "near the anus and the pubis." The list goes on forever, sprinkled liberally with

equal measures of chicken fat and cock's feet. Although much of the chicken folk medicine does not work, chicken soup has recently been studied and found to be a healthy meal for the sickly. To a certain extent, like the modern doctor's placebo pill, the chicken's power to heal comes from the patient's faith in that power. And the chicken was a powerful animal in widely divergent cultures. The chicken struts and puffs with the power we so desperately want it to have. People were drawn to those parts of the chicken's body which they feared and were fascinated by, just as they smeared certain parts of the chicken's body onto the injured parts of their own bodies. The thing that they were consuming was not the chicken but themselves and their own ideas.



Astronomic Past and a Gastronomic Future.

If you went around believing what everybody told you, then the world would not only be your oyster, it would also taste like chicken. Why chicken you ask? As far as omnipresent and powerful images go, there are few that can hold a candle to the chicken and its egg. Ever since the Greeks, Western culture has basted the chicken with the spices of its collective imagination. The chicken almost seems happy to oblige our dress-up fantasies of super-male and super-female sexuality. But alas, our modern chicken has lost its flavor and zest.

When people nowadays use the phrase, "Tastes like chicken," they are most likely using the chicken to represent some sort of ubiquitous white-bread symbol of the bland and familiar. The phrase, "Tastes like chicken," is used to make the exotic familiar and more palatable. Eating can often take on the

aspect of the horrific. It is not safe to eat the unfamiliar, not only because it might taste bad or be poisonous, but because we might not be keyed in on the social meanings of eating foreign animals or unknown parts of such animals. In ancient Rome sow's wombs were eaten with sow's udders as a delicacy. Some today might wince at such a feast. If eating the reproductive organs of animals is kinky, then why don't we have a problem with eating unfertilized chicken eggs? And why don't they serve pet snakes or dogs on the menu at Denny's? Is it just a matter of taste?

The social constructions of taste, aesthetic as well as sensual, flavor things more than the object itself. Up until just a few decades ago chickens were seen as a valuable luxury meat and beef was seen as the food that the common poor folk ate. Thus the Republican Party's promise in 1928 during the Depression to put "a chicken in every pot."⁸ If chickens were seen as bland and abundant to every poor yokel, then this wouldn't be much of a political promise. At the time, a chicken dinner on Sunday represented a level of economic well-being that most people desired.

So what happened? Christianity harnessed the chicken's power, which had its roots in sexuality, and sanitized it. Again the chicken was used for food and moral lessons, but this time to illustrate the Protestant Ethic. The word "cock" was castrated into a word that blushing Christians found more palatable and easier to roll off their tongues, "rooster." The raunchy sexual nature of chickens was downplayed at the same time that the power of the chicken as a symbol was claimed for Christ. The sexual connotations of questioning if the chicken or the egg came first was lessened by saying that God created all creatures.⁹ Therefore the original chicken was extricated from the vicious cycle of its own genitals and placed in the hands of God, where it was expected to work. In a similar way, the egg was used as a symbol for the rebirth of Christ. To be born is to be an egg, but to be reborn through Christ was to hatch forth into the real world. The hen was seen as the embodiment of the Protestant Ethic. Hens are thrifty in that they eat anything from scraps to crap, and their prodigious egg-laying was seen as industrious and pious. People were urged to labor for God as the hen labored for man. The Reverend C. S. Lovell, in his 1836 book, *Young Pupils' Second Book* wrote:

"Of all feathered animals, there is none more useful than the common hen. Her eggs supply us with food during her life, and her flesh affords us delicate meat after her death. What a motherly care does she take of her

young! How closely and tenderly does she watch over them, and cover them with her wings; and how bravely does she defend them from every enemy, from which she herself would fly away in terror, if she had not them to protect!"¹⁰

Parables such as The Little Red Hen enforced people's perception that the hen was an industrious worker who made any and all sacrifices for her children. Parables such as Chicken Little also reinforced the idea that women tended to be flighty, gossipy, and overly emotional without the benevolent presence of the cock to watch over them.¹¹

It is the American Dream to obtain the independence and freedom that comes with wealth. And if this is not possible, people at least want the things that represent wealth, if not the wealth itself. In the mid-nineteenth century in America, tending chickens on one's own "Chicken Farm" was touted as being the best way to realize the American Dream. The family farm that raised chickens was self-reliant, and could make a decent living by thrift and hard work without having to punch a clock.

This idea was promoted and soon everyone was jumping on the chicken bandwagon. The advancing industrialism of the mid and late nineteenth century caught up with the chicken in its wake. The family farm was forced to boost egg production in order to compete with larger and more mechanized operations. Feed companies kept introducing new expensive feeds that supposedly increased egg-laying or hastened the growth of meat-chickens. New breeds were hybridized and specialized to be either egg-laying or meat chickens.¹² The vicious cycle of the egg and the hen became the vicious cycle of technology and nature. The need for larger flocks led to chicken overcrowding. This presented several problems. All those chickens created huge mountains of shit, which could present a dangerous health hazard to both chicks and chickens. Some farms just scattered saw-dust on top of the crap until the crap and saw-dust was several feet deep. Another solution was to raise the chickens off the ground in mesh cages and use bulldozers to sweep out the shit underneath. Out of boredom or from going a little stir-crazy, hens would often cannibalize each other. To solve this problem, the hens' beaks were cut off so that they could not seriously injure each other. The few cocks that were kept around as breeders retained their beaks, which after all, were needed to grab the hen by the neck during sex. Soon it became easier and cheaper just to buy incubated eggs instead of letting some hens replenish the flock. But the specialized strains

were often more susceptible to new diseases.

With the discovery that sunlight affected the pituitary gland within hens and activated egg-production, chickens were kept in factory-like farms where the amount of light could be consistently controlled. The hens would start out with 12 hour days which were then lengthened by 15 minutes a day until the hens were kept in 20 hours of "daylight." This push for production severely weakened chickens and made them even more susceptible to disease.¹³ Which in turn led to the need for more vaccines. Which viruses became immune to quick-er, which led to the need for more vaccines....

Karl Marx taught that the processes of production determine the character of society. The ancient Egyptians invented incubators that could hatch as many as ten thousand chicks at a time. Ancient China likewise had the technology to incubate large amounts of eggs. Such a large supply of food enables large groups of workers to busy themselves with forms of work other than growing and raising their own food. So perhaps it is the chicken and egg that are responsible for the Great Pyramids and the Great Wall of China, as well as Industrial America. Marx's statement about production can also be taken to mean that you are what you eat. The genetically altered and mass produced entity that is today called "chicken," tastes more like growth hormones, vaccines, and the stale blandness of desexed progress. Meat chickens are fattened to the point where their legs are not strong enough to hold up their bodies. Devoid of a beak, and huddled in virtually nonstop days of egg-ploping and bodily mutation, the old romanticism and regal symbolism surrounding chickens is now relied upon just to market these genetic monsters and to make them palatable to the consumer.

It is tempting to get all preachy and fowl-mouthed about the plight of chickens. I don't want to treat the chicken as merely meat or merely a moral lesson. Chickens do not represent one simple lesson or meaning. They are more than cowardly or courageous. Humans and chickens are linked, and people see things in the chicken that remind them of their own mortality, sexuality and appetites. This connection has existed for centuries.¹⁴ The chicken is a combination of opposites. The Western conception of chickens has evolved as people's perception of their relationship with nature has grown. People have used the behavior of chickens as Social Darwinian excuses for human behaviors, such as rape and bullying the weak. But what's the point? Are we just bipeds without feathers? The fact is that people narrow the world down to their own

periphery, creating it in their own image so that they can see what they understand even if they cannot always understand what they see. Egg begets chicken-shit begets sulfur clouds.

The second most baffling question that the chicken poses comes in the form of a joke: "Why did the chicken cross the road?" Maybe this question comes from the Hoodoo belief in the magical power of both crossroads and chickens. Regardless of that, this joke ridicules the fact that humans project meaning into the actions of animals at the same time that humans see themselves as separate from animals.


The question of the chicken and the egg presents us with the question of our own origins and whether meaning in life comes from living for one's self or in reproducing. Similarly, the chicken-crossing joke represents the argument about free agency and the purpose and motivation for our actions.

The answer to this riddle: "To get to the other side," mocks how humans seek balance and duality in all things. It also expresses the idea that form follows function. The chicken crosses the road so that it can get across. We think therefore we are.¹⁵ The human need for order expresses itself through philosophy and science. With these tools, people pave roads through the chaos to demarcate crossing points in human "progress."¹⁶

Are people, like the cock, strident individuals put here to look out solely for their own desires and hungers? Or are people meant to be socialized into pecking orders of clearly defined dominance and subservience?

Between what is and what was, there exists a void, a crossing, a road.

Why did the chicken cross the road?

It was afraid of being called chicken. 

¹ "In the beginning was the word." (John 1:1) And the words were chicken scratch. Does this all seem like mental masturbation to you? Well how do you expect to prepare the meal if you do not first choke the chicken? Food for thought. You cannot make chicken salad out of chicken shit and you cannot make a cake without breaking a few eggs.

² Fucking, shitting, eating and pissing are culturally charged actions because in each, the body's borders are penetrated and breached. In order for societies to feel like they are separate from and more civilized than savage beasts, there are strict rules and taboos about when these borders are to be crossed and how. The eating and sacrifice of chickens and their eggs are full of different taboos for each culture. People are attracted to and disgusted by how brazen chickens are with their bodily functions, which forces self-consciousness about the corresponding human action.

The senses do get confused. Hunger is the desire that ensures the survival of the individual. Sex is the desire that ensures the survival of the species. So of course these two hot spots tend to get linked and associated in various messy equations. In chickens, this connection is as obvious and plain to see as...guess what? Chicken butt, that's what. In chickens, as well as in other birds, the intestinal, genital, and urinary tracts all open into one single cavity, the cloaca. The egg therefore takes on the flavors of all the forbidden fruits: fucking and eating and shitting. The chicken is an ambiguous symbol in this respect since it is perceived as being clean and

dirty all at once. In Western cultures, white eggs were more valued because they were perceived as being more pure than brown or speckled eggs. In some Asian countries a fertilized egg that is incubated for several days is considered a delicacy. The perfect egg should have a yolk perky like a young firm breast. Rotten eggs are scented with the sulfuric fumes of a curdled fart. In some African tribes chicken eggs were thought to be part of the chicken's feces, and thus eating chicken eggs was taboo. The egg was also used as a fertility symbol in the orgies of Bacchus and in the Orphic mysteries. And yet the Protestants used the hen as a symbol of pious motherly devotion, regardless of the fact that cocks were not faithful to one hen. In *Annie Hall*, Woody Allen asks an elderly couple the secret to their being happily married for so long and the man answers: "We use a large vibrating egg."

³ The fantastic is that which inverts the "natural" order of things. P.T. Barnum, the master of the fantastic, advertised one of his side-shows with a poster depicting a vicious chicken. In large letters the poster proclaimed: "Six Foot Man Eating Chicken." After paying a small fee and entering a curtained room, the crowd was assaulted by the ghastly spectacle of a six-foot tall man sitting at a table eating a plate of chicken.

⁴ The chicken is thought to have originated in Southeast Asia. Being such a utilitarian and valuable animal, chickens were frequently traded among various nomadic peoples. From ancient Persia and Egypt, the chicken spread to Greece and Rome where Western culture just fell in love with these new exotic birds. The chicken was so highly valued that some Romans even built statues to commemorate their favorite fighting cocks. Another result of this popularity was that the chicken moved from the fringe to mainstream.

⁵ In this one old cartoon, Porky Pig is a chicken farmer. On his farm he has two roosters, both of which are drawn like slick crooners. One crooner is a parody of Bing Crosby and the other is a young Sinatra type. They both compete for the affection of all the hens. The suave dapper tones of their voices drive all the hens into fits of swoony swoon until each hen's ass starts to explode in orgasmic torrents of eggs. Each rooster's virility is measured by how many eggs he can elicit from the hens. And each rooster is competing against his rival's egg-totals. Come morning, Porky wakes up and sees all the eggs and fairly busts a nut. Porky is totally flabbergasted, so he asks a chicken what happened. Just then one of the roosters hums a few bars and a hurtling rocket-ship of eggs blast out of Porky's hamhock buttocks.

⁶ "Cock" is Old English for penis. The cock has been associated with the penis perhaps since it was domesticated. Cockfighting, likewise appears to date back to when chickens were domesticated. In modern Chinese the word for penis means "chicken-head." A ubiquitous cure used for a cock injured during cockfighting is to put the cock's head in one's mouth and to suck and to blow in order to clean the wounds and "revitalize" the cock. Chickens are naturally territorial and do fight in nature to establish dominance. But these encounters are brief and one cock ends up running away. Through confinement and breeding, humans cultivated this "natural" aggression within cocks. The connotation of "being chicken" perhaps comes from how the defeated cock will run away and when encountering the victorious cock in the future will again run away. This "pecking order" is, like cockfighting, a natural tendency which is exacerbated by the way in which humans keep chickens. When too many chickens are put together, they are more likely to fight and to establish clear lines of dominance over one another. Free range chickens are less likely to fight and to establish such well-defined "pecking orders."

⁷ In one book that I read, a hen's brain was said to be useful in stopping nosebleeds. Unfortunately the author did not elaborate on whether the brain was to be eaten or merely shoved up the offending nasal cavity.

⁸ As with most political promises, this one is also nothing new. In the sixteenth century, Henry IV of France said, "If God grants me the usual length of life, I hope to make France so prosperous that every peasant will have a chicken in his pot on Sunday." A great disincentive to armed revolt.

⁹ Which is essentially virgin birth, just as God created Jesus through virgin birth. So then does the Trinity, which represents the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, get tangled in the vicious cycle of the chicken and the egg? Whether the chicken or the egg came first, either may be perceived as a virgin birth since two chickens (male and female) would be required to make an egg. And an egg that suddenly hatches without being fertilized is the epitome of a virgin birth. Asking whether the Father or Son came first sounds like a joke about inbred people whose sons are their fathers. Inbred, the Last Supper offers body in bread. No one laughs at the running yolk. Sorry.

¹⁰ Obviously what is being valued here is the woman sacrificing her body up for the higher good, whether that be God's will or Man's various appetites. The woman's body is associated with meat.

The female succumbs to the male conquest, offering up a juicy piece of her tender meat. The passivity and weakness of women is also reinforced by implying that the hen is fierce only when protecting her young, whereas the cock's aggressions are sexual and aimed outward. Cockfighting is male competition to establish dominance, and the sexual act among chickens is seen by some as a form of rape since the cock chases the seemingly reluctant hen and then subdues her and bites her by the back of the neck to facilitate mounting her. Men then use this as proof that it is "natural" for the male to be dominant over women. The hen's sexuality is valued because it is subordinate to the male and to her chicks whereas the male's sexuality is valued for being aggressive and self-centered.

¹¹ This way of thinking was reinforced by the observation that some hens exhibited "male" characteristics and even chased and mounted other hens and cocks. Such breaches of the cultural norm were looked upon with disgust and fear. This theme is echoed in writings such as D. H. Lawrence's essay, "Cocksure Women and Hensure Men." The fear of sexual women conspiring and plotting together against males also finds its way into sayings such as the Irish proverb, "A whistling girl and a cackling hen come to no good end." "Cackling" because hens were thought to cackle triumphantly after having sex or after producing an egg. Men fear women laughing at them and treating them like they treat women. Overly aggressive men are called "cocky," and overly aggressive cocks repel hens more often than they attract them. On the other hand, a male that is not aggressive enough is seen as "chicken" or "pussy." The ultimate insult for the male is to be mounted by the female, and in the case of being called "pussy," to have that equipment of female sexuality installed where your masculinity should be. Which is strange since macho steak-eating men are supposedly always trying to "get some pussy." The symbol of male confidence and sexuality being perceived as ridiculous also finds its way into the "cockscumb." The cockscumb resembles and is associated with the male's genitals. The cockscumb is also the name for the drooping cap of a jester. Whereas the tines of the King's crown are erect, demanding respect and subservience, the flaccid prongs of the cockscumb represent the pretense and bluster of the inept male who is doomed to forever be ridiculed. When the woman is more aggressive, sexually or otherwise, the man is seen as "henpecked" or as a cuckold, and ultimately, a joke.

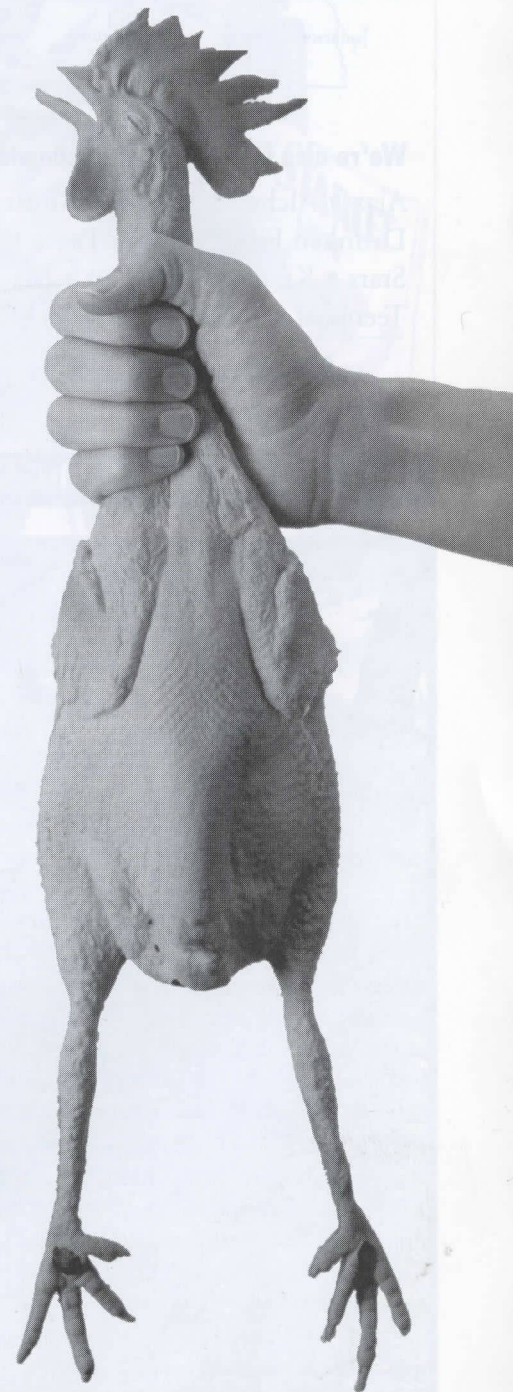
¹² By the 1890's, the Leghorn, which is a typically white and smallish breed of chicken from Italy, was found to be the best egg-laying chicken. This fact established the Leghorn as the stereotypical chicken. Such as Foghorn Leghorn, the affable Southern cock that was forever ensuring that no foxes or chicken-hawks were after his womb-hen women. As with other fairy tales and nursery rhymes, the only place in modern America that one is likely to encounter, on a regular basis, advice about not counting ones chickens before they've hatched, or the about tasks being as difficult as putting an egg back together again like Humpty Dumpty, is in cartoons. Americanisms and popular folk lore survive mainly in forms devoid of their original context in which they can then be parodied.

¹³ The Industrialized hen seems to be the manifestation of many women's nightmares. Trapped in her sexuality, her labor is exploited and she is forced to either labor until her own death in child-birth, or to "work" the streets, selling herself into marriage or prostitution. In 1927, Harry Lewis wrote that "the hen is too valuable as an egg machine to allow her to waste weeks and months in hatching eggs and brooding chickens. Then again, the hen is too fickle, too unstable, too variable in her whims and desires, to entrust to her the hatching of chicks on a large scale. Credit for making possible our great commercial poultry industry should go in large measure to the modern mammoth incubator." By essentializing the value of women in production and then taking even this power from their "fickle" hands, women become dispensable. Perhaps it is only a matter of time before the Anti-Abortionists invent a human incubator to replace the modern "unstable" women.

¹⁴ Plato defined man as "a biped without feathers." Diogenes, the leader of the Cynics brought a plucked cock to the Academy and asked Plato if this were not his "man." As far as archetypal "comedy" items go, the rubber chicken is second only to the rubber "Whoopie Cushion." And for centuries, bad philosophers and comics alike have roused the ire of cynics and critics and as a result found themselves tarred and feathered.

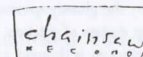
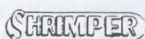
¹⁵ Nike should have some Chicken Street-Cross trainers since this joke fits in so well with their philosophical exhortation to "Just do it."

¹⁶ The answer to the chicken-crossing riddle is so simple that it makes fun of those that assume right away that it is a "deep" question. But like the amateur comic or philosopher, if one goes poking around blithely in the dens of cosmic chickens, one is liable to find oneself re-tarred and feather-brained.



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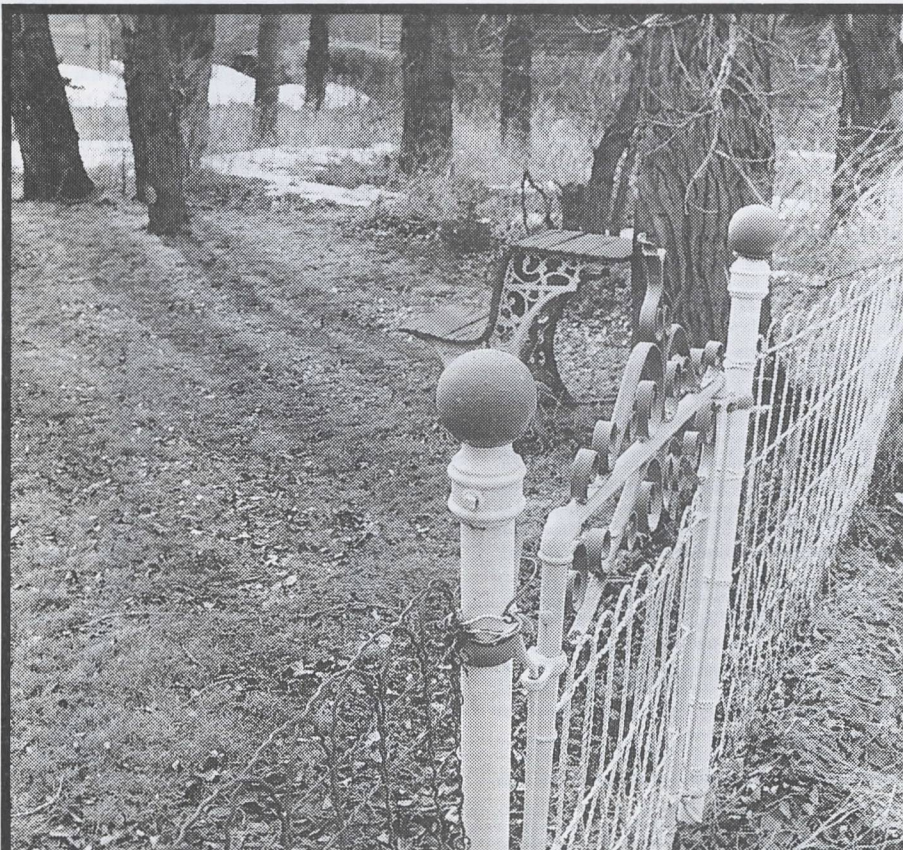
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Lisa Carver & Boyd Rice

Q uite possibly the most celebrated figure in zinedom, Lisa Carver has certainly graced the pages of many fine publications itching for her words of wisdom and whimsy. Even we fell into her trap two issues ago when she stole our center spread and years later I find that she is as charmingly enigmatic as ever. Provocateur, writer, bowler, and mother of one, Lisa sheds light into her buoyantly bizarre world through the world-famous Rollerderby magazine which continues to chart Top Ten Faves lists through and through.

While she's adored and admired by thousands, she has also been the center of much controversy in the "underground" community, partially due to her vitriolic, Ted Nugent-endorsed ruminations on Kurt Cobain's suicide, her attack on the underground's values, and her proposition of becoming the official voice of a new generation, Generation L. Perhaps most disturbing to her fans has been her romantic relationship with controversial cultural terrorist Boyd Rice, which has since introduced baby Wolfgang into the world. A confessed prankster and Satanist but leery of labels, Boyd has otherwise been hesitant in publicly expressing his beliefs, some so compellingly fascistic in nature that many believe he's either a Nazi or Nazi sympathizer. From his opinions to his articles in Answer Me!, Boyd has sent shock waves down the collective spines of do-gooders everywhere. Aside from that, he's prone to such phrases as "okey dokey" in conversation which I found infinitely amusing.

The day I got Lisa's letter in the mail with a Sears portrait of the family, I just knew that I had to talk to her again, but this time with Boyd, too. Now in their first official interview together, I give you, ladies and gentlemen... Lisa and Boyd.



Noël: First of all, Lisa, I know you think a lot about [what it means to be] normal. Can you describe to me what your idea of normal is?

Lisa Carver: [What's] accepted, what's not shocking to the general populus. What else is there?

Well, a lot of people think it's a relative term.

LC: It's relative in that whatever society is not shocked by that particular year is [considered] normal.

Boyd Rice: When people use the word normal, I think they're still thinking of some Fifties-type of normal like some *Leave It To Beaver* family and anything that is not like that is weird. But I think even in that time you had TV shows with characters like Maynard G. Krebs who was a Beatnik and that was not normal then. But by the time something sifts down into popular culture, there's already an aspect of it in a prime-time TV show, it [becomes] normal, too. I think that a bunch of people now who think they're really rebellious and "alternative"... that's normal now.

LC: I think it's really hard to *not* be normal, you have to have some intrinsic malformation, almost, or just be way ahead of your time to not be normal. At this point there's so many acceptable ways to be.

What's the stereotype of a normal person?

BR: I don't know if there is a stereotype 'cuz I think every different group considers themselves normal. Society is so fragmented at this point that there's not one stereotype anymore, I think that idea of one stereotype of people in the suburbs is really a throwback to the Fifties or Sixties. I feel that what I think is reasonable and I feel that I'm normal, but then when I contrast that to the rest of the world out there, I feel that I must not be normal because I feel so happy and well-adjusted. I'm happy with my situation in life and I'm doing what I should be doing. I really wonder how many people can say the same thing.

That's funny how you mentioned the "well-adjusted" bit because that seems to play an important part in how people would perceive somebody as being nor-



mal. It's part of the illusion that somebody normal is well-adjusted and has nice teeth, you know, there are signs that give people the impression that somebody might be a maniac when, in fact, they could be just totally normal.

BR: (Laughing.)

Do you know what I mean?

BR: Uh huh.

Like the guy with the mohawk could be completely well-adjusted while the guy in the business suit could be the slayer.

BR: Exactly.

LC: Boyd and I are... the thing that attracted me most about him was that we're both really normal and really *not* normal at the same time and we're happy about both parts. We must not be normal because things that we've done have been extreme, like me dancing naked in front of strangers and him with his, uh... well I don't know what he wants mentioned. But anyway, he's done a lot of extreme things, too. Also, we could do normal things but view them in an abnormal way, like when I go to the hairdresser. For me it's a really sexual, sado-masochistic fun time. I don't know if most people perceive it that way.

There are probably a lot of people that just don't talk about it, but you're really outspoken about it.

LC: You think other people are having these

about things.

BR: But for every one of those people who write us and agree with how we think there might be a thousand other people who violently disagree. We're tapping in to some segment of the population, but that doesn't mean that's the consensus opinion by any means.

LC: And we each have a different segment. (Laughing.)

BR: I think some of our segments overlap.

LC: Your segment is a meaner segment than mine.

(To Boyd) Lisa is much more loved than you!

LC: He's loved, but mean people love him. (Laughing.)

Do you think you use normalcy towards subversive ends?

BR: I don't know, I think I used to trust in concepts like subversion when I was much younger. Now, I don't really think that I'm going to sneak something into the mainstream that's really going to affect the way somebody thinks and make some huge change in the world. Now I feel that people are just basically the way they are and they either have instincts or they have a lack of instincts and that's going to determine what's going on in their life and that's going to determine the way the world evolves. I'm not really out there to subvert

thoughts? I mean, I look around at the other patrons there and they do not have emotions flitting across their faces, they're just sitting there talking about corduroy and where the cheapest place is to get shorts.

Maybe it's because the bleach is spilling into their eyes and it's burning.

LC: (Laughing.) But see, that would be exciting for me! (Laughing.) But then the other half is that we must actually be normal because... When I moved here he had two years worth of unopened mail and I read it all, and over and over people were saying, "That's exactly how I feel!" about something or other he said publicly. We must be normal if people agree with us

that, I'm just out there for what I find fun.

LC: What do you mean by using normalcy to subvert people? You mean are we trying to act normal so we can do some diabolical things?

Exactly!

LC: I have an honest normal side, it's not like dress up for me.

It just makes me curious because dependent on how you look, you can get your message across to more people. People would be more close-minded if you were just crazy looking.

LC: You mean just physical appearance?

Yeah.

LC: Oh, I don't care what I dress like. I always try to look pretty. My idea of what was pretty changed from time to time. At one time I thought to look really sleazy was pretty, in fact, all my life I've thought looking sleazy was pretty. There were other times when I wanted to look more respectable for some reason or other. Now my idea of pretty is whatever Boyd likes.

Well, I hope that question made sense.

LC: Yeah, I figured it out and I think the answer is: No.

And Boyd, you don't?

BR: I feel like sometimes I dress what people consider normal and other times—

Do you use it to your advantage?

BR: I think so. I think people draw certain conclusions from the way I dress and maybe it attracts some people and makes other people stay away. When I was younger, sometimes I would dress really pleasingly and I would look really friendly and old ladies would go out of their way to be nice to me and young girls would come up to me and say things. Then other times when I would have a shaved head and a goatee, I would notice that these same people would try not to even look at me or make eye contact.

LC: Well with good reason. Most of the time when there is a weird-looking person, he is weird. You can't tell totally from what a person looks like, but if I see a group of tough-looking guys, I avoid them, because if they want to look tough they probably want to act tough. If I was an old lady and I saw a guy with a shaved head and a goatee and I didn't know what it meant, but I thought maybe he's a skinhead or maybe he's one of those Satanic people, I would try to avoid you and you probably are one of those people.

(Confused)

BR: (Laughing.)

LC: I mean, uh, the person with the goatee is probably one of those people.

Does it seem strange to be in pursuit of the normal lifestyle?

LC: Can you be specific? What have I done in pursuit of the normal lifestyle?

Having a family, having a baby, embracing some conservative values, taking Sears portraits, things like that.

LC: Well, I've always wanted to have a baby, it just wasn't the right time or right person before. Taking Sears portraits, that's something not that important but looks normal. To me, I find that kind of romantic. All my life I've wanted to have a Sears family portrait. I find it kind of funny and it is weird because Boyd and I are not considered normal and so in that way it really amuses me. But at the same time, I just really like the Sears portrait. They use good lighting, they make sure your hands don't get cut off in the picture frame. It's a good picture and there's a reason everybody else goes there. **It seems to me that people were having a problem separating the two. If I showed somebody the picture, they would think it's strange but I think that's because they know who you are. If they**

"I think it's really hard to *not* be normal. You have to have some intrinsic malformation, almost, or just be way ahead of your time to not be normal. At this point there's so many acceptable ways to be." — Lisa Carver.

didn't, I don't think they would interpret it the same way.

LC: So do they think I should go on my whole life having sex with a bunch of people and running around being constantly insane and being on drugs and never going to Sears portrait galleries? (*Laughing.*)

I hope not, but you should have taken the picture with the water mill background with the brook.

LC: I am next time, it's that autumn scene. **Would you think that there is a cultural shift, in our generation, towards more conservative values and ideals? There's Generation X and then there's Generation L and Cocktail Nation, which is part of Generation L I would suspect.**

LC: Well, they came first but, yeah, it's obvious that the country's getting more Republican and I read in *Newsweek* that people think it's sexy to stay a virgin or sexy to wear suits. Also, we've had a wild, free culture for a long time and it's about time that things changed. Things always happen in cycles and it's time for the conservative cycle.

BR: I kind of think the people of your generation are the last generation of being real wild and being extremely liberal in their thinking. I think that the generation that's coming is going to be really reactionary against all that stuff that's gone on in all these decades of liberalism.

To what do you attribute this change to?

BR: Just like what Lisa said, things are always cyclical and the pendulum goes forth and the pendulum goes back. I think that a lot of liberalism is based on ideological abstractions and I think you can try to make ideological abstractions work for years and years and years, but at a certain point you realize that reality isn't conforming to that and you have to try something else. I think that the people [of] the past few generations have been brought up with these nice sounding ideas [that] seem very reasonable and they seem like they should work, but I think the people who are coming up now are going to feel like they're just in some weird no-man's land where noth-

ing makes much sense. They're going to look for something far more harsh.

LC: There's problems both in liberalism and conservatism. With liberalism—particularly all the handouts, all the welfare, trying to help all the oppressed people, all the women, the old people—just trying to help all the sad people as much as you can, there's problems inherent in that and those are now becoming apparent to people. And then the problems with conservatism are people have other things they want to do than being respectable all the time, they want to be more wild than having to stay a virgin until they're married, they don't want to respect their parents, and so eventually people get tired of that and I think that's how the Fifties and Sixties ended. Now I think this liberal time is coming to an end and I'm glad 'cuz I'm tired of it. (*Laughing.*)

Even the people in previous generations who were an influence like William Burroughs, now he's making Nike commercials and anything he said [in the past now seems] completely watered down.

LC: What's wrong with William Burroughs making a Nike commercial?

It just makes him a little bit more non-threatening.

LC: I don't agree. To me, if I see him in a commercial, that does not mean what he says is not real. I don't know what was so incredibly threatening about him before.

Manslaughter [homosexual drug addict, accidental homicide, etc.].

LC: That doesn't have much to do with his writing, though.

Yeah. But now... it's kind of a normal-weird connection, if that makes any sense.

LC: I know what you're saying and I've heard other people say that—not to say you're not original, Noël (*laughing*)—but if I see William Burroughs in a Nike commercial, that doesn't say to me that he's changed his views.

It's not that, I just don't think a lot of people will make the connection and as a result, it becomes even less potent.

BR: But don't you think that it's a logical conclusion for all this so-called underground stuff to get sucked up into the mainstream and evolve and get mutated to the point where it is mainstream and yet people still keep the thought in the back of their mind and still call it underground somehow?

LC: I'm feeling a little hostile about this topic because Boyd and I are both starting to get into the mainstream, he was just in this major Hollywood film and I just sold my book to Holt so now I guess we're mainstream or we will be in a year or two. Saying that William Burroughs' shoe commercials somehow makes him less potent or less threatening, that's like saying I'm going to be less potent because more people can read my book or Boyd is less threatening because you can see him in a movie. To me that makes you more potent. I think it's some weird, awful, unrealistic snobism to want only a few people to know about what you do. I think if you really have a good message, you want the whole world to know about it, not just people who happen to read... well, *Bunnyhop*, for instance. So I'm touchy about that. (*Laughs.*)

BR: She's just touchy 'cuz she's waiting for the offers to come in from Nike. She looks forward to doing a commercial.

Yeah, what are you going to be doing in the commercial? What are your exercises going to be?

LC: I'd love to do a Nike commercial! They had the best slogan of the decade: "Just Do It." **Well what are you going to do when you wear the shoes and they make you do that monologue?**

LC: I was actually thinking of doing an exercise video. One of my exercises was going to be one of those... little things you stick your fingers in and you pull out.

BR: Those Mexican handcuffs?

LC: Yeah, that was going to be one of my home exercises. You can take them anywhere, you can pull your fingers in and out.

BR: Those are good exercises for the breasts, aren't they?

LC: Yes.

To add to what you were being touchy about, Lisa, I -

LC: I'm starting to get more and more touchy!

face of the planet reproduce. There's nothing inherently weird about it.

LC: It's *the* most normal thing you can possibly do because if you don't do that, your species dies immediately.

BR: Imagine that people have been fucking for thousands and thousands of years to produce you and then you think, "Ah, I won't do that because my art will suffer!" (*Laughs.*)

I always think about how... 24-7, people are fucking and shitting and pissing and eating and laughing and dying and stuff. It's a weird thought, but it all happens at once.

could do anything that I wanted to do. My mother always thought I was so beautiful, even when I was really ugly for 4 years. Even though no boys would have sex with me, I still thought, "Maybe I *am* beautiful because my mother thinks so." A lot of my friends who were criticized or just ignored in their youth, they sort of feel like they can't do things or maybe their parents did everything for them. Now they expect everyone else to do everything for them. I'm realizing just now how much your upbringing affects you, although you don't really believe that, do you Boyd?

BR: No, I believe that your character is

"I feel that...I'm normal, but then when I contrast that to the rest of the world out there, I feel that I must not be normal because I feel so happy and well-adjusted." — *Boyd Rice.*

Actually, it bums me out that in some circles, there is this "downwardly mobile" sentiment that people have. It's really sad.

LC: It's just misplaced snobism.

Poverty is not a merit badge.

LC: Yeah! (*Laughing.*) They [probably] grew up middle class so they feel like maybe they didn't make their own way.

BR: Plus it's very schizophrenic because they have this absolute mania for fame and glamour but they just don't feel comfortable with their appetite for such things. They'll build people up to a certain level of fame and then they'll want to see them knocked down.

LC: I've been getting so much criticism from the underground lately because I'm selling-out, supposedly, because I take ads from Geffen and stuff. And then the mainstream thinks that I'm just too weird to put in their mainstream publications so I'm stuck. I'm stuck in the middle and everyone hates me and I hate them! (*Laughing.*)

(*Break*)

LC: I'm also touchy about all the references to Wolfgang, like he's some publicity stunt or - **Who said this?**

LC: A lot of people have been insinuating it. I think that's really rude and I get touchy about my son. I don't think it's funny.

BR: People have been acting like it's such a weird thing to have a child. It's something that people used to not really think that much about. Well, obviously certain people still don't think about it that much. All creatures on the

BR: (*Laughing.*)

It's happening right now!

LC: None of the three of us is doing any of that this particular second. Now *that's* weird.

Actually, I'm on the toilet.

LC: You are?!

No, I'm just kidding.

LC: April Fool's! (*Laughs.*)

I just can't understand why people would think [having a baby] would be a publicity stunt. I mean, 9 months of...

LC: Maybe it's something in their own brain that they could do for a publicity stunt. I would never put myself through that, there's plenty I could do besides that that's a lot less intense.

You, Lisa, said having a child was the most natural, normal thing you could do. How has it affected you during and since then in how you look at the world?

LC: I feel like it's exciting because what I give to him for an outlook on life and what I encourage him in and everything is what he'll become when he grows up and that will go on after I'm dead. He'll remember me and part of his actions will be influenced by me and how I treated him and what I taught him. Of course I know he'll rebel against me and all that business and he'll be his own person, but part of him will be something I helped to make. It just gives me this peaceful feeling.

That's similar to your own upbringing in that your parents always told you you were beautiful, that you were smart and you believed it.

LC: I know! I think so much of my success is due to my parents just constantly telling me I

stamped upon you and you have it or you don't.

LC: I think that you have half of it and then your parents can either encourage it or -

Destroy it.

LC: Well, not destroy it, but they can do their best. (*Laughs.*)

BR: Definitely it's something that you can nurture and cultivate, but I remember my earliest thoughts were exactly what I think now and -

LC: Yeah, Boyd, your parents think you're brilliant. At least your mom does. Your dad's dead, but your mother thinks of you exactly the way my mother thinks of me. She thinks that you're the best looking guy in the world and that you're so smart and can fix everything. You think you would be exactly like you are without that belief sewn to you?

BR: Yeah, they certainly never communicated that to me. I was never given any encouragement for any of my thoughts. In fact, just the opposite, I never got anything but shit. I always realized I had faith in the way I thought of things and no matter what my parents, teachers, or anybody said to me, I thought, "Well, I know what's going on and everybody seems to be a little bit confused about most things."

LC: Well, when your mother asks you, "Oh, I can't figure this out. Can you do this for me?" That tells you that you must be smart.

BR: (*Laughing.*)

LC: Boyd and I were just in the hospital when Wolfgang had pneumonia, and there was this little baby next to Wolfgang, he was only a week old, and his mother only visited him three times in eight days and only for half an

hour and she kind of ignored him while she was there. No matter what kind of a character that baby was born with, what do you think he's going to be like? He's forming his idea of what the world is like and what he sees is a place where no one cares about him. He's helpless; when the blanket falls on his face, he cannot lift the blanket off of his face. He must think that the world is a hostile place where no one is ever going to ever love him or help him, so he's probably going to turn into a thief or a bad man.

BR: *(Laughing.)*

(To Boyd) On the subject of Nurture vs. Nature, where Lisa might have been encouraged, you might have been discouraged from some of the things you wanted to do or what you thought. That wasn't necessarily nurturing, but in a way, it did nurture your determination in the way you thought. So inadvertently, it was still an upbringing regardless.

BR: That's a good observation. I think a lot of times when you do get some negative thing, it just makes you even more steadfast in your beliefs or even more determined to do exactly what you want to do whether anybody likes it or not.

And that could have possibly made you more of an ostentatious person.

BR: I don't think "ostentatious" is the word you're looking for.

LC: I do!

(Laughs on the house.)

BR: You smart ass!

Yay, Lisa!

LC: I was born a smart ass, I can't help it. It's in my nature.

BR: I think a certain amount of oppression is good for people because it requires them to be even stronger and rise above that and do what they want to.

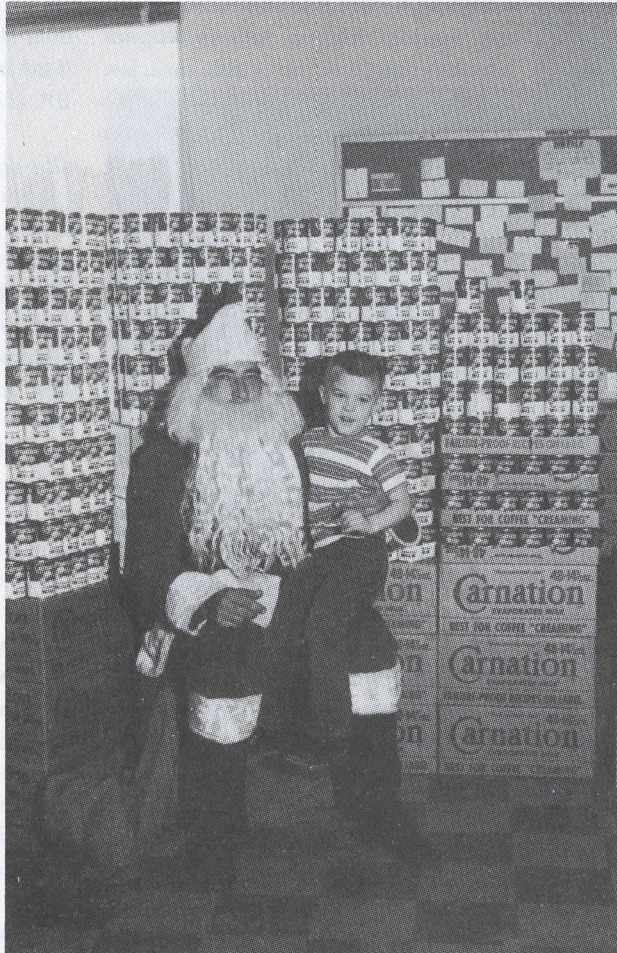
LC: It just depends on what sort of oppression. **Yeah.**

LC: The oppression of that baby of being all alone, completely helpless, and having no one there for him, I don't see how that is ever going to make that baby grow up to be a determined, stick-to-it kind of guy because you stick to things if you realize that if you work long and hard enough, you will be rewarded, you will get what you want. That baby cried for hours and it didn't do any good. It's trying to

engage with people to respond to it and when all of that trying doesn't work it will just withdraw and they stop developing socially.

BR: Well, yeah, I think what's happening with that baby is kind of different than what happens to a young adult who is encouraged or discouraged.

LC: I think it's too late then. By the time you're ten, you're made. You have your world view.



It seems that Wolfgang can never lead a normal life because of your "notorious" backgrounds. How does that make you feel?

LC: I don't think that's a true statement. My father and stepmother were drug runners and the stepmother had three children and she'd run around naked when her kid was 15. They were just bizarre people, they had Hell's Angels people over the house all the time, they had very unorthodox views. One of her sons rebelled against them by becoming a stockbroker or something. He makes \$100,000 a year already and he's only my age and he's got a \$200,000 life insurance policy and he started doing that when he was only 19 years old. He turned out as normal as you could possibly imagine, I mean, he's got all name-brand

clothing.

Come to think of it, Lisa Marie Presley isn't all that strange.

LC: No. You're right.

And she had a freak of a father. How did the two of you arrive at the name Wolfgang? (Initially, I was told his name was Damion, as in the movie The Omen. -N.)

BR: We just thought that -

LC: We didn't think anything, Boyd just picked it. He's always liked it.

BR: I've liked it since I was a little kid. Eddie Munster's middle name was Wolfgang and I thought, "Why can't I have a name like Wolfgang?"

It had nothing to do with Mozart?

BR: Well, yeah, when I was in first grade, they selected one person from every class to go see *The Magic Flute* and at the time I thought that was an incredible name. All throughout my youth I was aware of the name Wolfgang and I thought it was great.

LC: I was shocked when he told me. I said, "If it's a boy, you can name it whatever you want." When he said Wolfgang, I was shocked and then I got over it in about 2 seconds. It seems to fit the little guy, he looks like a guy with a two syllable foreign name. *(Laughs.)*

If you had a girl, what would the name have been?

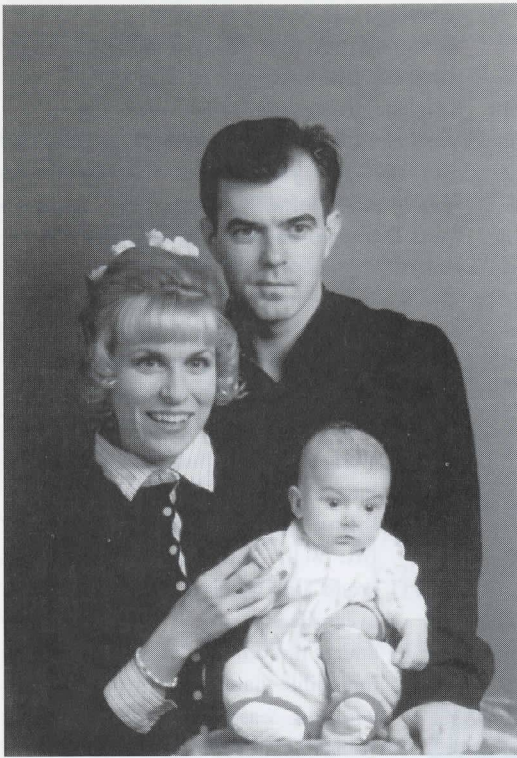
LC: It would have been Eva Mary Rice. If I have another boy, I get to choose the name this time. It's going to be Buck because in this nature special, this pack of wolves was chasing this herd of deer and they were really closing in and at the last moment, the brave head buck deer turned around

and fended off the entire pack! Can you believe it? He was shaking his horns *(That's antlers, Lisa. -N.)* at them and he was just so brave and fierce and strong, and yet he had this cute little fluffy tail he was wiggling around. I thought that seemed like a fine man! But then I realized today that we would have one kid named Wolf and we would have one kid named Buck and I would wonder if they would fight.

It's just all animals.

LC: If Wolfgang tried to beat Buck up because he had the wolf nature and Buck would have the buck nature... but since this buck was fierce, I'm sure Buck would have no problem fighting off Wolf. *(Laughs.)*

I wasn't sure if it had anything to do with your love for the song "Hungry Like



“I’m looking forward to being some old woman with grandchildren and I’ll be in a Nike commercial.” – Lisa Carver.

something, and after a number of months, he said that she was incapable of bearing children. All the relatives were saying, “Just take a little time, just give it a couple months and she might not be barren after all.” He obviously enjoyed twenty cows more than having this one gal.

That’s a lot of burgers.

LC & BR: *(Laughing heartily.)*

(Break)

BR: I think a lot of the things that we think that seem really unreasonable

now are things for centuries and centuries people just kind of acknowledged and taken for granted. Just in the past several decades where everybody’s trying to reinvent the wheel, rethink everything about human nature and human emotion like crimes of passion. People get really jealous and kill somebody and everybody acknowledges this as the way humans are, they get carried away with their emotions. In the Sixties, people were saying, “There’s no such thing as jealousy. Jealousy is just a barometer of your insecurity. If you’re jealous, you’re an unreasonable fucked up person.” I think jealousy is a very real emotion, it’s a part of people. It gets to a certain point in history where people start using their intelligence to distance themselves from the way people really are. A lot of times I think the conclusions they’re coming up with sound reasonable on an intellectual level, but they really have nothing to do with the way people really operate. I know people who live in a terrible part of town and they had a girl stay at their house and this girl was leaving the door wide open and going out to her car in this baby doll nightie and they were saying, “You can’t do this, this is a bad part of town, you’ll get raped, people will come into our house and steal everything we have.” And she says, “Well, I feel if you treat people with a certain level of respect, they’ll treat you with a certain level of respect.” That’s all well and good to say that, intellectually that sounds fine, but –

LC: All you need is one person to not return your respect to destroy your life. Just one per-

son walking by just saying, “Mmmm, yum, I’m gonna get me some of that!” *(Laughs.)* And then she’s raped and brutalized and maybe dead and also her nightie’s been stolen.

BR: *(Laughs.)*

(Break)

LC: So what do people say about the Sears picture?

“It’s scary.”

LC: It’s scary? They don’t say anything else?

I haven’t shown it to too many people.

BR: Do you think that people are just saying that to overstate something to get some comic reaction? I notice people have really strong reactions to things these days and I think there aren’t *that* many things you can react strongly, emotionally towards. They act like things are really extreme when in fact they’re just normal.

Do you think people who are so fervently against things like procreation, is that an example of self-disgust?

BR: I think it’s partially intellectual nonsense and I think it’s bullshit, too, because I’ve known so many women who’ve said, “I’m not gonna have a baby, I’m never gonna do that,” and as soon as they meet a guy they really like, they’ll do it in a heartbeat.

LC: I think it’s a combination of selfishness and self-disgust, but also I think some people just don’t want to care for something small and helpless. They’re just not that way.

There’s also that twenty year weaning process and with some people, it’s even longer.

LC & BR: *(Laughing.)*

BR: Especially nowadays, people are holding on to their adolescence and it’s taking people much longer to mature. This whole thing started in the Fifties and Sixties where the whole culture was catered to youth and the youth market. Such an emphasis is put on youth and being young, people try to hang onto that youth and they stay in this retarded, teenage mental state up until they’re forty or fifty, they don’t want any responsibilities; the things that will bring good things in their own life will also be things that need responsibility and that

the Wolf”.

LC: Oh! No, but I always liked wolves, Boyd always liked them. There’s not very many animals I don’t like.

BR: And so the third boy will be named Badger.

(Laughs all around, except for Lisa who happened to be fighting off a severe head cold cough, too.)

BR: The girl will be Wolverina.

LC: Our home life, at this point, is really normal because there’s mommy and daddy and baby, but we’d be really happy to have another life because I think that makes a lot of sense. A baby requires so much work and attention and there’s so many things to do around here. It would be really great to have two lives. I think that would be a really good system, it’d be fun.

BR: I think that’s a great system!

LC: *(Laughing.)* It should be the normal system, but it’s not in this country at this point, although there are more societies that have polygamy than have monogamy.

BR: It’s like “Surf City”: *(in his best falsetto)* “Two girls for every boy!”

That’s right!

LC: The richer you are, the more girls you get. In a polygamous society, some guys have no girl, some guys have one girl, and then the really rich guys could have *five* girls!

BR: I just saw this special on TV about justice throughout the world and it showed this court in Africa where a guy had his eighth wife, he had given twenty cows for this woman or

will infringe on their extended adolescence. That's affecting society a whole lot.

LC: So they think it's scary that we two particular people have a baby?

I can't really speak for them.

LC: Even Saddam Hussein has a family and he cares about them and he's proud to have his portrait taken with them. Even that weird, popular villain is a family man. All these people throughout history like Chengis Khan had kids. Everybody had kids. There's nothing weird about having kids. Are you going to have kids, Noël?

I think about it. I want to have at least two.

LC: You're a young man.

Young and virile.

LC: Young eligible bachelor. That's for the ladies reading this interview.

Oh good, thanks. In reference to what Boyd was saying about this retarded state that people were in, were you speaking about your generation, the Baby Boomers?

BR: Yeah, I think it started with them and it's still an ongoing thing. I don't know what will stop it. I look at girls in Fifties movies and thirteen year old girls dressed nicer and had better hair-do's than any girl my own age.

LC: What's that got to do with anything?

BR: I think in that era, people *wanted* to mature and people wanted to -

LC: There's good things about every age, it's great to be a teenager and on your own—self-obsessed and independent, and then it's great to be in your twenties and starting your own family and have everything like you want it in your home and everybody loves you in your home and you love them...

Unfortunately, some people want to be 21 just so they can legally drink, that's their whole motive for growing up.

LC: I think that part of the reason some people my age don't want to start a family is because maybe they never enjoyed—as they should have—the stages that they went through in their adolescence and their early adulthood. They're still waiting for the good times (*laughs*), they didn't get what they fully wanted and they're not ready to progress. I'm looking forward to being some old woman with grandchildren and I'll be on a Nike commercial. (*Laughing*.) If you live each stage of your life completely, take full advantage of it, then you'll be ready for the next stage.

BR: I think that the entire society—shattering and splitting apart the way it is—I think people want just one thing that they can hang on to forever, they want one identity, they want one stage of emotional development, you know.

Do you think that's being endorsed by the culture industry?

BR: No, I just think things aren't operating organically and they aren't operating as they should, so just being alive and being a living, breathing person doesn't satisfy people the same way it used to. They're grasping for straws, they're looking for some identity they can buy into and submerge everything into that because they don't have a proper culture and they don't have a religion or anything to believe in. They don't know who they are or what they want.



They have things they can buy that gives them this false notion that they're being young and wild.

LC: People's belief in their art or their subculture is out of proportion. Your career is really important, your art is really important, but it's only one facet of your life and that's what people my age have forgotten, they think that that is life.

I do have to comment on something earlier, about marriage... maybe the reason why some people view having a family, having that "normal" lifestyle is scary because... I grew up around a lot of people whose parents were divorced. In a way it became a normal thing to know a lot of people with divorced parents -

LC: Right.

- and we're talking from grade school.

That leaves a pretty big impression on someone.

LC: It's hard, yeah, but so what? If you have a really bad chest cold and it's hard to breathe, does that mean you don't breathe?

So you're saying, "Get over it."

LC: Yeah. Anything that's worth anything takes some work. I think this interview is going to make people really dislike me. (*Laughs*.)

Really?

LC: Yeah, I do, because it's really an attack on what most people are going through and also it's completely obnoxious in interviews with couples that say "we", "We think this and we think that," (*laughing*) and I noticed we were doing that and I didn't even realize I was saying "we".

BR: *We* didn't do that! (*Laughs*.)

Wouldn't you rather be loved or hated rather than have people feel indifferent to you?

LC: Of course, everyone wants to be understood and of course they're not going to be. It is important to me if I get a letter from somebody and they say, "You inspired me to do something I've wanted to for a long time," like start their own fanzine, or if they say, "When I read what you said, it made me be more what I am," I think that's really great, that's how you hope to affect people.

BR: What about the guy who had his first good blowjob?

LC: Now that was good!

Huh?

LC: This guy had never liked having blowjobs and I guess when his girlfriend had read the blowjob manual (*In Rollerderby #16*), he got his first good blowjob and he loved it! What more can you want out of life than to [tell someone how to] give someone their first good blowjob! That just filled me with a warm glow, that's something to make the world a happier place. The good thing that for every one person that writes you, statistics say that a thousand people had the same reaction and didn't write to you, so I'm feeling really good about a thousand good blowjobs out there! (*Laughing*.) ☺

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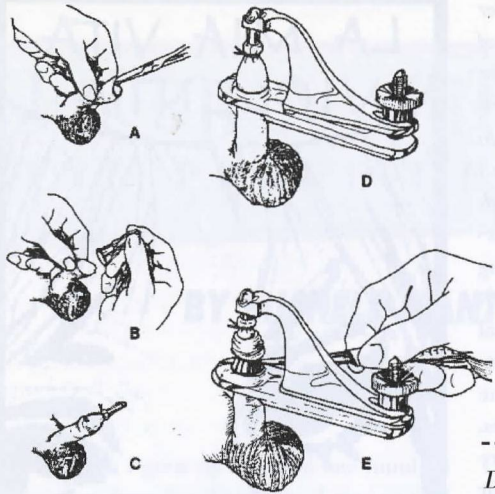
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ROUGHLY (PAPER) CUT

by Niklas Sven Vollmer

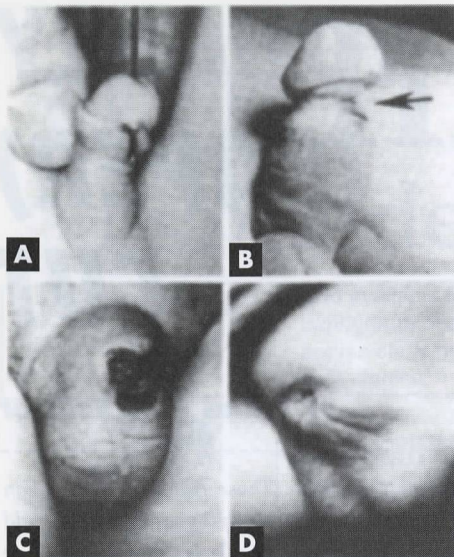


During my yearly physical examination, at age six or so, I remember a particularly awkward discussion between my mother and our family practitioner, Dr. Paul. The odd exchange centered around my penis. On that day, I learned that I was circumcised, and poorly at that. Non-religious circumcision arose in English-speaking countries during the Victorian era as a cure for sexual deviance—primarily to stop masturbation. One of the most prominent proponents of this practice was Harvey Kellogg, whose cereals we still enjoy to present day. Kellogg believed that the foreskin was inherently bad and the direct cause of hypersexual behavior. Recently, I heard about a place called Advance Tissue Sciences, a biotechnology company that uses infant foreskins to create human skin grafts. When I called

to get more information on their activities, they mailed me back a

business portfolio. Those clinical words began to collide with stock options—yet, all I could think about was a high school girlfriend, Jane and her grandfather. Except for doctors, Jane was the first person I allowed to examine and handle my genitalia. “Birth mark” was the phrase I chose to describe the scar tissue and adhesions on the head of my penis—a description not all together too far off. Jane was also the first person who made me cum, and this memory is complicated by a couple of her comments made soon after one of our first sexual encounters where she described my physical response as repressed. According to Kellogg, a masturbator could be identified by showing one or more of the following indicators: shyness, poor posture, fingernail biting, acne, insomnia, and personality change, to name a few. As a preventative measure, he advocated the removal of the foreskin in tandem with a diet of his therapeutic cereals. Like most physicians, Dr. Paul broke out his best clinical terminology in an attempt to mask the inherently personal nature of this focus on my genitalia. Surgery of a corrective kind was an option—although, he said leaving me “as is”






Complications of circumcision: a) Urethral fistula (note probe), the result of incision trauma. b) Three-year-old boy with completely transected urethra and nearly transected glans. c) A Gomco clamp circumcision that resulted in the amputation of all the skin from the shaft of the penis. d) Six-month-old baby whose entire penis was lost due to cautery used during circumcision.

was a possibility as well. Neither Dr. Paul nor mother looked at or said anything to me. Inattentive, I began to swim about in the large, black wooden chair, staring blankly at the sexless crotch of the decapitated and limbless medical torso.

Throughout my research I discovered a number of references to accidental castration. In some cases iatrogenic, or doctor-produced, screw-ups left only a scrotum. In one of these cases, the parents decided to socialize their modified infant to be a female. I began to think about my own fucked up circumcision... just lucky, I guess? Then, Jane told me about her grandfather who recently received one of these infant skin grafts. The surgeon's pre-operational jokes claimed that he was about to receive a new erogenous zone. And personally, I could not help but make a connection here. It also seemed odd that less than a mile away from where I spend most of my time, sits *Advance Tissue Sciences*. Each drive I make by this fore-skin factory evokes a twisted envy of the aged man's guinea pig hip and thigh. And if I had the ten thousand dollars I might get me one too. Not only did Kellogg believe that this prescription would curtail masturbation, but cure or prevent a whole host of other disorders such as alcoholism, epilepsy, plague, paralysis, rheumatism, polio, lunacy, tuberculosis and syphilis. This prophylactic was not limited to males. By removing the hood of the clitoris, females could reap the same benefits. Ten or more years later, during another physical exam, I remember the physician stating that

"someone did a pretty bad job here," soon after being asked to cough. Old Dr. Paul was out of the picture, and my new health authority, Dr. Whitney, spoke frankly. Had I ever "experienced painful erections?" He then went on to tell me that it looked like my penis would still function "normally." And so far it has... though somehow, I still feel different. It became apparent that this procedure prevented nothing (with the possible exception of pleasure). Instead of halting the practice, the medical community adopted new rationales to perpetuate the ritual: carcinoma of the penis in the 1930s, venereal disease in the late Forties, with the Fifties came hygiene, and now there are new claims that circumcised men and their partners have lower rates of HIV infection. All of these "scientific" claims are seen as suspect, yet Kellogg's "therapy" continues on. *Knowing that this slip-up, a "skin bridge" in medical terms, made me somewhat exotic, I began to look at the positive aspects of my novel state, and realized I could do things with my dick that most men could not. I saw myself, not so much as a freak, but as a "modern primitive" not-by-choice. Body modification was hip, and somehow this allowed me to feel back in fashion. Skin bridge, anyone?* 


Note: This text comes directly from a videotape entitled, *Roughly Cut*, which looks at the culturally-specific practice of non-religious, neonatal circumcision. By combining allegory, auto-biography and performance with popular tabloid TV footage and documentary strategies, a hybridized form is created that invokes shifting narratives surrounding male subjectivity and representation. Further, the tape explores our understanding of "normal" and "pathological" by raising questions regarding how these notions are played out in terms of cultural aesthetics, body modification / cosmetic surgery, psychoanalysis, male sexuality and masculinity. OK, enough wanking! For those of you who want to see my penis or the tape, please contact:

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SUBURBAN WHITE TRASH, AND PROUD OF IT! (I think...)

BY MICHELE MANTYEN

Even though I grew up less than one hundred miles away from San Francisco, I may as well have been raised in Hooterville for all I was concerned. The biggest club on my high school campus was the Future Farmers of America, and the opening of the downtown shopping mall was such a major event that all the schools were closed for the day. The population of my semi-rural northern California suburb town was overwhelmingly lower-middle-class, politically conservative and glow-in-the-dark white.

SMILE WHEN YOU CALL ME THAT

I never applied the term “white trash” to myself until I moved out when I was twenty. I ended up living in Silicon Valley, that haven of PBS-watching, designer water-drinking pseudo-culture. I dated well-educated professionals who ate sun-dried tomatoes, viewed foreign films on a regular basis, and owned espresso machines. Things were okay until the day one of my boyfriends informed me he wasn’t comfortable visiting my family because, well, they lived in a *mobile home*, and were a little, well, um, you know... *white trash*. Heh heh. (Although said mobile home was larger and better furnished than Mr. Boyfriend’s apartment, the very words “mobile home” seem to have become irredeemably associated with low-class losers.) Though I secretly sort of thought the same thing about my family, I wasn’t about to let the Mr. Condescending Elitist get away with this pronouncement. (The “It’s Only Okay if I Insult Them Because I Belong to That Group” syndrome.) I dumped the little snot-nose on the spot.

ROSEANNE IS MY SO-CALLED LIFE

A little later down the line, I was watching TV with another boyfriend and was laughing quite heartily at the episode of *Roseanne* in which Dan is thrown in jail for punching out his sister-in-law’s abusive boyfriend. Mr. Boyfriend II asked what I found so funny, and

I replied that I had grown up with these people, and been through these situations. (Bailing relatives out of jail, dealing with spouse abusers, hiding from bill collectors, chasing repo men down the street as they hauled away the family car...) He gave me a horrified look and asked, “But isn’t that, you know, pretty white trash?” This time I was able to smile and say “So?” before I dumped him, too.

Sure, some of my relatives are dumbass racists and hopeless homophobes who drink Coors by preference. (Not my immediate family, thank yew Jeezus.) My male relatives volunteer for the military “to protect the greatest country in the world, and don’t you forget it, godammit!” I have relatives with names like Clydeen and Eldra. Yes indeed, my brother and his family live in a mobile home in a trailer park. When I was a kid, we shopped regularly at Sears (Where America Shops) and K-Mart, and ate apple pie at the Woolworth’s counter when Grandma and Grandpa visited. Vacations were the same every year: Eight-hour road trips to Disneyland spent fighting with my brother for supremacy of the back seat until my Mom would scream, “Do you want me to turn this car around?! Do you?!” I ate lots of Kraft Dinners, Rice-A-Roni and Banquet Fried Chicken not because it was ironically retro-cool, but because, like Robert Mitchum says about beef: “It’s what’s for dinner.”

I tried to appear more sophisticated for a while. I moved to San Francisco to hang out with more cool, hip people, wore black (even though I actually look better in pastels), and ate organic shitake mushrooms washed down with micro-brewery beer. I chose San Francisco because I truly believed that my family had been saved from hardcore Trashiness when my mother got a job as a computer analyst in the big city, thus exposing her—and by osmosis us kids—to a more diverse culture.



But despite my attempts at hiding it, my Trashiness leaks out...

PLEASANT VALLEY SUNDAYS

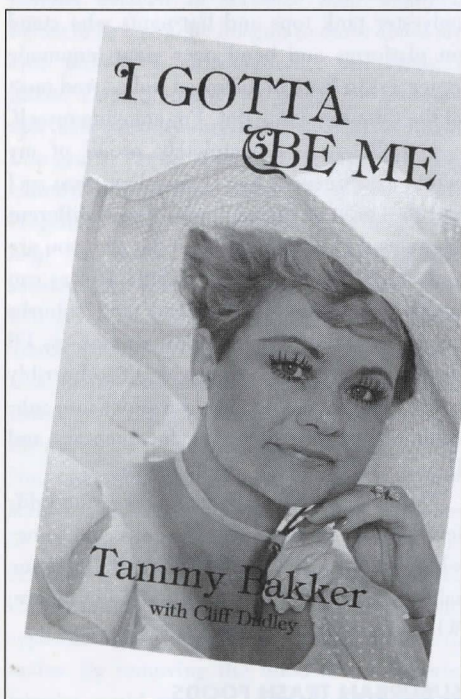
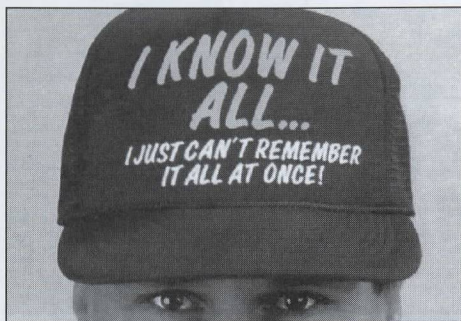
I’ve found a nearby diner that makes huge plates of fried chicken, served with canned corn and iceberg lettuce salads. I go there on the sly, and reel home reeking of deep-fried bird parts and guilty satisfaction. Every other Sunday I load my laundry into my car and drive thirty-five miles to do my wash in a town where I can park my car for free and stroll around, smiling and nodding at my kindred trash-folk. Sometimes I even sneak into a mall when no one is looking and gaze at the glittering displays while downing an Orange Julius and some kind of meat product on a stick, purchased from teenage girls in multi-colored polyester tank tops and hot-pants who stand on platforms and bend over giant lemonade squeezers in front of mirrored walls.¹ And most of the time I’m doing this, I’m enjoying myself.

I can’t say I’m completely proud of my White Trashiness: I live in San Francisco so I can be around people who have different lifestyles. I like the freedom to be who you are with fairly little hassle (or as little of it as can happen anywhere in America), and suburbs are often bland to a frightening point. So I’ll stay in the city where things aren’t so horribly white, but I’ll take my little vacations into suburbia where *Roseanne* is a documentary and Beavis and Butthead are my cousins.

Money and education may make some difference, but Trashiness still leaks out somewhere in your life. Remember what Roseanne said to the press: “I’m your worst nightmare: White Trash with money.”

SUBURBAN TRASH FOODS

The main difference between Suburban Trash Food and Country Trash Food is the



preparation. Country Trash actually *cook* their food and rely on ingredients from hunting and fishing trips and garden produce. (Greens, chitlins, grits, catfish, etc.) Suburban Trash Food is almost always bought already prepared. The most cooking required is boiling water or microwaving. Most fast food qualifies as Suburban Trash Food, no matter where you purchase it—and the sleazier, more grease-dripping meat-by-products, the better.

Slim Jims, any kind of store-bought meat jerky, pork rinds, frozen burritos, anything heated in the microwave at 7-11, Cheez Whiz (or any other “cheese food product”), Jello with marshmallows, Hamburger / Tuna Helper, Top Ramen, Tater Tots, Cragmont soda, Rice Krispie Bars, hot dogs with chunks of cheese inside, Spam, anything on a stick, Bugles, anything that sits on a Ritz, Cup ‘O Noodles, baloney or other de-ethnicized lunch meats, Wonder Bread, most Hostess / Little Debbie / Dolly Madison snack treats, Pringles, anything made of a meat slurry.

SUBURBAN TRASH FASHION

Gals: BIG HAIR, unless you are a Stoner Suburban Trash Gal, for whom long straight hair with 1970’s flipped bangs are *de riguer*.

TIGHT JEANS: Camel toes are a fashion must! The more butt, thigh, and pubic mound are outlined, the better. Age and size should be no deterrent to wearing your jeans crotch-numbingly tight: check out the fleshy females walking around any county fair. The jeans must be gal-fitting (no guys 501s), and usually acid-washed. High waist and tight ankle are best, especially if the ankle has a little zipper or lacing on it. For special occasions, denim mini-skirts may be substituted. Both jeans and minis are to be worn with **HIGH HEELS**, not sneakers, running shoes, or (god forbid!) work boots, ‘cause you might threaten some guy’s masculinity and / or be labeled a “fuckin’ lesbo.”

TIGHT, CROPPED BLOUSES, tube tops, halter tops, tank tops (the lace kind only!), or a tiny t-shirt with an iron-on that says something like, “10% Angel, 90% Bitch,” or, “I’m His, Because He Deserves the Best.” (Extra points for glitter in the iron-on.) **TALON-LIKE FINGERNAILS**, tons of **SILVER / TURQUOISE JEWELRY** and the “Young Tammy Faye Bakker” line of **MAKEUP** will complete your look.

Examples: Lolita and Tanqueray from *Beavis and Butthead*, most gals in Heavy Metal videos, most groupies, nearly any gal appearing on a daytime TV talk show, the Repo Wives from *Repo Man*.

Guys: The array of trashy **T-SHIRTS** for guys

is truly stunning. Anything with a slogan promoting guns, liquor (especially beer or JD), and pride in our nation’s military forces is acceptable. (Note: The most mind-boggling piece of Trash clothing I ever saw was a black K-Mart tank-top that read, “Winchester Rifles, Jack Daniels, and Elvis Presley: Three Things that Made America Great!” I regret to this day that I did not buy it.) T-shirts with jokes about women (“My Wife Ran Away with My Dog—I Sure Do Miss Him!”), or your drinking problem (“I Don’t Have a Drinking Problem—I Drink, I Get Drunk, I Fall Down—No Problem!” or the ever-popular “Instant Asshole—Just Add Beer!”) showcase your wit. **JEANS** or **FAKE CAMOUFLAGE PANTS**, preferably purchased from Mervyn’s, are cool. A crewcut, or even better, one of those **BUZZ-CUT ON THE TOP AND LONG HAIR IN THE BACK** hairdos will mark you as a man of true Trash Taste. If you don’t have the do, a **BASE-BALL CAP** with either a jocular slogan (see **T-SHIRTS**, above) or an All-American brand name (Bud, Coors, Marlboro, John Deere) may substitute, but only if worn with the bill in the front, godammit, not like those goddamn gang kids... The only **JEWELRY** permitted is a high-school ring, maybe one gold chain, and, if you get snagged by some lucky Trash Gal, a wedding band from JC Penney’s Fine Jewelry Department. Remember: earrings are for fuckin’ fags, unless you happen to be a football player who can kick the shit out of anyone who infers that about you.

Examples: The fans at any “professional” wrestling match, guys at Monster Truck rallies, any guy appearing on a daytime TV talk show with his wife / ex-wife / girlfriend, carnies, the guys in Peter Bagge’s “Testosterone City”. (Note: Rush Limbaugh qualifies as Suburban White Trash even though he does not adhere to the dress code.)

TRASH ENTERTAINMENT

This is by no means a comprehensive list, nor is it to be taken as a recommendation for recreational activities; even though some of this stuff is fun.

Publications: *Guns and Ammo*, *Penthouse*, *Fabulous Hairdos*, *National Enquirer*, *Weekly World News*, *TV Guide*, *Reader’s Digest*, *Harriet Carter Catalog*, *Parade Magazine*, paperback books purchased at the check-out counter of the grocery store (especially if the name of the author is bigger than the title of the book and / or is embossed in foil)

TV: *COPS*, any daytime TV talk show, *American Gladiators*, *America’s Funniest Home Videos*, infomercials (extra Trash points

if you believe they're really talk shows)

Recreation: Arena sporting events involving large motor vehicles, Chippendale's clubs, county fairs (depending on whom the featured entertainer for the day is), gun shows, hanging out in mall food courts, watching "The Big Spin" even though you haven't bought a Lotto ticket, buying Lotto tickets, most action flicks, Las Vegas, doing most anything in Florida, bowling in a league, going to bachelor parties that feature prostitutes, cutting out the comic strips "The Family Circus" or "The Lockhorns" for your refrigerator or cubicle wall, having / going to a huge elaborate wedding complete with matchbook covers with the happy couple's names stamped on them, having a large photo from Sears Portrait Studio of your family hanging over the fireplace, wet t-shirt contests, a *Playboy* sticker in the rear window of your vehicle, demolition derbies, waving a large foam "We're Number #1!" finger at sports events, thinking that Rush Limbaugh, Howard Stern and / or Andrew Dice Clay really reflect America's views.

SUBURBAN TRASH CHIC

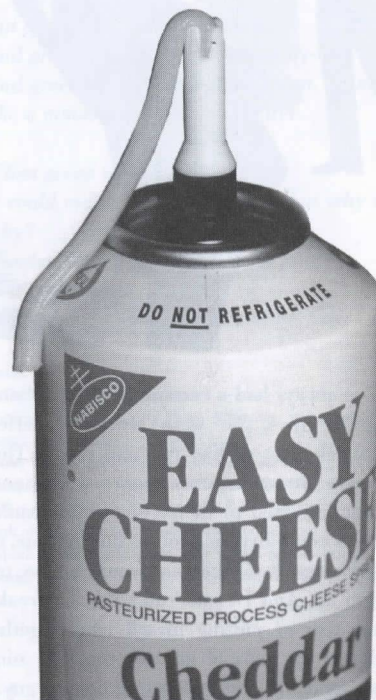
Until *Bunnyhop* High Priest Noël pointed this out to me I didn't realize it, but there is—and has been for a while—a Trash fashion resurgence. Suburban White Trash is now cool

within hipster circles. Check out your ultrahip housemates: Do they not seek out and wear proudly items such as housedresses, tiny 1970s t-shirts with iron-on sassy sayings, funky cardigan sweaters, race-track mechanic's pit jackets, and the like? And look at those rock stars! Crooked haircuts and trashy clothes galore! Royal Trux, Nirvana, Hole, Beck, Green Day... yahoo! Let's come out of the Suburban White Trash closet and celebrate!

WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?

Laugh all you like; but if one definition of "normal" is "whatever the majority is / does," remember: There are a lot more of us than there are of you... ☺

¹ A close friend of mine worked for this particular hot-dog and lemonade franchise for three years. She told me that the elderly owner of the corporation had absolutely no males working for him. He'd invite the new underage trainees to stay at his mansion in Los Angeles for a week, and take four or five of them at a time out to fancy LA restaurants and insist that they wear their polyester tank-top and shorts uniforms. The mirrors surrounding them at the hot-dog stand are there so the drooling customers can see their pert little bodies from every angle. Just knowing about this makes me feel a lot sorrier for these exploited teens. So next time you pass by, be really nice to them.



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Desire for the **NORMAL** Guy

by Darby

I've always had a certain affinity for "normal" guys. We were always a perfect match—sort of like fire and water. They were attracted to my supposed craziness, and I was attracted to their comfortable sanity. These boys could live vicariously through me, do all those things they otherwise would be too, uh, normal to do. And I could run wild and freaky, with less fear of putting myself back together again—I had my normal guy for that. My nice, sweet, dependable, stable... *boring* normal guy.

One of the best real world examples of this scenario is Bailey on *Party of Five*, and his girlfriend Jill. Just like the 90210 "Emily" period¹—this was the only time *Party of Five* was at all interesting. Jill was the fucked-up drug addict girl who was carefree and exciting and would actually have sex with Bailey (unlike his last girlfriend), and normal boy Bailey was opened up to the fast, unpredictable world of this energetic female. He enjoyed it, thought it a fun, temporary detour from his usual existence. In the end, though, Bailey couldn't control the girl, make her a normie like him. She was just too different and unacceptable and so *not* normal that eventually he gave up (e.g. she wasn't going to make a good mother for his children.) And guess what her fate was? She couldn't fit in with any of the nice boring characters on the show so it was either the loony bin with Emily or... (gulp)... *death!* Death was obviously much more efficient so that's what the nice normal writers for *Party of Five* chose. Quite practical of them.

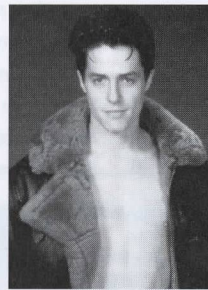
I guess initially my normal boy attraction was a sort of backlash from the more fucked-up boys I went out with when I was younger (I was much more fearful of dull back then.) Anything that reminded me of the stability of family or society I scoffed at—it was all a façade anyway. And so, as I have since discovered, was the "normal" guy. I

mean, did Elizabeth Hurley ever imagine her normal guy Hugh Grant was such a nasty little pervert? We were all shocked. And it wasn't just because some famous movie star was doing it with a prostitute. No, we were shocked because it was that geeky, clean-cut, compassionate, every-mother's-dream Hugh Grant! For most other men that sort of thing is almost expected—at least once; for a normal guy it becomes an outright obscene gesture—a slap in the face to all who trusted him and the notion of normalcy he stood for. The normal man, as with Hugh, must keep all that doesn't suit his normal guy status under wraps, lest it compromise his image. So in that respect you can never be quite sure what perversities might reside in the hidden depths of the normal man (which is what these thoughts become, since they have to hide them, and since they feel an almost religious guilt about them.) Normal men, and the girls who love them, enjoy that quality though—it adds a bit of intrigue to their otherwise routine existence.



Speaking of women, your average Joe Normal needs one in his life. Society demands as much—it's only normal.² And they're usually involved in a serious relationship—or want to be. As far as sex goes, normals are not all big talk and testosterone. They might be shy about a few of the more eccentric ideas you come up with, but don't get them wrong, they just need a moment to turn off their dominating self-reflective behavior and let loose that wild man fighting to get out, dying to give in to the insanity of the moment. If you can get him feeling self-assured, *he'll* be the one bringing up all the tricky maneuvers he's been fantasizing over for most of his life. Actually most normal guys are heavy into fantasy—often pornography (they're typically the ones that hide

it in the back of the closet under dirty laundry.)³ These guys aren't like the drunken, "Yeah, all right baby, I got what you want," *Hustler*-reading types. No, the normal guy is actually deeply and intuitively appreciative of the female form and mystique (because he can't quite intellectualize it.) It's often part momma's boy fantasy (though they'd never admit *that*) and part utter amazement that such a wondrous thing as woman exists. Isn't that sweet? They're the ones that could actually care more than less if it was good for you. They might even care *too* much.



Most normies won't do drugs because they might lose control of themselves. They can't give up their upper hand—their most redeeming quality. I took ecstasy once with a fabulous normal guy, thinking we were going to have an unrestrained enlightened evening together. We were going to go out but we took the stuff before leaving the house and it started to hit us before we left. I was enjoying the feeling of it coming on and went to see how my friend was doing, only to find him lying on the bed, fighting with everything he had to not lose control. He was in a panic, a cold sweat, fear in his eyes.... I spent the rest of the night keeping him talking so he wouldn't kill himself with worry over not being normal and predictable for the moment. By the end, of course, as the effects of the drug were wearing off, he was able to relax and sort of enjoy himself. He was out of the vortex of the trip, it was safe then, he could release himself without any fret. By that point though the objective of losing oneself, or changing one's perspective while on drugs, was quite unattainable. He could only stray so far, keeping his concrete, stable self within reach at all times. Some normals do like drugs, most often the more "controllable" drink, if they can push themselves beyond that initial fear. It's the best easy access excuse for a break from their

repressive nature, a much needed release from the demanding restrictions of being normal all the time. Can you imagine the pressure?! But even when a truly normal guy gets drunk, some part of him is consciously keeping track of his drink intake and monitoring whether he is fit to drive—unless he's gone beyond and lost all sense of that. That can happen—when they get too wasted—but usually they just break down and get extremely over-exaggeratedly ill and try not to ever lose that control over their faculties again. They are normal, and stable, and the ones *others* rely upon when *they* get fucked-up.

Another factor that adds to my attraction for normals seems to be a direct correlation with my dislike for the boys who try so hard to be unique and hip and important. Normals can't really fake being more than what they really are, at the core, because it's just too damn obvious. Even if he can fake it more as a youth, you'll still notice the tell-tale signs. And typically once they're past high school they don't even bother trying to fool anyone about it. The normal boy doesn't waste his energy trying to be something he isn't, so I suppose the appeal is towards one who is not worrying about it. At the same time, in the back of my mind, I feel I can really reach that suppressed part of them, bring it out and give it life. See, at the same time I like the idea of this normal guy, borderlining geekdom, a yet undiscovered treasure, that I can open up like a present, unearthing the deep hidden qualities. That their

normalcy is just a guise—a façade to protect the wondrous innards they're hiding from the rest of the unworthy world. That if he allowed me to share this with him it would truly *mean* something.

But alas, I realize most normal boys are just that, normal—just what they appear to be. You can't get mad at them either. They didn't lie to you about it. They didn't pretend they were something that they weren't—it was all *your* crazy imagination. They showed you their stability and you were attracted to it. You must now bond with their common sense. Be friends with their conventionality. And make love with their sense of responsibility and security. (Yaaaawn.) I know, in reality, I could never stay in a relationship with a normal guy even though there's that part of me that loves them dearly. They're too dull and I'd have to run away to some exotic place and have a mad affair or something and it'd be all their fault... for being so predictably normal. Despite all their repressive qualities, I'm still attracted to the "normal boy"... but for now I know we'd be much better off as friends.

I'd like to end this with a poem, from a very normal guy. He talked about normal in terms of being green. It went something like this:

*It's not that easy being green;
Having to spend each day the color of the leaves.
When I think it could be nicer being red, or yellow*

*or gold –
or something much more colorful like that.*

*It's not easy being green.
It seems you blend in with so many other ordinary things.
And people tend to pass you over 'cause you're not standing out like flashy sparkles in the water – or stars in the sky.*

*But green's the color of Spring.
And green can be cool and friendly-like.
And green can be big like an ocean, or important like a mountain, or tall like a tree.*

*When green is all there is to be
It could make you wonder why, but why wonder why?
Wonder, I am green and it'll do fine,
it's beautiful!
And I think it's what I want to be. ☺*

Notes...
1 Emily was Brandon Walsh's wacky girlfriend, who got so unhinged she went sorta *Fatal Attraction*, and eventually set the gang's float on fire.
2 Gay normal guys are a different article. They're not considered "normal" as far as societal standards (at least not yet.)
3 You ever read Joe Matt comics? He's a normal who displays the dark sides of normalcy. Joe differs from Crumb precisely because Crumb is not normal. The only reason Joe is such an especially fucked-up normie is that he's an anal-retentive perfectionist Virgo.



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STEEL POLE BATH TUB



The sheer crunch and grind of Steel Pole Bath Tub's tumultuous brand of audio terrorism always leaves me begging for more. From the days of Lurch and the jarring nature of songs like "Christina", this is the band who, in one fell swoop, changed my mind about music forever. Five years later, after several singles, albums, and other masterpieces, San Francisco's own show little sign of wear and tear with their infinitely explosive live sets.

Sure, the first issue of *Waffle* featured Steel Pole way back when, but that was Scott and Caio up to no good. I was still curious about a few things, so when the opportunity came around, I gave it a go. I met two-thirds of the band, catching a cab from Mike Morasky's pad to Dale Flattum's digs up in Bernal Heights. (Drummer Darren Mor-X was somewhere else.) As expected, Dale's place was ripe with pop culture ephemera (a self-confessed "packaging whore") all of which was obsessively and neatly arranged along the walls and several shelves. We adjourned to the small but homely backyard with a slight breeze in the air and a 16-ounce 7-Up at my side.

Noël: Did you two grow up together?

Dale: Mike and I did. I met Mike at a mutual friend's birthday party, we played miniature golf.

Mike: That's right.

D: And I won. I didn't know anyone—except for this friend of mine—outside of Bozeman, Montana.

M: I didn't know anyone, either. I spent most of my time alone.

When was this?

M: Sixth or seventh grade, when bullies were really bullies.

D: And you could still play a serious game of miniature golf.

When you were growing up, did you ever wish you were somewhere else?

M: It seemed like anywhere else was better. I always wanted to go to California so I could surf, but that was about it. I'm glad I didn't grow up in California.

D: I spent my formative years in Montana in the basement of my parents' house so I didn't have any real perspective as far as where you

could go if you left Montana.

In the basement doing God knows what. (Laughter all around.)

M: My room was upstairs and I had my own TV and everything.

Judging from some of the things you guys use visually, did you ever have a longing for another era?

M: I've never longed for another era.

D: There are times when it seems like it would be really fun to be involved with early Sixties drag-racing—

M: (Laughing.)

D:—and to be in some gang or something.

M: It would be nice to live in an era where people wore really cool suits.

Like shark skin suits and fedoras?

D: Yeah, and have lots of money to throw around.

M: Yeah, that too.

D: I [wish] I could've been one of the kids in *Blackboard Jungle*, total Fifties, right around the time when they coined the term "juvenile delinquent." (In a gruff voice) "There's a

problem today with juvenile delinquency and hoodlums!" That's when there were these badass trouble kids with x's on the back of their jackets, knife fights with teachers—

M: Right, in the beginning of that despair, like, "Well, we live in the City and we have no money, so we don't care!"

And play rock 'n' roll.

M: That would've been fun to play in a rock band then because you would've been such an outlaw.

You guys appropriate a lot of Forties and Fifties pop culture, mostly starting with *Tulip*, but also the various sound bites that play a big part in your sound. With Fifties pop culture running rampant, why do you think it is still relevant today?

M: I think that they made such cool stuff then, overall.

D: I think a lot of it, too, is that nothing today can remain underground or undiscovered. If anyone does anything, like if two people make a magazine, *USA Today* will have a blurb about it. I don't think anything exists for twenty years without anyone rediscovering it. I doubt there's going to be a Jim Thompson where he dies penniless and obscure 'cuz now he's a big cultural icon. Nothing exists in a basement anymore.

M: A lot of stuff has time to develop that way. In Fifties and Sixties culture—not late Sixties 'cuz that's when [youth culture] was being put on a cereal box—with pulp books and such, it was developing over such an extremely long period of time that it actually could become an aesthetic, whereas now things change so fast that it never really has time to sink in as an aesthetic.

D: There's not any regionalism anymore. With technology and media, everything is just smeared across the globe. Things that are happening in New York that you once heard about, now you can just watch it on TV. Things

are spread really thin. I guess that's what we could be crotchety old men about—"Kids these days, they don't understand!"

(Laughter.)

Most people tend to appropriate old pop culture on a surface level, mostly out of irony and perversion. How do you avoid such trappings?

M: We were vaguely talking about this a little earlier, about the pervasive nature of Fifties pop culture. It's not something that we think about. It's weird, we just have this knack for it. All of our records—from the covers to the content—all seems to represent itself as a "package" and it all seems to happen inadvertently.

D: And as far as packaging goes, a lot of the coolest advertising packaging came from the Fifties and Sixties when... Now, see *there's* an era that I would long to be in, to work for an ad agency in New York. (*In this evil, sinister ad exec voice*) "I got an idea! We'll make soap with pumice in it and we'll call it Lava Soap! And we'll put a volcano on the package! We'll use the word 'pumice' to sell it!"

M: It was totally thought of the whole way through.

D: Right. Now, when you see [appropriated ideas], you wonder where it's stolen from.

M: Bands these days just slap a "decal aesthetic" over the top of their records, it's not really thought all the way through. Not that we think it all the way the way through, but I do think that—

D: Oh, we do think it all the way through.

(Laughter.)

M: Like *The Miracle of Sound in Motion* record, that record has so many sound effects on it. The only reason that it has a sound effects record cover is because I bought this one record and we couldn't decide on the album cover and I thought, "That's pretty cool, why don't we use that?" Actually, the title was swiped from the back of that album.

Did you steal all the text, too?

D: Darren [Mor-X] swiped half of the text. Sam Sulliman is credited with doing the artwork.

M: It could just easily be seen as, "Ooh, we've got a lot of sound effects and this package is about sound effects!"

D: We could pull the, "Oh yeah, we had the concept from the beginning," schtick.

There seems to be a degree of consistency, especially since that record followed *Tulip's* pulp theme with the cover and the song "Myrna Loy," but I can see how that could come in retrospect.

D: We just channel the stuff, man. We just receive the signals. It's all alien possession.

(Laughter.)

D: I don't think we're *that* into the Fifties, we're not like *American Graffiti*.

M: Actually, in terms of packaging, the early Sixties is what I'm more into, like the cars, the clothes—

Who was it that said you guys always seem to catch onto something—like drag-racing—before it's big?

M: It was this ridiculous interview and he was kinda stupid, actually. Again, it's another example of what happens in retrospect, like [our Marcia Brady cover] and the Brady Bunch coming back in full force. It's not so much catching on to something as it is doing what you do.

D: I can't support that statement, that's like, "My head is so big, I can't take my shirt off!"

(Laughter.)

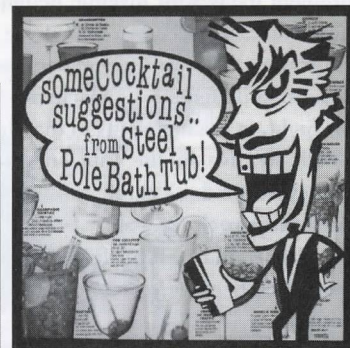
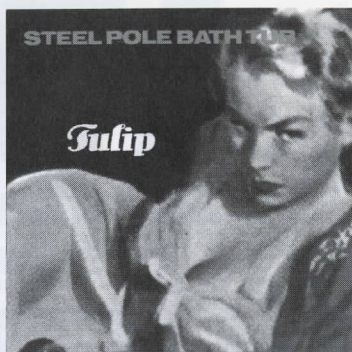
M: I don't think that we influence things that way or that we catch on, I think it's just more like—

D: We receive the signal. We do what they tell us to.

Wow, it comes through your cable channels, huh?

(Laughter.)





D: Yeah, we spearheaded the whole drag-racing revival.

M: Right, exactly.

Well, an interesting thing about the drag-racing thing is that Adam Ant has retooled his image around that.

D: Really?

It was just awful. I saw him at this live acoustic performance inside Tower Records and it was just pathetic. I expected more from a guy who pioneered a lot of interesting music in the early Eighties.

D: Too bad he wasn't still dressed up like a pirate.

(Laughter.)

D: He did that Indian / pirate thing a while back.

He was onto the space thing ten years ago, even though it never caught on.

D: But then he got into that lying-in-a-barn phase where he was like, "I'm lying in hay!"

(Laughter.)

Right, his whole romantic Renaissance phase.

D: New Romanticism, that'll make a big comeback.

M: Prog-rock.

D: They need to combine Prog-Rock and the New Romanticism.

Seems like the perfect marriage, doesn't it?

D: Right, frilly shirts with Flock of Seagulls style haircuts.

Why did you guys never think it was important to have a rock / theatric image?

M: But we do!

(Laughter.)

You're image is completely normal.

D: It can get quite complicated.

M: I'm just too lazy to be quite honest.

I think it's just funny seeing this Time-Life commercial for their "Guitar Rock" collections and they'll show Quiet Riot with their big hair, striped spandex, and pseudo-evil imagery. The worst part about it is that people still do that.

D: A bunch of people talk about the return of Hair Rock and I guess it makes sense. People who'll be running out of stuff to pay attention to will be like, "Wait a minute! There were three guys at that Denny's with big rock hair! It must be back!" Then there'll be an article written and a bunch of kids in Kansas will—

M: Grow all their hair back.

D: —go, "Oh, okay," and steal all their brother's Poison and Warrant records.

(Laughter.)

It's disgusting how people in these so-called hipster circles are so reactionary that they'll go so far as to immerse themselves in really bad metal music from the Eighties. I mean, even Krokus was a band that metalheads hated.

M: They're the worst!

D: At least you've got to listen to what they were ripping off, you don't want to listen to

Ratt.

(Laughter.)

D: At least buy a Blue Öyster Cult record.

M: Get to the core of the matter.

D: Get to the root of the problem.

M: Even Beavis and Butthead didn't like Krokus.

(Laughter.)

D: I'm hoping that it doesn't happen.

M: There are droves of people out there just waiting for it to come back.

Exactly. It's just weird, Eiso was talking about this the other day, how none of the guys in Bakamono look or dress similarly and how people could be confused by that as if there should be this singular image.

M: That kind of goes back to the Fifties. TV wasn't quite as prevalent in music so they weren't packaging bands quite that extremely. That's what it comes down to, something that people can see on TV and go, "Oh, it's that band," or, "It's that kind of music." Then they go out and buy a shirt, cut their hair the right way, and they're a part of that. It's that easy.

Do you think anything in the Nineties will have any staying power? Like, in the year 2030, people might look back and go, "Wow, the Nineties had some great packaging!"

(Laughter.)

Like Debbie Gibson's Electric Youth cover, someone might look at that and go, "Whoah! It really looks like neon lights!"

D: When we were in Seattle, we saw this minute-lube place with this big banner that said, "You'll Be Out In a Minute," and it looked like it was cut-up punk rock letters. Even the punk aesthetic is used to sell oil changes because they figure all those people in Seattle who are in grunge bands need to get the oil changed for their van!

(Laughter.)

D: The next big thing will be becoming a farmer, "We own land and raise cattle and



have a zine about it!"

(Laughter.)

D: It will always be worse than what we could sit around here and try to make up.

The funny thing is that just in the past five years, all of the past three decades have been revived.

D: Yeah, there's that great Dan Clowes line, that in the future you'll be into the Seventies, but not the Seventies of the Seventies but the Nineties rehash of the Seventies.

(Laughter.)

D: Nothing new will be thought of.

M: It's like the Nineties version of Seventies punk, in 2010 people will be into that.

I think that the Nineties will come back in the Nineties, but it won't represent the Nineties since it's a decade living in the past.

D: The circle is getting smaller and smaller.

M: I think that the corporate logo is one thing that will remain later on. Everybody has to have their own corporate logo.

D: That'd be great if all individuals had some logo designed for them. That's another thing, there's so much logo appropriation, that no one can actually sit down and create a logo anymore. It's like, "What if we take the Texaco logo and put our name across it? Wait, our band's name is too long."

M: (Laughing.)

D: Me and Mark Brooks from Foreskin 500 took a vow never to appropriate another logo, it all has to stop. It's not too far from when everyone will have trademarks after their names. The new Jack In the Box [ad campaign] is amazing.

M: That's related to the bomb phenomenon I was talking about. When they did that, they just totally erased their past.

D: Nobody remembers the fact that all these people died eating their food.

M: McDonald's has done a really good job with the recycling thing, like, "Oh, we're not destroying the rainforest," even though they've been basically destroying our planet.

D: Then they hired some earthy graphic artist to do some wood block-like artwork to make people think that, "Oh, this was hand-printed down at the community center or something!" when in fact it was all done on a computer and made to look cheap.

(Laughter.)

I know if my mother ever caught me listening to Steel Pole Bath Tub, she'd wonder what's wrong with me. Why do you think that is?

D: My dad had the best line when I was listening to this P.I.L. record once when I was 15 or something. He said, "If that guy came into my

house, I'd loan him a shotgun to kill himself!"

M: (Laughs.) Right!

That's a Ted Nugent endorsed sentiment.

M: People used to be so surprised about the normal thing, like, "You guys look so normal, I thought you guys would be INTENSE!!"

D: On our first tour, people expected us to look like White Zombie or something.

M: I've never really thought of our music that way, I've always had this sense that it was very cartoony. No one ever seems to pick up on that. I guess it isn't like the Smurfs.

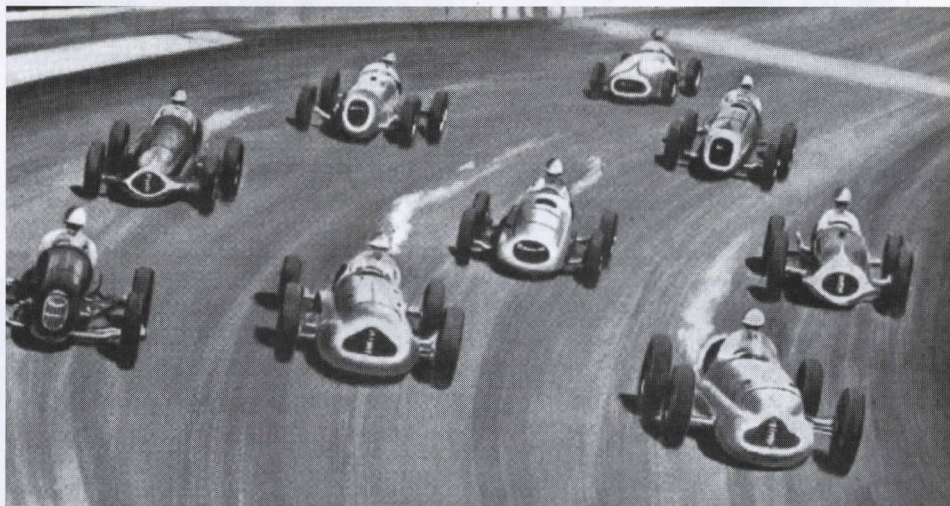
D: I like the Smurfs.

M: Oh, I love the Smurfs.

I think that'll be the next wave: Smurf Rock. Maybe Fraggles Rock, too.

M: (Laughing.)

D: Cuddly but slightly perverse and frightening. I think that we have a very good sense of humor about it all. I was cracking up when we played the Warfield the other night, it reached



a point where I was laughing so hard I thought I'd have to lie down. I'd see a girl holding her ears, waiting for Mike Patton, her boyfriend standing behind her, comforting her. A whole bunch of people were like, "Why?! Just stop! If you'll stop now, we'll get to hear Faith No More." Then I think, "How did I get here?" When I was in seventh grade hiding in the basement, would I have imagined that I'd be "rockin' out" and—

Frightening children.

(Laughter.)

D: I don't think that the average Steel Pole Bath Tub fan has \$17.50 to see us in some huge place. I see the crowd and think, "Yup, just another slough of stoned 15 year old boys from the suburbs who want to watch Mike Patton," and that we're just this obstacle. In this way, it reminds me of when we first started playing shows where you think, "I don't care if anyone hates us, they're just gonna

have to deal with a whole slough of screeching noise," and now it's kinda gone full circle. It's like, "They're trapped! They don't want to give up their spot on the fence!" They can put their fingers in their ears, but that's just about it.

I wonder if looking normal will become a huge hip trend.

D: Maybe "nice" will be the next thing, just market it, package products really well.

M: Anything you can think of will be chewed up and spit out as quickly as possible.

D: With a nice logo and all.

M: And you can read about it on the Internet. (Laughter.)

M: I feel like a grumpy old man when I talk about MTV, but they really do take in visual culture and two weeks later it's barely relevant nor seen as innovative. You can't be original now if everything looks like *Ray Gun*.

"MTV: Gatorade and Ray Gun."

(Laughter.)

M: With bands like Smashing Pumpkins and all that "alternative" stuff, they've created this non-aesthetic aesthetic, this kind of...

D: Mush.

M: Right, and if it's mushy enough and lacking any flavor, it fits right in.

From Cocktail Nation to Tofu Nation.

M: (Laughing.)

The first time I saw the t-shirt for the new Jack In the Box campaign—where it says "(Jack's Front)" with the clown head on the front side and "Jack's Back" on the back side—I thought it was just the perfect indie-rock shirt. All the indie-rockers should have one.

(Laughter.)

M: Whoever thought of "Jack's Back" wakes up smiling in the morning. ☺

Etiquette

the **RIGHT** thing to do

by Jennifer Lehrer

There's no disputing the hardline Mayflower history of etiquette. Its basic principles, however, don't necessarily reek purely of waspishness, but rather serve as evidence of a nice, kind and considerate person. I know that sounds a little too soft and cushy for some of you post-punk rockers, but as long as you're not being gagged with loveliness, wouldn't you prefer someone to be polite?

What exactly is polite? To find this out I turned to some of the many etiquette books available today. They had thousands of lessons on how to do things like address invitations, but none contained what I feel to be the one true element that defines class which is, of course, what etiquette implies. A truly well-mannered person never makes another person feel "below" them in any way. Reading these books puts a whole bizarre twist on the plot of proper; it distorts manners into rules, something to aspire to, rather than a common sense way of living that anyone can employ. I am particularly fascinated by etiquette books from the Fifties and Sixties when men's and women's roles were so defined and so separate. Books of this era did little more than tell women to keep their legs shut and groom themselves to be trophy wives. Men's roles were clearly defined as protectors of the frail and delicate women. Nevertheless, there are some day to day considerations that transcend gender and help make the harsh realities of everyday life a little easier. There is no question that being polite sometimes requires thinking of others first which seems to be the antithesis of our "civilized" society. There are a few inconsiderations I could not find covered in any of the etiquette books and these are things that continue to irk me on a daily basis. I share them with you in the hope of ridding the world of these nasty unmentionables.

SMELL

The most basic way that you can be considerate of others is to bathe. It's downright rough to be on the train with someone whose aroma is wafting indiscriminately throughout the car. You try to turn your head or hold your breath

to avoid it and nothing works. You look at the person across from you and you know exactly what they're thinking because they're doing that same thing. Smell is the perfect example of how poor etiquette forces others to suffer your presence. This is particularly nasty at restaurants. Last Father's Day, one papa was so stinky that we had to request another table. Others followed in short suit and the offender was left alone with a wife who knew all too well why they now had a private dining room. Miss Thing could have done the world a favor by buying her big papa a six-pack of Arrid Extra Dry rather than forcing him upon the unsuspecting public. Surely she could tell how stinky he was in the car on their way over, if not before that. She could and should have told him. Any proper person finds a nice way to point out the "unmentionables" that someone might not notice about themselves, but needs to know desperately.

Just as people fail to bathe, others erroneously douse themselves in cologne. This is most horrible when you can recognize the scent from previous overexposure—Obsession, Charlie, Poison, Giorgio and, of course, patchouli. Being stinky is more than not proper, it's cruel.

DRIVING

Driving could be such a joy if people kept a few basic points in mind. Always use your blinker. Don't honk unless absolutely necessary (ie: your horn is not a doorbell). I know we're all tabloid gore whores, but if there's an accident on the road and everyone slows down for a glimpse of blood, traffic gets snarled for miles and it's really not worth the wait. Stay the fuck out of the fast lane if you're not going

fast. Do not cut someone off only to go slowly or step on your brakes. Never use your brakes for no apparent reason. Be kind and let someone make that left turn they've been trying to make for ten minutes. Don't drink and drive unless it's bottled water or banana smoothies.

People also seem to have a problem with general merging. Although it has nothing to do with driving, it is general movement and it seems to go together. What's up with the lines to get on BART? In New York they were fairly formal, you did not get in the car before someone you knew had been waiting longer. Here, people don't give a fuck and cut right in front of you snatching the seat that was rightly yours. And when you get off the train people don't wait until everyone's out of the car before they pile in. What's up with that? I don't know if it's that people are rude here or if New Yorkers were scared someone would blow them away if they cut in line. (I like the New York system better even if it is somehow deep down based on intimidation.)

NOISE

This is where I'm a big wimp and no fun to live near. I need lots of sleep. I go to bed early rather than getting up late and I get bummed if someone is blasting music past 11 PM. Think of your neighbors before you crank it. Let them know beforehand if you are going to have a party so you can give them the option of not being there. Invite them even if you know they won't come, maybe they'll be more sympathetic at 4:45 AM when you're still rocking. There is no excuse for not taking your shoes off so your downstairs neighbor doesn't have to hear you thumping around. Loud orgasms are not necessary and are often gross-



ly exaggerated. Everyone should get off—it's important—but it's not necessary for the neighborhood to know when, where and how many times. Some people just live differently than you and although that can be hard to understand, unwanted sleep deprivation is easy to sympathize with. Everyone should do their part to rid the world of it.

DATING

Be honest. The worst part of dating is not knowing. Not knowing if he really likes you, if he's going to call, if he's lying when he says he can't see you anymore because he's starting to fall for you and he's "not ready for that." The worry and obsessiveness that goes along with all this can be avoided by simple honesty. If you don't want to see someone again, tell them. Tell them nicely, but tell them nevertheless. Don't drag it out until they finally guess. Don't say you'll call if you won't. Don't leave anybody hanging 'cause you're too big a wimp to fess up. Not knowing really sucks and if people were honest nobody would have to go through the torture that accompanies it. Another cardinal rule about dating and sexuality is never assume. Never assume someone likes boys or girls or peacocks and that your attention is warranted just cause you think they're "something." Don't assume that they will be turned on by getting their butt spanked just like you do. Ask your partner or "potential

love interest" if something is okay, or suggest it lightly (physically or verbally) before literally diving in. Respect people's choices and boundaries. What's good for the goose is not necessarily good for the gander.

To define that gender rule once and for all, everyone should strive to pay their own way. The only reason someone shouldn't pay their own way is because of financial circumstances, not gender. Back in the olden days of etiquette it made sense that a man had to pay a woman's way because she had little opportunity to make money of her own. But this isn't the case anymore so to all of you gold-digging, alimony seeking girls and boys: step off! Of course it's nice when someone wants to take you out and enjoy your company, by all means accept and enjoy, but don't expect your date to pay every time just because he's got a penis. That's wimpy and pathetic.

BEING A GUEST

If you are a guest in someone's home pick up after yourself, offer to help with dishes, etc., and offer to bring something or chip in for food. Chances are your friend will pshaw you, but the offer will nonetheless be appreciated.

This is a partial list of the uncovered basics. If you want to read a book that demonstrates true graciousness rather than stupid rules, read Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Little*

Princess whose heroine rapidly goes from rich to poor to rich and shows the difference between true manners and learned etiquette by never stooping to others nasty levels even in the face of hardship and adversity. This is true style because it breaks down the condescending "money" part of manners. It doesn't take money to be polite, and being polite will grace you with more smiles than any dollar bills. Once one can get over the class divisions of etiquette, they'll realize that it's all good and, hey, table manners can be really sexy. A heartfelt please or thank you or even an "I'm sorry" can make all the difference in my feeling towards a person. What is most important to keep in mind is that roles, rules and expectations should not be defined by gender, but only by what makes sense. ☺



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C/Z
records

the great

mentos

conspiracy

by Wendy Bryan

THE MENTOS JINGLE

It doesn't matter what comes
You've got a freshness in life,
With Mentos, fresh and full of life!

Nothing gets to you,
Staying fresh, staying cool,
With Mentos, fresh and full of life!

Chorus: Fresh goes better,
Mentos freshness
Fresh goes better—
With Mentos, fresh and full of life!

Announcer: Mentos, the Freshmaker!

Most folks remark that the Mentos enigma lies in the fact that the commercials are based on bad humor or at least fail to cater to American advertising sensibilities. *USA Today* rated Mentos commercials as number two on a top ten list of worst commercials for 1994. Considering America's ego-centricism regarding entertainment, it's not surprising that we find our humor to be more advanced than those "wacky Dutch".

However, what may be seen as unforgivably strange is actually a standard paradigm of comedy, spanning from Shakespeare all the way to *Three's Company*. (Mentos has thus far stayed away from gender confusion.) The visual puns and slapstick humor are unmistakable. Does the theatrical development excluded from the 30 second Mentos commercial (compared with 23 minutes of information in *Three's Company*, or three hours in a Shakespearean comedy) really make that big a difference? Picture this: instead of the blond kid in the mall being chased—apparently without provocation—by some old lady, it's Jack Tripper being pursued by a hot and horny Mrs. Roper who's under the impression that Jack wants to teach her "cooking lessons". The misunderstanding between the two is obvious. Jack, suddenly inspired by a fresh solution,

diverts Mrs. Roper's sexual energy by making her dessert, simultaneously reminding her that he's gay. Our hero manages to impress his nemesis, yet remains unscathed.

Judging from the information sent to me by VanMelle Corporation (the company in the Netherlands which distributes Mentos), they seem to believe that their commercials are very inspiring. There was not a trace of irony connected with the storyboards, which answered most of my basic questions about the narrative of all Mentos plots and storylines. Here's an actual transcription from the storyboard of the "Sweetie-Pie" (no, it's not Psycho-Mutant-Killer-Mom) commercial:

In a shopping mall, "Aunt Tilda" notices our hero. He swallows, looks the other way... searches for help—and comes up with a fresh idea. He pops in a Mentos... and transforms himself [puts on hat] into a show-window dummy. Aunt Tilda looks around: "Where is my 'Sweetie Pie' gone?" Our hero smiles, relaxes and pops a Mentos into his mouth. On the escalator way down Aunt Tilda spots him. Our hero smiles and proudly flashes her the winner sign. Mentos — the Freshmaker!

The January 1995 issue of *Spin* magazine offered a brilliant deconstructive analysis of this commercial, claiming that her identity is that of a Freudian mother figure. The old woman in the mall is not the young boy's mother nor his lover trying to accost him in a *Fatal Attraction*-esque manner, it's his aunt—Aunt Tilda to be exact. They neglect to specify exactly *why* she is chasing him through the mall, or why he feels forced to resort to his little bag of tricks—the Freshmaker—in order to evade her. He never seems to express any embarrassment per se, but perhaps it's that "subtle" European acting style.

The Mentos FAQ Version 4.0 on the Internet claims that the older woman is actually an actress who plays a similar character in a

German sitcom. Excepting those hip to international sitcoms, most of us are left out of this reference to German pop culture.

The Mentos Conspiracy

Mentos commercials have been acknowledged as the most bizarre, lame commercials ever to make it to prime time, but they are somehow quite charming and very successful. While Mentos has been around for twenty years, the past few years has seen this hot product skyrocketing. The proof is in the pudding: sales went from \$20 million to \$40 million in 1991 right after they introduced their oddball campaign. Initially, Mentos pared down their U.S. selection from 50 flavors to two, but now that Mentos popularity is on the rise, some European flavors are being re-introduced to America. There are now five: mixed fruit, mint, spearmint, strawberry, and cinnamon.

Perhaps what we've perceived as poor quality commercial making is actually a highly subversive attempt to advertise to the difficult-to-reach twentysomething buying audience. The kitschy stylization of the commercials, (having the appearance of an innocent, yet failed attempt at narrative) has somehow appealed to American twentysomethings as a sort of an inside joke. But perhaps the joke is on us; the poor quality seems to be a very deliberate sell on the part of the VanMelle Corporation.

The magazine *Advertising Age* describes the success of the thirty-second spots, aired on Fox, MTV and shows like *Saturday Night Live*, which "show frustrating situations smartly overcome by cool thinking aided by Mentos." Advertising in such an expensive timeslot cannot be anything but a calculated move on the part of the VanMelle Corporation. In 1994 they spent \$11.9 million dollars in advertising alone, a large percentage of which went towards prime-time television. *Advertising Age* also noted the progress of Mentos product

placement—the freshmaker has been spotted on MTV, Comedy Central, and *Baywatch*. Seeing David Hasselhoff munching on a Mentos while checking out chicks on the beach might convince any *Knight Rider* lover to rush right out to their local candy shop. Drugstore sales went up by 55% between 1993 and 1994. The fifteen-plus pages making up the Mentos FAQ is a monument paying tribute to the chewy candy, created by a bunch of collegiate geeks (Whether the site is paid for by VanMelle is unknown at this point). More recently, the appearance of a Mentos ad in the movie *Clueless* seemed to further reinforce the cultish identity of the commercials, the movie itself intended as a tongue-in-cheek piece.

Advertising Age claims that Mentos commercials were originally created to reach European customers. This would clear up some of the confusion about the absurd nature of the humor in these commercials. However, the intention of the Mentos campaign is still under question. According to Aaron Naparstek of *Spin*, the man who designed the Mentos commercials had not intended them to be strictly for a European audience, and found it

amusing that everyone seems to believe that. The Mentos FAQ cites that several of these commercials were filmed in the U.S. by an unnamed American director. Tricia Gold, the associate brand manager for Mentos in Kentucky, is quoted as saying, “We try to have an American focus, but it’s a global campaign.” Mentos manages to transcend these cultural boundaries by appealing to our newfound love of absurdity.

We are being targeted by what I like to call “The Banality Aesthetic,” meaning people in their twenties—the TV generation—have been exposed to so many commercials and gimmicks that we now become excited by the stupid and mundane. If the sell doesn’t appear to be reaching its intended audience, fails a little, or misses the mark entirely, it’s almost certain that we will like it. Once described as unreachable by most ordinary advertising means, our generation may have become the easiest sell: make it dumb, insipid, intentionally boring, and the money will flow like diarrhea. From California lottery commercials to the “Got Milk?” campaign, simplicity and stupidity are the reigning kings of ads. Now that advertising

agencies have caught on, it’s gonna be all kitsch,* jolting camera angles, grunge fonts, and MTV Home Shopping Network until we’re sixty. “The Next Trend” column of the October *Advertising Age* even held a contest to mimic the success of the campaign: “Come up with the next really stupid but wonderfully kitschy Mentos commercial”. Scary. ☹

Footnote

* Kitsch is a term originally coined by the elite to maintain a standard of taste to separate themselves from the lower classes. In the Seventies, tongue-in-cheek appreciation of kitschy, mass-manufactured goods by the upper classes was in vogue, breaking down standardized notions of “good taste.” Susan Sontag maintains that kitsch is no longer kitsch once it has been recognized as such, a sentiment which still makes it elite until it is recognized as such by the general public. Our generation has become attuned to this sort of inverted snobbism—perhaps a natural extension of our haughty American attitude—a notion of taste which changes when too many people join the club with the same *Welcome Back Kotter* lunchbox. The appeal of the underground quality of kitsch is irresistible to advertisers who have a hard time walking the thin line between jaded youngsters and a successful profit for their client.

Fresh-mak-er (fresh’mā’ker), *n.* A chewy candy product, usually Mentos, which causes the ingestor to become more clever than others and therefore fresh and full of life.

Any product that expands the vocabulary of the English language in order to describe itself must be pretty darn special.

DO-IT-YOURSELF!

How to advertise to “Gen X” without their knowing it!

A Lesson in Freshmaking:

- Come up with a plot for your commercial. Watch some *Three’s Company* for inspiration. Keep it simple!
- Don’t try too hard, those Gen X-er’s will know if you’re faking that kitsch!
- Pick an object, such as an item of clothing or a car, as the center piece for the “fresh” solution.
- Buy some old film. Maintain that lo-fi Seventies film quality—kids love it!
- Find an urban setting.
- Establish those enemies: corporate, elderly, or establishment types work great! Essential for “fuck you” Mentos salute at the end of the commercial.

Feelin Fresh! Here’s a perfect example of a fresh solution to a not-so-fresh problem thanks to Mentos!



1. The first lady walks into the public bathroom, purchasing a much needed tampon from the handy vending machine.



2. Our heroine follows, also needing a tampon for that fresh feeling, but finds that ruthless nemesis snags the last one.



3. Enemy is triumphant, giving tampon salute.



4. Our heroine ponders her problem with a pack of Mentos...



5. ... then comes up with a fresh idea by using her mentos as an even fresher tampon!



6. Where Mentos goes, freshness follows! Mentos – The Freshmaker™.

Photos + text: Wendy Bryan

Craig

the LAST hippie on the peninsula (perhaps)

by Joe Donohoe

"And if all the hippies cut their hair / I don't care" — James Marshall Hendrix

A year and a half ago I commuted 3 hours a day, five days a week, to and from work in Menlo Park which lies on the Peninsula between San Francisco and San Jose. It was there that I met Craig Dremann.

Menlo Park, like neighboring Atherton, smells like old money. In the shadow of Stanford and the Silicon Valley to the south, its wealth is quiet and casual, low key, Californian. Large estates lie in the best neighborhoods fronted by walls and oaks. People are nice but act nervous around you if you don't look or seem quite right. Perhaps this subtlety is a quality of the climate. The Mediterranean weather makes you want to sit in the sun for spaces of time with your eyes closed while class distinctions take care of themselves. Down in the creek, crowded with garbage and refuse, is where all the tramps live.

Craig was one of a group of customers who came into the copy store I worked at once or twice a week who were dissimilar from the uptight white types who brought in most of the business. There were a group of eccentrics whom I associated with Stanford such as the Polish professor who liked to show me his picture of the mountains where the Pope went skiing; or the geezer who looked and acted just like Einstein and always tried to buy copies on credit; or the brothers who dressed like railroad engineers and collected erector sets. But Craig wasn't one of them. Craig runs the Redwood City Seed Company out of Redwood City. The shell beads and embroidered shirts he wore wouldn't have been a big deal in Santa Cruz or Marin, but here they stood out. Unlike many hippies, I didn't hate Craig instantly, in fact, I even found him entertain-

ing to converse with. Maybe it was because, unlike many guys his age, Craig had found some kind of balance in his life between belief and necessity that didn't require him to become a square or, for that matter, a bitter, disillusioned, junkie burnout. Living right is

I would have made more money, but I stuck with what I was doing. Now I'm seen as a leader. People seek me out for advice because at one point I did what I believed in when no one else was doing it. (*Yup, Craig's a preachy critter.*) Today there are others, but there are still only fifteen companies in the United States that are selling native North American seeds.

"In the city it's hard to tell where the money comes from but in rural or agrarian areas such as the Central Valley it's obvious, the earth, the land, food. If you go down to the Santa Clara Valley you see all these silicon mines where there used to be farmland. The farmland would have lasted if it was farmed right, it would have been a lasting economic resource in this region. Silicon miners will do what miners always do, move to new stakes, go where the

money went. It's already happening. Software companies are leaving the area and moving to Texas. Mountain View is practically a ghost town. At one point in life I wanted to be a nuclear physicist, but if I had become that I'd be like a lot of friends in that line of work, looking for jobs that aren't there.

"What your generation doesn't understand is that my generation lied to you. My parents lied to me, too. I had to go to my grandparents for the truth. My grandparents went through too much shit. [The] Depression, the Second World War. They were willing to accept anything they were offered. Give us the split level ranch house, we'll make bombs, fight Communists, whatever. Their kids, the Baby Boomers, got it all on a silver platter: \$18,000 homes, education paid for by the GI Bill, 3% loans. This was all on the government's tab. Everytime I see someone my age driving a Lexus or BMW, I see part of a loan that isn't being paid back. Your generation is expected to pay off the loan."



Photos: Joe Donohoe

an art form and Craig seemed to grasp this.

"Guys my age for the most part went ahead and did what we used to call 'selling out.' They took an offer the government made them and ended up making tank periscopes for a lot of money which they turned around and spent on themselves. I didn't want to do that so early on I had to figure out what I wanted to do with my life. How was I going to pay my bills and be happy without having to make tank periscopes?"

Craig, finding solace in the natural world, got into the mail order seed business by the time he was nineteen and has stayed with the small company he started with his wife, Susan, for over twenty years. They specialize in food staple plants native to the Americas and crops which had significant roles in various world cultures from Tibet to Peru.

"When I started, guys in the line of business I was in were saying, 'You're nuts selling that stuff. Try selling these new sturdier, hybrid seeds and you'll make a lot more money,' and

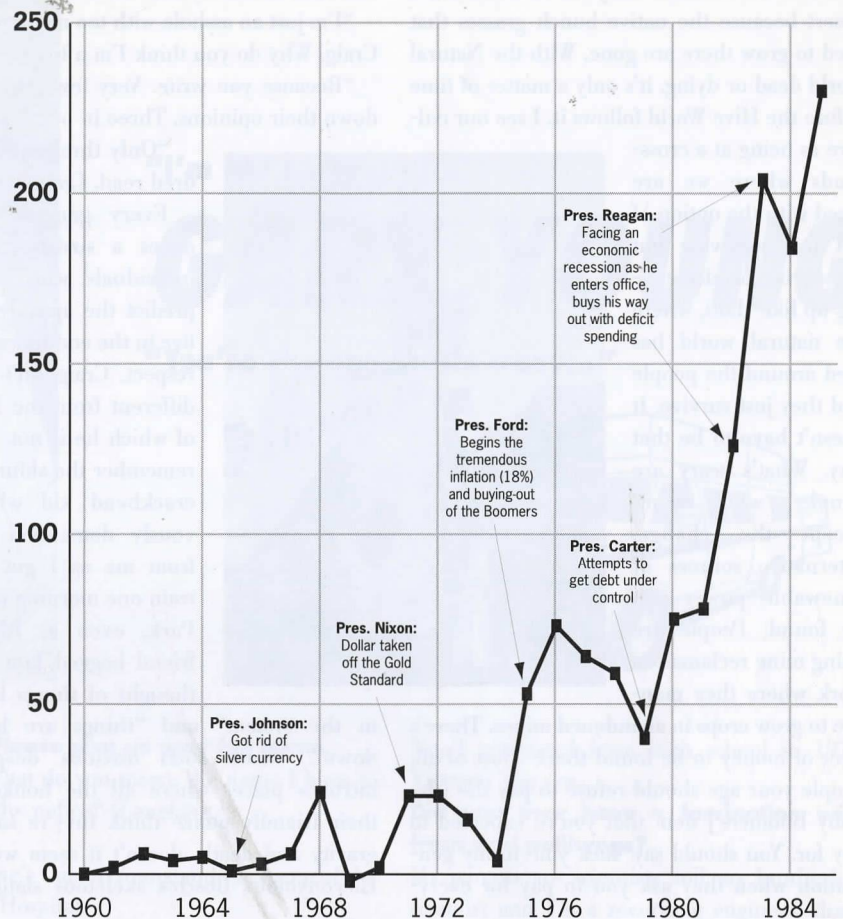
Craig's home is in a mostly Hispanic and black neighborhood with a slight Tongan population. He and Susan are the only white couple left. Craig told me how he likes to organize the neighborhood kids into fixing potholes in their street and doing gardening. "If you change the set in the neighborhood you change the neighbors. A government road is just a government road until you give people some investment in it. We let all the kids into our backyard but we don't let them kill anything, not the beetles even. The old Spanish people are afraid of Jerusalem Crickets which they call *niños de tierra*, 'children of the earth.' They're black and they live in the soil and the men think they get powers from the devil which can kill them so when one shows up in somebody's yard I have to go save it. I like being away from white culture. I like living in an area where everyone likes to hang out. I speak Spanish and act as an interpreter between the black and Spanish communities. The Mexican folk used to call me El Gringo but now its El Hippie because there's a difference. I don't consider myself a caucasian. What do I know about the Caucasus Mountains?"

Craig likes to make references to what he calls the "Hive Culture." It's a term that is similar to the Austrailian Aborigine phrase "Termite People" which describes white civilization. The term is also used by Robert Anton Wilson in his mid-70's autobiography *Cosmic Trigger*.

It's a Sixties prejudice that technology and cities are cold soulless cancers that are eating up the planet which ignores the fact that some people get quite a bit out of urban existence and that urban communities can be every bit as warm and vital as rural ones, if not more so. Technology, it could be argued, has made some humans truly aware of just what our behavior is doing to the environment and opened questions of living differently. To be fair Craig doesn't tow this party line. "I'm not saying let's go live out in the woods," he told me. In fact it's not even so much "The Hive" which Craig has problems with as what he sees going wrong within it.

"There's [this term] in bee keeping we call 'foul brood' that is noticeable by a urine-like smell. I think there's a foul brood in the Hive Culture. I can smell urine in the streets. There never used to be all these homeless people. The idea of anyone not having a place to live used to be absurd. In the Seventies, you could live on the Peninsula for only \$200 a month and now you can't. There was this big military buildup and the people who ran industry dangled this carrot in front of my generation's face

NATIONAL BUDGET DEFICIT (BILLIONS)



**All the young people have to say is:
"I'm not paying the bill for your
party, you free-spending yuppies!"**

Source:
World Almanac, "Economics — Summary of Receipts, Outlays and Surpluses or Deficits, 1934 – 1985."

and said, 'Work for us and we'll give you all this money and a lifestyle to maintain. If you don't, we'll make it really hard for you to live.' See, the Republicans were going, 'Those god-damn hippies are smoking too much pot and getting all mellow and seeing through our bullshit. We have to put a stop to this.' It was about this time that law enforcement really started cracking down on marijuana cultivation and there was this big weed shortage."

"So you like pot?"

"Oh yeah, we call it *wise weed*."

"I know plenty of people who smoke heroic amounts of cannabis and they are hardly what you could call wise."

"That's because they don't use it right. Anything can be used wrong."

"When people my age do drugs it's not because they're looking for some kind of mystical transformation. It's because they're bored. We're bored. We want kicks. It's really cynical."

"That's because your generation is in tune

to an intuition that things are fucked, which they are. The Hive World is dying. It has no vitality. Everything is running on oil. On dead dinosaur bones. How long is this going to last? We've got to find another way. This gets back to the other truth I wanted to tell you. The first people to be aware of what I'm going to tell you were the Native Americans, the ones that kept to their cultural traditons which involves being close to the natural world. After them, the hippies—those of us still left—figured it out. Then the entymologists knew it, then the botanists. The last people to figure it out were the archaeologists because they could look in the past and see that it has happened before. The truth is that the world isn't going to end. *It has ended*. The natural world has ended. There were no feral bees this season. The honey bees have all died from a mite from Asia. Foul brood. Three species of oak on the coast are endangered and there hasn't been a major oak seed appearance since 1973. Lichens are disappearing. Whole species of

amphibians are disappearing. If irrigation was cut off to the Central Valley it would become a desert because the native bunch grasses that used to grow there are gone. With the Natural World dead or dying, it's only a matter of time before the Hive World follows it. I see our culture as being at a crossroads where we are faced with the option of not just surviving but prospering or else ending up like Haiti, where the natural world has died around the people and they just survive. It doesn't have to be that way. What's scary are people who won't accept the change. Alternative sources of renewable power can be found. People are doing mine reclamation work where they manage to grow crops in abandoned mines. There's a lot of money to be found there. Most of all, people your age should refuse to pay the [the Baby Boomers'] debt that you're expected to pay for. You should say 'fuck you' to my generation when they ask you to pay for every-

thing. You personally should turn people onto this stuff because you're a leader."

"I'm just an asshole with too many opinions, Craig. Why do you think I'm a leader?"

"Because you write. Very few people write down their opinions. Three in one hundred."

"Only three in one hundred read, Craig."

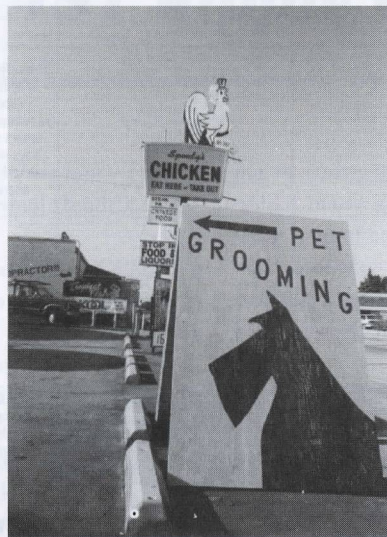
Every generation produces a sizeable crop of individuals who want to predict the apocalypse and live in the end times. In that respect, Craig isn't all that different from the Normals of which he is not. Yet as I remember the skinny white crackhead kid who nervously demanded change from me as I got off the train one morning in Menlo Park, even as his black friend begged him away, I thought of things like "rot

in the system" and "things are breaking down". When such obvious desperation intrudes places where all the honkeys and their friendly police think they're safe from gravity and death, doesn't it seem worthy of Hieronymous Bosch's skeletons slaughtering

the living in the midst of their pleasures? But society has always had this decay. The lost souls who fell out of family, of security, of balance or who were never given these things in the first place. I don't always agree with Craig's thinking; to be honest, I only agree with part of it. The Hippie vision is too reductionist, too much based on wishful thinking regarding human nature. But Craig has done something a lot less Americans have done: He stuck to his guns when most of his peers didn't, undaunted by the media industry that genuinely hated the Sixties counter culture and what it stood for. Now that's what I call character. ☹

ENDNOTES

Two things. (1) Craig refuses to be photographed because he says images are sacred. (2) Since Craig said some alarming things, I had to do some homework before printing any of it. I would like to thank Roxanne Bitman of the Natural Database of the Department of Fish and Game in Sacramento, Eric Musen, a bee biologist at UC Davis, and Art Shapiro, entomologist, all of whom corroborated the natural extinction data Craig provided me with, though Roxanne was careful to qualify her statement by saying, "Craig should know that acorn populations fluctuate from year to year." By and large most of the information I received from these scientists was of a sober and scientific nature. Not quite as passionate as Craig's assertions but the bottom line seemed to be, "We do have problems."

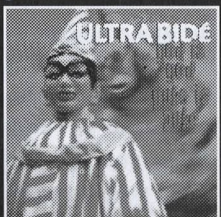


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"I'm not crazy..."

GARY YOUNG

"You're the one that's crazy..."



When I caught the 38 Geary to the Fillmore that drab Friday evening, I didn't know what to expect. I

went to hook up with Gary Young whose band, Hospital, was opening up for the Sebadoh / GodheadSilo show that evening at the horribly overpriced venue. It was still soundcheck for them which was quite amusing, seeing that Gary was being clowny on the drum kit even without an audience. I could see why his days with Pavement way back when have become legend, though I personally never had the pleasure of witnessing his drunker than thou tomfoolery. Musically, Gary Young caters to warped (intoxicated?) mental states, skirting between Zappa to Beefheart to Robyn Hitchcock to Lord knows what. He looks like an old skool hippie burnout, a pony-tailed walking dinosaur from the Sixties, with piercing blue eyes that were somewhat unsettling. He was decked in a classic red and black flannel, the cotton pilling from extensive wear; an old Clockwork Orange t-shirt, and worn out Levi's with faded motor oil stains around the knees. The Fillmore's accommodations for his band were hardly what you would call private as soundcheck noise rendered the shower curtain walls useless. Instead—seeing that Sebadoh hadn't even arrived yet—we took over their backstage room which was entirely plush, complete with food and drink that we found well nigh tempting. But we refrained from indulging in Lou Barlow's food. Gary was quite content with his can of Bud.

Noël: Please give us your full name.

Gary: What do you mean, the name I have to give to the police? (Laughing.)

No.

The name's Garritt Young and the name of the band is Hospital.

Isn't it Garritt A. Young?

[Garritt] A.R. [Young]. My parents were sneaky with names. My father's name is Robert and his last name is Young. My first name is Garritt, my middle name is Alan, I'm Robert's son / Robertson, and Young, [so] the initials are G.A.R.Y. My brother is Randall Oron Robertson Young, which makes R.O.R.Y.

Rory.

Yeah.

Ya see, I was going to ask you if people ever chided you about your initials, being G.A.Y.

No.

That never came up in class?

No, no, I don't think I have that persona much. (Laughing.)

When were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born in Mamaroneck, New York in 1953, it's like 20 miles north of New York City and I had lived there until I was 22, and then I lived for five years in San Francisco, and then I moved to Stockton.

When you were growing up, what was typical life like?

It's just regular suburbia. Regular Dick Van Dyke middle-class suburban idiot nonsense, ya know.

This is the mid-Fifties?

No, I graduated from high school in 1971. Vietnam War era.

Did you ever have a fascination with frogs and polliwogs?

My parents are scientists and my brother's a scientist and I'm a recording engineer, that's science in a sense. We had lots of strange pets like iguanas, but we weren't into ripping them apart if that's what you mean.

Lord no.

(Laughing.) We had friends that would do things of that nature. No, pithing of frogs was not my favorite activity.

You didn't like frogs?

Well [not] pithing them.

What's pithing?

You poke a little thing in the back of their neck in the biology class and it makes it so they can't move anymore and you can twitch their little legs and stuff like that.

Were they still alive?

Yeah.

I never did that.

Ya see, I was supposed to be a doctor or a lawyer or something like that.

Was that your parents' hope or yours?

Well no, I mean, I was supposed to be smart enough to do that; I studied all that kinda nonsense when I was in high school, ya know, I was in the advanced classes like physics and stuff like that. When I was in the 11th grade, we were already doing College 1 Biology and College 1 Physics. By the time most of the kids who were my contemporaries got that far, they were doing College 4 Calculus and still in high school. We lived in a place that was relatively

well-to-do, and when you live in a place like that, people have money and [have] smart kids because smart people marry... pretty girls.

(Laughing.)

And then they have smart children and they have pretty children, so all the people in my high school were pretty and smart.

Pretty smart.

Natural selection winnowed down to the suburbs of New York City.

You were describing a typical suburban neighborhood, and for this issue we're working on the idea of normalcy.

You want *me* to be normal?!

Well, your views of normal. We know it's a relative term, but what's your definition of "normal"?

Okay, well here we go. I've discussed this at great length with a lot of people. Who is the most normal person that you know?

That I know?

Yeah.

Hmmm. (Long pause.) I've never really

Who else could be more normal than yourself, unless you really have some kind of weird, psychological hang-up or something.

At the same time, there is a perceived idea of what "normal" is.

You mean M.O.R?

Well, you know, your white picket fence, 2.5 kids, 3 dogs, a cat, married, heterosexual normal.

Okay, well I'm one dog, one wife, no kids, heterosexual.

(Laughing.) You're half way there!

(Laughing.) Right! No, I don't have 2.5 children, but ya know what I want more than that is the point five.

What is that, a dwarf?

(Laughing.) No, I don't know! It's just such a great statistic, you have to admit it.

I was going to ask you if you had any children—

We're working on it.

What do you think it would be like to have one?

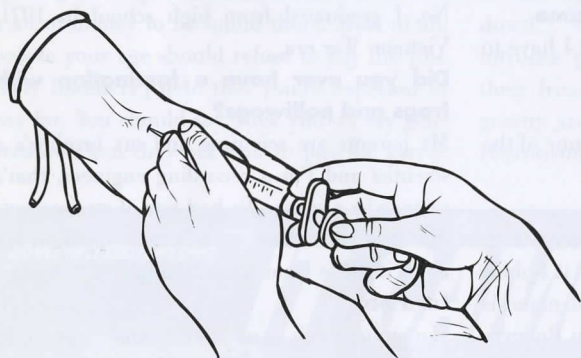
Yeah, you know what I'm talking about. Behavioral things are interesting things to be studied, there's no question.

You want to leave that out?

Well, just the Hitler thing.

I didn't even interpret it as a view on your behalf [in terms of] condoning racism.

I think that all people want more people like themselves. In reality, I've spent my entire life being *way* different than regular people. I'll be 42 in a month and we were the hippies from way back and we wore all the strange clothes and everything like that and I think that my generation and me, to some degree, in particular, are really responsible for way more interesting clothes, especially in men. See, I happen to personally think that girls clothes are so much more interesting than guys', they're so much more colorful, so much more varied. When I was 18 years old, do you know what men wore to work? Every single person wore a gray suit and a white shirt, every single one.



"Who else could be more normal than yourself, unless you really have some kind of weird, psychological hang-up or something."

thought about a single person.

Well, like is your father [normal]?

Uh-huh.

Well my father's pretty normal. Just pick somebody for fun.

I would guess anybody in my family.

Okay, well I would say *I'm* the most normal person that I know because whose criteria am I using?

Your own.

Right, so how come you didn't say yourself?

That's a good question.

So you see the point that I'm getting at? Like you said, it's a very subjective thing where 99% of the general population of the United States would consider me completely out of my mind. But am I supposed to sit here in this room and say to you, "I think I'm crazy" —

(Laughing.)

—just because I play the drums or jump off the stage? I'm sorta challenging you—

Oh no, that's fine.

—but can you get that, though?

Completely.

Well, I have another funny story, I have a bunch of these clichés I might as well throw at you that I sorta made up. Do you know why I want to make children? Because I want to make more people *(very creepy voice)* just like me! **(Laughing.)**

And how is that gonna better humanity?

Well, again, see... you can delete this from the interview because I don't want to seem racist or anything, but Adolf Hitler thought that he was good and he wanted more people like him, and that's *definitely* bad. But, again, if you get into somebody's mindset, isn't that the real reason for procreativity?

To create more of yourself?

Well, to further the gene. I watch a lot of educational TV and there's was this big thing about ornaments on dinosaurs that people thought were for fighting, but were probably really sexually-oriented things. The thing that they were comparing it to [were things like] big-horn sheep going krrr krrr [butting heads] to get the girls, and me and you—

Slugging it out.

Wearing sneakers to work, or like those boots you got on, what are you dreaming? Ya know, blue jeans? I think we were responsible for that.

Funky clothes?

Not funky clothes, but the general attitude where it's more interesting that people are different than they are the same. I think that's one thing that came out of the Sixties that strikes me the best. A lot of people want everybody to be the same. I think that's what the protests of the Vietnam War were about—I think the war was the head that brought it all around—but I think that there were the people that decided everything should be this way and the kids just said, "This is Russia! That's what the people want in Russia want and we don't want that and we're gonna speak out against that!" I think that there is a profound change. I tell ya, if you walk down the streets in New York City or San Francisco now, or Los Angeles for that matter... the guy that helped me load in my drumset, he had a tattoo from his head to his toe! And I don't think anyone

walking in the street batted an eye at this guy. I think this is a good thing.

What I find really interesting was that there was definitely a time, and this was probably right before your generation, when there weren't really many identifying factors weeding out those who would be considered "mal-adjusted" between those who were "sane."

Oh, no, I think—

Do you know what I mean? For example, in the Thirties and Forties, there was less of the idea of clothes defining what kind of person you are inside, whereas now you can see groups of people dressed according to what music they listen to or what not. I believe way back, that didn't really exist.

I think you'd be surprised to see that it did exist a lot more than you think.

Probably more subtle, though.

You know, Frank Zappa, very early on at a concert that I was at—there was a problem with the police—and this guy from the audience said, "Ah, these assholes in uniforms are messing it up!" And Frank Zappa stood up and said, "Every single one of you standing out there is wearing a uniform."

Uh-huh.

I'm wearing a uniform. It's a Kurt Cobain uniform. It's a uniform as much as the police one is; it's a little less rigid, but what's the difference? Anyway, what are we up to? (*Flipping through Bunnyhop #5*) This is a pretty magazine.

Thank you. So, obviously, you consider yourself to be pretty well-adjusted. How do you determine whether somebody's crazy or not crazy?

It depends on what you mean by "adjusted." If you're able to feed yourself and roof yourself, right, and not get arrested on a daily basis, is that well-adjusted? I mean, my parents manage to do that, I manage to do that, but I would have to say my parents wouldn't say that I was "well-adjusted."

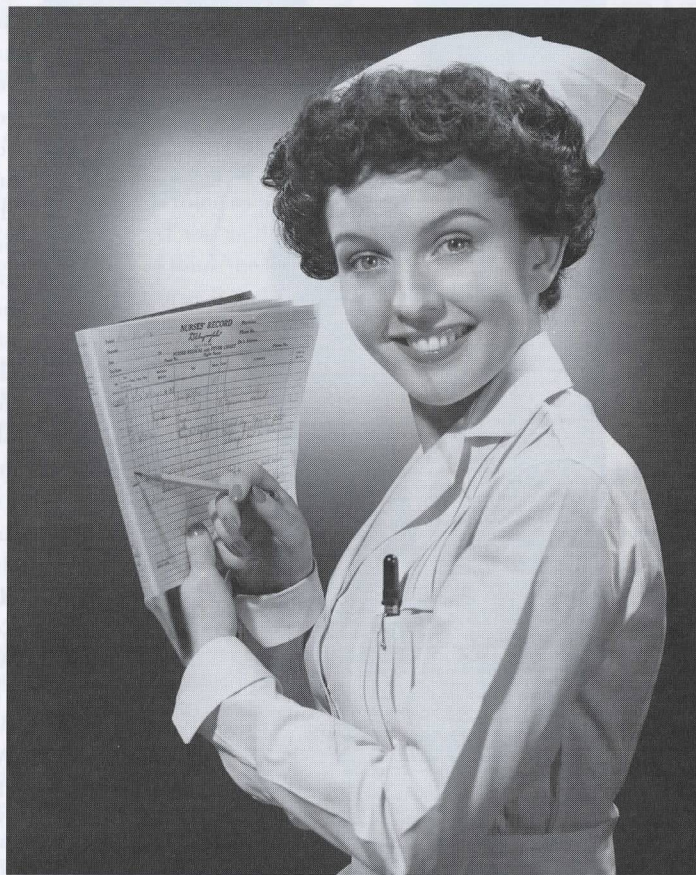
What did you do to make them think that?

Well, the thing that I'd really like to steer away from, because I wanna keep everybody from doing this (*raising his can of Budweiser*) and taking drugs, but, ya know, we took drugs. Mostly pot and stuff, but what my Mom said it was, again, it was this War thing. Ya know, we sat in front of my high school parking lot and there was a draft. They pulled numbers out of

a hat! "You live."

(*In unison.*) "You DIE!"

So we're supposed to be paranoid. "Smoking pot will damn you 'til eternity!" "Yeah, well we're going to war in three weeks anyway so what difference does it make?" I'll never forget sitting out there in the high school parking lot, getting just completely twisted and everything 'cuz it was on the radio, just like the O.J. Simpson trial. "May 3rd. You're going! Your birthday. You're in. Better hope you can limp good Charlie!" (*Laughing.*) No, I dunno. We were never really subversive actively with the federal government. We did wreak a lot of havoc with the local police 'cuz they used to



chase us around for smoking pot.

(*Laughing.*)

And, ya know, for stealing beer from 7-11. We were never violent criminals or anything, just kids running around stealing beer—

Trashing mailboxes.

Exactly. "Stealing people's mail," as Jello Biafra would say.

Pavement, for example, was pretty notorious because of you in many ways.

People went to Pavement shows just to see you drunk off your mind.

I think that has a lot to do with it, but I think that we put on some really great shows. Did you ever get to see any of them?

No, unfortunately not.

The thing that I thought was better about that was... we were walking a knife edge and everyone in the audience was holding their breath knowing that this could either be really good... not really good or really bad, but it looked like it could self-destruct, any minute the whole entire building could explode and there'd be nothing left, just a big hole in the ground. I liked that, ya know, people sitting on the edge of their chair. I think that's really important. I can't really do that now because I gotta sing, it can't be quite that wild. When I played with those guys, they took up most of the song "duties" if ya know what I mean by that. I had to just pretty much play the beat

and it was okay [that] I could do other things. But see now I gotta sing, play that, and I gotta keep the rest of the whole thing together so I can't really fool around like that. I can't just stop and not play the song and stand on my head again.

Was this based on personality differences? What was going on?

Oh, no, I just thought that... Steve never liked it. He always hated it, he thought I was really ostentatious, and it's definitely true, and I did a lot of shit to take away from the shows. He always thought that the songs were really important and I realize the [Pavement] songs we had were really good. I realized that this guy is a song-writing genius.

Yeah.

It took me awhile to figure it out, but I know it for sure. In a way, in his mind, and I'm sure it's true now when I look back on it, I detracted from the

songs. He'd play this great song by himself and I'd stand on my head.

(*Laughing.*)

And when I stood on my head, the people clapped, they didn't pay a rat's ass worth of attention to this poor bastard with the great song. So I'm sorta mad at myself for doing that, but what would happen was that he'd say to me, "Ya know Gary, c'mon, this is getting stale." And I'd say, "Yeah, I know."

(*Laughing.*)

And then we'd go out, right, and he'd start to play this song and half way through this song, the people would go, "Gary! Stand on your head!" And so I'd look at him and I'd go, "What do you want me to do?" And he'd go,

"Well... I guess... stand on your damn head!" But I think that few and far between of the people that came to a Pavement show *ever* forgot that they were there. People go to see a band, they go, they go "yeah" and they go home and they go to sleep and that's the end of the whole thing. I don't think that happened with Pavement, and I think that's what you're saying, they wanted to see what the hell I was gonna do.

What's your ideal living situation?

Where we live now is fine.

Everything about your life is ideal to you?

Not everything. I drink too much. Where we live is great, out in the country outside of Stockton. There's two houses on the property, one's the [Louder Than You Think] studio and one's where we live, and we have a swimming pool and a hot tub and a dog and a little place to play badminton. I'm heavy-duty into vegetable gardening and I've got a giant vegetable garden. It's as big as the [Fillmore] stage.

You've got a green thumb.

To some degree.

With your song "Plant Man"—

That really doesn't have anything to do with gardening.

I didn't even think about that, but while we're on the issue of "green stuff," when I was walking down the street to catch the bus to meet you down here, I was thinking... some people have this argument that plants have... feelings.

Aww, you're dreaming. Ya know what it is? This year was the first year I've really been home for a long time. I grew all my summer vegetables this year with no pesticides, with no nothing. I go out there every morning and [I'm] in tune with them. They say singing to them is the thing to do, or this or that, but what they really mean is... ya see, the people that sing to their plants, they're not just out there going "Ya da da da da," what they're doing is they're out there weeding and—

They're just amusing themselves.

No, they're not just amusing themselves, they're interacting with the plants and not only that, we breathe in oxygen and [plants] breathe in carbon dioxide, so we interact and the closer you are to a lot of plants, the faster they grow. If you're into vegetable production, which I'm into, quicker is better. I really believe that if you're in tune with it... and you go out there and go, "Oh, there's a weed there," and you pull it out and it's gone and it

doesn't interfere with the plant so the plant's happier. Maybe you're out there being happy singing this thing and whatever, but I really think the interaction is what makes them and you better. An interesting thing about animals, one of the reasons we bought our dog, is that they say people who have animals live longer, even if it's just a goldfish. Again, there's this interaction.

Something to live for.

That's another thing, I think that's different than the interaction. I don't live for my dog, but my dog is there as my best friend. I stay



home all day long and all night long. My dog sits right here (*pointing toward his feet*), right there for twenty of the twenty-four hours. I'm in tune with the dog. The dog's in tune with me. I know when he's gotta go someplace. It's the same thing with the plants, I know when they need fertilizer, ya know, I go out there everyday. "Oh, what's going on here? Got too much water? Not enough water?" Da da da da da. I think people view [the idea] of green thumb as a lucky thing, but I view it as a degree in astrophysics or something. It's not just a thing that you have, but it's a thing that you worked [towards] and got. Do you get the

vibe that I'm coming from?

So you don't think that plants have feelings? See, there was this scientific thing that I remember seeing, or reading, which was about—and I don't know what kind of sensory meter type thing they put near the plant—but right before they trimmed it down, the plant apparently emitted some kind of energy as if it were screaming.

Screaming, right. I have a strong suspicion that there is something like that in the plant, but I think not ahead of time. In other words, I don't think that they're precognizant. The thing is, if somebody's coming at you with a knife, you scream and you jump out of the way. When you chop the plant off, it has no precognizant idea of that. When you chop it off, then it reacts. It does a very logical thing. Again, I'm doing broccoli for my winter crop, and most broccoli and a lot of celery-ish type plants, you chop the top off, the kind for the supermarket, and that's the only part that's any good, but if you actually grow them at home, you'll see that you can chop the top off and little tops grow.

Little crowns.

Yeah. One of the reasons I started to grow plants was basically they wouldn't let me grow what we wanted to grow... if you know what I mean. (*Laughing.*) They'll take your house away. So I just transferred that to corn.

(Laughing.) From the Green to the Corn.

What can I tell ya.

I guess they're related.

What else can we talk about?

Well, you were talking about nature shows earlier.

Oh yeah, we're heavy-duty into that. There's a great show called *The Secret Life of Machines*, have you seen that?

Yeah, is that on Discovery?

Yeah, and the one I watched the other day was about the dishwasher and the fax machine.

Oh, I saw that!

I'm just really interested in the way anything works, I'm just absolutely fascinated by the *reason* that something happens.

Did you ever get the feeling in those animal shows where they show the titmouse and the python and whatever, do you think that the animals are set up?

They do it to some degree, I already know it for a fact that that's true. It's not that bad. My brother, who also has a recording studio, has work [doing] the sound effects for the aviary at

the Bronx Zoo and stuff like that. What they do is, you know how sometimes a snake falls out of a tree?

Yeah.

Well they don't ever throw the snake out of the tree, what they do is they go up in the tree and they know the thing will eventually fall down, but they can't spend three days waiting for the stupid thing to fall out, so they push it. They don't hurt it. *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom* is pretty benevolent all in all. I'm not worried about them.

How do you feel you fit into normal, everyday society?

I don't fit right, but I do a lot of right things. I think if the police knew what I really did, even though it's nothing more than drink a few beers and smoke a few joints, again... if the status quo knew my attitude, they [wouldn't] want me. These people want followers. The Jerry Falwells, the Newt Gingriches, they don't wanna know anybody that thinks, they don't wanna anybody that's got an independent mind. They've stifled education like it's going out of style. You're young, you must be going to college or something like that.

Just finished.

Well, you don't think that they're stifling education to some degree?

Oh yeah.

In my high school, if you couldn't read or write by the time you were in the 7th grade, you *stayed* in the 7th grade. They wouldn't let you get away with that in a million years. There was no such thing as pass / fail, there was no such thing as graduated grades, an SAT was an SAT, which I never passed because I never studied, but, uh... I think the liberalization of education has really taken a turn for the worse. It looked good in the beginning.

Any last thoughts on what it means to be normal?

It's a very difficult thing. I'm wearing this shirt of *A Clockwork Orange*, where they tried to make somebody normal and the gist of the whole movie is they didn't do a very good job at it. And what did they do at the end? They put him back the way he was, right?

He was "cured, all right."

Yeah.

A lot of people were real disgusted with the *real* ending. I felt it was a cheap ending.

What, they put him back [in the hospital]?

No, there's copies of the book being reprinted with the original last chapter, the 21st chapter.

And what happened at the end, then?

He sees his old friends in bars and what not and sees them working their way into normal society in terms of getting hitched, having kids, and things like that and he's feeling this inclination towards that lifestyle. What's implied is that's what he's gonna become.

I didn't see it that way at all because all of [his] friends that became cops, they were still thugs.

You read the 21st chapter?

I guess I haven't seen what you're talking about.

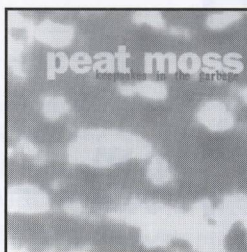
It's not in the movie. That's the whole thing that [author] Anthony Burgess had a problem with his American publishers. At the time, he eliminated it because he was young, he was a new writer, he needed money, so he swallowed his pride and let them cut out the last chapter, which also became the same version that was translated into film. It became more of an American cynical / sinister ending, as opposed to his version which was a bit more redemptive.

Oh, I see, turns it to mainstream.

Yeah.

I dunno, I liked the other one better. ☹

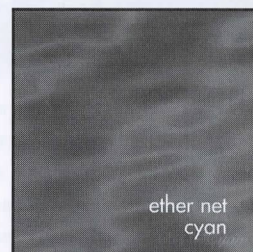
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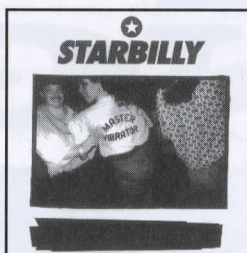
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Regular Style

By Joshua Glenn

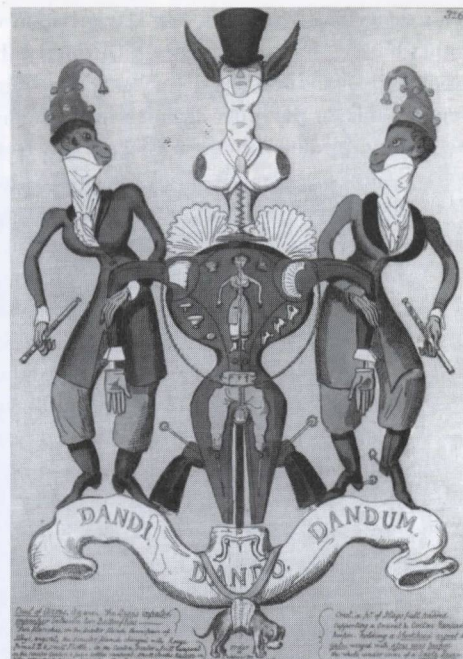
Now that I'm an old man of 25 myself, I don't know what the young turks are wearing anymore (although it looks to my jaundiced eye like they are letting Urban Outfitters dress them). But when I myself was full of piss and vinegar, I used to be "real, real *regular*." That's how we of the Regular Style put it.

By "regular," we meant like how we imagined "regular guys" in the Forties would dress (or, I blush to confess, how those young cracker Southerners one always sees on the edges of photographs from the Civil Rights struggle dressed). We always wore highly-polished wing-tips—actually, my friend Papo used to wear two-tone bucks, like the kind they have behind glass in the trophy wing of Graceland, and we kept our hair short. I usually went for the flat-top thing, but Papo liked to grow his out a little on top and slick it to the side, "real to the side," as he always put it. We always had our barbers (Willie, Benny, Sam and Joe: real regular names, huh?) shave the sides of our head really high and close ("tight") over the ears, so it looked like we had white hair, it was so short. Papo called it "Benny Goodman style," but I've never seen any pictures of Benny Goodman with his hair that short on the sides. What Papo really wanted was a Hugh Beaumont haircut. He used to get up early

every morning to watch *Leave It To Beaver* just to admire Hugh Beaumont's hair. The "regular style" got its name from Regular Style hair pomade, a 1940s product which we stockpiled religiously against the day when they no longer made it. (Today I use Halka.) Brilliantine is, indeed, the distinguishing characteristic of a regular-style youth. Were it not for their brilliantly-shining hair, one might not be able to recognize them as Regular—which is the whole point, of course.

Another thing was our pants. If we could have afforded nice baggy Ricky Ricardo trousers, well, of course that's what we would have worn; but the fact is, we couldn't. We bought Dickies, work pants, from Harry the Greek's (a uniform surplus store in Boston) for two bucks a pair, and had them tapered from the knee to seven inches across and then cuffed them a couple of times until our ankle showed. Which meant that we had to have an endless supply of nice socks to wear between wingtip and cuff, but luckily socks are the easiest thing in the world to steal from clothing stores. We were always clean-shaven. We always wore button-up boxer shorts, plain white t-shirts and religious medals, too. It was all part of being "regular." Some of us went so far as to get lurid 1940s sailor-type tattoos—even requesting the same faded blue as an old man's tattoos!

In the introduction to *Pagan's Head* #6, the author "salutes old people... for meticulously keeping up old cars so that young hipsters can buy them for a song and run them into the ground." Although when an old-timer talks about "being regular," he or she is usually referring to their intestines. Old people are very important to those who espouse Regularism. For one thing, we were always incredibly polite to our elders. Not like *Clockwork Orange* polite, where there's always an edge of sarcasm and menace, but honestly polite. We respected the hell out of our elders. We called every man "sir" and every woman "ma'am," even our friends' parents. My girlfriend's parents thought I was mocking them, the way I said "sir" and



"ma'am" constantly, but they got used to it and eventually even enjoyed it, I think. I know that we always made a good first impression. The Regular Style is all about old people. Regular-style youth closely observe and imitate old-timers' style: their haircuts, their brooches and faux pearls, the pleats in their pants, their eyeglasses... Although *Newsweek* would have us believe that young Americans are obsessed with infantilism ("Who Let the Inner Child Out?," 28 Dec 92), it's obvious to me that what young people *really* want is to be old; why else would they patronize those greasy diners and drive those old clunkers? And couldn't the motto of retirees apply equally well to slackers ("No job, no plans, no worries")? In fact, if I could magically leap over middle age and become a crotchety old man in shiny pants hanging out in the barber shop, I would.

But that's a little misleading because old people certainly aren't trying to be regular, they *are* regular. What does it mean when someone tries so hard to be regular—to the point where they don't look regular at all? I mean, although regular-style youth don't stick out like punks or skinheads or even grunge-os, a young guy wearing high-waters and wingtips and bald over the ears doesn't exactly blend in, either. It's a curious phenomenon, this "being regular." I am reminded of several similar phenomena. For instance, the black queen "Got To Be Real" scene as documented in *Paris Is Burning* (and simultaneously popularized and de-fanged in Madonna's "Vogue" video)—those folks were absurdly concerned with appearing "real," to the point where they practically had fist-fights over whether or not their coats were buttoned on the correct side! And how about the English mods of the '60s,



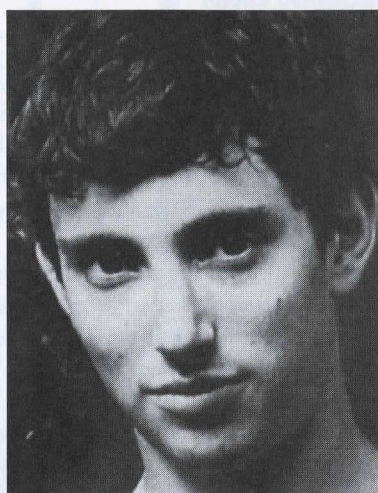
with their “baggy trousers,” or D.C.’s Nation of Ulysses, who didn’t have a “hair out of place”? Obviously, this presentation of oneself as absurdly “real” or “neat” or “regular” has some implications for the order against which one measures oneself. You will forgive me I hope if I depart now from the narrative tone of this essay and put on my sociologist’s hat...

Implicit in the very birth of (what I like to call) Regularism, some two hundred years ago, was an assault on the oppressiveness of appearance. Although the media likes to label every extravagant style of the youth culture “dandyism,” this is an historical misunderstanding. Contrary to popular belief, the dandy’s costume was, according to one student of the subject, “distinguished by its restraint—color and textures were subdued... restraint was exercised in richness of material and flamboyance was generally avoided, distinction provided by subtle little points in refinement, noticeable mainly to other ‘insiders.’” Beau Brummell, the Ur-Dandy himself, believed that “the severest mortification which a gentleman could incur was to attract observation in the street by his outward appearance.” That is to say, extravagance of dress, such as that of the Macaronis of Brummell’s day, or the punks and hippies of our own, is *not* dandyism, and hence cannot function as dandyism did to subvert the accepted order of things. For Brummell was, in his own way, a revolutionary. The son of a commoner, Brummell managed to create a new aristocracy, one based not on inherited position or wealth, but style. Brummell’s style was fabulously ironic: In his quest for unremarkableness, he even blackened the soles of his shoes! Brummell was in fact the social superior of his companion King George; by single-handedly making gorgeous unremarkableness the standard, Brummell helped to close the social gap between commoner and aristocrat.

In *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Dick Hebdige claims that, in their absurd neatness, the “mods” undermined the conventional meaning of “collar, suit and tie”—in fact, they undermined “the orderly sequence which leads from signifier to signified.” That is to say, if what I appear to be is not what I am, then what is that which I am pretending to be? In this sense being “regular” is an entirely different challenge than other forms of youthful costumery. Whereas your punks and hippies and other counter-cultural types spit in the face of the status quo and get ignored or—worse, commercialized—for their pains, your counter-counter-cultural regular-style types take a different approach. *Irony* is the concept I’m looking for here, and irony is the most sublime form of humor. Like Kierkegaard’s Knight of Faith, who could appear as a fat, cigar-smoking burgher, yet who “does not do even the slightest thing, except by virtue of the absurd,” the regular-style person shatters all our social categories—not just our dress codes. As Baudrillard points out in his essay “Simulations,” the most dangerous person in the military is not the insane person, but the person who *simulates* insanity—because although the military knows how to deal with the insane, it has no choice but to apply the same standards to the simulator. Structures rely on an orderly sequence leading from signifier to signified, and simulation tests the very foundations of this kind of order. One ironic queen or mod, then, is more dangerous to the “suits” who oppress us than is an entire legion of tricked-out punks and hippies. Or so I’d like to believe. ☹

Jonathan Richman

Saint of Regularism



The cover of the Modern Lovers’ first—and only—record (*The Modern Lovers*) says it all. It’s the mid-1970s, and four guys in t-shirts are posing for the camera; three of them have long, greasy rock-and-roll hair, and the fourth (Jonathan Richman) has a short, neat haircut straight out of a 1962 college yearbook. This album—possibly the best single record the world has ever heard—includes four or five anthems to what I call “being regular” (see article), and Jonathan Richman is a hero, or maybe even the patron saint of Regularism.

We all know Richman’s later work, sometimes with “bands” he also called the Modern Lovers, more often solo, and everything that is good about Richman today (his sincerity, charm, lyricism, and ability to dredge up embarrassingly optimistic adolescent feelings) was true then, but even more so. Plus, the original Modern Lovers rocked out like the Velvet Underground and boasted Talking Head-to-be organ player Jerry Harrison, whereas the later Lovers were just a bunch of tom-tom-beating freaks. The story of the Modern Lovers is a parable about the struggle to stay regular in a world which demands conformist eccentricity (to the point where the regular person is eccentric), as follows.

Having been discovered by Warner Brothers after paying their dues at all-ages shows, in 1973 the Modern Lovers travelled to L.A., where former Velvet John Cale produced the songs which appear on their one album. But Richman was opposed to becoming a rock-and-roller: He despised the whole drug-taking, long-haired, *sloppy* way of life of the mid-70s rock world. (His beautiful song “I’m Straight” is the least preachy straight-edge song ever, since it’s just about a guy in love with a girl who loves hippies: “Now I’ve watched you walk around here, I’ve watched you meet/Your boyfriends (I know) and you tell me how they’re deep?/Look, but I think if these guys, if they’re really so great/Tell me why can’t they at least take this place, and take it straight?”) Because Richman wanted to turn down the volume, play acoustic, and basically become the silly Peter Pan he is today, the Modern Lovers broke up at the height of their powers.

“I had a New York girlfriend, and she couldn’t understand/How I could still love my parents, and still love the old world...” (“Old World”) Yes! I, too, had a New York girlfriend who couldn’t understand. New York is all about detached irony, and more-hard-boiled-than-thou cynicism, whereas Boston—where Richman and I are both from—is a city whose tangled streets (about which Richman so often sang) engender a complexity of outlook and emotion which never permits their denizens to be so sophisticated. Punks from D.C. and NYC and L.A.—all cities laid out on a grid, by the way—hate their parents and run away to squats; punks in Boston cook dinner for their grandmothers every Wednesday, and feel nostalgic for moments which haven’t even happened yet. Jonathan Richman, like Jack Kerouac (also from Massachusetts, and also a regular guy who was surrounded by posturing freaks), is always a study in contradiction: ecstatic at the beauty of life, and crushed by his inability ever to grasp that beauty; bitter and optimistic, simultaneously. All of us who practice Regularism feel this way, and we all dig the Modern Lovers. ☹ — Joshua Glenn.

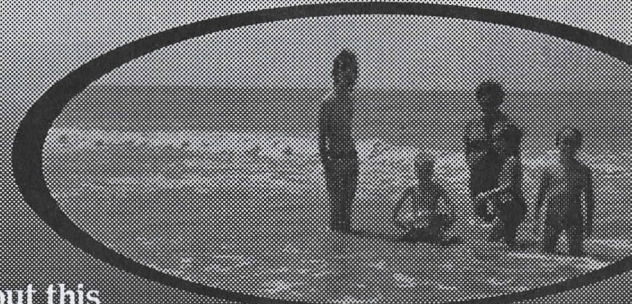




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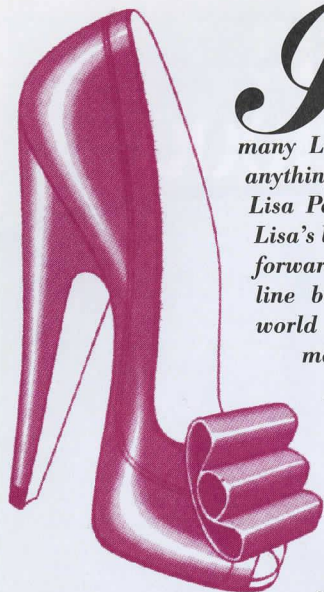


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I have this feeling that there are too many Lisas in the world. Not that there's anything wrong with them. There just are. Lisa Palac is one of them. But not every Lisa's been a former editor of Future Sex, a forward-looking magazine that walked the line between erotica and the brimming world of computer technology. And not many Lisas can claim to be a noted feminist writer / pornographer with more ideas than you can shake a stick at. It's just not possible.

Bent on creating pornography that's titillating for both men and women and convinced that the imagination can dream up some wild scenarios, Lisa's taken the plunge into the audio world with a

series of "Cyborgasm" CDs. She describes them as "voyeuristic sexual spoken word performances in the form of sexy stories, sexual interactions between two adults, erotic monologues, and sexually explicit performance art." Utilizing three-dimensional virtual reality audio technology, Cyborgasm sounds surprisingly real, almost creepy. Some of the material borders on pure cheesiness, but what else is new?

With the threat of the infamous firetruck accident just months away, it was still an opportune time to meet Lisa at Radio Valencia for a little grub and chit chat. I found her inside with a cup of caffeine and a sandwich on its way. She was dressed in almost all black, topped with short, slightly m(o)ussed dark chocolate hair and blue-green eyes that screamed through her nerdy thick spectacles. She was a lot shorter than I imagined, but I guess everybody looks 5' 11" in print. Who am I to talk about shrimpiness?

Noël: I want to know where you grew up, when you were born, all that.

Lisa Palac: 1963, November 4th, 6:37 in the evening or something like that. Scorpio is my true sign.

I was just about to say that.

I grew up in Chicago, I was very middle-class and went to fourteen years of Catholic school. Then when I was 18, I went to Minneapolis and I lived there until I was almost 26. I moved to San Francisco just two weeks before the big earthquake. Now I'm thinking about living part of the year in New York because I really like New York. I can't decide.

A bi-coastal life, jetsetting around.

Well, I wouldn't know if I would jetset but—

You would look very glamorous doing it.

It would look very cool.

What were you like when you were younger? What three words best described your personality as a younger Scorpio?

Loud. Inquisitive. And sweet.

I know a lot of Scorpio women for some reason.

Yesterday at this party—we did this big event at Slim's for the record release—there was a reporter there from one of the daily papers and I guess she thought this would be a very unusual thing to ask me, and she said, "Is there anything about you that's traditional?" I was a bit surprised and said, "Of course! I really want to have babies and garden and bake pies, ya know, have a partner. I really want to do that, be a mom and have a family." She was sort of surprised. I think that a lot of people think that I'm just this incredible, sexual libertine, that I want to swing



Lisa
PA

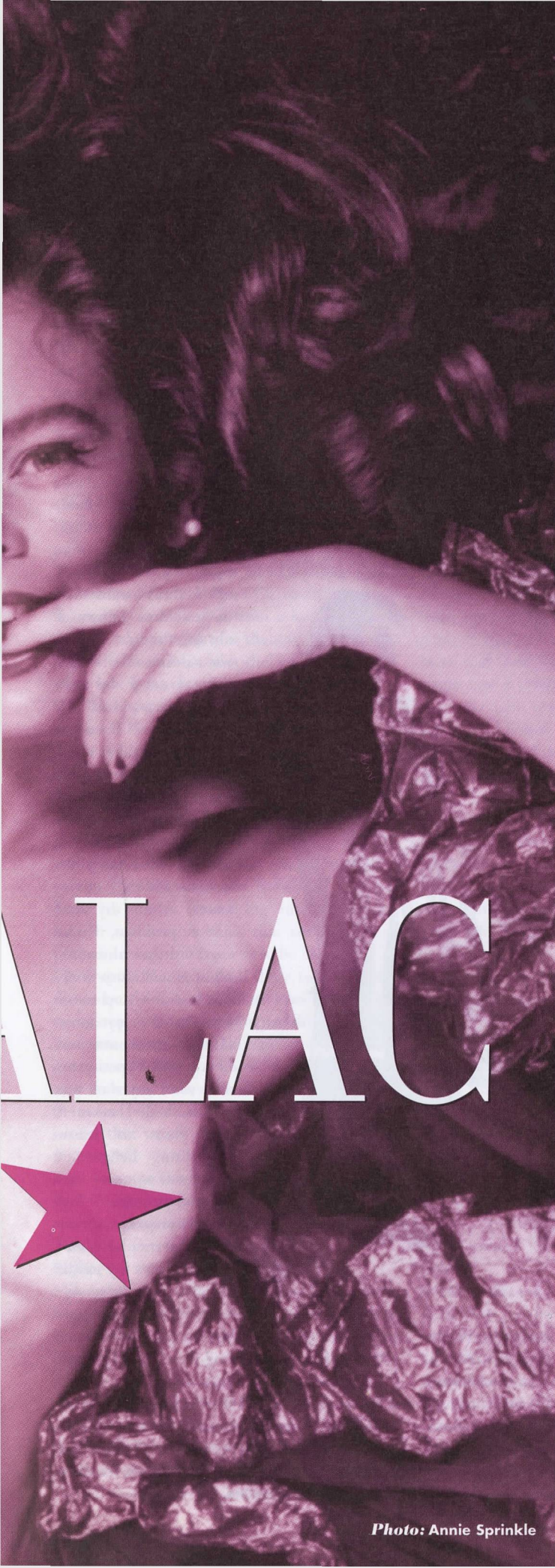


Photo: Annie Sprinkle

from chandeliers or just “swing” all the time. There’s this very wholesome, traditional Midwestern part of me that I really like. I don’t know if I’d get married, I once thought about it.

I thought you were engaged.

Yes, I was engaged, once upon a time. A disaster narrowly avoided! I might have a lot of unusual attitudes about sex and relationships and things, but just because I’m a bit more public about them... I think that a lot of people have those same attitudes knowing that, gee, the divorce rate is high. Maybe being with just one person or following this notion of romantic love that will last forever—clearly you can look around and see that it doesn’t always work, so what does? Definitely the idea of falling in love is romantic to me, I’m a hopeless romantic. I just keep falling and getting back up again... I would start my family in a minute as soon as “Daddy” appears!

What would your definition of “normal” be?

People are always questioning what is normal, particularly when it comes to sex, and it’s so hard to say. The word normal implies that there’s something “correct” about a certain way and that there’s something “incorrect”. You can only have normal if you have abnormal, right? Because people are so closed-mouth about what they really do in the bedroom or what they really think about sex or about what kind of sexual lifestyle they might really want to pursue, we’re all thinking that, “Gee, I’m probably not normal,” when in fact we have more in common with people than we would ever know. For example, a lot of people might think, “Anal sex is not normal. It’s deviant.” Well, I certainly don’t think so and most people I know don’t think so, but then again those are my friends. We can say what’s average and what most people tend to do, but it’s really hard to define what is normal. Everyone’s perception of reality is really different, so it’s kind of this bottomless, unanswerable, metaphysical question, almost. It’s like saying, “What is God?”

Don’t you think there is a conceived notion of what normal is?

Oh sure, I think that public perception of what is normal is that people don’t shave their heads, people don’t scream loudly and have temper tantrums at restaurants, people don’t recklessly smash into other people’s cars, people don’t beat their wives, people don’t wear their underwear out in public. There’s all these things about what is normal and what is not normal and certainly our perception or our definition of that has changed over the years. What was normal in the Fifties might now seem completely unusual and very strange. The Sixties and Seventies and the political and sexual revolutions that happened really changed our definition what is acceptable and what is normal. The fact that women don’t get married, don’t have children, have their own careers, was once considered highly abnormal. It changes with time. Cultural attitudes, politics, and economics play a big part in what’s normal.

Is it possible that when more particular sexual activities considered shocking—anal sex being an example, but also spanking and anything involving fetishistic items—if that becomes more mainstream, does that dilute the activity? It seems to me that the taboo element involved is almost intrinsic for that rush.

Everybody wants to know this. “If you talk about sex too much, then it will be cleaned up; it won’t be dirty and it won’t be fun so just shut up about it! Leave it mysterious. That’s what makes sex so exciting!”

(Laughing.)

I will have to say that I’ve never found sexual ignorance real exciting. I’ve talked a lot about sex and it’s still tremendously exciting and there’s still things to me that are taboo—I always find new taboos in things that are dirty in the most positive sense of the word. There’s been this S/M as fashion movement scene with just leather and fetish wear and rubber and some people tie that to safe sex; it’s more about costume and suggestion and that sort of thing. Certainly mainstream press has written about S/M and fashion has covered it as the latest trend, but I don’t think that really dilutes or takes away from people that are serious practitioners. People that really are masochists or sadists aren’t really phased by the fact that there are some people dabbling in the most superficial ele-

"There's a lot more to a relationship and there's a lot more to commitment and being faithful to someone that doesn't necessarily involve sex."

ments of it. For people who might think, "Oh, it might be cool now to be spanked! That's something I've never tried!"—if it gives them permission to try something to give them a new sexual experience, more power to them. People are often afraid of things they have no understanding of. By giving people information, in the end, whatever subject you're talking about, be it pornography, rap music, etc., in the long run they may decide, "Still not interested," but they're able to make an educated decision instead of just this knee-jerk response. Tolerance and understanding about the things that frighten you is really important, I think.

I guess the same could be said about all the piercings and tattoos, it's a lot more accepted these days.

Right. Certainly, some people do follow trends whether it's white people with dreadlocks wearing flannel shirts (*laughs*) or people getting piercings and tattoos, whatever trend they want to follow... a lot of people take the most superficial elements of a trend and modify it and appropriate it for their own means and never really attach any other meaning to that other than fashion or being part of the "cool" crowd, but that's to be expected with everything. Every movement throughout the history of Western culture has always had that, there's always been the core scene, then the hangers-on, and then it evolves into something else.

I understand that you've had a very long Catholic upbringing and this seems to be a consistent theme with so many people who've turned out much more freakish than the next. What role do you think your religious background played in leading you to eventually becoming a pornographer?

Well, Noël, it's so interesting that you should ask me that question because I'm working on this book, a very personal history of sex and pop culture and all the things that I think had tremendous influence on me. I think that organized religion, particularly Catholicism, in my case, had a big influence but exactly what it was I may never fully know or understand. People can say, "Oh, you were

raised Catholic! Of course you are this way because you had to rebel," and while there may be some truth to that, I don't think that's the whole answer, it's just the first layer. It's interesting to have gone through fourteen years of Catholic school and have very little memory of what the doctors were or what I was taught, it's just bits and pieces and in some ways it's this big black hole. I mean, nobody ever came up to me and said, "You will go to Hell if you masturbate," or, "God will not love you if you have sex before marriage." It was never as direct as that, it really wasn't. I'm

and believers in God. Other people from that same type of background are just wild, libertine... you name it, sky's the limit. Other people who grew up with really liberal, hippie parents have grown up as adults sexually uptight and conservative, just the opposite as they were raised. You can't just say if you were raised one way, you're going to end up a certain way. There's so many factors.

For yourself, you didn't consider it a form of rebellion?

It's the separation between parent and child, everybody rebels in their own way. I never

consciously did anything to piss my parents off. I always wanted to make them happy, I always thought that I was doing the right thing. I never did anything purposefully to say, "Well I'll show them!" Never! For me, I started talking about sex, sexuality, and pornography, it grew out of a political place. I just felt like I had to do it, it just felt right to me. Later, when my dad had a problem, I was regretful that he couldn't appreciate my work, but it didn't stop me. I love to get my mom talking about sex and her sexual experiences and what my dad was like in bed, I mean, I just want to know everything because I wonder if some of that is also genetic. I feel like my parents, my father particularly and in some ways my mother, also were very different from their parents

and were also determined to lead a completely different life. I feel like, in many ways, I'm continuing that tradition.

A lot of people feel that with Catholicism and the repressed sexual aspect of it has led them towards more "sick" libidinal interests or just that it expresses itself in more extreme forms.



really trying to unravel and find out what the connection was for me. I'm sure it's different for everyone. You just never know what impact that experience or a particular doctrine or a particular teaching is going to have on someone's life. I've known people who've grown up in very conservative, religious backgrounds and they've also grown up very conservative

I would have to say in general, whatever is repressed, it comes out in a more extreme form. Now, with an attempt to be more tolerant of other cultures and racial differences, the whole notion of politically correct speech—you can't say this or you can't say that—it's as if by taking away the symptoms, you've solved the problems of racism, which of course you haven't. There's a lot of racial hatred out there, it's inescapable living here in America. Just because we take away the symptoms or tell people that they should think differently doesn't mean that they're going to behave any differently.

Exactly.

Sure, in terms of Catholicism and sex, John Waters has said, "I get down on my knees everyday and thank God I'm Catholic because otherwise I'd have nothing to talk about!" Sometimes I wonder if I was raised Buddhist and had no issues with sex, I might have nothing to say, ya know, I might not have a job! I've been doing a lot of reading about Genesis and the history of Christ and it's very fascinating to look at it from a historical perspective as opposed to a theological perspective, whether Christ was the son of God and what not. It seems to me in the research that I've done, people have always had issues with sex, even the ancient Greeks—while they certainly enjoyed the erotic spirit and were proponents of all kinds of sexual activity—they, too, felt that if you could rise above the impulse of the flesh, it was more virtuous than giving into desire which was totally natural and pleasurable. There was something to be gained by being able to transcend. I don't know if there's something intrinsic about human nature that feels that sex is such a powerful thing that it needs to be controlled in some ways. That's why all these teachings, all these doctrines, and all these laws that always try to stop us from sexual expression really tap into something about human nature. It's not just Jesse Helms, ya know, there's a reason why so many believe that what he's doing is the moral, right thing. What is it about human nature that would make so many people feel that way?

For you, when did you discover that there was more to sex than just the missionary position?

That's the normal position, right?

Right.

I probably discovered that before I even had sex in the missionary position, because it was very important to remain a virgin for as long as possible. Being a virgin simply meant no penis in my vagina, but anything else was "okay" and I was technically still a virgin. There was a lot of experimenting going on, ya know, oral sex and all sorts of things. It's so weird, I remember the first boyfriend I had when I was 15—he was a little bit older than me and he

had a car—and we were fooling around and he fingered me. I just thought, "Well, as long as you're using your finger, why don't you just put your cock in." He was like, "Don't you know that... that would be like having sex!" Part of me was like, yeah, yeah, I probably should stay a virgin, but as long as you have one thing in there, what does it matter what the thing is? (Laughing)



It's funny how people make that distinction. Sex comes in so many different forms.

I know! This whole idea that anything but the penis in that one orifice was okay and you were still a virgin and I always thought that was just weird. People were just kidding themselves about that and I thought that I was, too. I've always had much more broad ideas about what sex was from the beginning. I remember listening to a lot of pop music on the AM radio as a kid and I remember all these songs about cheating, "She cheated on me, I cheated on her! Oh my God, I'm crushed! How could you love someone else? How could you sleep with somebody else?" It was a big deal, everything just fell apart when that happened. I just thought, "What does that matter?" There's a lot more to a relationship and there's a lot more to commitment and being faithful to someone that doesn't necessarily involve sex. From the very beginning, I've questioned this argument that seemed specious to me, that sexual fidelity really proved that you were committed to a person.

It seems like a puritanical view.

Yeah. Not sleeping with other people was the most important thing you could do to prove how much you really loved and cared for somebody and I was saying the complete opposite. Everywhere else, people were lying about their other affairs and they were also not being very loyal, loving, compassionate and friendly with the person that they were with because everything had to be so furtive and

secretive. It's just a strange concept, that there'll be this one person for you for the rest of your life. It's a relatively new thing in terms of history, the way humans have traditionally come together to create a family has always been much more of an extended notion of that. The nuclear family is a relatively new concept, not one that's particularly effective.

Popular media always has this tendency to eroticize "blandness", in terms of eroticizing the librarian, the candy-striper, the female lawyer, the business-woman, etc. What would you attribute that to? I guess even the Catholic school girl look would qualify.

Are you saying they eroticize uniforms or they're eroticizing innocence? Maybe I don't know what you're asking.

I just wonder why it's such a stereotype that the librarian is such a sexual beast lurking underneath, ya know, candy strippers, nurses... it's always applied to these white-collar, blue-collar jobs. I'm wondering how that evolved. To me, maybe it's part of the uniform, the rigidity of the clothing or conservative clothing in general.

If you're talking about what makes uniforms sexy, then you're getting into the area of fetish and I think almost anything could be a fetish. People could have a fetish wearing this bunny t-shirt, they would just have to have their lover wearing this t-shirt and that would get them off like never before. It's very interesting that people's fantasies and fetishes... fetish I would define as a particular style of dress or a particular action that you enjoy the repetition of over and over again. It could be anything. We think of a fetish as fetish—wear like rubber, garter belts, high heels, all those kinds of things. In the gay scene, we've seen fetishes for uniforms for cops and other military styles. There's foot fetishes and toes... it could literally be anything and sometimes you might not even know what it is until you have a reaction to something that you've seen or an experience that you've had. When it's happening or when you see it you just go, "Oh God, that's really hot!"

For me, lately, it's been Marcia Clark.
Oh!

It's kind of crazy. I think it's the power suit and I think she even toys with it, wearing the short skirts and all. She's obviously not even a "hot babe" or anything.

(Laughing.) As far as uniforms go, it could have its roots in childhood, a lot of people would associate with authoritarian figures in their childhood and as an adult, being able to go back into that situation but with a little bit

“My take on why cybersex is so popular is because it gives us an opportunity to talk about sex under the guise of technology, which is a respected field.”

more control.

I was reading an old issue of *Future Sex* and it was an introduction you wrote about sex machines and Richard Kadrey had said that Americans fetishize machinery. You said that women have their own machinery that they fetishize.

We always associate computers, guns, cars, stereo equipment with masculinity. What do women get associated with? It's dishwashers, microwaves, blenders, hairdryers (*laughing*), ya know, which don't really have that speed or sexiness. I don't know why that is. Certainly there are people that cross over, not every man has a machine fetish and not every woman doesn't.

So before you became involved with *Future Sex* and *Cyborgasm*, what was your interest in computers and virtual reality?

Zero. (*Laughs.*)

Did it evolve right around that time?

Yeah. I learned to use a computer, one of those really old Macs, back when I was doing this little underground zine, it was just basic word processing and some graphics program called *Ready, Set, Go!*, which doesn't even exist anymore [*RSG!* does, in fact, still exist—I just don't know anyone who uses it. —*Seth*]. When I was offered the job at *Future Sex*, they said it was going to be this sex and technology magazine and I just thought, “What?” At the same time, I met Ron Gompertz who's my business partner and we ended up doing *Cyborgasm* which is this same sort of thing. It's like, what is this connection between sex and technology? Is it just vibrators? I mean, we can't just talk about this idiotic concept of cybersex because it doesn't exist! Frankly, I'm not holding my breath waiting for any sort of [cybersex] suit. To me, technology is a tool so I can get results right now. A lot of people really have this fear of technology; they think it's going to replace human interaction and to some extent it already has and to some extent it will. In some ways, it will increase human interaction and make it possible for people to have access to information and ideas that they've never had before. The internet is a great example of that. So for me, it's about communication and how these tools can really

benefit me. There are plenty of people I know who just don't understand it. They're afraid of it because they hear all these myths that it's going to do this and it's going to do that, it's not safe, there's no security, everyone will be spying on me.

I'm mostly disturbed with all the hype surrounding V.R. and I'm sure you get

like, “I did not!” Where did they get this information from? Some say that I'm this cybersex expert and I'm not! I wish this word “cyber” would just go away and leave me alone because it's very limiting. Computers would be boring if there were no interesting concepts or ideas to hang on to. It's one of the reason why V.R. really bores me because I'm not interest-

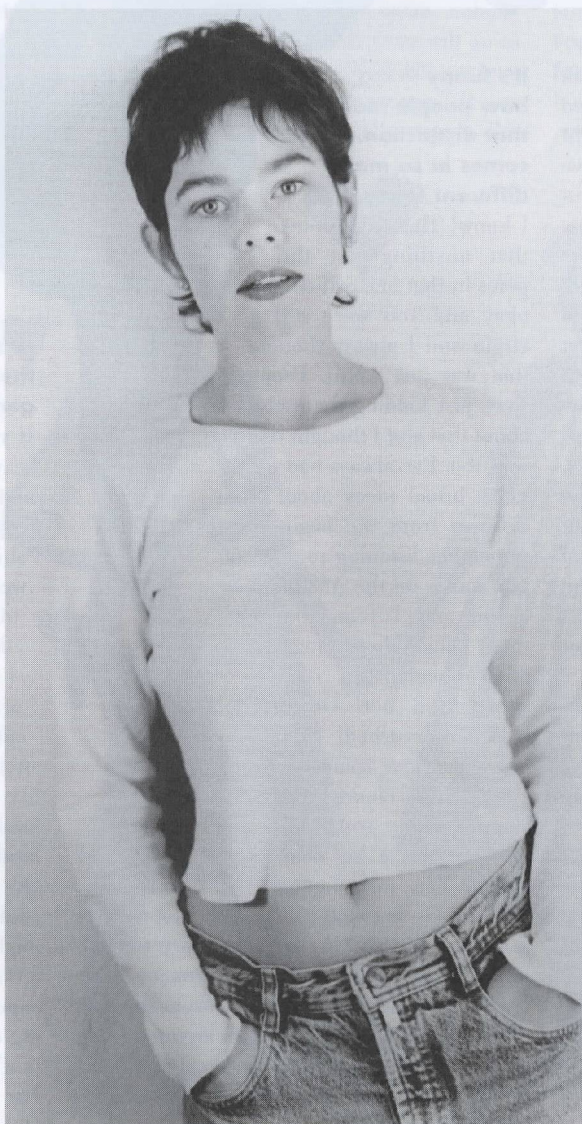
ed in kick-shoot-punch games, I'm not thrilled by the architectural walk-throughs. The only time I'm excited is when it allows me to do something that I couldn't have done otherwise, that the medium is allowing me unprecedented freedom of expression that I just wouldn't have had before. The Germans are so into these cybersex suits that I just haven't been able to shut them up. Even now, I get these letters and calls from these German journalists who say, “We really want to do this piece on cybersex and we want to know where those suits are.” Nothing gives me greater pleasure than returning their phone call and saying, “You know those suits you saw on the cover of the second issue of *Future Sex*? We made it up!” It was pure fiction, it was a parody of all this hype around cybersex but it just backfired.

I can understand the hype; pornography has always embraced technology—it sold more VCRs in the Eighties. Same thing is happening with CD-ROMs. For some people, they just really freak out over it, but when you reduce it, it's just an image as much as any page from a magazine.

I just can't tell you how many people have tried to rope me in to doing adult CD-ROMs. I just had to say no because what could I possibly show on the CD-ROM that would be really revolutionary, that would be inspirational, that somebody would want to sit at their computer and have an experience with?

That's why you dealt with just audio on the *Cyborgasm* CDs?

Right. Pornography needs to be portable. You cannot sit at your desk with a big monitor and masturbate and click the mouse, it's just too complicated. It's not comfortable, and there's these technical problems with CD-ROMs, they're not fast enough. People are used to videotape, ya know, you put the tape in, you



pigeon-holed into that all the time.

(*Laughing.*) I know, I'm the “Cybersex Queen”! All the hype around cybersex makes me feel like throwing up sometimes. Ever since *The New York Times* called me the “Hi-tech Sex Queen” or something ridiculous, I've just never been able to live it down. Sometimes I get phone calls from journalists saying, “Oh, you wrote a book called *Cybersex*,” and it's

play it and fast-forward to what you want. You open a magazine and you look at a picture and there it is. Because there's nothing different on CD-ROM that you can't get from those other two sources, there's no other real different experience you can have. I was just never really interested in it. Which is why Cyborgasm is was really more effective. I thought that the 3D audio—the virtual audio—really does work. It's not like, "Oh, it's interactive" when it's really just multiple choice. I thought it was much more effective because there are no pictures and people have to use their imagination. People underestimate the power of sound and how provocative it is.

On the more low-tech side of technology, you have your inflatable sheep.

(Laughs.)

(Break.)

Back to "normal," it seems like what people want anyway, for you to be well-adjusted on the outside. But once they start tapping into your privacy, that's when it gets scary.

The thing is when people start to feel guilty and ashamed for what they've done, that's when it becomes a problem. Of course, a little bit of guilt and a little bit of shame, you have to have that, they're important human emotions. With sex, there's so much of it and people feel so closeted. There's some people who just really hate their sexuality because they just feel so ashamed of it. There's got to be a backlash. Some people say, "Oh, Ted Bundy. See what pornography did to him?" It's always the serial killers or the child molesters who are found with pornography, but what about the millions and millions of people who look at pornography all the time and never rape anyone and never commit murder. I definitely believe that we're influenced by the world around us, by sound, by pictures, by experiences, but exactly what that experience is, who's to say? There's just so many variables.

The correlations are often too simple. People like to relieve themselves of any responsibility.

Right. Violence—which is one of my other favorite topics—people like to say, "We're living in a much more violent world! It's just so violent now." People forget that the Middle Ages were incredibly violent, people swing that ball with the chain and all the spikes, iron maidens, torture, Spanish Inquisitions...Violence has existed throughout history in one form or another. Of course, you can't talk about violence if you don't talk about sex because people love to put those two together, right? You have to say, "Are we really living in the most promiscuous time?" Everyone likes to think, "Anything goes! Now with these homosexuals and their disgusting sexual behavior! There's

all this sex on TV and women with breast implants!" The Jerry Falwells of the world are completely freaking out and so many people who consider themselves liberals are starting to think, "I don't know, anything goes now! We've never had such a completely lascivious society!" Is that really true? It's very superficial how we treat sex. It may seem like sex is everywhere, but really having any kind of straight-forward, intelligent, or educational discussion about sex, people just don't want to do it. In many ways, this is a very sexually repressed and restrained time.

Back to the technology thing, do you think that part of the fascination with V.R. and sex with machines has anything to do with fantasies of human interactions with androids? There are movies like *Blade Runner* or a character like Data from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* which contribute to that idea.

I think it's a really limited audience with people who want to really have sex with robots or really want to have an orgasm with machines. Back when I was editing *Future Sex* I wanted to have [a sign of] two robots fucking with a slash through it, ya know, this magazine is not about fornicating with robots! If the gear was there, people would probably stand in line to do it for that novelty. My take on why cybersex as a phenomena and why it's so popular is because it gives us an opportunity to talk about sex under the guise of technology which is a respected field. We really can't talk about sex in terms of pornography because we all "know that pornographers are just a bunch of sleazebags and low-lives and they're stupid and greedy and have no talent. Oh, but if we could talk about pornography on CD-ROM, then somebody has to have a brain in order to develop a CD-ROM or program, so there must be some intelligence there." Hi-tech equals brainy thinking so under that umbrella, of technology, we're able to talk about our sexual ideas, our fears. It's our platform to talk about sex without having to talk about disease because the last big platform in the way we got a lot of information about sex—despite the horrible tragedy—was about AIDS, when people had to confront it and talk about condoms, anal sex, they had to say the word penis or semen. They had to say all these words that, before the epidemic, people never talked about in casual conversation. The whole technology phenomenon was really just a way to discuss sex. There's a lot of focus on on-line sex and I think it's really getting beyond the "Ooh! Meet someone, beat-off, and type at the same time!" It's about relationships and communication, erotic identity and ideas.

What's the real difference between "feminist" pornography and "normal" pornography? And do people really go see pornography for plots?

Well, that's a good question. No, people do not watch pornography for the plot and anyone who says, "I didn't like that movie because there was no plot," is lying. (Laughs.) Pornography is all about having a sexual response and that's all there is to it. If you—in addition to it—gain some insight to the human condition or have some dramatic, artistic response on some aesthetic level, that's great. But the most important thing is to have some kind of sexual response to it.

Does feminist pornography put more effort into the aesthetic quality?

Well, I think that feminist pornography really focuses on women's orgasms. That's the big difference, that they want to see women cum—**As opposed to the standard "money shot."**

That may be in there, too, but she has to cum and not just like, "Oh, we'll skip over that," in a lot of mainstream porn movies. For me, I can really appreciate high-quality porn, where it's really a great movie in addition to having great sex—that's certainly a plus. Other times, I've watched the trashiest, most hardcore movies and just had the best time because the sex was so uninhibited. They were just taboo breaking, that's really exciting to me. What's most boring is the plain old in-out in-out. It's really about sexual performance; people want to find that scene that really works for them, that pushes their button and they don't want to admit that. I've heard a lot of people say, "I've tried watching some porn movies, but they're just really boring." I just think, "Well, if watching a porn movie with a lot of naked people having sex is boring to you, what's interesting?" I can see their point sometimes, but often I don't think they give it a chance. The thing about pornography is that there's just a lot of glut out there, just like in Hollywood movies.

Also the stigma attached to pornography.

Yeah, you've got to wade through it and because of the stigma people are reluctant to do that. But I always say that there's no good pornography, only good scenes!


(Laughing.)

It's true! People always ask, "Can you recommend a good movie?" "No, but I can recommend a couple good scenes!" My latest fetish is renting movies where guys are getting fucked in the ass with big dildos, I just can't watch enough of those movies!

(Laughing.)

And they have to look like really straight guys who resist at first and then just kind of cave in to the big strap-on!

Is that something you acknowledge as the sadistic side of you?

Yes!! Yes!!! 

AVAILABLE NOW

Do You Fancy Me

Do you fancy me, or am I living in make believe? Am I
someone just to pass your time? To pass lonely hours 'til
your heart can be free, Then you'll forget all about me

Do you think of me, or are you just memories?
Why can't we live for no reason?
dream, Why can't you love me?

Like flowers of springtime there comes a time,
must wilt away. Like coldness of winter, with clouds in
sky, I watch lonely people pass by

I'll no longer pine for you, my heart,
blue. Soon you'll turn to find me
lonely hours, 'til your heart can be free, And you'll be all
your yearnin' for me

MICHELLE - bass
PAULA - guitar, vocals
CARLA FABBIZIO - cello
Produced and Engineered by Ta
Recorded at Guerrilla Euphonic

Joshua M.
CA

Gentle Creatures

Yellow Birds

The little yellow birds, do they cry for me, or do they cry
with happiness? They look down on me with tiny eyes
do they see my tears?

They seem to flutter by so carelessly, do they hope I have
some seeds? They land beside me without any fear
do they see my tears?

There is the open sky where a warm breeze blows, still the
birds stay close by me. Do they want some hair to make a
nest for spring, or do they want to dry my tears?

LINCOLN - electric guitar
MICHELLE - drums
PAULA - bass, vocals
MATT - lap steel
Produced and Engineered by Tarnation and Warren DeFever
Recorded at Warren's House in Livonia, MI

TARNATION

gentle creatures: cat.45961

featuring: the hand, halfway to madness
and the well

AVAILABLE NOW

Air Miami



me. me. me.

AIR MIAMI

me me me: cat.46000

featuring: i hate milk, dolphin expressway
and definitely beachy



4AD hotline: 310. 535. 1714

The
Ceraldine
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LOST SOMEWHERE BETWEEN
THE EARTH AND MY HOME

featuring Dragon Lady

PRODUCED BY STEVE FISK



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SHAWN DEVLIN • MARY TIMONY • ASH BOWIE

HELIUM



Wrapped up in an acrylic navy blue cardigan, dressed from head to toe in what was practically my whole fancy-pants busboy outfit (sans bow-tie and vest) was probably not the wisest thing to wear in the crowded and steamy beer-tainted place called the Kilowatt. Armed with left-over restaurant food and my own bad self, I walked right in as Boston's Helium were just about to take the stage. Now I could babble on and on about the fine sonic buzz of this eerily quirky pop trio, but I'll leave that to someone else. Having enjoyed the din, I made my way to the back where singer/guitarist Mary Timony stood surrounded by a few friends and fans

vying for her attention. Pressured to make myself known, I interrupted whatever conversation there was and filled her in, but thanks to the swell publicity staff that commands the Matador Alpha Base 2000, Mary already knew I'd be there.

She called fairly early the next morning from this nice hotel saddled in between the Civic Center and the Tenderloin. With my work clothes ironed and a tape recorder in tow, I had Seth zip me down there lickety-split. Mary was the first to greet me down in the lobby/cafe area as the others followed, wandering around the place in search of food. She was surprisingly giggly and

upbeat, a far cry from the moody characters she embodies in song. Since we were all a bit famished, we hopped in the Helium van and headed back to the Mission, ending up at a restaurant doors away from the club they just played. If I remember right, we all ordered crepes. Mine was filled with pesto.

Noël: In a lot of interviews I've read, you made a lot of references to *Pirate Prude*, that the songs were about feeling angry and unempowered and... somebody I know brought up this idea that there needs to be oppression and repression in



"...One thing that happens is that we're told to shut up a lot—not literally, but as a woman you're not encouraged enough to think that your voice is important enough to be heard."

the world. I was curious to know what you think of that. This person didn't necessarily speak of it in terms of creativity, but when I thought about it there is some truth to the idea of struggle leading to more creative endeavors or giving people a reason to live.

Mary Timony: I don't think in my case that I was inspired to write music because I've felt oppressed or repressed. My voice is definitely repressed. I'm not really an authority to speak on it. I know that one thing that happens is that we're told to shut up a lot—not literally, but as a woman you're not encouraged enough to think that your voice is important enough to be heard. But it's all just a gray and complicated area because women are encouraged to do more artistic things, but only dabble in them and not do them as a "job."

Not many are even fully recognized for their work.

Yeah, it seems to me from the stuff that I've read, not many women are recognized for it because they aren't encouraged. With rock music, it's a completely different story.

Now in this recent article in *SF Weekly*, you mentioned that the new songs were about "hoping for a beautiful self and a place to live, but in actuality people are dirty and gross." What exactly did you mean by that?

That was totally taken out of context, he didn't get that right. It's not that complicated. All the songs and the themes of the lyrics are about hoping for Heaven or hoping for a beautiful place or trying to make yourself healthy, but in real life, living in the grossest part.

Is it more of a place that you retreat into your head?

Yeah, an idealized vision.

My impression was that he was just trying to string everything along the title *The Dirt of Luck*, that everything's dirty.

He got that a little wrong, but that always happens. I may have said that, but it's taken out of

context, I mean, I don't believe people are dirty. That's why I hate it when people misunderstand our band [as being] cynical. You see a lot of grotesque art surrounding the rock world, pictures of people with blood coming out of them and all. A lot of rock music is like that, it comes from this really macabre place of death and grossness and CBGB's (*laughing*), and I hate that. I love it to a certain extent, but I don't like things that don't resolve itself and make you feel somewhat better.

Like presenting more problems instead of giving solutions?

Not exactly that literal, but yeah, things that don't offer any catharsis or any other way out. I just don't like dwelling in grossness.

Well, had the writer not taken your words out of context, I had this thought that followed. In regards to the idea of normal, the whole idea of civilization—from herding cows to sewage systems and all that—has always tried to strip humans of their dirty, animal nature.

Yeah, and I think that idea of dirtiness, of earth, has been placed on women.

Of being "defiled" and things like that.
Yeah.

Going back to the idea of the "necessity" of oppression and repression—in relation to standards of beauty, the people who don't fit in to that... I don't know if it's something that is consciously developed that makes a lot of them more attractive or if it's a natural sexual energy. I mean, the standard of beauty is just another form of oppression, even being beautiful is oppressive. People don't operate on a sincere level in that sense.

I think that women that are more beautiful by society's standards is a ticket to more freedom, people are willing to give them more or listen to them. At some negative level, a woman's only value is her body. A woman that's attractive is more valued and a woman that's unattractive is like dirt, she's worthless.

Even men are seen as more valuable, by proxy, if they have an attractive woman at their side, like some kind of trophy.

That's what Ice-T said, "A woman isn't my jewelry," or something like that. Women that act like men can get ahead in the real world. It's a weird, complicated web of not being allowed to act like yourself. As a woman, I feel like I'm always trying to fit into some kind of stereotype that I'm supposed to act a certain way and I can't fit into that role, it's really hard. It's like trying to become somebody that you aren't and that's where all the anger in the songs comes from. If I'm going to turn into the attractive, sexual object, on the inside I'm going to be a complete monster because I'm going to have to alter my personality, you know?

Do you have mixed feelings about being a performer, being on stage?

Yeah.

All the time?

No, it's not that complicated. It's like sometimes you don't want to go to work, it's the same thing. Ultimately, I don't get a lot out of performing. I like to do it, but I'm not a ham, you know? (*Laughing*.)

A ham?

I'm not a performer.

Well, I don't expect a band like Helium or Codeine to be all "Wahool!" and lighting fires with dancing midgets, I mean, it's not appropriate.

(*Laughing*)

You know, I feel like I've been dissecting your songs or something.

No, go for it.

Well, in that song "000", you talk about TV and movies and how it relates to being watched, the idea of the woman as being some sort of spectacle. Then the idea of being in a band makes you even more of a spectacle, the "aura" that supposedly surrounds the performer.

It's pretty weird, but I think it depends on how

well you can remove yourself from a situation like that. At that point, I wasn't getting along with the band and there were just weird dynamics going on in the band. Now that I'm more happy with the music and with the people in the band, it's easier to be up there and see it in a more positive way because I want people to hear it. I'm a lot more confident with it now so I don't mind being in that position.

The other thing is... if the world were to operate under a matriarchal system, what would be the most profound change? Would it be a mere shift in power relations or would it be equal?

It would be an egalitarian society. Before Christianity, the rise of Western civilization, technology, and all that kind of stuff, societies were more egalitarian, they were smaller, but the religions from those societies reflect that; there were more female god figures then. I don't know how factual that is, although I'm pretty sure that it's pretty factual because I've read a little about it. More importantly, it's a framework that I have for understanding my place in the world. I had this really weird dream the other night where I was on a spaceship and we were all going to die on the U.F.O., like the Apocalypse was coming or something. There were a bunch of weird parts, but the weirdest thing was towards the end of the

dream, this door opened up in the U.F.O. and God was in it (*laughing*), it was a male God and he started speaking to everyone. Then I found out that there was a Devil and that there was a God. In the dream, this woman started speaking and then I found out that there was going to be a female God in the world and I started going "Woohoo!" and jumping around going "Yeah!" (*Laughing*) It was totally weird! **I thought you were going to say that the woman was the Devil!**

No, no.

I hope not!

It depends on who you talk to whether or not the ideal world that we're going to have in the future is going to be a matriarchy. Around that point with *Pirate Prude* I was reading a lot of Mary Daly and she has this idea that the Apocalypse is the fall of the patriarchy and that people have different ways of interpreting what the Apocalypse is. Her idea is that it's the fall of Western civilization, patriarchy, the system of the world as we know it that's obviously not working very well. Afterwards, it would be more egalitarian, more female gods, women will be more important in society... it just seemed like a cool idea to me.

The word "apocalypse" is often misunderstood, I think when most people use it, they're really thinking of the word

"armageddon". Apocalypse is the final struggle between good and evil where good prevails, not where we're all dead or something.

Right. Change is good. It seems like with our generation, we've had to think about that a lot. As kids, people really shoved the idea of World War III down our throat with stuff like *The Day After* and the whole nuclear bomb scare. It's over now, but I feel like that's taken a permanent part of my head that you could die when you're 18 with the threat of nuclear war. That terrified me as a kid! When you hear that so often, you just think it's going to happen.


It basically communicated the idea that there was nothing to look forward to, that we couldn't amount to anything. Even if we could make something of ourselves, it hardly mattered because there'd be no trace of humans left.

I remember in 9th grade seeing this movie with these interviews with kids and what they thought about nuclear war and there was a bunch of them going, "Well, I guess I'm not going to have kids. I'll probably die by the time I'm 20."


It was horrible.

Subconsciously, I think that's what a lot of kids thought. ☹️


zero gravity, bro. and they thought they were punk!




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How life revolves around *THE BOMB*

An overview of the significance of
bombs in American thought
and culture after World War II

BY SETH ROBSON

Ever since one fateful August morning just over 50 years ago, life as we know it has revolved around The Bomb. The threat of instant, explosive destruction has been one of the most sublime forces at work in the American collective subconscious through the Cold War era and beyond. The very creation of the atom bomb radically changed our government, our media, and our culture—and its effects still resonate today, even though the Cold War and the nuclear threat are considered “over” in most corners.

Was there life before The Bomb?

Of course, bombs existed well before science learned how to split the atom. The “pre-history” of The Bomb is full of colorful anecdotes in itself: from the invention of gunpowder by the Chinese to the stereotypical “bomb-hurling anarchists” that helped sow the seeds of tumult in 19th century Europe. Alfred Nobel invented dynamite—the basis for many a bomb over the years—then used the vast wealth he accumulated to create the Nobel Prize. One of the Nobel Prizes awarded each year is in the category of “Peace”, supposedly to assuage Nobel’s guilt over all the destruction that his invention caused. However, aside from soldiers in combat overseas, bombs hardly affected the lives of most Americans.

World War II ushered in the glory age for bombs. For the first time in history, the most important weapons of war were airborne. From the German V-2 ballistic missiles and midnight air raids on London to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the Allies’ merciless incendiary bombings of Dresden and Tokyo, bombs played crucial roles on all fronts—and helped make World War II by far the bloodiest conflict in human history.

In 1945, American scientists pulled out the biggest Bomb of them all, harnessing the newly-discovered fury of nuclear fission. One Fat Man and one Little Boy left two major



Japanese cities almost completely vaporized under horrific mushroom clouds—blown off the face of the earth by explosions packing the force of 20,000 tons of TNT. Much more important than the modest hastening of Japan's surrender, the United States demonstrated its powerful new arsenal to an unsuspecting world and its willingness to use it. Thus with the mighty force of the atom behind it, the United States was set to become the world's leading military, economic, and cultural superpower at the close of World War II.

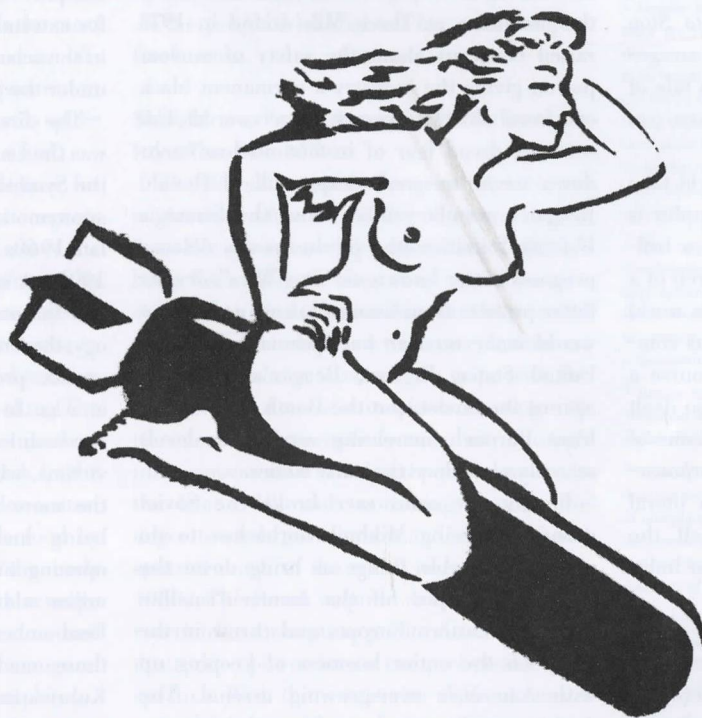
How The Bomb changed America.

Since the U.S. Government began repressing all news about developments in the field of nuclear fission in 1939, and because the Manhattan Project itself was conducted under unprecedented levels of secrecy, most Americans had no idea that such a destructive force could be created by human science. Nevertheless, many people quickly grasped the terrible implications of The Bomb in the days and weeks that followed the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The initial reaction of many Americans towards the Bomb was one of dread and fear, which in many cases overshadowed the sense of relief about World War II finally coming to an end. Members of the press and average citizens alike imagined nightmarish scenarios where such horrific weapons were used against the United States. The government and big industry quickly rushed to put a happy face on the Bomb (primarily with fairy tales about cheap, clean, abundant nuclear energy, nuclear-powered cars, etc.), but the seeds of primordial, sublime, persistent fear were planted deep in the soil of the American consciousness.

Of course, it was only a matter of time before the Soviet Union, that other superpower left standing at the end of World War II, acquired control over its own Bomb, as well. The nuclear stalemate between the United States and Soviet Union plunged the entire world into a tension-ridden Cold War, with full-scale global thermo-nuclear war waiting just around the corner. These international tensions further cemented the general feelings of dread, as well as our country's dependence on The Bomb as both defense and deterrent. At no time was our state of dependency and helplessness in the face of The Bomb more

evident than the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1961, a geopolitical staring match between Kennedy and Krushchev with merely the fate of the entire world hanging in the balance.

These nail-biting international tensions greatly affected life at home. The looming threat of nuclear destruction occurring at a moment's notice was one of the primary causes of the stultifying cultural conformity in American culture from the late forties through the early sixties. American culture after World War II took on many of the facets of what contemporary Republicans would refer to as "traditional family values": the rise of the nuclear family (really, no pun intended), a jump in religious piety, and the growth of an unquestioning faith in the federal government, the military, science, and industry. People with dissenting voices were met with severe repression—labeled as "un-American" and thoroughly discredited, often along with their friends



and family. Socialism, once a begrudgingly tolerated point of view in American politics, became an excuse for some very ugly episodes of political oppression—most famously carried out by Senator Joseph McCarthy. In this dangerous climate where American survival supposedly hung in the balance, conformity—or at least the appearance of conformity—was critical.

The American people blindly put their faith in the structures of power—government, the military, science, and industry—to protect and reassure them in the face of an unspeakable, inescapable threat. In turn, all of these centers of power and influence became much more

secretive about their operations. In fact, the whole concept of the "secret government"—especially where the military was involved—grew up out of the unprecedented secrecy of the Manhattan Project. After World War II, the old War Department was transformed into the Department of Defense, and the newly-created Atomic Energy Commission was slipped under its secretive cloak. Records pertaining to radiation experiments conducted on servicemen and civilians alike remained classified for decades in the interest of protecting "national security," an example of one of the more well-known abuses perpetuated during the "Top Secret" Fifties and Sixties.

Pop culture responses and reinforcements.

In the early days after America entered the Atomic Age, the Bomb and nuclear forces in general were all the rage in popular culture. In many instances, these little bits of ephemera were the result of attempts by government and business interests to "popularize" nuclear fission: A-bomb songs, assorted toys and knickknacks, a certain two-piece swimsuit, electric razors—even perfume—popped up almost overnight. Even whole towns were built to revolve around The Bomb, reveling in their roles of supporting the various testing and manufacturing facilities they served.

Soon Hollywood was producing movies where nuclear forces played central roles. Most of these early films were horror or science fiction movies where nuclear radiation caused humans or animals to mutate into supernatural—or simply grotesque—monsters. One of the most famous examples of this genre is *Godzilla* (1956), which was produced by the only country to ever find itself on the business end of a nuclear weapon: Japan. In the original *Godzilla* movie, nuclear radiation creates a towering lizard who stomps all over Tokyo, wreaking havoc and causing much destruction. In the many sequels that followed, *Godzilla* was transformed into a protector of the Japanese people against an onslaught of malevolent creatures such as *Mothra* and *Rodan*. Thus, the transformation of the role of *Godzilla* parallels the evolution of the role of America (and The Bomb in particular) in Japan from destroyer to protector.

Only in the 1960s did Bomb-oriented



movies downplay the mutant fantasies and begin focusing on what might really happen if The Bomb went off. Some of the classic films from this era include *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (1961) and *Fail Safe* (1964). Perhaps the ultimate Bomb movie was Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964), a savagely didactic yet completely over-the-top tale of how ineptitude, paranoia, and jingoism can ruin everyone's day.

The 1960s also saw the literary world take on The Bomb. One of the best examples is Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* (1963), a brilliant farce in which the bungling children of a famous scientist end up destroying the world with his greatest invention: an ominous compound called ice nine, which is of course a metaphor for The Bomb. Vonnegut also dealt with the fire-bombing of Dresden in some of his other works, most notably *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1968)—which served as both a literal description of the horror that befell the German city and a metaphor for nuclear holocaust.

Despite the heavy-handed overtones The Bomb cast over everyday life and even over pop culture, some rather humorous references to the ubiquitous nuclear threat can be found. Boris Badenov of "Rocky & Bullwinkle" fame was often seen toting a classic spherical explosive—referring to both the violent roots of Bolshevism and the contemporary nuclear threat the Soviets posed against freedom-loving mooses and squirrels. Marvin the Martian, a Warner Bros. cartoon character, mocks bombastic Soviet militarism with his neo-Trojan outfit and his threats to blow up the Earth using the Illonium Pu-36 [sic?] Explosive Space Modulator. In the end, All-American Bugs Bunny outsmarts Marvin and saves the day, though they do end up blowing up the moon (which might as well be Russia, of course).

The fall of the iron curtain and the birth of domestic terrorism

The 1970s saw varying anti-nuclear protest movements wax and wane, as The Bomb and nuclear energy never stayed fixed in the public's consciousness. However, incidents such as the meltdown at Three Mile Island in 1978 raised concerns about the safety of nuclear power, giving the industry a permanent black eye from which it never fully recovered. The sublime, dread fear of instant nuclear meltdown never wavered, despite all of Ronald Reagan's mumbo-jumbo about the Strategic Defense Initiative (the pie-in-the-sky defense program better known as "Star Wars", despite bitter protests from George Lucas) and how it would make nuclear war "winnable" for the United States. In fact, Reagan's hard line against the Soviets put the Bomb back on the front burner¹, increasing anxiety to levels scarcely seen since the early sixties.

Finally, the arms race broke the Soviet economy, forcing Mikhail Gorbachev to do such unthinkable things as bring down the Berlin Wall, spin off the former "satellite states" of Eastern Europe, and throw in the towel on the entire business of keeping up with America's ever-grownig arsenal. The American military-industrial complex felt vindicated: their program of massive military expenditures and weapons buildups finally caused the Soviets to back down and the United States could once again be the unquestioned military power in the world. However, while the Cold War brought down the Soviet economic system, it seriously damaged our own: the Brookings Institute estimates that the Cold War cost the United States over 4 trillion dollars. Instead of reaping the windfall of peace in the 1990s, the U.S. fell into a lengthy malaise of economic recession. In the end, Japan and Germany—both heavily subsidized by the U.S. military in the face of the Soviets—were the real winners of the Cold War.

Shortly after the Cold War ended, the veneer of American cultural unity started to break down. The Bomb, once a powerful glue which held disparate groups and cultures together in the face of shared annihilation, ceased to be so much of an imminent, equal-opportunity threat². In the absence of any other life-or-death patriotic rallying cry to keep everyone occupied (that Desert Storm sure had a lot of staying power, right?), coupled with the serious economic downturn of the early 1990s, American society has become increasingly fragmented³. In these uncertain economic and cultural times, some of these factions got the idea that they had to fight tooth and nail in order to assure their survival. This pattern has manifested itself in a number of ways—from the excesses of the "politically correct" to the whole whiny "angry white male" syndrome. The socially and economically fractured environment of the early 1990s has proved to be the perfect breeding ground for extremists of all stripes, which in turn led to the second coming of The Bomb—this time, under the guise of domestic terrorism.⁴

The first great domestic terrorist bomber was the Unabomber, a supposed ex-member of the Symbionese Liberation Army whose semi-anonymous mail bomb escapades began in the late 1960s and suddenly escalated again in the 1990s. A man who apparently feels alienated and threatened by rapidly advancing technology, the Unabomber has primarily targeted scientists, professors, and businessmen for his attacks. In letters he mails to the press after successful attacks, the Unabomber mocks his victims, who are generally considered among the more intelligent members of society, as being incomprehensibly thick-headed for opening unexpected parcels sent from unfamiliar addresses. In a way, the statement the Unabomber is trying to make is similar to those made by people like Vonnegut and Kubrick in the 1960s: the scientists and businessmen we've collectively entrusted with so much power aren't any brighter than the rest of us. Ironically, many of the Unabomber's targets obtained most of their power and influence as a result of the government's secretive policies surrounding the atomic Bomb.

The event that truly hammered home the fact that "it can happen here" was the Oklahoma City bombing, which took place earlier this year⁵. Members of a small anti-government militia group allegedly parked a rented van filled with drums of explosive fertilizer outside a federal government office building in downtown Oklahoma City, and the resulting blast killed and injured hundreds of people and traumatized an entire country. Once

again, this terrorist act was allegedly perpetrated by a group of people on the fringe of society who were angered by a government and a society that they saw as trying to repress—or completely eliminate—their right to exist. Not only was this bombing shocking to the nation because it was allegedly carried out by American citizens, but because it took place in a conservative, “heartland” community such as Oklahoma City.

The weapon of choice for the 1990s?

So what makes The (homemade) Bomb such an appealing weapon at this point in American history? The answers can be found in a number of areas. Both in mainstream society and popular culture, bombs are a symbol of brute masculine force—capable of leveling virtually anything standing in its way. A bomb represents a power so compact and potent that it immediately gives a voice too powerful to ignore to any fringe element that might wield it⁶. Basically, the bomb is the most effective way for any disenfranchised or oft-ignored voice with a dire need for attention to take a shot at knocking down the status quo—to disrupt business and discourse as usual.

This basic premise not only holds true for terrorist acts perpetrated by domestic agents such as the Unabomber and the affiliates of the Michigan militia, but is further reinforced by contemporary popular culture. Everywhere you look, companies and individuals trying to make a bold statement in the crowded marketplace of public consciousness are invoking The Bomb as a metaphor for themselves or their products. On one hand, you have Jack in the Box, who offered up their original clown mascot as a scapegoat for their horrible food by blowing it up on national TV in the early 1980s. Then in 1995, Jack got his revenge when he blew up the board of directors and took back “his” company in the inaugural commercial for the “Jack’s Back” campaign.

Bomb-related movies were more the providence of the fifties and sixties, but a few of the quintessential Bomb movies were made during the later stages of the Cold War. What child of the eighties could possibly forget *The Day After* (1983), a made for TV movie where the residents of a midwestern city attempt to survive the aftermath of a nuclear attack. Also essential viewing is *Atomic Cafe* (1982), a hilarious documentary which uses 1950s newsreels and civil defense films to chronicle American sentiments towards The Bomb.

Contemporary pop culture has also made its share of bomb-related references. Jokey Smurf, always looking for attention down in Smurf Village, has a propensity for giving

everyone bombs disguised as gift-wrapped presents (“It’s a surprise!”). Rappers sometimes refer to their lyrical skills as “bombs” or “dropping bombs,” though references to “the bomb” in black urban music go all the way back to the days of the Gap Band and Parliament / Funkadelic. More recently, the cute li’l backward pants-wearing duo Kris Kross released an LP entitled *The Bomb*, complete with a picture of an atomic detonation on the cover—which immediately led to the album being banned in Japan. And there was the dramatic season-ending cliffhanger to *Melrose Place* last year, when Kimberly blew up the whole apartment complex to get back at all the people who slighted her over the past few seasons.

Should we “stop worrying and learn to love The Bomb”?

The dramatic social changes that occurred in America after World War II stem, in part, from the invention of the atomic bomb. What’s been fascinating to observe is how American culture has tried to rationalize the deep-seated threat The Bomb posed to its very existence, and how America is coming to grips with the recent wave of terrorist incidents. Starting with the movement towards forced unity through ultra-conservative social and political mores in the late 1940s and continuing through the anger towards government and authority that spurred much of the social unrest of the late 1960s, The Bomb inspired drastic actions and reactions in attempts to put its virtually infinite destructive power into a comprehensible perspective. With the recent rise of the domestic terrorist, bombs have once again reverted to the original meaning they’ve held in Europe and the Middle East: a metaphor for fractious, volatile social conditions.

In a society that’s becoming increasingly more divided and mean-spirited, and with the breakdown of any useful dialogue between different racial and political factions, people are finding it harder to peacefully coexist than ever before. These mounting social pressures bearing down on already radical fringe groups and individuals will probably only lead to more and more incidents involving domestic bombings. Sorry everyone, it may still be too soon to convert your old bomb shelter into a sauna. ☹️



¹ Who could forget Reagan’s infamous live-mic blunder, where he uttered the joke “We’ve just outlawed Russia, bombing begins in three minutes”?

² Despite the perception that The Bomb no longer threatens us, there are virtually just as many nuclear weapons in the world as there were in the late 1980s—and more countries than ever have their hands on them. Many of the republics that were once part of the Soviet Union “inherited” nuclear raw materials and manufacturing facilities. In fact, the poor economic conditions and political corruption in many of these former Soviet republics makes it very likely that international terrorists with enough money and connections can acquire the materials, equipment, and expertise they need to fabricate their own nuclear weapons.

³ Obviously, American culture has never been “united”, despite all the rhetoric. Certain national crises have put these tensions on the back burner for a while, only to flare up again when the imminent threat recedes. It’s been said that America always needs an enemy to compete with and fight against, and perhaps—in the absence of a threatening external power—we turn upon ourselves instead.

⁴ Bombs have been used in international terrorist acts for years. Terrorism in America is a fairly new phenomenon, which partially explains why it is so shocking to most of us.

⁵ Although the World Trade Center bombing in 1993 jolted America for a brief time, most people were lulled back into a sense of complacency when several foreign nationals were arrested for the bombing. Also, this bombing occurred in New York City: a place just crawling with bomb-toting lunatic foreigners, as far as many residents of the “heartland” were concerned.

⁶ An observation supported by the fact that the Unabomber—perhaps feeling jealous about getting pushed out of the spotlight—redoubled his own attacks and communications with the press in the weeks that followed the Oklahoma City bombing.



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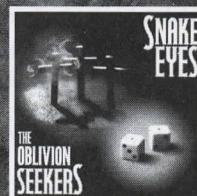
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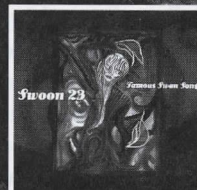
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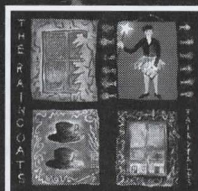
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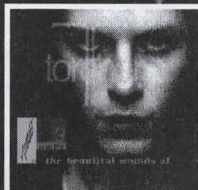
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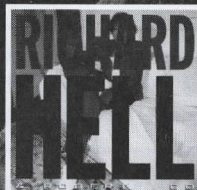
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Esquivel!

Juan Garcia Esquivel—widely referred to as *Esquivel!* (exclamation point included)—practically invented what jaded fucks now lovingly call “space-age pop”, a vigorously riveting genre of yesteryear’s musical scope, envisioning futuristic Utopian otherworlds lined with Maraschino cherry trees, flowing with martini streams, and two hi-fi’s guaranteed in every garage. Not exactly Muzak and hardly the relaxing brand of music it was “meant” to be, revolutionaries such as Esquivel created Crayola colorful, cartoonishly oddball sounds that bubbled with giggle-juice zest, from “boink-boinks” to “plink-plinks” to “zu-zu-zu’s” to “cha-cha-chas”. Commanding his orchestras with an “iron hand”, Esquivel composed and arranged some of the oddest, most indisputably complex songs this side of the Milky Way, incorporating such instruments as the theremin, ondiolin, Jew’s harp, whistling (courtesy of Muzzy Marcellino), double-neck steel guitars, bongos, and an authentic jawbone with rattling teeth.

With a 50 year career that includes work for radio, television, live shows, and film, Esquivel has since retired from the industry at the young age of 77. His irresistible influence reigns in the “lounge” revival that includes young sophisticates like *Combustible Edison*, *Black Velvet Flag*, and *Love Jones*, to name a few. MTV can even be accused of stealing clips from his musical collection to spice up their promotional blips. Thanks to the concerted efforts of Bar/None Records and RCA to expose his music to the world, ignorant twits like myself can now revel in his all encompassing glory. I spoke with the man in hopes of finding some hints on life and the wild blue yonder. (For a thorough look at his music, check out *RE/Search #15: Incredibly Strange Music, Volume II*.)

Noël: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Juan Garcia Esquivel: Oh yes! I have two, brothers, one of them is Sergio, he lives here

in Jiutepec. I have a sister who sings opera. She also gives piano lessons to her students, but she doesn’t play any kind of popular music. Because of my practice with my orchestra, I wanted to create something different; I wanted to have a sound of my own. I guess it was just a kind of approach by which I saw things. For instance, if anyone mentioned an electric light-bulb, he would immediately think of a roundish kind of thing. I would imagine a square or something quadrangular. If you mentioned a watermelon, I don’t imagine a round thing. I’d imagine a shape like a star. I would have the seeds and the pulp—that’s the meat of the watermelon—separate, perhaps because I don’t like the seeds. It’s just a matter of appreciation. In music, usually I just strip the melody out from the lyrics.

I imagine you at the piano writing the music laughing your head off. Was that the case?

Yes, that’s it! I have much fun writing. At the time I wrote my arrangements, I always tried—in most cases—to make a satire out of the sounds. When I recorded in the States, it was



“When my parents brought the piano to the house, my father was very happy because it gave me much pleasure. But I guess afterwards, they regretted it because I wouldn’t stop!”

the beginning of stereo; it was a novelty for me to have two jacks for stereo. For one song, I’d write two musical scores, one arrangement for the left side and another for the right side. We didn’t have the technology that they have nowadays; we didn’t have synthesizers.

When you were a little boy, did your parents feel that there was something peculiar about you?

Well, speaking of my childhood, frankly, I don’t remember. All I know is that once I started playing piano at six years, I don’t remember anything from before. I don’t remember playing with footballs, volleyballs, basketballs.

Did you find yourself staying up late at night playing the piano when you were younger?

I had very bad habits. I used to play all night with the piano. I remember that when my parents brought the piano to the house, my father was very happy because it gave me much pleasure. But I guess afterwards, they regretted it because I wouldn’t stop! From the moment I woke up to the moment I went to bed, I was playing the piano. I do remember that I used to swim a little, but that was in college.

I understand that when you would perform in Mexico, women would take off their dresses and throw them on stage because they loved you so. Did that startle you at first?

That’s a tradition that comes from bullfighting. When a bullfighter does a good job... the bullfighter is teasing the bull, but he’s trying to make the performance very artistic, very elegant and not run ever from the bull. He’s risking his life. In Mexico, this one bullfighter finally retired because he got hit by bulls 164 times! I guess if I were a bullfighter, I would take one wound and that would be enough! So when a bullfighter has a good fight, the public will throw at him hats, women will throw purses and coats. The bullfighter picks the items up and returns them to the audience. It’s kind of a silly thing, but it’s a way of demonstrating that the bullfighter is a good fighter. When we came to Mexico City, this place called El Patio, a very popular place, one time I found a bra. I didn’t know whose it was and I had to return

it to the person. When the lights were on, I couldn’t distinguish which woman had thrown the bra. The musicians in the band were confounded! Instead of throwing tomatoes at us, they threw clothing on stage. I had to explain to the band that it was a form of appreciation, the man would throw jackets or ties and the women would throw anything. It was quite exciting for us!

Were you considered a playboy?

No, it wasn’t my kind of scene. Hugh Hefner once tried to take us to the Playboy Mansion but I didn’t consider it because it wasn’t the kind of show for the place—

Oh no, no, no! I meant were you considered a playboy, you know, like a ladies’ man?

Oh, no!

You weren’t?

It’s true that I love women, of course, and that my main loves in life are women, cars, and money, but not necessarily in that order! I’ve been married four times and it’s true that I’ve been lucky with my lady friends, but I don’t consider myself a playboy. It just happens that, you know, when you’re young and you play piano or any instrument, well logically you deserve a little more attention of the ladies.

(Laughing.)

If you happen to be in a circle that consists of beautiful women that convene in the entertainment world, of course you’ll be surrounded by beautiful people and your friends are beautiful. That’s just logical.

That’s like living the American Dream™: cars, money, and women.

Yes, you put it very well! I was very lucky because I happened to be liked. At all times I tried to be very nice with the people. I’m not pretentious and I try to be honest with my friends. I have the fortune of having very good friends, very beautiful ladies as friends; I’m very happy of that fact. I behaved very well. No matter that I’ve been divorced four times, all of my ex-wives call me. I keep on very good terms with them because I was very decent and no one can say anything bad about me. That’s very nice!

That’s remarkable!

It is remarkable!

Did your obsessive nature with music ever get in the way?

No, not really. I consider marriage a must for every man, but when you’re married, you have to get the proper partner. The woman has to be beautiful, has to understand you, and leave jealousy behind. That’s one thing that, unfortunately, you can’t obtain because all women are jealous by nature.

Men aren’t jealous by nature?

I guess that we have opposite points, but it’s human nature, I don’t know why. Men are allowed to do some things that women are not allowed, not that the girls don’t do them. Men can easily have more girlfriends than women. It’s difficult to say, at least for me—not that I consider that I have the right, it’s not that, because I don’t think that the man should be different than the woman—but just based on my past experience, I consider that we men have more liberties than women. I don’t know how, I don’t know why. That’s just the way it is. The women, I respect them very much. I love women. I think that they do a tremendous job. They become mature much sooner than men. A girl that is 18 years old is much more mature than a boy at 18.

Right.

It’s just the way that it is so that the women can support more pain, they’re more capable of suffering. They live longer than men. But it’s funny because—this is a difficult thing to say, it’s not bragging—when I was 73 years old, I had a girlfriend that was 21! Can you imagine that?

Wow!

Just imagine it the other way.

It wouldn’t happen.

I can’t justify that thing and I don’t think that’s right. I was just reviewing my life and at all times I’ve had more pretty girls and women that I respect very much and they’ve had to be younger than myself. I don’t know why. Right now I’m 77.

Do you have a girlfriend now?

No, I have two very pretty nurses, one in the daytime and one at night. I guess they are wondering when I’m going to commit [to] my

fifth marriage. I think they are trying to get rid of me because they've been with me over a year. Right now, I'm practicing some therapy and rehabilitation to see if I can get up and around. I've been laying in bed for too much time. It's a great comfort to have these two pretty girls around, to know that I have assistance at all times of the day. Of course the girl at night has to be used to my way of life 'cuz sometimes I stay awake until five in the morning playing games, listening to my stereo, listening to CDs—I have all kinds of music because people are so nice. Recently a magazine in London, *GQ*, published a beautiful interview. They gave me two pages. The senior editor, Jessamy Calkin, she wrote a very nice article entitled "Juan Step Beyond."

(Laughing.)

She said, "Of all the easy-listening music, I think that Juan is unique because his music is certainly not easy-listening. He has a way which he has combined the corny with the most advanced and esoteric kind of modern music, producing a large and brilliant sound."

That's great!

Yes! It's a fairly recent issue, too. I wrote to her a very nice letter. She came all the way from London to my house! I couldn't believe it!

When you were still growing up in Mexico, did you feel American culture influenced you a lot?

Yes, of course! My main interest was in music.

Before I came to the U.S., I had many idols. At the time, they were Stan Kenton, Glen Miller, and Henry Mancini. I met Henry Mancini in Hollywood, I'm so sorry he passed away; he was my idol. In Mexico, we have very strongly been influenced by American culture, especially the girls who dressed very much like the American girls dressed. After seeing a television program from Memphis, Tennessee, that featured the most important figures in ice skating, I suggested to Irwin Chusid (*producer of Esquivel's Bar/None compilations*) to send my music to Nancy Kerrigan and Katarinna Witt. They base their routines very much on the music and sometimes the music is very fast or classical or even comical.

Have they used your music?

No, not yet. On second thought, I'm thinking it's not a good idea to send my music to both of the ice skaters. Maybe just Nancy Kerrigan or Katarinna Witt. They probably speak to one another and won't like the idea that they're using the same music. Who do you think would be a better idea?

Probably Nancy Kerrigan.

Yes, I think so, too.

I like them both.

I also prefer Nancy Kerrigan so I'm going to tell Irwin not to send it to Katarinna, just send it to Nancy.

Good idea.

Perhaps she will choose one number to per-

form with.

It could be very difficult for her to come up with something because most of your music is so complex.

Right! Perhaps she could make some kind of collage. (*Laughs.*)

It would have to be. One last question, Mr. Esquivel.

Yes?

What's your advice on love and life for somebody like me?

My motto in life would be: Love and respect women very much. One thing is to love them. Another thing is to want them. Another thing is to respect them. You can want them, but with love and respect. That's very important. Try to make money with whatever you like the most. Whatever you like in life, that's what you should do, not to be imposed in any particular direction. Just find out what you love to do and dedicate your life to it. That's how I did it because I love music and I found out that I could believe out of my liking, so I'm very happy with it.

Thank you very much.

Thank you! I appreciate very much you talking to me.

I appreciate your time, Mr. Esquivel!

Oh, you're very welcome! Any time.

I enjoy your music greatly.

Thank you very much, Noël. ☺

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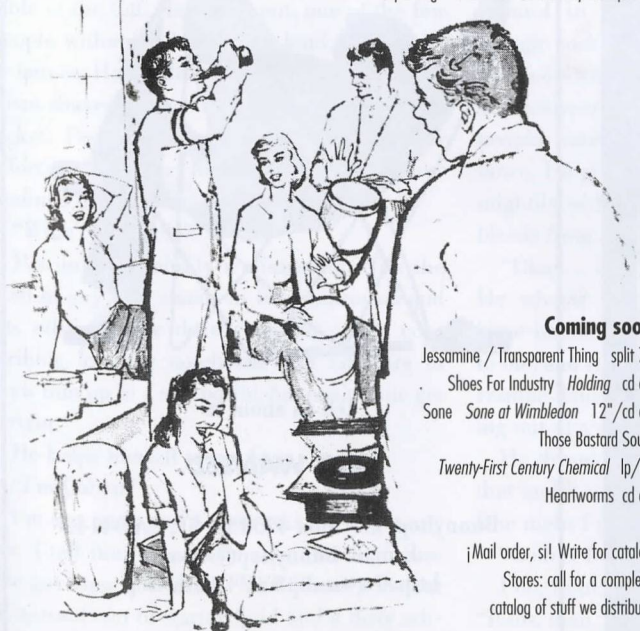
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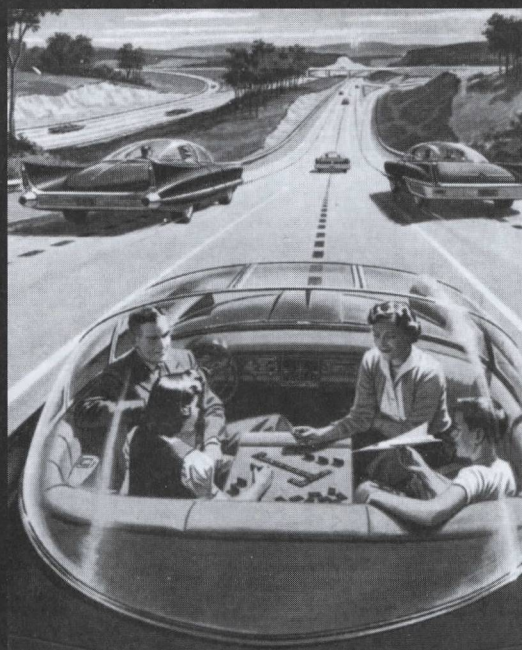
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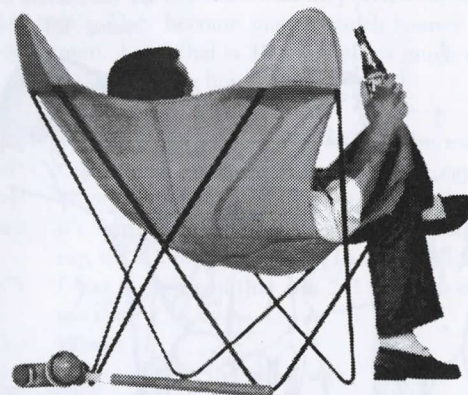
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TRUE

by Sean Beaudoin



Art: Dale Flattum

It's the first day of school, and I'm unpacking. Some guy knocks on my door and asks if I've got any food. He's got the kind of face that's impossible to remember once it's out of your sight. I don't have anything, but give him a couple bucks 'cause he looks hungry, reminding myself not to answer the door anymore.

The same guy sits next to me at an empty table in the Caf. He stands out, one of the few people without colored hair, loud thrift-attire or tattoos. He exudes normality, close cropped, clean shaven, tortoise-shell glasses and a jean jacket. People seem to avoid him. In their efforts to appear different, his blandness reminds them of their homogeny.

"What's up, dude?"

His unremarkability is disarming. He's the kind of guy who stands in the background and lets other people do the talking while cops scribble in their notebooks and later try to draw him up in a composite, but can't quite get it right.

He helps himself to my fries.

"I'm Cohen."

I'm at a party and Cohen asks if I've got any pot. I tell him no and he says, "Good, 'cause I've got some PRIMO ETHER!" and pulls out an aerosol can of starter fluid and a dirty athletic sock with orange stripes. I look at the

back of the can. It's only sixty-three percent ether. He says the rest is "negotiable" then grins, mashing the sock against his face and inhaling deeply. I turn and walk in the direction of a blonde freshman who'd smiled at me earlier. His inflated laughter follows me across the room.

I see Cohen later that night. He's walking around in circles, loudly showing off his "magic sock" like a proud father. It's now so imbued with the chemical that it can be lit on fire without burning the fabric. A crowd of people watch in disbelief, keeping their distance. He gives it a good dousing and inhales mightily with it pressed against his face. Neon bleeds from his eyes, people edging away.

"Okay... it's O-KAY."

He wheels with narcotic reflex, plunging a bone-handled fishing knife into the wall next to me, and runs off across the common. People resume dancing, shaken, James Brown humping out of a set of speakers in the corner.

He dropped out of school pretty soon after that and it was a year before I saw him again. One night I got a call.

"Collect from Cohen, do you accept?"

I do, reluctantly.

"Jesus, man, I'm in trouble, I'm fucked..."

"They don't sell starter fluid where you're

at?"

"Hey, c'mon, I'm in Manhattan... they got everything..."

"Then what's the problem?"

"Cops."

"If your bail is about thirty bucks and change, I'm your man..."

"No, no... that's not it..."

"What then?"

"Listen... I'm up in Boston, staying with my dad and his new wife. I don't like her. Told her I'd cut her if she didn't leave him, but it hasn't sunk in yet."

"Give her time."

"Yeah, anyway, he tells me I gotta clean all this shit out of the basement and take it to the dump. He gives me three hundred to rent a truck and pay the landfill fee. I'm walking over to the rental place and I see these construction guys sitting around eating baloney sandwiches and drinking Kool-Aid. I figure fuck it, I'll go over and lay this sob story on 'em how I need a truck real bad..."

"What with granny's tumor an' all."

"Right, and if maybe I could borrow theirs, I'd be eternally thankful and on and on, and they bought it!"

"No way... they just gave you the truck?"

"Yeah, they liked me. Guy hands me the

keys, makes me promise I give it back before they split at four. I left 'em my license, said we'd all go get a case of Strohs after..."

"Unbelievable"

"Yeah, so, I just saved myself two bills and I go to load the truck. It's a huge dump-thing, I'm grinding the gears, the fucker's like two-tons. My dad's like this inventor and the basement's all full of these half-ass failure experiments like three-way fuck-seats and hydro-turbines and shit and it takes forever to get it all in back and by the time I hit the road I realize there's no way I'm gonna get to the dump and back before four, so I notice this little wooded area on the side of the highway, and I figure I can save another hundred if I just pull it in and leave the shit there..."

"Good thinking..."

"Yeah, so I start shoveling all the crap behind these trees, and I got it about halfway done when I see this cop cruise by on the other side of the highway. He takes one look at me and punches it off the exit ramp, so I'm like 'oh shit' and I decide fuck it, I'll go to the dump afterall, but the truck has sunk into this mud and the wheels are spinning and I'm starting to sweat 'cause it's like this huge fine for illegal dumping and I left those guys my license and there's this enormous fucking sign next to the picnic tables that says NO DUMP-

ING..."

"Picnic tables? You dumped shit at a picnic area?"

"So what. Gives the kids something to fuck with. Anyway, the wheels are spinning and the truck won't move and I can hear a siren and I guess spinning the tires so much got the axle all heated up or something..."

"Happens all the time..."

"And since I was in about three foot high weeds something caught on fire and the fucking truck just starts to go up, man, the whole thing..."

"No way... you asshole... what'd you do?"

"Fucking ran out to the highway and hitched a ride. That truck was totaled. Could see the smoke for sixty miles. I just got here..."

"This happened today?"

"Yeah. Can I come stay with you? I still got fifty bucks. We can get some dope..."

"Christ...okay. But leave the sock..."

"Cool."

I'm in my final semester and halfway stuck on how I'm gonna get away with this lame thesis I'm straddling. There's a knock on the door. It's Cohen. Somehow I had a feeling. He's crossing the country in a red Honda station-wagon he rented with some French exchange student. She doesn't like him, and before we

get up the next morning, she splits in the car, and I'm stuck with him. He's got no money, but we eat well. He's a masterful shoplifter. He makes no pretense of trying to hide anything. We go to the supermarket and he grabs an armload of frozen pizzas, a gallon of cider and a kielbasa. He walks right out the front door with it, puts it on the sidewalk, and goes back in for milk, bread and a magazine. Somehow he is beyond reproach. No one questions him. Baggers smile. Cashiers whistle. We go home with a week's worth of food.

I dare him to steal me some cigarettes. They have them in a special case behind the cashier's stand. I come home after a night of whiskey and hustling pool. There's a carton of Marlboro reds stuck to my door with a bone-handled fishing knife. He refuses to tell me how he did it.

The last time I heard from Cohen he'd gotten a job counseling men who beat their wives.

"How the fuck did you get that job?" I asked him. "Don't you need some kinda degree?"

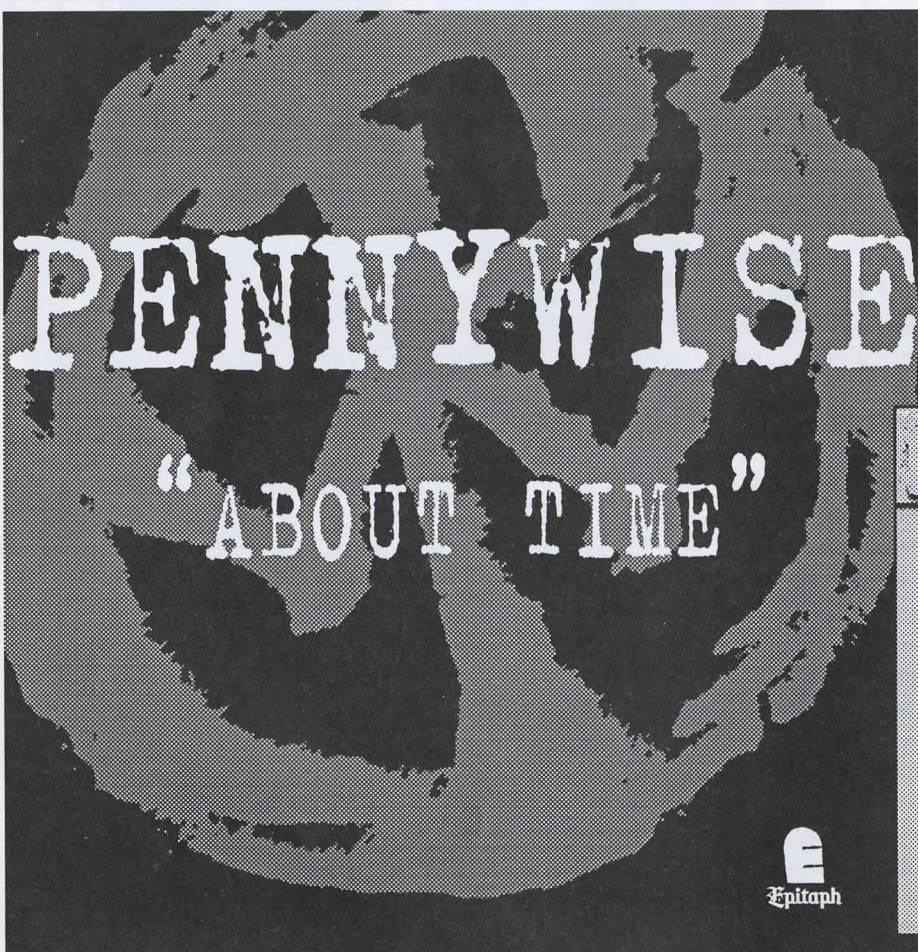
"They like me."

"Who doesn't?"

"I tell 'em, 'Go ahead an' smack her.'"

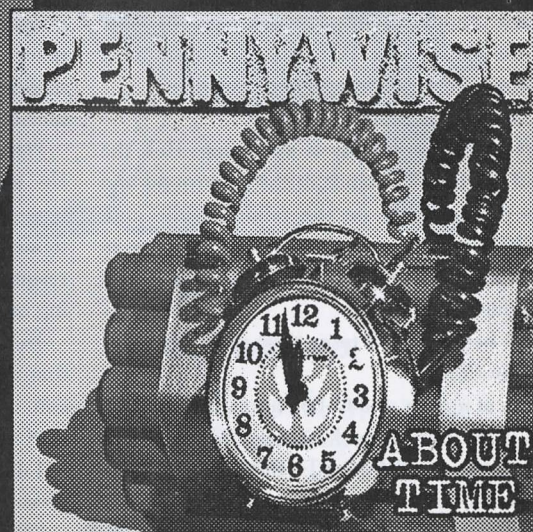
"Right."

"I tell 'em, 'If you don't, I will.'"



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"Are Skinny

White Women Overrated?"

...and other thoughts on interracial dating

by Noël Tolentino

In all honesty, I had never really given too much thought to exactly what it is about certain women that pushes those crushy love buttons and renders me mushy, that is, until the day my friend Sean shared an idea or two. He was unfortunate enough to have witnessed yet another episode of lovesick me awhile back, warbling on and on about so and so. To save himself from hours of mindless babble, he simply stopped me in the middle of my rant and bluntly claimed, "You're just into pasty skinny white chicks." And for a minute there, fudging my words with thoughts of confusion and denial swirling around, I could have sworn he was right.

Whether or not I'm actually fascinated with the skinny, pale one is somewhat irrelevant, I mean, I like white women just fine. Love them, even. It's what's implied (i.e. self-loathing racism, image problem) that disturbed me. I've never considered my attractions to be so narrow, almost exclusive, judging attractiveness based solely on skin color and a specific body type. Even worse, I had to think about it and to this day, I still do, repeatedly overanalyzing every single instance of unsolicited rubbernecking involving white women, even women who—on a surface level—aren't all that. And while my last two girlfriends were of mixed heritage, they certainly weren't beyond the creamy alabaster variety, not to mention the

revolving door of crushes that followed, filed under "Honky".¹ With this seemingly inordinate amount of attention paid to these and other fine ladies, I found myself literally agonizing over the thought: Do I really prefer white women over others? Could I possibly have a fetish for white women?² Am I *still* obsessed with death rock girls? Is there something severely wrong with me? After all was said and done, one thing was certain: I *noticed* them.

Bookish types and wood nymphs

"... it was easy to determine... that the white woman occupied a peculiarly prominent place in all of our frames of reference."

— Soul On Ice, Eldridge Cleaver

Whiteness hasn't always been such a consistent theme in my life. While second grade showcased less than a handful of Asian girls at school, particularly Cindy who was just beyond adorable,³ high school was a completely different story. Certainly there were hordes of cute and sassy pony-tailed Diet Cokeheads whooping it up in their colorful VW Cabriolets, but I usually noticed the Asian and Middle Eastern girls, especially the intelligent bookish types often found huddling in small groups in the library during lunch. I must have had a crush every other week, everyone from Kari to Cheryl to JiSoo to that Afghani princess whose

name I can't recall. Then college came around and, unfortunately, wiped the slate clean as a whistle. I didn't notice it at first, but UC Santa Cruz is pretty damn white. (Growing up in predominantly white neighborhoods, you just fail to notice these things.) The irony of it all? For a place that supposedly championed the ideals of cultural diversity, it simultaneously boasted the highest percentage of white students of all the UC's. (Of course, the influx of clean-cut, overly-privileged-kids-cum-guilt-ridden-hippie-slummers / wood-nymphs was a pretty good indication of the cultural makeup.) Consequently, virtually every single girl I ever lost my mind over was, ahem, white.

Moving back to my first home away from home has been a welcome sigh of relief. Living on the cusp of North Beach and Chinatown has colored in a more realistic view of the world, the kind of perfect place I wouldn't mind getting lost in. (Never mind all the German tourists who cram themselves in cable cars with their camcorders, crowding the streets with their impeccably bad sense of fashion. They're just looking for horrible heavy metal music to bring back home.) The neighborhood is a veritable potpourri of peoples, generations upon generations of Italian and Chinese families with an infinite number of smaller "communities" thrown in for good measure. And within this cultural stew bubbles

a plethora of beauty, from the young Vietnamese lovely who cuts my hair just right, to the death rock-ish, Audrey Hepburn-like dame who works the door of a local nudie joint. (Sigh.)

Even so, I still take more notice of white women than any other. One could speculate that it's a simple matter of circumstance—which still would only excuse me for a minute or two—but I'd like to think that there's more to it than that. No, this is not an attempt to discredit the beauty that millions of white women possess, but rather to delineate a number of social, pop cultural, and historical forces potentially responsible in sustaining an ideological construction of white womanhood. As Black Panther affiliate Eldridge Cleaver once noted, the centrality of white women in our collective gaze is “peculiarly prominent.” One must wonder if the monopolization of imagery—particularly of the white woman—and its dissemination on a global scale contributes to an ulterior political agenda, at once fostering an attraction and denying its fulfillment. Even in this day and age, interracial relationships still raise eyebrows; with white women in particular, *thems is fightin' words*.

Popular culture and the white woman beauty ideal

The omnipresent, media-induced beauty ideal typified by images of white women has haunted me since I was a little lad who didn't know any better. Aside from Kristy McNichol and Tatum O'Neal, this fascination can be traced back to—and perhaps best embodied by—the dazzling Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders of the late 1970s, famous for their all-American blonde hair and blue-eyed charm. Distinctively marked by their teeny white shorts, huge lipstick red smiles, and knotted royal blue blouses cradling their jubilant boobs, the Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders were every little girl's dream and every heterosexual man's fantasy. Equally, the foxy ladies of *Charlie's Angels* and the femme fatales of James Bond flicks contributed to the white woman attraction.⁴ (Ironically, their roles as seductive undercover agents represented the new position of the powerful, liberated woman, typically tarnished by their slender, physically weak(er), and highly sexualized identities. With these and other such representations, the threat is never real, just sexual.) And who *didn't* get a rise out of Olivia Newton-John's transformation from a virginal, goody two-shoes cheerleader to black leather clad roadster betty in the film *Grease*? Kids everywhere spilled their Whoppers[®] and didn't even know it.⁵

Popular culture's cheesy, overabundant use of canonical Western references—whether through classical music, fine art, or mythology—in relation to white women has been an effective means of expressing cultural bias and reinforcing the beauty ideal. Bo Derek's classic slink to Ravel's “Bolero” in *10*; Bananarama singing “I'm your Venus / I'm the fire / of your desire”; Vanna White in the leading role of made-for-television movie *Goddess of Love*; Helena Bonham Carter's countless roles in “enchanting” British films about the good ol'



days (set to the music of Puccini, no less); weepy Meryl Streep oft described as Botticellean; ad infinitum. Suggested is a direct correlation between white women and the cultural arts. Excepting the existential question on the true nature of art which has plagued mental masturbators and art theorists (same thing?), art since the Enlightenment has widely been understood to be the “science” of aesthetics. With that in mind, white women as the standard of beauty is practically “self-evident,” an “empirically” supported sentiment endorsed through the eyes of the culture industry. Considering that Westerners—whether through colonialism, movies, or MTV—have repeatedly imposed their ideals upon other peoples and cultures, the beauty

ideal prominently represented by white women often goes unquestioned.⁶

Perhaps the skinny white woman beauty ideal has been best tailored by the fashion industry. I can still recall the days back in sixth grade when I thought I'd become a fashion designer, becoming overly obsessed with Paulina Porizkova and, in high school, Christy Turlington. I found myself flipping through my mother's copies of *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan* whenever they rolled into the house, giving little thought to the fact that the models were invariably white. True, that particular tradition was broken when *Elle* was introduced state-side, but even then it was obvious that the fashion world sought “typically” European features in women of color: “fair” skin; small, thin noses; small butts, thin lips, etc., a beauty mold narrowed down to a Barbie Doll science that merely required a dash of pigment for ethnic variety.⁷ Now when I look through fashion rags, I see that some of today's supermodels from the waif series like Kate Moss and Shalom, especially when compared to the Texan largeness of Anna Nicole Smith, are frightening examples of women and beauty, an unhealthy paper thin look for girls to model themselves after.

Unequivocally, Hollywood has been highly influential in shaping public opinion surrounding issues of beauty. True, silver-screen legends like Audrey Hepburn, Rita Hayworth, Marilyn Monroe, Catherine Deneuve, et al, certainly glow with an element of timeless beauty. But it's also quite evident what kind of wonders a makeup crew, good lighting, morphing technology, surgically removing a few ribs, starving to death, maybe even a boob job or two can do for certain careers. What kind of starlets do we have today? Sharon Stone? Demi Moore? Drew Barrymore? Marisa Tomei? And why do we give so much attention to television dunderheads like Heather Locklear, Tori Spelling, Christina Applegate, Pamela Anderson (Lee)?⁸ Judging by the millions these ladies rake in, it's no wonder why our collective ideas about image and beauty—signified by skinny white women—are so distorted.

Subcultures and circumstance

Placing the blame on media saturation alone is too simple. It is difficult to determine just how much media influences public opinion and vice versa. I know for myself that circumstance has provided much to mull over, especially considering the particular subcultures I've been involved with. Besides my breakdancing phase in grade school and hip hop inclinations that come and go, every sub-

culture that has ever sparked my interest has been predominantly white. In high school, like a number of other miserable teenagers dotting the planet, I was fascinated with death rock culture. No, I never became extremely submerged in it, at least not to the point of romanticizing midnight trysts in cemeteries or having tub o' lard Robert Smith posters lining the walls of my room. Involved, nonetheless, as in I-have-a-pair-of-Creepers-with-skull-and-crossbone-buckles involved. In a time when one often feels confused, isolated, irreverent, and a little more than curious about sex, death rock was the perfect solution. Perhaps the most alluring aspect of death rock was that it was the first erotically charged youth culture I was ever exposed to. Ex-death rocker Seth Robson said it best: "Death rock women are so appealing because they *can* embody such wild extremes in behavior—from the 'little girl lost' to the depraved vampires—often at the same time." Beyond that, death rockers expressed a fashion sense that seemed far more sophisticated and intriguing than most any other subculture. Stylistically founded on the notion that everyday *was*, in fact, Halloween, death rockers freely borrowed ideas, anywhere from Victorian-era romanticism to the ghoulish chic of *The Addams Family*. (Ultimately epitomized by Winona Ryder's morbid character in *Beetlejuice*.) Essentially, death rock culture glamorized extremely pale skin painted over skin and bones, a sharp look of decadence topped with self-perpetuating doom and woe-is-me gloom.⁹ Those who failed to meet the "pigment deficiency" requirements resort to either locking themselves indoors for extended periods of time or caking on clown white makeup before the next trip to the shopping mall. All this sickliness combined with an appropriation of cliché fetish wear (patent leather high heel boots, satin and lace, fish net stockings, etc.) developed into a twisted attraction that, much to my chagrin, still has residual side effects.

In some ways, particular strains of punk rock are no different from death rock in fostering somewhat distorted skinny white girl attractions. The past few years has seen the rise and uneventful commercialization of the Sassy Sanrio Riot Grrrl look (see the commercial for L'oréal's Exuberance hair-color) that eclipsed the popular waif look of yesteryear. From candy colored barrettes to form-fitting girlie tees, Hello Kitty backpack purses to baby doll dresses, the Sassy Sanrio Riot Grrrl "movement" now has less to do with revolutionary sexual / gender politics than it does with fashionable infantilism, shirking adulthood responsibilities and equality for the

promise that simulated youth might bring. Much like death rock, the "look" applies to a body type that is, for most women, unhealthy. I believe Darby of *Ben Is Dead* said it best when she wrote in the introduction to *Retro #1*: "Fuck Kim Gordon. Clinging to youth through anorXia! Can you imagine the high she gets off knowing girls are barfing themselves silly to fit into her toddler designs? There's not one item in her line of clothing for a healthy, 'mature' girl. She's either stupid (doubt it) or just fucking every girl over for being half her age." In this instance, there seems to be little difference between X-Girl and the warped rigma-role disseminated by fashion magazines: "I am woman; hear me roar! But excuse me while I pee softly!"

Unfortunately, my attraction to white women has never been restricted to those within the few subcultures I identify with. Life would be so much easier that way. On the opposite end of the spectrum, though I rarely come into close, personal contact with them, are the "normal", 9-to-5 women that I've been long fascinated with, the kind who wouldn't know the difference between the Flying Burrito Brothers or Flying Saucer Attack. Living near the financial district of San Francisco has certainly provided a wealth of sightseeing attractions on most any occasion. Dolled up from head to toe in the height of business-suit fashion, these particular women possess that unmistakable mix of professional pizzazz and subtle, sometimes perfect makeup jobs that scream "And I'm worth every second, too!" While I can't quite place my finger on the exact reasons why I find this type so appealing, there is definitely something alluring about that conservative power-suit look, or conservative women in general.¹⁰ Perhaps it's that assertive, graceful walk or that sexy illusion of stability just waiting to be shattered, but detractors would cite fetish: fancy high heels, sheer black stockings, long flowing skirts, hip-hugging short skirts, silky white pearl necklaces, minimal wire rim glasses, etc., all of those stereotypical elements that let the imagination go ape.¹¹ I had never realized the extent of this attraction until I found



unhealthy Marcia Clark, prosecuting district attorney in the O.J. Simpson trial, even remotely sexy. It's true, even if Adrian Tomine, creator of *Optic Nerve*, thinks I'm just saying this just to be "outrageous." I can see his point, though, especially that really bad perm (which has since been remedied), but with those dreamy doe eyes, dollops of intelligence, and that unflinching, bad-ass spitfire attitude of hers poured into a professional suit, who could blame me?

Yet after seeing Terry Zwigoff's *Crumb*, I can't help but feel somewhat disturbed by my skinny white girl attraction, which is in direct contrast to R. Crumb's own fascination with big-boned, "Amazon-like" women. It was painfully clear when one woman in the movie remarked how he drew women "as they really are" and not like some idealized stick figure with boobs. It's sad to think that my desires, like many others, somehow perpetuate the bird-leg body type. I mean, whatever happened to images of the voluptuous lovelies of yesteryear?

Girly-Man

Media portrayals of people of color and Asian males in particular have been—if you'll pardon the expression—"slanted" to say the least. Not only are there a dearth of different roles to transcend stereotypes, but those that do exist are certainly horrible in "defining" what it is to be an Asian, or Asian-American, male. Roles are usually narrowed down to awkward, picture-taking buck-toothed and bespectacled louses with thick foreign accents,

who unwillingly serve as comic relief and as the subject of mockery and derision, particularly Mickey Rooney's questionable role in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. (And in the case of foreign exchange students Takashi in *Revenge of the Nerds* and Long Duck Dong in *Sixteen Candles*, they possess an obsession with white "hair pie.")¹² There's also the case of the greedy and inflexible businessman highlighted in the mid-Eighties flick *Gung Ho*, a comedy about the flailing American automobile industry that pandered to the swell of Japan-bashing deemed vogue at the time.¹³ Even the film adaptation of Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* failed to produce a single positive image of Asian men.¹⁴ Other than Margaret Duras' *The Lover*, pop culture has been insistent in emasculating Asian men, even within instances of overt masculinity. Have you noticed how, unlike James Bond, Bruce Lee's valiant efforts often go unrewarded (i.e. lady to love) by movie's end? Even after making Kareem Abdul Jabbar look like a fool? And what did Mr. Miyagi get for helping some whiny Italian pud the tricks of the trade? Jack fucking shit.

Issues of effeminacy in regards to Asian men are often correlated with the prevalent myth of the small penis. In his first hit, *Delirious*, Eddie "Well-Endowed" Murphy quipped about "rice dicks" lost in chop suey bowls. Even Asians have a sense of humor about it all, especially in the Chinese comedy *Sex & Zen* where the plot centered around one man's feelings of inadequacy, to be resolved by the uneventful grafting of a horse penis to his body. As Daria Yudacufski would say, "capturing some sense of masculinity" is paramount to a number of Asian men who feel ill equipped.

Penis size aside, delving into extremities doesn't necessarily guarantee the mark of masculinity, either. From the work of John Woo to the mayhem the Ruins eke out, Asian craziness could just as soon be trivialized by Freudian phallogocentric theories, over-compensation as a result of penial inferiority complexes and minute traces of radioactive fallout. "James Iha of Smashing Pumpkins is probably the most widely exposed Asian in rock today," cited Sooyoung Park of Seam. "But I seriously doubt whether the band would be as big if he were the frontperson." As Billy Corgan's musical pawn, Iha, thin and wispy in nature, completely lacks "manliness", a sentiment further exacerbated by his convincing cross-dressing stint in the video for the song "Today". It is this kind of timid, non-threatening image that seems to follow most Asian and Asian-American men for a better part of their lives. "Asian girl interaction has always been brotherly-sisterly," commented Adrian Tomine.

Bakamono's Eiso Kawamoto—whose ideal woman is Yoshimi from the Boredoms—added, "Women sometimes think you're gay, so they think it's safe." While it may seem like heterosexual women are looking for a nice guy, popular opinion seems to support the notion that what they really want is a mix of sweetness and danger, big and brutish bears who are cute and cuddly. For Asian and Asian-American men who stereotypically don't fit such roles, it essentially means no Pocky for kitty. "I think everybody has a secret desire to be objectified," said Park. "[But] Asian men rarely feel objectified by anyone."



Art: Christine Shields

Otherness and white women

While the persistence of myth has had a damaging effect, it certainly hasn't stopped white women from being curiously attracted to Otherness, fictional or otherwise. For example, the latest Guess campaign panders to the sexually taboo nature of the coupling of white woman and black man. She, the blonde goddess, serving as the proverbial muse for the black musician, who in turn melts her frozen sugar walls with his sexually rhythmic percussion playing. Completely enraptured in the heat of the moment, she even blows off the advances of the stiff, presumably upper class white man who tries to woo her away. (Waiting in the wings is a younger, hipper Johnny Depp-like rebel figure who—as a result of his hipness—has a chance with her, but is nonetheless reduced to the role of a spectator, or better yet, voyeur.) Talk about punk rock!

In terms of recent pop cultural deluge, the issue of Otherness and attraction was perhaps best exemplified by Data's role in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Adamantly clever from

day one, even the voyages of the *Star Trek Enterprise* paralleled modern day sociopolitical issues, interactions between human and non-human species representing those of human ethnic groups, racism in the guise of speciesism. (Duh, Captain James T. Kirk fucked everything that moved.) Rhonda V. Wilcox's essay "Dating Data: Miscegenation in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*" addresses the character of Data, an android, whose Otherness is taken to the extreme, "from the difference between races to the difference between man and machine" (Wilcox, 266). Much like Spock, a half-human, half-Vulcan who faces prejudice in a predominantly human (read: "white") world, Data, too, must endure resistance from those who denigrate him solely on the basis of being an android.¹⁵ More importantly, Data fits squarely in a long tradition of symbolic representations of the Other. "From *Metropolis* to *Blade Runner*, androids... stand not only for forbidden sexual pleasure, but also for subjugated classes of people" (Wilcox, 267). Highly logical and physically strong, women drawn to the exotic found him to be well nigh adorable. Dig this conversation between Jaina A. Davis and Lisa Carver from *Flatter!* #3:

Lisa: Who would you most like to have a child with?

Jaina: Well...

L: In the *Star Trek* crew.

J: Doy!

L: Can I hold your hands... I want Data. I'm holding your hands so you won't claw my eyes out!! I've seen him be a father. He was good.

J: Parent-wise, Data would rock.

L: What would be your ultimate date with Data?

J: Well, I think it would be pretty quiet. We'd go to his room and he'd demonstrate his multitude capabilities while I'd get all hot and bothered.

L: I know he's very strong. And he doesn't need to sleep. He could go on all night long...

J: You could just program him for hours! Until you were dying! I want to be fucked to death by Data! That's the way I want to die.

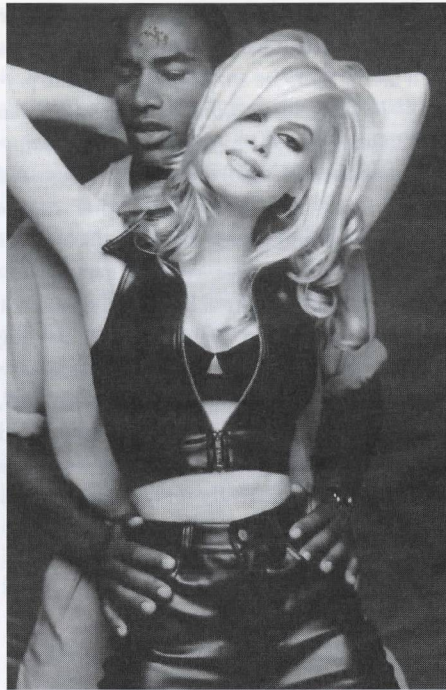
Gleaning the episode "Ensigns of Command" for clues, Wilcox added, "The immense strength of androids is a trait they share with the stereotype of the slave, who is treated as an animal, a sexual beast... [and] as lynching might result for the black man who kissed a white woman, Data is seemingly murdered after an alliance with a human woman who has kissed him" (Wilcox, 271).

White women: Political pawns?

It is interesting to note how the imagery and symbolic nature of the "purity" of white wom-



These three pictures are from the latest Guess Jeans campaign. Quite "racy", wouldn't you say?



anhood has been instrumental in perpetuating racism. In 1894, writer and activist Ida B. Wells, upon returning from a tour of Britain in an effort to inform people of racial prejudice, developed a radical analysis of lynching. She was convinced it was a form of economic and political repression, "the routine killing of black men...legitimized by stories of rape and sexual assault of white women" (Ware, 127), simultaneously keeping the white woman in a state of subordination to white men. Around the same time, different factions of the Ku Klux Klan were developing in response to the "emancipation" of black people in the reconstruction period. One of the main premises of the KKK has been to protect the sanctity of white womanhood. In the book *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan*, David Chalmers wrote: "The [white] woman not only stood at the core of his (white man's) sense of property and chivalry, she represented the heart of his culture. By the fact that she was not accessible to the Negro, she marked the ultimate line of difference between white and black" (Chalmers, 21).

Save for those who have been locked in the basement all their life, the myth of the predatory black man "hunting" for white women has become legend.¹⁶ While such political terrorism has socialized white women into thinking that it's more likely that they will be raped by black men than a white man, statistics show that over 90% of all rapes are *intra-racial* as

opposed to interracial. Angela Davis noted that proportionately more white men rape black women than black men rape white women (Davis, 43).¹⁷ Still, the collective imagination lingers while black men are harassed by police on a daily basis for crimes they didn't commit, all in the name of upholding "law and order." Even in this politically charged, post-Rodney King era, the myth of the black male rapist helps to satisfy ulterior, racist agendas without advocating an explicitly white supremacist position.¹⁸

Supermasculine menials and Ultra-feminines: A crash course.

"...a terrible feeling of guilt came over me as I realized that I had chosen the picture of the white girl over the available pictures of black girls. I tried to rationalize it away, but I was fascinated by the truth involved... Was it true, did I really prefer white girls over black? The conclusion was clear and inescapable: I did."

— Soul On Ice, Eldridge Cleaver

In his landmark novel, *Soul On Ice*, Cleaver painted an unapologetically daring picture of sexual politics and race relations in the fiery history of America. His views on interracial relationships corroborate those sentiments of Angela Davis: "I know that the black man's sick attitude toward the white woman is a revolutionary sickness: it keeps him perpetually out of harmony with the system that is oppressing him" (Cleaver, 28). Intent on further understanding his attraction to white women, an attraction he believed was foredoomed to be unfulfilled, Cleaver invented a sexual-social myth system to describe the rela-

tionships between white and black:

Omnipotent Administrator - white men, "the Mind," oppresses all others to maintain omnipotence, has access to white and black women, effeminate

Supermasculine Menial - black men, "the Body," alienated from the mind, virile, access to black women only

Ultra-feminine - white women, symbol of freedom, weak-minded, weak-bodied, sex freak, accessible to white men only

Amazon - black women, domestic, strong, self-reliant, large, accessible to black and white men

This system,¹⁹ however rooted in persistent myth, is significant in a number of ways. A social distinction is made between the Mind and Body, which are mutually exclusive on a hierarchical level. In maintaining the oppressive nature of the Mind (knowledge, legislative power, technology), the Omnipotent Administrator inadvertently forfeited all those traits associated with masculinity to the Supermasculine Menial: strength, brute power, muscle. Even without the masculine traits, the source of power and prestige that the Omnipotent Administrator represents renders his attractiveness to both white and black women, which also indirectly suggests the beauty ideal of the skinny white woman. "Even though [the Omnipotent Administrator] is effeminate, [the Ultra-feminine] is required to possess and project an image that is in sharp contrast to his, more sharply feminine than his, so that the effeminate image of her man can still, by virtue of the sharp contrast in

degrees of femininity, be perceived as masculine" (Cleaver, 167). Not only must the Ultra-feminine be physically in sharp contrast to the effeminate Omnipotent Administrator, but also must be distinguished from the Aunt Jemima-like image of the Amazon. Cleaver arrives at the term "Ultra-feminine" because she is the woman of the elite who has, at once, absorbed the feminine qualities of the woman of the lower class and relieved herself of her domestic nature. Reciprocally, the Amazon absorbed the Ultra-feminine's "cast-off domestic component and relinquished her own femininity" (Cleaver, 167). Should the Supermasculine Menial try to "reclaim" his mind, it would be viewed as a desire to transcend the "laws" of nature by miscegenating, the fear that fuels the fire between the Supermasculine Menial and the Omnipotent Administrator for control over sexual sovereignty.²⁰

From the numerous examples cited here, from Cleaver to death rock, from *Baywatch* to fashion runways, what seems highly apparent in the idealization of the skinny white woman is four-fold: (1) whiteness invokes ideas of purity, innocence, and virtue, characteristics most men seek in women; (2) thinness, as a sign of weakness and subordination, has a semi-sadistic appeal; (3) smaller, skinnier body types are consistent with "ideal" asymmetry in relative size between male and female; and, (4) as innocent "weaker", "delicate" beings, they "need" to be protected (from men of color) by (white) men. Yet, even the position of the white woman is contingent upon changes in the sociopolitical landscape.

Inequality and Asian women

"My little China girl / You shouldn't mess with me / I'll ruin everything you are / I'll give you television / I'll give you eyes of blue / I'll give you man who wants to rule the world"

— "China Girl," David Bowie

The struggle for power effects all levels of any social caste system and once there is a significant shift in power relations, those at the top rethink their "strategies" to maintain the fruits of their status. (The fear that many white male flag-waving GOP members express of their alleged near-extinction and oppressed status is laughable. Congress couldn't be any whiter or more male.) The social and economic advances that feminism has granted women has left many backward, "traditional" men feeling a little more than just frustrated and uncomfortable. Take, for example, the growing trend in interracial couples that involve Asian women and white men. Since World War II and repeated G.I. Joe trips on Bangkok sex

tours, the myth of the submissive domestic love slaves that Asian women embody has been tattooed on the collective white male psyche.²¹ I'm sure that a number of Asian woman / white man relationships aren't quite so tainted by myth and the "queasiness" of sexual equality, but it hardly means that others haven't been influenced by such factors. (It also makes me wonder why so many white male friends who express having "a thing" for Asian women are so reluctant in explaining exactly why they do.) In Joan Walsh's article "Asian Women, Caucasian Men," Tom Knight*, a fortysomething art professional, expressed difficulty in dealing with women he considers his equals. "I don't really understand it, but I



know I feel less threatened by Asian women," he said. "I grew up in a culture where men acted a certain way and women acted a certain way." Balding retail manager Mike Arnold* spilled a little of his own vitriol: "It's a Darwinistic world, dating-wise, and I have an inferiority complex with white women," he said, adding, "I eventually realized that being white, I could make it with an Asian woman who's more physically attractive than I am, just because she's got a cultural inferiority complex." (Much to my dismay, he prefers dating recent Filipina immigrants. He likes that a language barrier exists.) In its scariest and perhaps most extreme form, this chauvinistic exotic-erotic Asian female fantasy has successfully manifested itself in the dubious world of mail-order brides, where white men import their love from places like Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

The tensions and frustrations that coexist with changes in equality have also been felt by others. Many white women feel they've been

"abandoned" by white men in favor of Asian women. In Walsh's article, Sherrie Thompson felt frustrated upon moving from the Midwest to San Francisco, recalling, "I have to admit I felt threatened. Asians seem kind of like what a man would say 'the ideal woman is'—you know: small, thin, fragile, almost doll-like." (And perhaps just as important is the light skin color of many Asians.) In Tanaka Tomoyuki's FAQ (frequently asked questions) "Disparity in Asian / White Interracial Dating," he cited that, "The current ideal of feminine beauty in this country focuses on slimness to the point of forcing many to attempt crash diets. Asian females are usually smaller and thinner and, by chance, happen to fit this ideal better."²² Since Asian-American men certainly are not the symbols of status in this country, there are no similar sexual-political pressures for white women to be involved with them, a dating disparity that has left many Asian-American men feeling a little more than frustrated and out of the loop. "It's an unspoken thought that if an Asian guy goes out with a white girl, it's some kind of social climbing," said Tomine. "My only girl problems are the lack of *any* girls."

Intraracial bickering

"Meet Mr. Successful / I guess he's blessed yeah / But he happens to be a brother who only wants blue eyes and blonde hair...He says sisters wasn't good enuff / They only wanted his green stuff"

— "Pollywanacraka," Public Enemy

One sad development stemming from the politics of interracial dating is the intraracial resentment it has stirred. In the black community, there has been an increasing amount of "role models" such as entertainers and athletes—Barry Bonds, Michael Jackson, Sidney Poitier, Quincy Jones, Gregory Hines, Frank Thomas, Al Jarreau, Montel Williams, and O.J. Simpson, to name a few—who have all crossed the color line, much to the dismay of many black women.²³ Equally, disenfranchised black men voice strong opinions about black women who only date white men with money. In the Asian community, Asian men (as well as some women) strongly believe that the need to assimilate into American culture has been heavily responsible for the attraction to white men among Asian women, which might help to explain the outmarriage rate of over 70% among Japanese-American women. "It wouldn't bother me as much if Asian women were also dating black men or Latino men," said Bryan Nobida (whose heritage is half-Chinese, half-Filipino) in Walsh's article. "But it's white guys. I've heard Asian women say they only date white guys. And it's because we live in a white culture." Some Asian women place the

blame on persistent sexism that exists in most Asian cultures, which they believe extends to Asian men here in America. Others believe that Asian men aren't adventurous enough, taking up conservative jobs for stable lives.

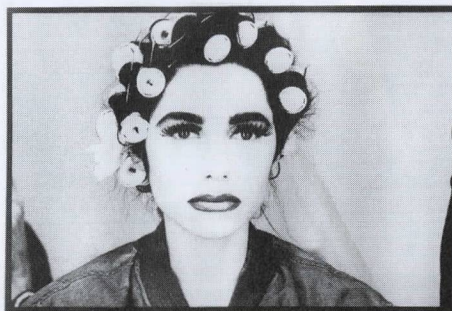
The struggle for status is believed to have led many to transcend racial boundaries in order to maximize future opportunities, a sentiment that seems to get lost in the midst of lots of hot air and mindless bickering. Those who get caught in the middle are the real victims of this particular form of discrimination. The idea of racial purity—a concept hardly exclusive to Westerners—complicates things. Ethnic groups in America are equally guilty of pressuring their brothers and sisters to remain “pure”, to be more “responsible” to their people. As Park pointed out, the Korean-American community feels particularly let down by interracial dating. As a recent immigrant group from a xenophobic, racially pure country, such relationships are likely to be met with much resistance. With Japanese-Americans who have had a longer history here, the resistance is less, which might further explain the high outmarriage rate among Japanese-American women.

Race mixing: The Final Solution?

The debate over interracial dating gets really heated when it takes the logical next step. While the now defunct Very Small Records printed wonderful shirts that said “Race Mixing Is Good,” the word “miscegenation” itself is often tagged with a negative connotation. The fear that one day all color lines will be eradicated has been on the minds of countless generations of bigots, a fear that, to this day, is unfounded yet has still effectively socialized people in believing its inevitability if we don't “abide” by certain measures. The Yellow Peril of the late 1800s, which was originally applied to the Chinese, was projected on the rising Japanese empire of the early 1900s because, you know, all Asians look alike. Obviously the stuff of fantasy and paranoia, the Yellow Peril was a perfect subject for popular culture, whether in movies, pulp fiction, comics, or sensationalist journalism. One individual who was able to successfully funnel these ideas in an articulate form was Sax Rohmer, a British author who was also well known in America. From 1913 on, he had authored the classic tales of Dr. Fu Manchu, an insidious fictional character that embodied the impending “threat” to white supremacy: Eastern mastery of Western knowledge and technology; the ability to harness mysterious powers for diabolical ends; and the mobilization of the yellow horde. So it was no surprise

that by the time of World War II, when Japan proved themselves formidable foes, that Rohmer took these tales to the next level. In the tenth Fu Manchu novel, the evil genius was involved in laboratory experiments intent on altering skin pigmentation. “These wild imaginings, in which Rohmer's evil Asian was already experimenting with yellow white men and ‘white Nubians,’ amounted to symbolic miscegenation and touched on the ultimate white supremacist fear: the obscuring and eventual obliteration of color lines” (Dower, 159).

One must wonder, though, if race mixing is actually the solution—and not the problem—to shakey race relations, what Maxwell Geismar called the “essential miscegenation.” Sure, jokesters like Thomas Jefferson and Franklin Roosevelt both entertained the idea of



“improving” the racial stock of minorities—whether they were black, yellow, or red—by miscegenation with white people,²⁴ that is, until their peers slapped them silly and told them to shut their traps. And while MTV provocateur Madonna likes to publicly toy with such sexual taboos with her flamboyantly oh-so-alternative lifestyle, much of the “political” message gets lost in her egocentric self-promotional stunts and insipid brand of dance music. But there are those who express sincerity on this issue. In Lynn Norment's article, “Black Men, White Women: What's Behind the New Furor?”, South African writer Mark Mathabane, whose wife is white, said, “Interracial couples have an important role to play in the improvement of race relations... Often, they have overcome personal prejudices in establishing genuine friendships founded on mutual trust, respect, cooperation, open-mindedness and communication. These are prerequisites for racial harmony.” To paraphrase Cleaver, he concurred on this, citing that a black man will never be free until he can be in the same bed with a white woman and no one will think negatively of it. And if there's anything we should learn from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, it's “embracing the Other [which] means becoming wholly ourselves”

(Wilcox, 275).

At the risk of sounding unpopular, bitter, incompetent, racist, sexist, or hopelessly ignorant on such an infinitely complex, touchy issue, I wanted to address this issue once and for all in hopes of discovering the core of attraction. Not only has it been difficult, but it's been scary. Recognizing and unlearning sexual ideals, reconstructing them, and being able to evaluate them objectively—especially those attractions that are so specific—can be a creepy process, one that can be learned from, nonetheless. But fully understanding the components and implications of the particular gaze involving white women—or anybody else, for that matter—may never be known.²⁵ While there are a myriad of experiences and realities that exist out there, there are also commonalities and persistent myths that will, perhaps, follow us until the world goes up in smoke. I'd be the last person to claim that I've been 100% “cured” of cultural white-washing and I doubt I could find many who are or would want to be. And even then, it would be stupid of me to reduce ideas of attraction to intellectual constructs; we're animals, plain and simple, driven on impulses that we may never be able to tap into, that defy all forms of logic and reason. I will forever be attracted to skinny white women, just as I am attracted to beautiful ladies of all ethnicities and subcultures. Whether you follow your heart or your hard-on is up to you. Just realize what you might be getting into. ☺

¹ Unless you count the goddess with the fashionably uneven pixie cut in the Fila/Lady Foot Locker commercial who proudly announced: “I'm Chinese.” Dang!

² One fine afternoon in Berkeley, over burritos and root beer, Adrian Tomine, a fourth-generation Japanese-American and creative wizard behind *Optic Nerve* comics, warned: “You can read creepy motivations into basically everything so it's better to just not obsess about it.” I replied: “I shouldn't write this whole piece now.” Adrian responds: “No, no, you should because there's a lot of—” as Eiso Kawamoto, frontman for San Francisco's noise artist Bakamono, interrupted with much fervor: “Believe me, you'll get a lot of mail. Maybe you'll even get laid!” To which Adrian ends, laughing: “That's always a good motivation!” If only life were this simple...

³ Then again, there was Jennifer Schuyler (12 year crush) and Gretchen Hill (10 year crush) who stole my heart. Gretchen appealed to my love for cartoons by bringing her Snoopy doll—often dressed in a number of different outfits—to school. Her mom, who zipped around town in her gold 280ZX, just happened to be the teacher's aid. I became fond of older women from then on.

⁴ Question: Do gentlemen really prefer blondes? Answer: No. (Some men will fuck anything that moves.) Everybody seemed to go bonkers over Farrah Fawcett and Jacklyn Smith (fine women, indeed), but I was partial to Kate Jackson. This can be likened to my attraction to Mary-Ann from *Gilligan's Island* and Betty Rubble from *The Flintstones*. Can anybody explain why Rosie O'Donnell was cast in the role of Mrs. Rubble for the ill-fated movie adaptation?

⁵ In third grade when I was first introduced to pornography (thanks to an exorbitant, “well-concealed” collection that was discovered between two classroom portables), I had no idea what was the whole point of looking at naked women. There were the likes of *Playboy* playmates Cathy St. George and Shannon Tweed and I just didn't get it. Staying up late for *The Benny Hill Show* provided a few more pieces to the puzzle but failed to resolve anything. All I

knew was that nudity was "taboo," old men enjoy having their bald heads slapped, and that those unexpected erections on my part were still involuntary. Looking back, I can see how such media representations might have given me this bizarre sense that white women were somehow more sexually receptive. Sooyoung Park of Seam, however, noted that, "If you buy into these stereotypes [concerning Asian female sexuality], it would seem Asian women would be more sexually receptive."

⁶ Karl Marx once wrote: "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented." I bet you that most people in America still think that Cleopatra was white.

⁷ Mannequins more often represent white women. Ironically, they are particularly generic representations of humans.

^{7.1} Most disturbing has been the rise of the supermodel, a power position that entails their dubious role in other forms of mass media, especially in music videos and film. Much to my dismay, models like Elle McPherson, Stephanie Seymour, Kathy Ireland, and, by far the worst of the lot, Cindy Crawford have all made the leap to bigger and "brighter" things. At least Robert Altman's employment of fashion models in *Pret a Porter* had a purpose.

⁸ Mary Elizabeth Manstrantonio, Jane March, Julie Delpy, Uma Thurman, Penelope Ann Miller, Jodie Foster, Tracy Nelson, Janine Turner, Bess Armstrong, Mädchen Amick, Nastassja Kinski, Anne Parillaud, and Mia Farrow are much more dreamy.

⁹ When asked why there are overweight death rockers (it didn't make much sense to me), Jason replied: "What better reason is there to be miserable?" Was Martha Dumptruck death rock?

^{9.1} The emaciated cartoon heroine Aeon Flux of MTV's *Aeon Flux* personifies the future death rock look in a tantalizingly scary way. Her physically altered body recalls the old skool body manipulation of Victorian-era corsetry.

¹⁰ I've seen so many of these normal women at the places I've worked, whether it was at FAO Schwarz during Christmas time, stringing along their bratty kids, or the classy Cafe Majestic where it was quite obvious why the gentlemen were paying for dinner. Those were tough jobs, I tell ya.

¹¹ It's interesting to note how the fetishistic component of such mundane items have been perpetuated and encouraged in popular culture, in a way that would suggest that the appeal is undeniably universal.

¹² Long Duck Dong happens to end up with a buffed and dirty blonde bodybuilder, the humor, of course, in the difference in their size; her "masculine" traits balance out his effeminate smallness. As a result, his sexuality is not a threat.

¹³ Japan-bashing still thrives in this day and age. The film *Rising Sun* with Sean Connery and Wesley Snipes highlighted current fears of Japanese business takeover that paralleled white men's fear of miscegenation. The violation of the white woman became symbolic of Japan's "invasion" of the United States' economy. Gotta love that Michael Crichton.

¹⁴ Perhaps it's significant to note that Amy Tan, like many prominent Asian women, is married to a white man. Maybe it isn't. For reasons unknown to me, the white male assholes in the book were replaced by Asian men in the film adaptation.

¹⁵ Wilcox likens Data's status with oppressed African-Americans. (Yet his remarkable intellectual skills and cold demeanor (read: "Asian") coupled with physical strength (read: "African-American") seem to suggest a hybrid, a hybrid that cannot exist in the proposed disjunctive properties of Mind and Body. By embodying two supposed opposites, he is deemed even more freakish, beyond human.-N.) Though his skin color is beyond white, it is the very difference in degrees of whiteness that sets him apart from the predominantly white crew of the Federation, a fact in itself rife with thematic implications. Like African-American slaves who struggled under harsh conditions and treated like animals, Data's existence was stripped of humanity as prescribed by his creators. "In his quest for human nature, Data pursues the image of the unattainable (white) woman" (Wilcox, 274), only to be met with much resistance from humans.

¹⁶ Similarly, after the Allied forces were stunned by the military successes of the "inferior" Japanese enemy, the malleable wartime imagery exaggerated the opponent, transforming them from asexual "lesser men" to "supermen" who raped white women.

Compelled by fear and the preservation of power, Westerners have always found it necessary to distinguish themselves from others. For instance, the race words and war words—apes, lesser men, primitives, children, madmen, and beings who possessed special powers—that riddled Allied representations of the Japanese during World War II were a result of centuries of political jargon that dates back to Aristotle's "time-honored" postulations (Dower, 150). In his first book, *Politics*, Aristotle set forth the idea of the "natural slave," in which it was declared that some men are by nature free and all others to be slaves; a natural slave was not so much a human as he

was a lesser human. By the same token, women and children—and to a lesser extent, criminals, the poor and disposed—were considered slaves, too.

The words and imagery associated with the Japanese were further intensified and reinforced by nineteenth-century Western science, an "academic racism" that borrowed from a diverse range of disciplines such as biological evolution, anatomy, psychology, phrenology, ethnography, social psychology, theology, and linguistics to provide "proof that the traits attributed to nonwhites by Europeans in earlier centuries were indeed inherent characteristics of colored peoples" (Dower, 153). (Adolf Hitler and Friends often cited such empirical "evidence" to support their own racist agenda.) It made little difference whether print media represented the Japanese foe as apes, monkeys, rats, dogs, cockroaches, vermin, lesser men, supermen, or children. What was clearly absent from



American propaganda poster c. World War II

the persistent imagery was the perception that the Japanese could possibly be human like oneself. Words that associated the enemy with animals, "irrational," unpredictable creatures unlike ourselves, were of particular importance in the process of dehumanization that is integral in moral and psychological distancing that facilitates mass killing.

¹⁷ She also adds: "Most rapists are not psychopaths, as we are led to believe by typical media portrayals of men who commit crimes of sexual violence. On the contrary, the overwhelming majority would be considered 'normal' according to prevailing social standards of male normality."

¹⁸ Instead of developing a cure for internal social problems, those in the positions of power are more comfortable dealing with the symptoms—through diversion or displacement—rather than the disease itself. Like the Republicans' "War on Drugs" and San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan's "Matrix" system (a system that has criminalized homeless people for occupying certain public areas), problems are "resolved" by scapegoating, whether it be people of color, the destitute, and / or those considered "freaks" by societal norms.

¹⁹ Had Cleaver included Asians into his hierarchical system, it would've been quite clear that they would fit into the very extremes of the equation. On one end of the spectrum would be the brainy, asexual Submasculine Asian male, whose obvious counterpart would be the exotic-erotic Super Ultra-feminine Asian female. While one might conclude—under the logic of Cleaver's system—that the intellect of the Asian male would make him more attractive to women, what is ultimately lacking is status and prestige, characteristics that the image of the white man possesses.

²⁰ As close to erotic literature as Cleaver gets: "At the nth degree of the Ultra-feminine's scale of psychic lust stands the walking phallus symbol of the Supermasculine Menial. Though she may never have had a sexual encounter with a Supermasculine Menial, she is fully convinced that he can fulfill her physical need. It would be no big thing for him to do since he can handle those Amazons, with his strong body, rippling muscles, his strength and fire, the driving force of his spine, the thrust of his hips and the fiery steel of

his rod. But what wets the Ultra-feminine's juice is that she is allured and tortured by the secret, intuitive knowledge that he, her psychic bridegroom, can blaze through the wall of her ice, plum her psychic depths, test the oil of her soul, melt the iceberg in her brain, touch her inner sanctum, detonate the bomb of her orgasm, and bring her sweet release." (171)

²¹ In what could be seen as some attempt to support that idea, Annabel Chong, 22, broke the world record for the number of sexual partners taken in a day. Surrounded by cameras and onlookers, Chong ended with a final result of 251 in a mere 12 hours, more than doubling the previous record of 120 set by a sex worker in Amsterdam. Her motive? "It's the best way to have lots of sex without commitment," she told *Details*. "These guys don't need to sleep over and they won't be calling me twenty-four hours a day."

²² Tomoyuki also adds: "Slimness is also related to looking young. Asians often look younger than their age."

²³ In defense of black men, Corey Olds article, "Gynotropolis: The Dynamics of 20-Something Interracial Dating," noted: "This uncomplimentary attitude harbored by certain black women is indeed ironic, given the number of black men—like myself—who have been shunned by them...it seems only reasonable that black men pursue those relationships that best suit them. If those involve white women, then so be it."

²⁴ Does anyone know if Thomas Jefferson fucked his slaves? I couldn't swear I heard about this one.

²⁵ I can hardly explain why I am so thoroughly fascinated and aroused by Polly Jean Harvey and Liz Phair. Will somebody please send me that last issue of *I-D* with Ms. Harvey on the cover?

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It's always Marcia! Marcia! Marcia!



MARK KOZELEK

Red House Painters

The first day I heard the Red House Painters was, in fact, an unusually rainy day back in June '93. A copy of their self-titled debut floated into the mailbox and having been filtered through the authoritative ears of my then housemate John Phinney, I was immediately mesmerized by the strength of the music and the songwriting. Singer / songwriter Mark Kozelek's music is like a shoulder to cry on, precisely for those rainy days when you'd rather be wrapped up in warm fuzzy blankets, scribbling words and pictures on fogged window panes with your index finger. Defying convention with their slow, unorthodox stylings and songs that appropriately drift

into the 15-minute range (20 minutes live, with 3-hour shows), the Red House Painters continue to impress and astound.

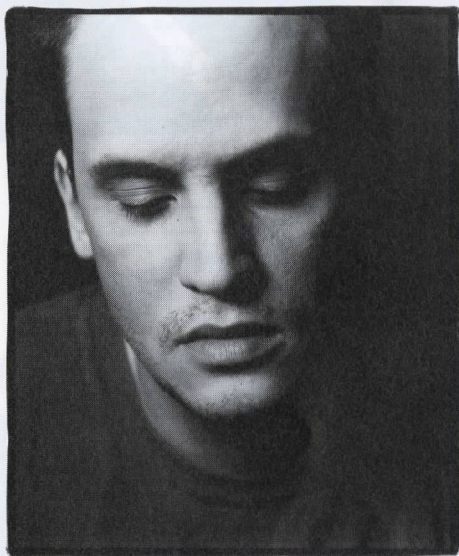
But gawd I felt stupid. Stupid and awful. I don't know what I was thinking. Having just finished my talk with Helium's Mary Timony, I rushed on BART from 16th and Mission on my Fast Pass to Civic Center to catch a bus up Van Ness. I was late for my meeting with Kozelek and Ian Connelly (of Hotwired) for some glazed pastries and coffee. What was so stressful to me hardly seemed to matter, though. As I walked into the obscure donut shop on Polk, I found the two chatting up a little storm in the corner with Ian's recorder

switched on. From there, we headed next door to a quaint tacqueria for some real food.

Ian Connelly: What kind of audiences do you get?

Mark Kozelek: We did a show in Virginia once, someplace out on the beach, and there were nine people there. I felt really out of my element because we got up onstage and there was a big empty dance floor. I invited them to the front because I don't like to play to an empty space. They brought all their seats in and we were basically playing for these moms and dads, you know, really middle America. After the show, they told us they had all our records

"You go to Ohio, and people bag groceries. People just live. They just live. They live to work, to come home, to eat, to get their paycheck... and I don't think that's so bad."



and that we were their favorite band besides Neil Young. We ended up going to their house, going out on their boat, and eating some food with them. I noticed the same thing on this last tour that I did. I think if you would've asked me this question a couple of years ago, I think I just would have said, you know: "It's kids that are really depressed, man—I get letters from kids in hospitals." Which is true, I get letters from sixteen year old kids in hospitals who are all fucked up. I've had people that completely loved my band show up in stonewashed jeans that drove their parents' car to the gig and they seem real trouble-free, stress-free kind of people. I don't think that the music I do just attracts that doom and gloom audience some people have attached to us. The English press has really attached that whole (*imitates pretentious British accent*) "Mark Kozelek is the tortured individual" thing. I think there's a wider audience.

I: I was kind of surprised when we saw you play. It had taken me a while for me to acclimate to [your vocals] on the records because of your inflection and the pattern of the songs. Live, you accented things differently. Do you like to switch things around?

M: It's partly that and it's just partly out of boredom. (*Laughs*.) We're just a kind of band

where we always do things in a different arrangement, it's just more natural for us. I'm not into the whole Eagles thing of "Give people what they want and make everything sound exactly like the record." I'm not into that. Touring's really not fun—there's no adventure for me. I like to have fun a little bit and play around with the arrangements because the whole tour process is just such a repetitive, boring fucking thing. I think people appreciate that too, just somebody going up and being human, rather than making this set list and making sure everything really shines.

I: Are you nervous about playing live?

M: Yeah, really nervous. I mean I used to be really really nervous; I couldn't sleep for two weeks before a show, or I'd be throwing up before or after a show. I am much healthier about all that than I used to be. Now I rarely get sick. Once in a while after an LA gig, maybe, where the record company puts 30 or 40 industry people on the list, all these fuckin'...

I: Did you do that 4AD thing (*All Virgos Are Mad*) last summer?

M: Yeah, I played that fucking stupid 4AD party. Every time I'm down there that place just freaks me out.

Noël: It just makes me wonder, when people do something that becomes part of the public, and it becomes an irritant or something that they're not quite comfortable with, the question becomes to me: Why do something that will be in the public? Why do you think you're doing what you're doing? Do you ever feel confused standing onstage and thinking, "Why am I doing this? What the hell's going on?"

M: Sure, but I was a lot more confused when I was working at the front desk of a hotel down on Lombard street, or playing the back room at the Covered Wagon because we weren't popular. I still have all kinds of things I can

complain about, just like I did when I had to be at work at seven in the morning, but I'd rather be doing what I'm doing now. I'm a chronic complainer. I'm a kind of whiner. I whine and I complain, and that's my way of being, and I'm gonna do it for the rest of my life. It's better to be able to whine and complain when you've got something going on. And I've got a little bit of something going on. I'd rather be bitching about some guy in the audience, who told me to fuck off in the middle of a song, than being at work, with my boss telling me I'm fired.

N: It becomes irritating talking about work.

I: Noel the busboy knows. (*I've quit the restaurant industry for good. I think. -N.*)

M: What's that?

N: Sometimes you just leave, and you think, "What a fucking asshole my boss is." That's gonna get you nowhere.

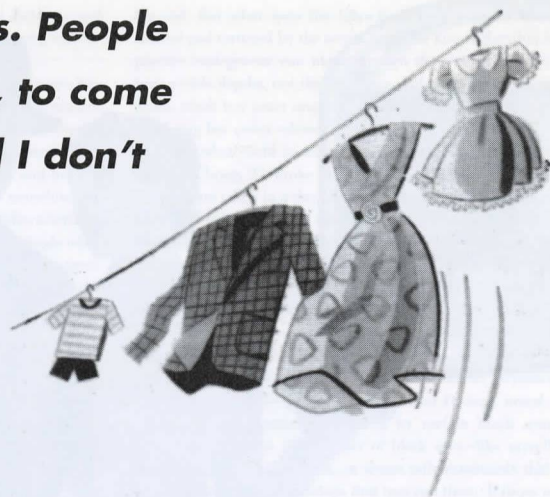
M: I can whine and complain about what I'm doing, but I'd rather be whining about how I'm gonna get a vocal right on the record than, "Oh my God, I forgot to get that person's key when they checked out."

N: I don't know when it started, where the idea developed that people were against anything that started becoming bigger, this whole idea of selling out.

M: There's this big guilt attachment thing to it, it's weird.

N: You can't choose your audience. If a bunch of metalheads started listening to you, are you gonna hate what you're doing, or question it, or are you fine with it?

M: It's a weird thing, I think about that with Pearl Jam. Eddie Vedder has this supposed big guilt about everything that's gone on with them. And I can see that because he's onstage and he's looking out at a bunch of people who probably go to Van Halen concerts. It's like that whole high school rock mentality thing. I



can see it; I can't explain it, and I know you can't choose your audience. But I would hate to look out there and see that Van Halen crowd at my show.

N: There's just a different attitude lately about any kind of ambition towards stardom or making it big.

M: I think that when you do something big, like when I go back to Ohio, my relatives and everybody are like "Red House Painters? What are you doing? I don't get it." I like that controversy. I like that these housewives don't understand what I do, because they go to Kenny G concerts. Just the fact that they don't understand makes me feel like I've got something that's special. I feel like the second that I become that household "emotional person" like Tracy Chapman or Sinéad O'Connor or Eddie Vedder, then it's like, "Oh no." I don't want my fucking cousin who plays football to be into my music, and get pumped up so he can go out and play football listening to my music like they do to Pearl Jam.

N: It's strange, because reality becomes so distorted when you get into the public eye. At the rate things are celebrated these days, pop stars are so disposable. This month you're the next big thing, next month you're the flash in the pan, and the month after that nobody talks about you. Everybody hates you, even your original fans. What the fuck? You just lost touch with the whole world just because of some song you did. I don't know how Eddie Vedder can complain so much unless he's doing music that wouldn't attract this crowd. No offense, but for the Red House Painters to be big seems impossible. If you're a Red House Painters fan, you almost have to have a high tolerance for twelve minute songs. Most songs should only be three, but for some bands it's appropriate.

I: There's also a weird "fan elitism" of people who like certain bands but won't go see them anymore when they get big and start playing shows at the Warfield.

M: But it's like, who wants to go to an REM concert...

I: With 30,000 people, for three nights...

M: With all those people. Who wants to go? Not me.

I: Sit on the lawn, pay thirty bucks, and watch it on a gigantic TV.

N: Just get a poster, look at that, and listen to the record at the same time. They're not gonna look any bigger at the Shoreline Amphitheater. "Hey, is that Michael Stipe?"

(Laughter.)

M: How old are you guys?

Us: 23.

M: Yeah, 18-25, the "person in the making" stage. I grew up in Ohio and moved to Atlanta because I had friends there. I lived in downtown Atlanta for two years. I thought I was really cool. Lived around places that were open all fucking night; people were getting shot and raped on the street. Eventually, you end up coming back to your roots. There was a time I thought Los Angeles was really cool, but now there's nothing like going up to Mendocino, or camping down in Big Sur. But for a while, I was like, "The city, man, that's where I wanna be, the city, because people don't look at you twice." I used to have a mohawk, earring in my nose with a chain to my ear. I was in that "person in the making stage" and I think I probably still am. I think everybody's always in search of their identity, [especially] when you get out of high school.

N: I always hear people talking about Los Angeles versus San Francisco. People think it's so fake down there, but when you get down to it, it's real. That's how people really are down there, or at least how they can be. It's evolved into a total reality: big fake breasts, all the make up. Some people are so alien there. I've never seen people who look anything remotely like that.

I: Do you ever feel nostalgic for the mid-west, living out here?

M: Yeah. When I moved to Atlanta, I cut Ohio down a lot; I became the "big city guy," playing in a punk band, and I'd go back and have no appreciation for any of the people there. The thing that's so amazing to me is that here, or in any [big] city, everybody's something—you guys are journalists, I'm a musician, somebody else is an artist... You go to Ohio, and people bag groceries. People just live. They just live. They live to work, to come home, to eat, to get their paycheck...and I don't think that's so bad. There's not a big competitive thing going on. I could stay [in Ohio] for months. My mom and her friend are drug counselors, and I could sit up all night, talking with my mom and her friend, playing Scrabble. The things that they talk about are so meaningful to them. Simple things; it seems really healthy to me. I don't know if I miss it because I don't know if I ever really liked it when I was there. But now when I go back I have an appreciation for it that maybe I didn't used to have.

I: When I lived there, I felt like things were pretty stoic and confining, and when I came out here, I thought, "Wow, people are doing millions of things." But

now it's kind of comforting to go back and just hang out with people I know and go to places that are real low key. It's probably not particular to the mid-west, though.

N: It's kind of unfortunate that the pace of a big city just runs so fast that people are just jaded by it. They're no longer excited about anything; they just sit at home, being miserable.

I: I had a real creepy time when I came to the city. There's three-quarters of a million people here, and so many things going on at shows and bookstores. Instead I sat in my apartment and didn't talk to anyone.

M: It's sort of overwhelming.

I: It was. I had a hard time approaching people here.

M: The city is a really weird, cold place. You can't go into a place and get a drink of water anywhere. Go to Haight street, go into some place and ask for change for a dollar and see what they say. They look at you like you're from another planet just for asking. That kind of sucks.

N: Some people work to live and that's their whole life: living and consuming whatever. But it gives you another perspective: this is their reality. My realities aren't necessarily "correct."

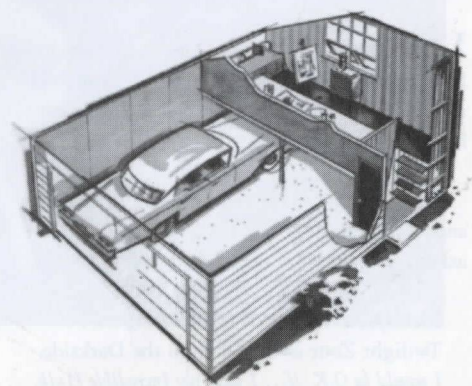
M: I was more like that when I was 20 or 21, cynical of people who worked in restaurants and didn't do anything. But I'm totally over that now.

N: I've been getting over that the last five weeks. I mean, the people I work with are really just good people. I don't have to hang out with them to prove that. They're working hard. They've got their stupid gods just as much as I do.

M: Yeah, I mean not everybody can be a film maker or a rock star....

(Long pause.)

N: Sure they can! (Laughs.) That's what camcorders are for!



On Spontaneous Erections and Frosty the Snowman...

Things began innocently. . .

I was on a beach with my mother and father and my father's best friend Jeffrey Rapp.

Jeffrey took me on his shoulders—piggy back style—and we headed for the ocean. I'd never been in the ocean. I'd only seen it from afar and from the perspective of fish-characters in books and cartoons. But for me, at such a tender young age, when so many experiences were new ones, this ocean was no great epiphany. I was interested in the top of Jeffrey's head, his red curly hair, and the way the sun broke into shards of light when I looked at it.

Just then, Jeffrey hollered "Woe!" And a huge wave toppled us.

I felt no fear.

Only the pull of the undertow.

Mermaids. Darkness.

And finally, a lobster.

Like the lobsters in the tank

at the *Alpha Beta Supermarket*.

My father dried me with a towel. My mom held my hand. "Are you OK?" She asked.

"Yeah," I said, "when I was under I saw a lobster."

It was orange and huge, with black beady eyes.

It was curled up and tumbling with the wave. Just like me.

"No you didn't," said my Dad.

"Yes I did," said I.

"It was just your imagination," said he.

Are you trying to tell me I didn't see what I saw?

Are you telling me to mistrust my eyes?

I lay in my bed. I imagined that clown from *Poltergeist*. Two hours later—at about midnight—after the *hide under the covers* technique failed, I screamed.

My dad came to my room to see his little boy snot-nosed and in a sweat. "What's wrong?" He asked.

I always feel like somebody's watching me. . .

Twilight Zone and Tales from the Darkside.

I would be O.K. if... I were the Incredible Hulk.

I said, "I'm afraid there's a monster in the closet."

He sat on my bed and stroked the hair out of my eyes like a good dad. And then he said, "I don't know why kids always think that dads can protect them from monsters. If a monster was in the house, don't you think it'd get me too?"

Oh now dad, Santa Claus was one thing, but...

When I was six, I played games with Jill, the girl next door. A tall wooden fence separated our lawns. Time and time again, Jill climbed over the fence and came to my lawn. Why? My lawn had a jungle-gym, and my mom didn't get upset when we played *doctor*.

It was fun while it lasted.

But one day Jill unzipped my pants.

And what did she find?

An erection.

This was just one of those random occurrences, like the wind, with no special reason or meaning other than that it was. Nevertheless, Jill screamed, ran and dove over the fence like Bo Duke evading Boss Hogg.

I never saw her again.

What had I done wrong?

When I was seven I asked my dad what sex was.

He explained it to me the best he could.

Of course, he articulated his ideas with a lot of terminology I didn't comprehend—e.g. *vagina*. After his explanation I lay in bed and tried to reconstruct the act based on his description. This is what I came up with:

Sex began at dinner. A few glasses of wine. French rolls. Some butter. Then a little guy who bore a striking resemblance to the Planter's Peanut Man unzipped my dad's pants and climbed onto by dad's leg. Mr. Peanut, a fearless little creature, hopped on over to my mom's leg where he proceeded to climb into her panties.

Hence, me.

The miracle of life.

Popped out like toast before the check arrived.



NOTE: Today I have a much more astute understanding of sex and my creation. My dad, who is actually a medical doctor, eventually explained the process of intercourse to me more accurately. He told me that Mr. Peanut didn't exist. I was disappointed, but that was only the beginning—many more of my fantasies would ultimately end in disillusionment.

This is a confession...

When I was eight I kissed

Michael, my father's first gay lover. It was my first kiss.

Don't worry, I wasn't molested.

In fact, I initiated the kiss.

It was on the lips and it lasted three seconds.

I had seen my dad do it so many times.

I just wanted to know what it was all about.

Of course, I was curious.

After all, my dad divorced my mom for *this*.

They had to get separate houses for *this*.

They had to share *me* for *this*.

It was at a party. Michael stood by himself on the balcony, drinking a beer. I snuck up from behind him, tapped his shoulder, and then I did it. His lips were soft and wet, with a little roughness around the corners.

I ended the kiss. I judged by Michael's expression that he was shocked, and then horrified. He must've had a wise fear of being associated with NAMBLA, and so he speedily headed for the hills, into the crowded living room portion of the party where the walls vibrated with the sounds of the Talking Heads.

He never spoke with me about the kiss.

LOW / LONG DIVISION



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let your dim light shine
the new album from
soul asylum



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COLUMBIA

He never mentioned it to my father.
And neither did I.

NOTE: At the time, the kiss meant little to me. But later I became self-conscious about my sexuality. Homophobia hit me at every turn—I felt it subtly from my mother, from the television, from my peers, and the mirror. When I was ten, I told this *popular* guy named Matt Hunken that my dad was gay, and he called my dad a freak. “Like father, like son,” he said. And that’s what I believed. So I resented my father for being gay. And I became terrified that because I had kissed Michael, I would be gay.

The next thing I knew my Mother decided to pack up our things and move us to Chicago. She was a Chicago native, and she wanted to be around her family. Also, she wanted to get away from my dad, who she resented.

I protested:

*“I hate tall buildings.
I hate the Cubs.
I hate thick pizza.
And what about Al Capone?”*

“You can build snowmen in Chicago,” she told me.

SNOW-MEN! SNOW-MEN! SNOW-MEN! SNOW-MEN! HOORAY!

Frosty the Snowman was all I ever hoped for.
I was sold.

The next summer I went to camp in Northern California. A girl named Josephine Portello rated me a 6.5 out of 10 in a kissing contest when all the other girls rated me a 3, and I fell in love with her. At the camp dance she asked me to dance when the disk-jockey played Paul McCartney’s “No More Lonely Nights”.

Josephine! Ah, sweet life.

Her name was Joey, for short.

She was a tall, red headed beauty.

I was sad when we parted ways, but we promised to keep in touch. She gave me her address in Davis, California, and I gave her my address in Chicago, Illinois.

I was done with camp, but the summer was not over. I had another two weeks with my dad in California before returning to Chicago.

It was a hot, drawn out two weeks.

Mostly, I thought about Joey longingly and read *The Black Stallion* in the back of my dad’s office while I waited for him to get done seeing patients. When I was through with *The Black Stallion* I read *Watership Down*.

Meanwhile, Joey must’ve ached for me because she wrote me a ten page love letter and sent it to me, in Chicago.

My mom, who received the letter, didn’t know I had fallen in love with a girl named Josephine Portello at camp—I wasn’t the type to kiss and tell. All she knew was that I got a letter from a kid named Joey, it was thick, and it reeked of perfume.

My mother decided to call me and read the letter to me over the phone. Unfortunately, when she called, I wasn’t home. So she opened the letter and read it herself.

Snooping through my desk drawer was one thing, but...

“What kind of camp did your father send you to?” Was the first thing she asked when she finally got me on the phone.

“A normal camp,” I told her.

“Then what about this love letter you got from Joey?”

“Josephine,” I told her. “Joey is short for Josephine.”

“Oh,” said she.

It was the worst of times, it was the worst of times...



In fourth grade came great conflict. It began in the cafeteria, over a tray of tater-tots and red Jell-O. A bunch of us guys sat along a rectangle table. We talked about basketball. We talked about how stupid our math teacher was. And we talked about how babies were born.

One of the more keen boys from the group suggested that babies came out of a woman’s belly-button. That seemed reasonable to everyone.

But I knew where babies came out of.

My dad, among other things, delivered babies, and it was not uncommon for me to accompany him to the hospital or to a “home-birth.” It was also not uncommon for the women who were

giving birth to invite me into the delivery room to witness.

“Babies come out of a woman’s vagina,” I told my class-mates.

Of course babies don’t come out of a vagina, one boy argued. Vaginas are tiny. The size of a dime. Vaginas are for pissing. The pee-hole’s the same size as your pee-hole. Do you really think a baby could come out your pee-hole?

“Sometimes they rip,” I told the astonished crowd. “Sometimes the baby’s head is so big that the doctor actually has to cut the woman’s vagina with scissors.”

The crowd went wild. One by one the boys told me I was *full of it, stupid, crazy, completely out of my mind, retarded*, et cetera. So I bet them. I bet every idiot at that table five dollars that babies came out of a vagina, not out of a belly-button. And every one of those boys bet me. I shook all of their hands.

So me and a representative from the opposing opinion approached our science teacher, Mrs. Freeze, who was eating a salami sandwich by herself at a table in the corner. And I asked her, “What does a baby come out of, a belly-button or a vagina?”

Mrs. Freeze froze. The look on her face resembled the one that came over Michael’s face after I’d smooched him. “The belly-button,” she replied.

I couldn’t believe my ears.

Mrs. Freeze stood with her lunch tray in hand. She smiled awkwardly. And then she walked away.

The opposing council’s smirk engulfed me.

And I felt sick at the site of his glory.

Where was my glory? Where was my smirk?

“Pay up!” He demanded.

I’ll never trust a teacher again!

In the bliss of eleven year old blindness, I had accumulated a lot of words which I didn’t know the meaning of, but which I could often be heard shouting. One such word that all of my friends and I acquired in the early 80s was “faggot”.

Back then I used the word like now how I breathe.

But so did everybody.

Then one day, in a fit of puerile rage, I made the mistake and discovery of my life. I called my father’s second gay lover—Tom Steel, Attorney at Law—the word.

“FAGGOT!”

It came out my mouth as every slur did—automatically, without forethought. I only intended to say, “Fuck you.” I only intended to be hurtful. I had no idea what I had said.

Tom and my dad couldn't believe their ears. How could *this* boy say *that* word? Why didn't he know any better? “Apologize now,” cried my maddened dad. “No,” said I.

Then Tom did something for me that I will never forget, something that changed my life forever. He explained to me the history of the word faggot. “Faggot’s an obsolete word for kindling,” he told me. “And the reason gays are called faggots is because people used to burn gays at the stake with kindling.”

Here I was—a little punk with a tail who wore LIFE’S A BEACH shorts and who liked a song by Night Ranger called “Sentimental Street”—with my mouth hanging open in disbelief.

“I’m sorry,” I said, “I didn’t know.”

From that moment forth, I was different.

I was the only one of my friends who knew that faggot was a bad word for a reason. It wasn’t like “fuck” or “dick” or even “cunt”. Faggot was more like nigger. It was the dirtiest of dirty.

When I was in seventh grade

my dad and Tom went to a refugee camp in Honduras to give medical attention to the people there who were taking shelter from the civil war in El Salvador.

My dad and Tom—leftist to the bone—were sympathetic to the refugees because the refugees (men, women and children associated with the popular revolutionary movement) were being oppressed (killed, mutilated, tortured, et cetera) by an unpopular dictator whose war efforts against his own people were being financially sponsored by the Reagan-Bush administration.

My parents—by then I considered Tom a parent (I called him “my step-mom”)—came back from their trip with a slide show and countless audio tape interviews of the refugees.

One man who Tom and my dad interviewed—a farmer who was known to be sympathetic toward the popular “socialist” revolutionaries—described how he was forced to watch his pregnant wife be tied to a tree, be raped by government soldiers and then be cut from vagina to belly in a symbolic abortion of the seeds of socialism. When my dad asked the man why he thought his life had been spared, the man replied, “I guess they were happy enough to poke my eyes out and let me be blind.”

My stomach turned.

That year, I was the only one of my friends to walk in the *Gay Freedom Day Parade* and chant, “No AIDS! No WAR! US out of EL SALVADOR!...”

Let’s make a leap...

In April 1995, I attended the National Lawyers Guild’s annual Testimonial Dinner where they honored my “step-mom” Tom with a lifetime achievement award. There were nearly five hundred people present to honor Tom and to hear speeches from several fabulous Bay Area folks, including SF Supervisor Carole Migden and Civil Rights activist Brian Wilson (not the Beach Boy).

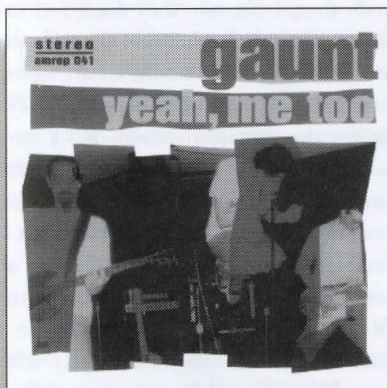
I sat at the table with my girlfriend Gretchen—a beautiful Italian & Irish Catholic—and with her mother, her father and several of my friends. We all got drunk on red table wine and enjoyed the festive atmosphere.

When Gretchen’s mom was sufficiently sprung, she turned to Gretchen and said, “Look at all these people here... If you and Jacob get married, it’s going to have to be a big wedding.”

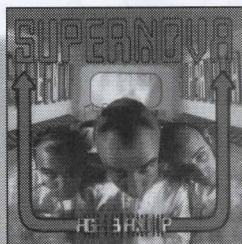
“Marriage?” Gretchen pondered. “Well, we hadn’t considered that as a realistic option yet. Jacob’s father always hoped he’d settle down with a nice Jewish boy.”

Isn’t perversion illuminating? ☺

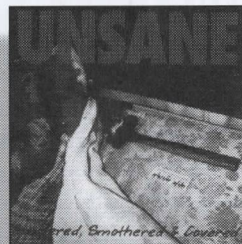
Is it just us, or do you really suck?



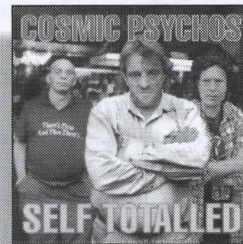
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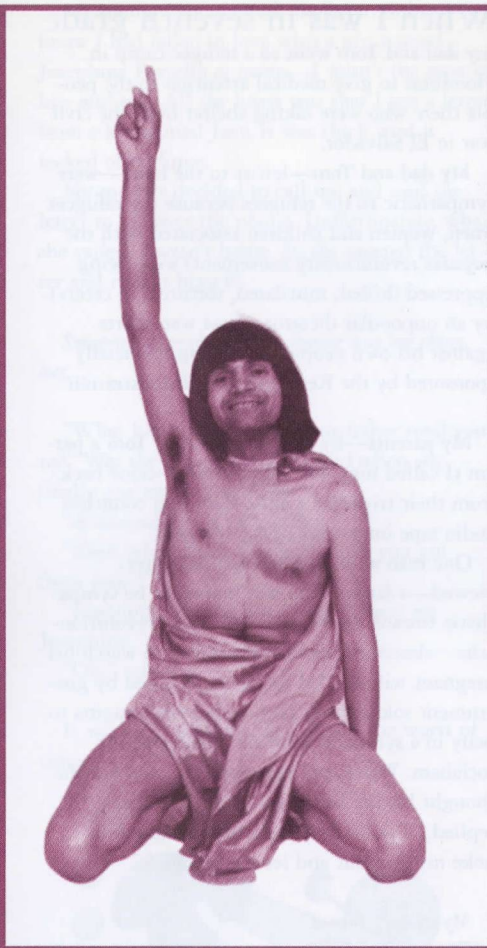
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by
jason yakich



Over the past six years, the Northwest has witnessed the evolution of a suburban thirty-something day-jobber into one of the more colorful cornerstones of Portland's music scene. Roger Nusic, a.k.a. the mysterious Roger T., is something of a would-be pop-cultural guru, fronting his three piece band and tirelessly promoting himself as a sexual/spiritual icon via his homemade cut-and-paste annual calendars and a personal telephone hotline. Nusic's 1993 debut record, *Hello Lovers Roger Nusic is Here For You Only* (Rainforest Records) was named Album of The Year by Fresno State University's radio station and has received much critical acclaim. The immensely likable pop/rock of *Hello Lovers...* documents well the integration of Nusic's two personal manifestations, the horny female-obsessed daydreamer, and his spiritually-guided Christian counterpart. Song themes range from the lusty workplace fantasy of "Can I Come In and See You?" to the reverent testimonial extreme of "Halleluyeah" and converge on tracks such as "She Was" and "I Want You" ("Every second, every minute, every hour, I want you all around the clock... I want you in the afterlife").

My own fascination with the man and

his music began in 1992 when my friend Alissa introduced me to 1) a copy of that year's Nusic Calendar and 2) a 7" single, an unforgettable cover of "Silent Night" backed with a catchy, pseudo-apocalyptic hardcore tune called "Closing Down the Century". The photo of Nusic and band on the cover was the real clincher: Nusic, with flowing page-boy haircut, in a self-styled superhero outfit (complete with a gold lamé cape), balancing a Christmas tree on his head; the smile on the face of the man with the t-shirt proudly spelling his own adopted name in block letters marked a sense of humility rarely seen in the average pop star. We were compelled to call the hotline, greeted with an epic message several minutes long in which Nusic narrated an erotically-charged encounter between himself and a beautiful blonde woman.

Having familiarized myself with more of his music and witnessing the increased sexualization of the Nusic Calendar over the last few years (the latest entry focuses even more ardently on Nusic's crotch than its predecessors), I couldn't pass up the chance to chat with Nusic in person while visiting Portland. The question on my mind was, of course, *Is he serious about all of*

this? After all, my former housemate Wesley, something of a self-made guru himself, had decided after intense contemplation of the song "What is the Name" and the 1994 Nusic Calendar that "this guy is on to something really big..."

Jason: I'd like to start by asking: "Who is Roger Nusic"?

Roger Nusic: What do you mean, "Who is Roger Nusic"?

There's more than one Roger, am I correct?

Yeah. Roger Nusic is a part in a movie that this other person plays. He is played by an actor who is both the writer of the script and the actor at the same time. Therefore, the script can be re-written "on the fly," or as we go.

Could I ask for the name of Roger Nusic's alter ego?

No. We put credits at the end of the movie, but we're still in the movie right now so we couldn't do that. How many times have you watched a movie and then all of a sudden in the middle of the movie they start listing the credits of who's playing who? Never!

Does the actor Roger do anything else for a living?

Yeah, unfortunately. Of course, it's a good thing because otherwise it would be sure death.

What does he do?

He's a computer programmer.

What prompted you to create Roger Nusic?

Well, there's this thing where people don't like to do things, because they don't feel the conditions are right, right? And the only problem with that is that the conditions are never right. I used to be that kind of person, always waiting for the auspicious moment... I thought it would be really cool to make an album or something, but I'd have to have money, I'd have to have this, I'd have to have that. At this particular time I was unemployed, and I'd been going to school too, and I thought, "Well, I'd like to do the music thing," you know? "But I don't have anyone to play with, so I guess I'll just start doing it by myself. Big deal." In the past, I was in bands, and you know, you practice, and you break up, and you get another band. That's what bands all have in common: they're always breaking up.

So you thought that you would seize the moment?

No, I just thought I would *do*, as opposed to *not do*. So I just decided to start playing music by myself because I like being onstage; I like being a performer. Not to say that it's been a great big success story or anything—in the

beginning I was playing open mic things on a Sunday or a Monday. Sometimes, during the afternoons, the staff far outnumbered the clientele.

So I take it that Nusic is the Roger you would like to affirm. If you could somehow become Roger Nusic full-time it would be a good thing?

Well, it would be nice to be doing the music thing full-time. (*Changes subject.*) The way that Roger Nusic came into being was that one time I thought it would be cool to have a band called "Newsic", like "New Music"... I decided I wanted to have a stage name, and I thought "Huh... why don't you call yourself Roger Newsic? It would be shorter than your other name." Then I discovered that I could achieve the same effect in saying N-U-S-I-C rather than N-E-W-S-I-C, which was the original spelling.

Are there a lot of differences between the two Rogers?

Yeah, I would say that Roger Nusic isn't as inhibited as the other Roger. The other Roger can be much more inhibited, whereas Roger Nusic is much less so.

What is your musical background? In terms of instrumentation, song writing, etc.

I've always improvised. Even when I was playing violin, when I was in grade school, I didn't ever like to practice. My parents wanted me to practice, but I knew that they had no idea what I was actually supposed to be practicing... So I used to start practicing, and I'd run off on a tangent, improvising about the piece that I was actually supposed to be playing, in the same style. I was making up these little tunes instead of playing what I was supposed to.

Let's talk a little bit about the religious aspect of your music. Do you consider your music to be "Christian Rock"?

One thing I might say is that now I've kind of changed my image. I'm not really doing the religious stuff [any more]. I still have the belief, but I'm not doing it because I wanted to get a broader audience. I've found that a lot of people object to it, and I want a broader audience. So I'm giving it a shot. (*Mimes a gun with his hand and fires; laughs.*)

My experience has always been that Christian-oriented music, especially rock, is really bad.

I understand what you're saying. What did you think when you heard [my] religious stuff?

I guess I thought about the dualism, about your apparent religious convictions and then your desire to be a sex symbol.

It's kind of funny because everybody that

would write about it would say, "He seems to be pretty mixed-up, he hasn't quite figured it out." And I was always thinking, "How in the heck did you get that idea? How stupid." I'm not confused about anything. Maybe they're confused, but I was never confused. The way I see it is that there are two parts to life.

The body and the soul.

I have my religious beliefs. And none of us would be here unless somebody had desire for somebody else, right? So it would be kind of stupid to assume that, "Well, if they're religious then they couldn't obviously like sex." That would be pretty stupid.

Those two themes encompass the songs of yours that I've heard. Is there any



interaction between the two?

Well, see, at first when I was going to do this, I had thought about doing only religious stuff. Then I thought that if I did that then nobody would want to listen.

There probably wouldn't be much of an audience for that.

And I didn't really want to spend my time playing in churches and stuff like that, even though that's not bad. I wanted to get out there more with the people. So I decided to introduce the other aspect, to have a catch, so that there would be something else in it. I wasn't trying to be an evangelist or anything like that, I was just basically singing about the things that I believe in. I think it's perfectly possible to have two forms of life. As a matter of fact

I've played at some Christian places before and I was always kind of amazed at how they thought that this lust thing was a bad thing. I was always pretty amazed at that because I would take a look at these people and for the most part they were pretty big guys, and they're saying, "I don't think you should do 'I Saw Her Standing There' because it talks about lust," and I'm looking at them, thinking, "You look muscular and you're telling me that you don't want any lusting? You've got to be kidding... I don't believe you."

I take it that you don't identify yourself with the Religious Right.

I think they're coming across more pure than they really are. Maybe I'm wrong, but I don't believe them. I don't believe they're that pious.

You work mostly with younger bands, punk/indie oriented?

That's the thing I've fallen into.

So that wasn't your goal?

Well, originally when I started this thing I didn't know anything about the punk scene. I played at this open-mic place really early on and I was doing my rock thing, shaking my ass, and the guy cut me off. (*Laughs.*) And he said, "I think you should go down to Satyricon (*A club in Portland.*)"; I didn't know what that was. And I thought, "Well, okay, whatever." (*Laughs.*)

Has that circle been accepting of you?

Yeah, kind of. That's the place where I ended up, in the underground scene, and I've been there ever since.

You want to break out of the underground though.

Well, I think it would be nice to get a broader audience, but that doesn't necessarily mean climbing out of the underground. After all, Nirvana got a really broad audience and I wouldn't consider them to have left, even though the purists think that [since] they got a lot of money they couldn't be punk anymore. I think that's a bunch of crap.

Why did you choose to portray yourself as a sex symbol?

It's fun. That's what rock 'n' roll is all about, right? [*Ted Nugent doesn't think so. - Noël*]

Yeah. Well, that's what rock 'n' roll has traditionally been about... Commercial rock has not really changed but some people may be trying to "strip that off" if you pardon the pun.

Really? They're not into the sex thing?

I'm sure that they're into sex, as people, but I don't think that they, meaning the men, go onstage just to pick up girls. Actually, at least unconsciously, they probably think about it.

I know that most of the band members I've

been involved with have all been trying to pick up girls. And they're all much better at it than I am. *(Laughs.)* The guys I went on the tour with, everywhere we went they were picking up on girls.

So a part of the reason you're in this is for "the chicks."

No, I'm not into casual sex. For one thing there's this thing called AIDS. And the thing is that now, from playing around, you don't just get VD, you get death. The thing I say to people is "Would you be willing to put on a condom and have sex with a person you knew had AIDS?" I don't know. Unless they're totally

longer around—suggested to me, "You know Roger, you should probably change your image... you should get into a fashion thing, because nobody else is actually doing that right now." I just thought it would be cool to do a color thing rather than the black thing... most everybody else is into the black thing.

You didn't want to be death rock.

No, I'm not into death. I'm not into that.

What inspired your creation of the various calendars that you put out?

I used to do press releases, a long time ago, and I used to tell people to "mark these dates on your Nusic calendar" as kind of a joke, you

"Anytime you hear people talking about all these signs pointing to the end of the world, you should know they're full of it."

insane, I would say no. And how do you know the person you're going to bed with doesn't have AIDS?

Do you have a significant other right now?

No.

There's no Mrs. Nusic.

(Laughs.) No. I wish. Relationships are hard things to acquire... [Theoretically] I think that desire could be fulfilled by a cloning process, probably... each person would probably be the happiest with a clone of themselves. That's the person you know.

That's why masturbation is in some ways better.

Well yeah. Nobody knows how to get you off better than you do. I have this song called "I'm Home", which is a newly recorded song, and I count it as my cure for AIDS. Meaning that if people would play around with themselves more, as opposed to jumping into bed with everybody that comes along, maybe there wouldn't be any AIDS and we could go back to life as normal.

So why the cape and superhero outfit? (Nusic's costume from a few years ago.)

Well I started wearing the bathing suit thing to accent my hip movements. *(Laughter from both of us.)* Because I was shaking my hips I thought, "It would be nice to have an accent, there's no spotlight, so I could wear the gold bathing suit, because I have this thing at home... it has been sitting in this drawer forever, so why not use that?" Now it's starting to get worn out.

So now you've moved on to the sexy Seventies outfits?

Well, no... Somebody, that happened to be one of the owners of the former X-ray—which is no

know? I thought, "Huh, maybe I should actually give them a Nusic calendar, because it kind of rhymes with *music* calendar."

This new one seems to be a little more revealing than the last ones.

Yeah. *(Laughs.)* See, I can do these things in private, whereas I wouldn't do them in public.

Who takes the photographs?

(Indicating the new calendar.) These pictures here were taken by a friend of mine at work. The other previous calendars' pictures were taken by this guy at my church.

What are some of your longer-term goals in being Roger Nusic?

Well, it would be nice to be successful with it.

Financially successful? In terms of audience, or all of it, the whole shebang?

The whole thing, yeah.

Is your family supportive of your musical endeavors?

Well, in a way, but in a way not.

Care to elaborate on that?

Various members tell me, "Oh, you should settle down, blah, blah, blah," and I think, "Yeah, I could probably stop doing it. Do you remember what I was like before I was doing this, how I was always depressed, how I was griping and complaining, 'Oh, my job, blah blah blah, life, blah blah blah...?' I could do that again, remember how much of a pain I [was]?" *(Laughs.)*

Are you evolving as a live performer?

I hope so.

How big can you imagine your stage act becoming? I can see you onstage with go-go dancers, your band in outrageous costumes, the kids clapping...

Tomorrow I guess we're going to have a couple of dancers. Female dancers.

To close things down, what is "Closing Down the Century" about?

It's about a bunch of things. The biggest thing is about changing from 1900 to 2000, that's the main thing. It's also about the changing of a really major number, 19 to 20. Finally, it's about the human race coming of age, and all the implications that go along with that. Maybe it's about time we grew up, that is, the human race.

Do you have hope for the future?

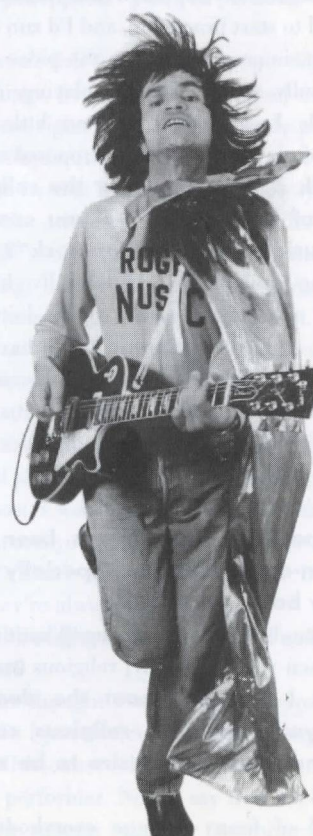
I hope so. But there's also the thing about "We have seven years left to go, will we make it...?" Or will we blow ourselves up? Who knows? One threat dies and another comes up.

It's interesting in the light of all the recent commentary on the various cults around the world that all view the year 2000 as being connected to the world ending.

Why should they think that? Anytime you hear people talking about that, all these signs pointing to the end of the world, you should know they're full of it. Because for anybody that knows what the Bible says, that's where they get all this junk anyhow, the Bible says that nobody knows. So if anyone tells you that [the world is ending], there's one thing that you know: That they don't know. Because nobody knows.

Well, it's been a pleasure being a part of your movie.

It's been a pleasure being a part of *your* movie.



ALL

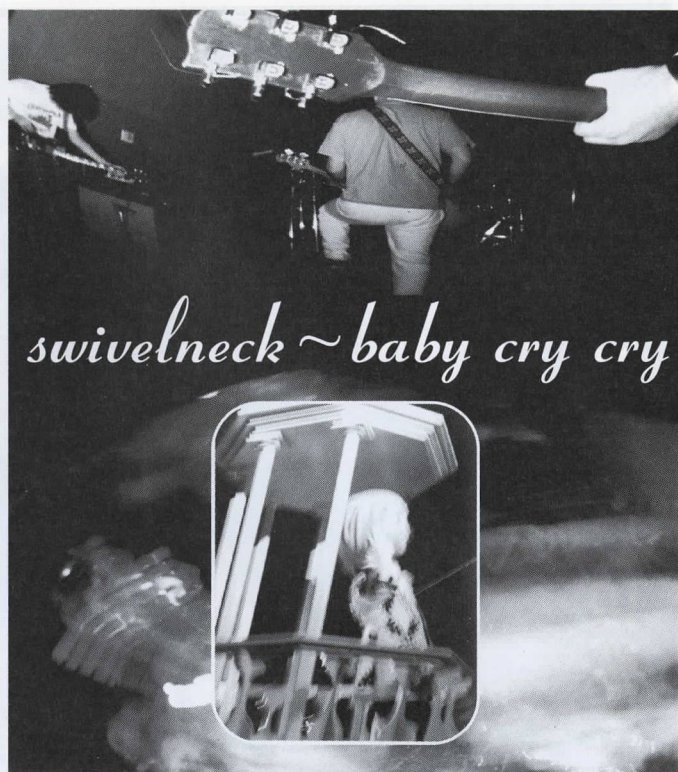
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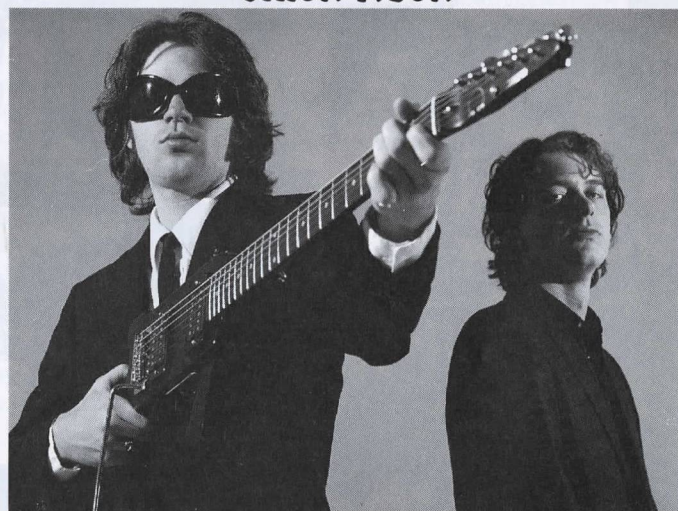
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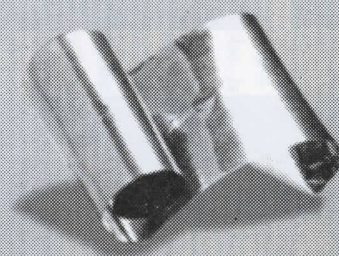
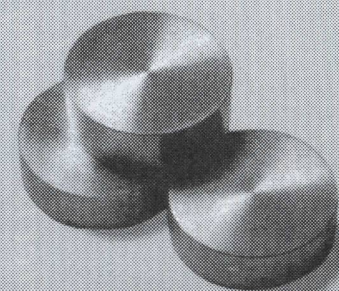


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by Michele Mantynen

Universal Life Church, 601 3rd St., Modesto, CA 95351

There is no food that says "Gawd Bless Amerika" more than that gelatinous pink pork loaf, Spam. Now you can bring Spamishness into your life without ever having to eat the stuff. Hormel Foods has a dandy little free catalog of Spam clothing (worn by folks who look like they were plucked out of the canning factory and forced to model). The classic dark blue and gold SPAM t-shirt is nice, but the \$109 Spam warm-up suit is only for the more hardcore Spammmites. Get your boyfriend Spam boxer shorts for that "Hey baby, my meat ain't canned" look. You need Spam slicers so your Spammwiches are always symmetrical. For the athletes: Spam golf balls, balsa gliders and basketball backboards. There's even a Spam museum in Minnesota. Come on gang, road trip! (Dr. Science once said that "SPAM" stood for "Scientifically Produced Animal Mucous"...) Call toll-free to order your Spamalog: 1-800-LUV-SPAM. Wonderful Spam, lovely Spam...

Man oh man—this has got to be seen to be believed. Order this catalog so that you too may goggle in amazement at the frightening spectacle of Ted Nugent and the Bowhunters Against Drugs. This is for hunters, Nuge fans, and people who like scary clothing items, such as the snakeskin patterned "I Kill It, I Grill It!" apron, or the "Lil' Whacker" baseball cap for the kiddies. Ted's a dude with a mission: he's the newest member of the Board of Directors of the NRA, and he HATES the "anti-hunt, anit-gun, anti-fur, anti-meat crazies out there...", whom he claims have "a long history of drug and/or alcohol abuse, a city life willfully disassociated from nature and the land, and a pathetic 'Bambi' fantasy curse on real flesh and blood living creatures." If you saw *TV Nation's* interview with him, your mind will be boggled even further by the Nuge's hardcore, he-man posturing. ***Ted Nugent World Bowhunters***, 4133 W. Michigan Ave., Jackson, MI 49202 or call 1-800-343-HUNT.

For every *Citizen Kane* there are a thousand Z-grade films like *Kitten with a Whip* or *Hercules Unchained*. No one, but no one can make fun of bad movies like the cast of *MST3K*. The newsletter is *free*, daddy-o. Sure, they try to sell you a few products, but so what? There are many hilarious, smart-ass articles like the one making fun of *Tek Wars* ("Joot awoke and,



Why review a corporate newsletter? Because The Gap is, in my opinion, the epitome of ubiquitous corporate evil popping up like toxic mushrooms over night in every neighborhood in America. I'll bet that every one of you reading this has either worked for The Gap or knows someone who does. Want to know how the Gap thinks of their customers? As consumers of "units"—the newsletter has hundreds of examples of worthy employees urging hapless buyers to accessorize, color coordinate, and build a whole Gap wardrobe in one insanely expensive buying spree. The issue I read also had a depressing story about Gap stores in historical buildings, including one built over a Native American burial ground. Har har, aren't they just the wackiest? This from the corporation that sold strings of Love Beads™ during the early 90s, erased the cigarettes from the photos of movie stars in their "So-and-so wore khakis" ads, and threw a \$2,000 a plate fundraising dinner for California's Republican Governor, Pete Wilson. You won't be able to read this newsletter unless you swipe it from a Gap worker. Aren't you glad I did?

A macro is any phrase, usually culled from pop culture, that one says to one's gang of friends to evoke laughter. TV commercials are always good for macros: "But wait—there's more!", "You got peanut butter in my chocolate!", and "Is it soup yet?" are some you might recognize. Macros also come from newscasts, movies, Saturday Night Live sketches, toys, and just plain goofy things one overhears. Now there's a free zine that collects funny macros and gives definitions and easy usage guides. Issue 3 featured an article on fractured English from Japanese products and an 1883 Portuguese-English guide. ("I have pricked him enough. But I can't to make march him!") Send a SASE to **Macros, c/o X Magazine, Box 1077, Royal Oak, MI 46068-1077**.

Newsletters You Might Dig. (Info courtesy *The Whole Pop Catalog*). This represents a cross-section of American culture, from TV to beer to monster trucks. I didn't receive any of these in time for review, but go ahead and send these folks a SASE for more info.

The Candy Bar Gazebo (for chocolate bar eaters and collectors) 6 Edge St., Ipswich, MA 10938, **The Optimistic Pezzimist** (for Pez collectors) c/o Mike Robertson, PO Box 606, Dripping Springs, TX 78620, **The Cast Iron Seat Collectors Society** c/o Charlotte Traxler, RFD 2 Box 40, Le Center, MN 56057, **The Diner Club** (for lovers of American diners) DADA/Counter Culture, 2730 Monroe-Concord Rd., Troy, OH 45373, **The Etch a Sketch Club**, Ohio Art Co., One Toy Street, Bryan, OH 43506, **American Spoon Collectors** 4922 State Line, Westwood Hills, KS 66205, **National Assoc. of Miniature Enthusiasts** PO Box 1178, Brea, CA 92622, **Just for Openers** (for collectors of bottle openers) 6126 McPherson, St. Louis, MO 63112, **American Business Card Collectors** PO Box 46029, Aurora, CO 80046-0297, **Paperweight Collectors Assoc.** (Snowglobes!) 150 Fulton Ave., PO Box 468, Garden City Park, NY 11040, **The Coca Cola Clan** c/o A. Fisher, 2084 Continental Drive NE, Atlanta, GA 30345, **Beer Can Collectors of America**, 747 Merus Court, Fenton, MO 63026-2092

Joe Bob's Mail Bag (For connoisseurs of drive-in movies. This guy is fun—neel) PO Box 2002, Dallas, TX 75221, **Xeroxage** (for copy-machine artists) Xeroxical Endarchy Ltd., 1341 Williamson St., Madison, WI 53703, **Romantic Times** (for romance novel readers) 55 Bergen St., Brooklyn, NY 11201, **Classic TV** 2980 College Ave., Ste. 2, Box 25, Berkeley, CA 94705, **Reruns Magazine** (for lovers of old TV shows) PO Box 832, Santa Monica, CA 90406-0832, **Monster Truck Spectacular**, c/o Starlog Communications, 475 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10016

SATELLITE NEWS

HOLIDAY '94 FORMERLY THE DRUGS POLYMER VOL. 6,2

First Ever ConventiCon Expo-Licious!!

The first ever devoted solely to the latest polymer news and information, the First Ever ConventiCon, is coming to the First Ever Holiday '94. Based on a survey, this is a first for the industry. The event will be a one-day affair and will feature a wide range of speakers and exhibits that will be sure to keep you up to date on the latest in polymer science and technology.

The ConventiCon will be presented in conjunction with the Holiday '94 and will be held at the same time and place as the Holiday '94. The event will be held at the Holiday '94 Convention Center, which is located in the heart of the city. The event will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 16, 1994. The event will be held at the Holiday '94 Convention Center, which is located in the heart of the city.

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about new trends. They also attend and participate in the various exhibits and seminars that are held during the event.

With a focus on the latest in polymer science and technology, the event will be a one-day affair and will feature a wide range of speakers and exhibits that will be sure to keep you up to date on the latest in polymer science and technology.

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THE NEWS

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INSIDE...

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
by Rev. John J. Shanley page 10-12

LETTER OF THOUGHT
by Rev. John J. Shanley page 13

LEFT BEHIND
by Rev. John J. Shanley page 14

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT ELIC
by Rev. John J. Shanley page 14

IN THE LIGHT OF BIRING
by Rev. John J. Shanley page 17

EARTH CENTRED CHRISTIANITY
by Richard C. Cline page 18

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CATALOG

1985-1996

Record Reviews

Hello all you dreamboats and fancy-pants! Welcome to another healthy roundup of reviews for your bathroom reading pleasure. We advise you to refrain from wiping the smooth chamois of your sprightly bum with this section since fine independent publications ("fanzines," the kids will say!) such as this will surely go up in value! At any rate, we would like to extend a friendly reminder or two. Make no mistake, not everything we receive is reviewed. Our policy is quite simple: **If we like it, we'll scribble some mumbo jumbo.** The following do not guarantee reviews: 1) putting *Bunnyhop* on your mailing list, 2) rubbing shoulders with the Man, or 3) sending pillow cases of Halloween candy stolen from little weaklings. Probably the only way to really curry our favor is by sending a hundred thousand dollars this way every two years so Noël won't have to get desperation jobs all the time. Otherwise, our opinions aren't for sale, tough guy. We accept unsolicited materials and encourage anyone to send in their stuff. Send everything and anything for review at your own risk. Thank you!

For what it's worth, here's a list of other good stuff we couldn't fit in: **Gastr del Sol** *Mirror Repair* EP (Drag City) and *The Harp Factory on Lake Street* (Table of the Elements), **Palace Songs** *Hope* EP / **Palace** "West Palm Beach" single (Drag City), **Pavement** *Wowee Zowie* (Matador), **Sam Cooke** *The Rhythm and the Blues* (RCA re-issue), **Jessamine** *Jessamine* (Kranky), **Al Green** *I'm Still In Love With You* (Hi Records re-issue on green vinyl), **Liz Phair** *Juvenalia* EP (Matador), **Six Finger Satellite** *Severe Exposure* (Sub Pop), **Red Hot + Bothered #1 and #2** (Kinetic/Reprise), **18th Dye** *Tribute to a Bus* (Matador), **Steel Pole Bath Tub** "Tragedy Ecstasy Doom and So On" double 7" (Genius), **PJ Harvey** *To Bring You My Love* (Island), **Red House Painters** *Ocean Beach* (4AD), **The History of Space Age Pop, Volumes 1-3** (RCA), **Doo Rag** *Chunked and Muddled* (Bloat), **Joy Division** *Permanent* (Qwest/Warner), **The Durutti Column** *Sex and Death* (Factory Too), **Barry Black** *Barry Black* (Alias), **Means To An End: A Tribute to Ally Division** (Virgin), Superdrag "HHT / Nothing Good Is Real" 7" (Darla), **The Matthew Shipp Duo w/ William Parker** "Summertime" 7" (Yakuza), **The Muffs** *Blonder and Blonder* (Reprise), **Peechees** "Scented Gum" 7" (Lookout), **Esquivel** *Cabaret Manana* (RCA), **Bugskull** *Senseitions and Phantasies* (Road Cone), **Chavez** *Gone Glimmering* (Matador), **June of 44** *Engine Takes To The Water* (Quarterstick), **Butterglory** *Downed* (Merge), **Tortoise** (Thrill Jockey).



Bardo Pond

Bufo alvarius, amen 29:15
Warpy, swimming in sugary water. Sick with necessary repetition, Bardo is some way out distorto fuzz fest that wants to be yr friend. Not unlike going to hell but taking the safe suburban side streets all the way down. There's something dark 'n' thick bubbling under each "song", but it's not totally ominous. Y'know, like *The X-Files* or something; weird and unsettling at first, but soon enough yr drawn in and hooked. Bardo's music is more like that ol' tongue in the cold sore theory; it hurts, sorta, but it's not half-bad either, and you keep doing it over and over again. (I honestly can't stop playing this disc. Somebody help me! It's crept into my psyche like an addiction. I'm missing work and everything.) Sleepy junkie riffs surround girl/guy "can't sing, but here goes" vocals that just drip and drain over like melted cheese or a Vicodin hangover. Wavering grt/vox distortion and some damn good drugs. Pine Sol? Windex? These guys have collectively birthed some bad blue baby that caressingly throttles you while it fingers yr mind. The damn near 30 minute closer (which is also the title track) is true unrelenting horror. Some weird sermon that just won't end. Agonizingly brilliant. Once you listen to this record, you'll insist on listening to only warped records for the rest of yr life. I swear it. Fuck fashion, let's get high. Fuck gettin' high, let's fuck. Fuck all that, let's transcend, man. — *Sara Bellum* (Drunken Fish Records, 8600 W. Olympic Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035)

Bedhead

4-song CD-EP
Back in 1993 when Dallas, Texas, natives Bedhead released their debut album *What Fun Life Was*, it went largely unnoticed despite the fact that it was one of the year's most gorgeous recordings. With much attention paid to subtlety and volume live as well as recorded, Bedhead have been successful in creating a body of work that builds from layers of lulling, dreamy folktinged pop to loud, invigorating epiphanies with crashing cymbals and broken strings. The four songs here tone down some of the levels that previous releases were known for, all recorded live in one take with one microphone to an analog 2-track master (without sounding lo-fi), mumbled words sailing over sweet, slightly saddening music. They also do a fine cover of Joy Division's "Disorder" as a closer. Bedhead ruled in their live set at SXSW, too. (Trance Syndicate)

Boredoms

Chocolate Synthesizer
As Japan's most beloved travelling freakshow, it's no wonder why the Boredoms still have the ability to confuse the living shit out of unsuspecting fools and foolettes worldwide. Almost 15 years and going, tapping in on some heretofore unnamed power source (word has it that most of them are, much to my surprise, completely straight-edge), the Bores once again indulge in ritualistic potato gun and Silly Putty food fights, leaving a big mess for mom and dad, and giggling the whole time. While a number of acts have

embraced this brand of noise and gibberish—an insane mix of rock, blues, funk, jazz, automobile accidents, intergalactic shrieks, and everything else—no one can do it quite like these kids. In what they call the "sound that connects primitive age to future" (the end of the world as a result of people dying from uncontrollable laughter, perhaps?), *Chocolate Synthesizer* more than leap frogs over their last effort in its sheer magnitude and immense sound, multiple-personalities, ids and superegos expressing themselves simultaneously in some outrageously bizarre attempt to garner some potentially unhealthy reaction from their listeners. One of the most amazing shows I've seen, the night I saw them in LA with the Polar Goldie Cats and Three Day Stubble, was the only time I've been stricken with a stomach cramp and felt physically spent *without* moving from my spot. Now if I only had a Bose Sound Cannon™ hooked up to my stereo so I could get even with my stupid fucking meathead jock neighbors upstairs... (Reprise)

Boss Hog

Boss Hog
Thank your lucky stars, kids, 'cuz after a miserable 2 year absence from the wonderful world of recorded musical mudfights, New York City's Boss Hog returns with this spit-shined new baby ripe for all-night barbecues and weenie roasts! As usual, the true king and queen of rock 'n' roll (that would be Jon Spencer and Cristina Martinez, okay?) are up to no good, dousing the house (and the stupid gazebo, too) with gallons of smelly gasoline and carelessly play with a book of Bimbo's matches whether you like it or not. Taking their balls out, wham bam fuck you, ma'am approach to the next level and a local hi-fi near you, Boss Hog dips their little piggies in a soulful secret recipe, fattening their scummy boozy blues groove with a new R&B dance move or two. Blazing through a myriad of styles—from the bass heavy good-time Zeppelin stomp of "Beehive" to the sexy cover of Ike Turner's "I Idolize You", the reckless abandon and third degree rugburns of "Ski Bunny" to the 70s blaxploitation wiggle of "White Sand"—these 15 short ditties explode with exhilarating aplomb. (And if Eliso says it's good for playing video games, that must mean something!) So bust out the old tube tops, hip huggers, big hair, and bouncy boobs, lady friends, and hop in your parents' old popsicle-orange Camaro with this fucker cranked high! You'll be dry humping in no time! Note: Condoms, dental dams and Handy Wipes™ not included. (DGC)

Bowery Electric

Bowery Electric
New on the Kranky label. Yep, you know

what that means. We are once again graced with a dose of unsettling, ethereal pop damage. We're just not worthy. Mr. Kranky has an ear for what's right and beautiful about music these days, not just what yer s'posed to like cuz it's indie. This group be from New York (Get it, Bowery electric? Think about it for a second.) and are purveyors of sparse, fuzzed-out psychedelia a la Spacemen 3, Verve, etc. Soaringly repetitious but not annoying. The guitars drone endlessly whilst the bass is left in charge of the melodies as well as the rhythm. A slow-motion nod to the 60s but not a throwback, the music methodically and purposefully spirals towards oblivion. The female vocals are nuttin' special, just a part of it all except in some real spacey moments when the words are chanted with heavy distortion so they end up sounding like a child speaking in an echo chamber, thrilled with the dissonant sound of their own voice. There's some chiming despondency that reminds one of Slowdive or some 4AD venture, but really the LP is dominated by a subtle, creeping grooviness that's ultimately greater than its various points of reference. — *Sara Bellum* (Kranky)

Glenn Branca

Symphony No. 9 (L'Ve Future)
For nearly two decades now, Glenn Branca

has been losing much sleep composing a body of work that would make most any spokesperson of the indie-rock™ cognoscenti feel like the proverbial idiot. Abandoning the noise-ridden din that earmarked his past work with detuned guitar ensembles—which included the likes of Thurston Moore, Page Hamilton and Lee Ranaldo—Branca has since plunged into the “conventional” world of classical music with his uniquely unorthodox vision. His orchestral compositions have been consistently haunting and unnerving, creating intensely riveting atmospheres drenched in tension and deep-seated fears, well suited for theatrical backdrops that would leave audiences on the edge of their seats. Undaunted by the pressures of the miserable music industry—whose main concern of cracking the *Billboard* charts or heavy rotation on MTV's “Buzz Clips” leaves little to be desired—Branca continues to astonish his listeners with his 47-minute opus “Symphony No. 9,” which daringly traipses through unknown wastelands of the imagination, startling both in its vivid content and minimalism. “Freeform” balances the slowness of the previous with its frenetic character, though not necessarily more upbeat or optimistic. Showing little sign of slowing down, Branca clearly has clearly arrived in the company of greatness. (Point Records)

Franklin Bruno

A Bedroom Community

I saw Franklin Bruno live a couple times up there wailing away like some prog-pop George Casanza. Bruno takes what he learned from the Go-Betweens, those New Zealand bands, Jonathan Richman, and so on and makes great smart-guy pop of his own. He really applies himself on this one. Restraining-order love songs and laments of all sorts are powered by skilled guitarman-ship. This is every bit as good as Nothing Painted Blue, his pop band. “The Death of Vaudeville”, the last song, is kind of a rare moment in music. Treat yourself to it. — *Glenn Donaldson* (Simple Machines)

Bunnygrunt

Actionpants

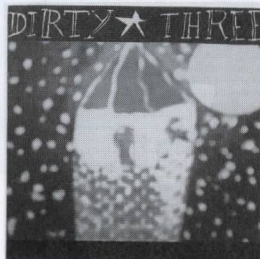
Jason, my co-worker, says this album is even sappier than Billy Bragg. I say I'm a sucker for sap. This album is just too damn cute for me to not like it. The songs don't make tons of sense (with titles like “Transportation Pants” and “I am Curious Partridge” I don't know what I was expecting) but they are honestly fun. There's truly something to be said for music that just doesn't try really hard to be serious; remember fun, kids? I heard this album on a scary bike ride to the BART station (I nearly had an encounter with Dr. Death, boys and girls, and wouldn't be here today if that damn bag had gotten caught in the wheel when the car almost swerved into me) and it kept a smile on my face the whole time. Of course, it probably isn't smart to listen to headphones while bike riding but that's not the point. Bunnygrunt is melodic, poppy, and very sweet—the kind of middleground music that won't give you a headache and won't make you depressed and lethargic. It's music to be completely flighty to and maybe even a little dreamy. Don't plan on diving into it—it's not that deep, and remember what the lifeguard said about the shallow end—but do plan on being tickled rather pink. — *Leah Reich* (No Life Records, 7209 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90046)

Country Teasers

Country Teasers

Crypt is a man's man's man record label. Tits 'n' beer, I say. No, tits and whiskey. Yeah, hard, hard as nails. I spit and grab to adjust my nuts and I realize begrudgingly, geez, I don't have any. I'm one of them other kind; a woman. Maybe so, but this disc rips anyway. I've gotta give it the old thumbs up despite the 98% misogynistic lyrics and ass backwards barnyard attitudes. Sure, the words are truly over the top idiocy penned, no doubt, by some hapless pinhead dick who ain't but had a real girl only once (almost twice but she ran faster 'n he could) but hey, a tune's a tune an' humor's what it is, and this here's some good shit, in a countrified Birthday Party meets Waylon sorta way. Sometimes they come across like a “woe is me” oompa band. Yep. I almost feel guilty for enjoying this, knowing my bra burning sisters would not approve, but it's a

low down 'n' dirty pleasure I must indulge in. It's actually pretty funny when the lyrics aren't so stupid. Example: “Oh nurse in your little blue skirt / you dropped your purse / why don't you bend over / pick it up - go ahead / I won't look.” Hyuck hyuck! And, of course, the hit, “Anytime, cowboy”, words that roll off the lips of us girls all the time, mmm, of course. These puds are Scottish of all things, which just thickens the puddin'. Who knew they could get that late night truck stop twang with a psychopathic glisten without ever having gone to a real rodeo. — *Sara Bellum* (Crypt)



Dirty Three

Dirty Three

Sadly, no words that a half-wit like me can come up with will ever do any justice to this recording / band. No vain attempts at frilly language du jour or even maniacal wit can really conjure the shy power that this Australian three piece emits. Not *really*. I have taken the liberty, however, of inventing a new musical genre for you masses, lo, so ye can presumably and properly walnut any like sounding artists, past and future, into the same shell: “Classical punk rock lounge music”. Hey, yr welcome... course I realize this is a moronically simplified means of musical analysis, but that was for the labelers, classifiers, capricorns, and review skimmers, in a nutshell (har). It is a fairly accurate description of the kind of music the Dirty Three make as an unlikely triage of guitar, drums and lead violin. Music with a “drinkin' alone” kinda feel to it. They are an instrumental group for the most part, excepting the abstract n' rambling beer soaked rants from the enigmatic front man / violinist Warren Ellis that characterize their live shows. In fact, it is the unique and personal element of having seen them live that tends to detract from this recording. Don't get me wrong, this disc is awesome in its own right and a major cut above yr typical critics “A” list fodder, but there's something about recording this band, in general, that doesn't seem right. It's a little too safe, maybe. The CD does nicely when ya can't go see a show, but in the live set you see this pissed poor sod, pouring his innermosts 'n' deep darkies out, geez, almost to the point of embarrassment. No human should lie this open, not in front of an indie rock crowd anyway, and these are just the intros to the songs. It gets deeper, but it becomes a different language. There's a strange beauty in weakness and sorrow, just as there's the accepted love of strength. Just ask Lou Barlow. When the two become twisted together, it's confusing and creates a whole



Boredoms



The Geraldine Fibbers

new aesthetic. During the performance, Warren spits, kicks over amps, throws things and (mostly) his body on the floor, in the crowd, and into the songs. These guys sweat, y'know, cuz they give a fuck which is rare indeed. This is the best makeout record of '95, no doubt, but it also doubles as yet another way of saying Punk rock is alive and necessarily unwell. This business of being alive is brought into a new dim light when you listen to these guys. Things that didn't matter, they do now, even in spite of the nagging sadness that tugs at yr hand and pulls you to yr knees for a good cry. It's not defeat, it's just life and "everything's fucked" but here we are anyways. — Sara Bellum (Touch and Go, re-issue)

Ed Hall

La La Land

Austin, Texas, has been notorious for giving birth to some of the more memorably burly sounds of the past 15 years and Ed Hall is no exception. Don't be confused, there is no one in the band named Ed Hall, just three hooligans who paint themselves in day-glo colors and pound out their fine selection of huge tunes in blacklights. In the fine tradition of the bastardized Sabbath noodlings of early Butthole Surfers and Flipper (whom they lovingly pen a song for), this trio drips heavy with a molasses thick goo of retarded psychedelic fuck 'n' roll. *La La Land* is bleeding with driving, menacing, sometimes danceable, and unexpectedly funny tunes sans the "Hey Ma, look at me!" antics of that annoying slew of white-boy funk thrash bands that littered the land awhile back. Aside from the big bomp of the politically quirky "Pollution" that spins a yarn about McDonald's in Budapest to the groovy doom laden mayhem of "Huge Giant Omen", the unpredictable collective imagination of Ed Hall still manages to sneak in cheesey chunks of other "oddities," whether that entails appropriate movie samples or an acoustic instrumental like "Music for Couches" that some granola chewing new ager might feel comfortable with.

Obnoxiously freaky good-time loopiness for those days when punching holes in the wall just won't cut it. (Trance Syndicate)

Flowchart

Multi-Personality Tabletop Vacation

Creamsicles, party favors, birthday candles, and perilous sweets float in the air amongst the tufts of fluffy soft clouds, flip-flop rotating in a slow-motion dance toward the outer reaches of the friendly skies for all the giggly angels to indulge in. Do the hokey pokey? Musical chairs? Twister? Pin the tail on the donkey? Why of course, you silly goose! Come celebrate and have some cake. (Carrot Top Records, 2348 N. Lincoln Ave., 3rd Floor, Chicago, IL 60614)



Flying Saucer Attack

Further

From the covers to the titles to the music itself, Flying Saucer Attack couldn't have picked a better name to crown themselves with. There is a definite sense of urgency in the wailing waves of guitar feedback that this duo employs, not unlike the roar of an ominous fleet of multi-colored UFOs screaming at supersonic speeds through thick walls of charcoal gray fog over the open sea. This third full-length smokes from start to finish, from the unbridled sounds of imminent nuclear destruction to soothing lush waterfall sculptures cascading into fuzzed-out aural bliss. Their bare-bones minimal approach, mixing acoustic guitars with extensive washes of hypnotically ambient feedback, harnesses moments of timeless beauty, piecing different elements from the likes of My Bloody Valentine, Spacemen 3 to

Victoriantland-era Cocteau Twins. Prepare to sink yourself into a hammock and stare aimlessly into the heavens with a glass of water at your side and a gentle breeze to tickle your bare toes. Definitely *not* for keg party playlists or future football anthems, thank God. (Drag City)

The For Carnation

Fight Songs EP

From the get-go, a disturbingly cold feeling of isolation sets in as our weary hero seeks truth from the darker side of town. Half past sunset, pages from yesterday's news litter the streets, float in the air, and curl around bare, calloused feet as his belly moans and grumbles from lack of everything. Words—at times inaudible over already slow-motion hushed tones—escape his lips: "crack-heads, assassins, burn victims, millionaires sons." We understand all too well. But unexpectedly, things are all whirlwind and light, frantic even. Landing on both feet, he discovers sparkling angels hovering above. A peaceful sense of purpose clears his muddled head, keeps his chin up for once. A slight breeze bathes him in glorious cherry blossom confetti; it is then that he recognizes the difference between being alone and being lonely. "Measure each step, look straight ahead, don't forget to breathe." (Matador)

The Geraldine Fibbers

Lost Somewhere Between the Earth and My Home

The Fibbers are of a select few who inhabit a special place in my heart, making it melt and go a flutter every time I hear them play their sad and winsome tunes. Fronted by the ever charismatic Carla Bozulich (formerly of Ethyl Meatplow), the Fibbers play passionate, emotionally intense, loud—sometimes abrasive—rock with a pinch of honeysuckle country-folk lovin' for balance and good measure. Songs of lost-and-found love and heartache build and balloon, only to be struck by heat lightning and rumbling thunder, crashing with a drunken stupor, finding you on the bar room floor the next morning with a stinging bloodied lip, unexpectedly piqued by the warm salty taste of life's red syrup. Walking forward on shattered glass and cactii pricks, bruised but intact, through the thick and thin of haywire Hell, the Fibbers' music is coiled tightly like a rattled rattlesnake, springing forth from calming countrified ditties to raucous ruminations. When Carla explodes, "I'm stopping everything, making fun of myself / drinking lipstick, tipping bookshelves / ripping up words that I thought were important / maybe that'll blow the window open" on "Dragon Lady", you can't help but feel like ducking from the pistol-smoked bullets of this gunslinger. Fortunately for lost souls everywhere, *Lost Somewhere*... dusts off some gems of their earlier, more strictly countryish days along with an overflowing box of new, highly potent material that could stop a ravenous herd of gila monsters in their tracks. (And for the record, I don't think

Carla's smokey-voice sounds like a guy at all, Wendy.) My baby blows a kiss. Note: You must see the Fibbers live. Three minutes into the first show I saw and I was SOLD, and that rarely fucking happens. (Virgin)

GodheadSilo

Elephantitus of the Night

There's nothing pretty about these guys, like that pleasantly sickening feeling that your being swallowed alive by an amorphous blob. The first time I saw GodheadSilo, I noticed that a bunch of meathead jocks in front of me were particularly displeased with the bludgeoning thunder. It was then that I knew that these goofy kids (yeah, they've got a sense of humor) were doing *something* right. GodheadSilo is just bass and drums, but judging by the magnitude of their patented Steamroller Sound™, you'd think the world was about to collapse in some blackhole. The CD has nine songs, my friend: Four new winners, four from the acclaimed *Three Friendship Village*, and one from the *Stars Kill Rock* compilation. Must be something in the New Balance shoes and PK Rippers. (Kill Rock Stars)

Helium

The Dirt of Luck

With each repeated spin of Helium's latest offering, I'm convinced that Mary Timony will go down in history as one of the brightest musician / songwriters the world may never know. Her knack for unconventional guitar-driven pop songs are achingly beautiful without resorting to tired, clichéd structures, coupled with seductive vocals that flirt from sultry sexy whispers to floating deadpan lazy mumblings and obsessively thematic, feminist lyrics that are neither folksy or grrrrr. Lyrically, the dark world inside Timony's head is disquieting, frightening, confrontational, alluring, and dirty, an uncompromising dissection of sexual / gender politics that reveal most everything you didn't want to hear for fear of unease. It's difficult to *not* be moved by this music. The recent inclusion of musical genius Ash Bowie (Polvo) has significantly added to a fuller, more realized sound which earlier recordings had only hinted at. From the disturbing Middle Eastern rumblings of the infectious pop of "Superball" to the dissonant magical My Bloody Valentine-like noisescapes on "Baby's Underground" (with its very appropriate use of a xylophone of all things), the dreamy slide guitars on "Honeycomb" to the confident drive of "Pat's Trick", it is quite clear that Helium's become an act worthy of your full and undivided attention. Gorgeous. (Matador)

The Hi-Fives

Welcome to My Mind

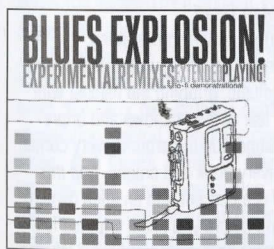
We sing thee praises, O glorious Hi-Fives! Everyone's been talking lately, and the world is out—go see the Hi-Fives. There's plenty of reason to talk about them, too. They are nothing short of fantastic, and their infectious, frolicking, rollicking, good-time spirit

is gonna make you shake your moneymaker, no doubt about it. This very album did not leave the turntable for about two weeks when I first got it. This is the band which the now defunct Ne'er-Do-Wells became, and the sound is very similar but far more together. The Hi-Fives combine straight-laced, suit-and-tie style with a loveable sound that will undoubtedly plaster a huge smile on your face. To get their sound, take a handful of surf, a generous pinch of old-style pop (a la Herman's Hermits, the Hollies, etc.), a dash of punk, and a few surprise sounds, throw it all in the blender and turn on the fastest level. Don't put the lid on, either, you want this stuff all over the kitchen. They give you romance, they give you nonsense, they give you an ode to the illustrious Queers, and they do it with lines like "Meat pie, meat pie, and more knockwursts." How can you go wrong? There's no way to describe this group further without kissing any more butt, so find out for yourselves. The next time they play your in your neighborhood, GO. Leave your heart at the door, though, or these wonderful boys may just steal it right away. — Leah Reich (Lookout)

Hot Monkey

Lion

For all you Grifters fans, this is Scott Taylor's 4-track workings, recorded between '85-'89. A bit more lo-fi than even the Grifters, though it does have an early version of "Arizona" that's interesting. A lot of the songs sound more like sketches and not quite realized to the full potential of the Grifters' genius. Varied stuff ranging from the 60s mod-blues of "Baby Love On Me" to *Hootenanny*-era Replacements on "Nothin at All" to even Swell Maps style mood on "Blue Moon" and "X-Ray Spex". Although unpolished, definitely worth checking out. — Steve Smith (Personal Favorite, P.O. Box 841, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163)



Jon Spencer Blues Explosion

Experimental Remixes EP

Homiez fucked up and got da 8-ball rollin'. (Matador)

Kids Soundtrack

Perhaps the most startling and riveting film in a decade, Larry Clark's *Kids* is a violently cursory tale about a day in the life of sexually active teenage skatepunk boys and the girls they get mixed up with. Set to the dismal backdrop of New York City life, the film is excessive without being explicit or exploitive, psychologically disturbing by cleverly being implicit, and devoid of the squeaky clean gloss of typical Hollywood

hogwash; this movie burns with many of the issues that teens are faced with today. Ironically, because it was released domestically as an unrated film, the people the movie is addressing won't be able to see it, though we could all learn a thing or two from this, regardless of age. The accompanying soundtrack is solid, free from any label pressure to produce a radio-friendly hit to justify its existence. (The actual film, however, boasts a lot more hip hop than the soundtrack.) This is perhaps due to Lou Barlow and John Davis' involvement in composing music for the film, most of which is performed by either the Folk Implosion or Deluxx Folk Implosion. (Note: The music is everything but folk, okay?) Daniel Johnston contributes two songs about Casper the Friendly Ghost, Lo-Down indulges us with hardcore hip-hop, Sebadoh gives us another winner, and Slint's classically ominous epic "Good Morning Captain" appropriately closes the soundtrack, even though it was never in the film. Sweet. (London/Polygram)

Labradford

A Stable Reference

The sophomore release for this stoically named three piece on the Kranky label. Hmmm... Not exactly followers of fashion, these guys are low key all around. Just atmosphere and insides here. Slow, brooding, and real sore. Pain and stuff, dragged out of some dark encrusted hole and spread all over the walls like butter. It's like clawing for the light in a waking dream. The half whispered, monotone vocal doesn't even try to sing. The words seep out almost like afterthoughts; dry musings where maybe no vocal was intended at all; it just happened. It all folds into the slight mix and adds to the preciousness of this record. The somber weight of the overall mood coupled with the steadily rising crescendo of the Pink Floydish keyboards render the offering murky yet strangely uplifting, ultimately majestic in its naked sparseness. This music means everything, for and by the lonely, ugly nobodies who'll rule the world some day, or should anyway. — Sara Bellum (Kranky)

Laika

Silver Apples of the Moon

The (amicable?) departure of Margaret Fiedler and Guy Fixsen from Moonshake left me saddened if not only for a split second. As one of the only truly original and intriguing acts to wash up on these shores from the so-called "British Invasion" as of late, Moonshake went beyond conventional trappings, skinny-dipping in the murky depths of highly acidic pools that left others looking like scaredy-cats. Laika (the better half of Moonshake) is the "new" development and their debut full-length *Silver Apples*... finds our bathing beauties in similar waters with Fiedler—lavishing us with her subtle, but sultry, phone sex vocals ("Coming Down Glass")—exploring her ambient tendencies that earlier efforts often alluded to. Backed by a new set of talented friends, most notably Rob Ellis of old PJ Harvey, Laika

pushes the musical envelope over the top, successfully swirling the best elements of ambient, jazz, hip-hop, ethnic, and avant-garde noise without sinking into hybridized absurdity. Hypnotically bouncy and frenetic, with a barrage of sights and sounds colliding into each other like charged atoms blasted in particle accelerators, these eleven songs go just about anywhere you can imagine. Live, they are equally captivating with a large sound that rattles your ribcage and engulfs you in a pleasantly spooky warmth. Too fucking cool. (American/Too Pure)

Love 666

American Revolution

The bastard child of the Jesus & Mary Chain, T. Rex, and AC/DC has got an AK-47 strapped over his shoulder and is ready for combat. "Know your enemy" they remind you as the fuzz crunch boom kicks in, rockin' good music with lazy, understated vocals that sail over songs praising MDMA and the joy of torching the White House. Although a nice follow-up to the "XTC" single, you get the sinking feeling that the songs sound suspiciously the same, which is fine recorded but a bit much for a live performance, further mutilated by superfluous noise wanks. Wake up and smell the napalm, kiddo, and get some donuts while you're out there. There's a party to be had before the world crumbles. (Amphetamine Reptile)

Low

Long Division

On their second album, Low weaves a hazy, shimmering dreamscape with frozen lakes and snow-capped trees out of the bare minimum of instrumentation. Much like Codeine, Low's sound draws strength when sounds are removed and tempo is slowed to a crawl—allowing silence and empty space to be the dominant instrument. However, Low tempers their spare sound with rich vocal harmonizing between the husband and wife duo of Alan and Mimi—giving the music an intimacy that brings back memories of the Cowboy Junkies' earlier days. The net result sounds like a good compromise between *The White Birch* and *The Trinity Sessions*—making the perfect companion for curling up under a nice soft down comforter on a cold, still winter night. — Seth (Vernon Yard Recordings)

Mr. T Experience

Everyone's Entitled to Their Own Opinion

The only thing wrong with this album is the grammatical error in the title. Other than that, it's pure punk fun (think the Ramones and the Queers and maybe even Screaming Weasel but don't think too hard). A reissue of their first album, *Everyone's Entitled*... cranks out 14 fast songs in just over 30 minutes. This is the kind of music that enables you to clean the bathroom in record time while dancing around and singing along at the top of your lungs (at least, that's what it made me do). For those who are already MTX fans, you definitely want this

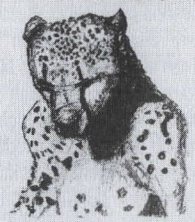
album. For those of you who still don't have a clue who they are, there's just no excuse. MTX, in its many stages of existence, has turned out consistently catchy, enjoyable, silly punk rock with tons of great lyrics. You won't catch them expounding lengthily on the many traumas of Our Great Nation but you will hear about crazy antics and sad teenage-esque problems. Even better, there's a song about Danny Partridge. Add MTX to your list of reliables and get this album to remind yourself about how much fun they are. And even if you don't dig the music, you'll totally love the photo of Mr. T. — Leah Reich (Lookout)

The Oblivians

Soul Food

Bubbling from the same fuck 'n' burn meltdown rockabilly blues punk that has made the Cramps, the Stooges, and the Blues Explosion heartthrobs among neurotically crippled white-girl junkie groupies, the Oblivians leap forwards (and backwards) with raw blasts of liquored strip joint energy on this here chunk of plastic. *Soul Food* is a collection of hard to find cuts from various seven-inchers plus 8 previously unreleased spankfeats that are destined to find you, as Matt Groening once wrote (see "How to Be a Feisty Rock Critic"), with your eyes shut tightly, biting your lower lip, and nodding your head rhythmically. Amped-out filthy dimestore guitar fuzz set to retardedly fun beats of burden are haphazardly fronted by maniacal squawks and yelps by any and all of the three band members. With covers that range from Lightnin' Hopkins' "Viet Nam War Blues" to Dave Clark's "Anyway You Want It," this fucker burns with enough kick to fuel those spontaneous road trips you're itching for. (Crypt Records)

VIVA LAST BLUES



Palace Music

Viva Last Blues

Now that Jerry has spiked his way to Heaven, Will Oldham can fill our hearts and soothe the pain of loss. Mark Williams says the music on this sounds like the Allman Brothers in junior high. We all agreed that this was a great compliment. Palace plays very high quality music. In fact, I haven't heard anything by Palace that I didn't like a whole bunch. Smart-guy country-folk that even real hicks might enjoy, let's listen together. — Glenn Donaldson (Drag City)

Pere Ubu

Raygun Suitcase

Fucked up retardo rock via space-synth bleeps and quarks with epileptic / spastic vocals similar to crying with too much jerky

in your mouth. This 20 year old Ohio band's new release harkens back to the sound of their first couple records, *The Modern Dance* and *Dub Housing*. This stuff's good, walking the line as Pere Ubu always has of being too arty for their own good and writing unusual, fucked up quirky songs. On a few occasions they slip and things get just too silly, with Zappa crap-like lyrical inflections that are annoying, but this is rare and 98% of the record is reflective of what Pere Ubu do best. A great release from a very inventive band. — *Steve Smith* (Tim/Kerr Records)

Rachel's *Handwriting*

Rachel's *Handwriting* is unequivocally one of the most moving albums in a long, long time. Recorded between 1991 to 1994, *Handwriting* is a collection of masterful work, a truly inspirational labor of love gathering a wealth of talent from the incestuous Chicago / Louisville scenes (Rodan, Cocktails, Gastr del Sol, etc.) to the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, and host of others from who knows where. What is unique about Rachel's is that they've discovered the perfect intersection between experimental contemporary music and the classical: retaining a familiar structured format with enough flexibility and imagination to transcend those limitations with a sound that's unmistakably modern. This is a particularly potent mixture that previous "groups" such as This Mortal Coil could only dream of. The haunting hum of cellos and violins immaculately layered over the ring of vibraphones and Rachel Grimes' (whom the ensemble is *not* named after) stunningly timeless piano playing ("Frida Kahlo") add up to nothing less than Heaven itself, not necessarily the one draped in fluffy whites or dipped in pearlescent paint, either. Pieces like "M. Daguerre" displays the ease in which Rachel's can creep from a jazzy, late-night slink to stark moods, riddled with uncertainty and haze while "Full On Night" shifts back and forth from musical noodlings and realized movements, eventually drifting off into spaces reminiscent of Gastr's *Crook Crakt* or *Fly*. Absolutely gorgeous and sinfully breathtaking, and I only say that about certain desserts. I haven't even gone into describing the packaging yet. In the meantime, go look for the vinyl. (QuarterStick)

Red Aunts

#1 Chicken

If bad ass Marcia Clark were tattooed and younger and Nancy Sinatra was really in dire need for a new pair of boots, they'd definitely be prime candidates for the Red Aunts. Epitaph's coolest fargin' iceholes dish out the dope shit on this no-holds barred grudge match with El Diablo himself and— with that patented, swift upper-cut of theirs—win with the greatest of ease. Hailing from Snoop Doggy Dog's hood, these dreamy ladies (actually, Angel and Cougar are the heartbreakers here) spit-

shine the lackluster world of weak punk rock with their tantalizing take on noise-ridden drag race thunder, 100% pure, fucked-up dumb, lean, and blood-red raw. "Freakathon" kicks in the walls like unwarranted visits from the Kool-Aid™ man, spilling his artificially-sweetened juice all over the freshly vacuumed mustard gold shag carpeting, and the action doesn't even end there, tough guy. Weighing in under 23 minutes, from winners like "Roller derby Queen" to "Poor Ole Netty" to the title track itself, rampant with piercing shrieks that smack you in the face, these 14 songs whip their fanboys into shape like the pussies they are. And that doesn't even come close to explaining why Angel's disturbing onstage convulsions are so sexy. (Epitaph)



RE/Search: Incredibly Strange Music, Volume 2

The professional people at RE/Search have been amazingly thorough with each and every theme that they've dove into, whether it be body manipulation or their *Angry Women* series. As an accompaniment to their second installment of *Incredibly Strange Music*, RE/Search has put together this odd and amusingly absurd assortment of old music that otherwise never got the attention they so rightfully "deserved." Skokian's "Hot Butter" slobbers on the Hawaii Punch charm while Bob McFadden & Dor's "The Mummy" honks and squeaks with pathetic glee, guaranteed to find you reeling in laughter. A number of tunes jiggle with that unmistakable lounge sound, from Russ Garcia & His Orchestra's "Delicado" to Jean Jacques Perrey's "Gossipo Perpetuo" to Harry Breuer's "Bumble Bee Bolero". The snippet "Introduction" from Del Close & John Brent's *How To Speak Hip* invites the listener to hop on the bus and learn how to speak "Hip" as a very honky man says, "This is a new departure in language instruction for English-speaking people who want to talk and be understood by jazz musicians, hipsters, beatniks, juvenile delinquents, and the criminal fringe." Then of course there's Ken Nordine's unforgettable, excessively dramatic liberal rants about different colors. But perhaps the scariest bit, aside from Les Baxter's disturbing piece entitled "Terror", is by Marcy, a puppet, who revels in God's glory on "Join the Gospel Express". Essential since all the albums these were stolen from are not only hard to find but have surely gone up in value. (Asphodel, P.O. Box 51, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113-0051)



Rachel's

Rex

Rex

Imagine sleep-drunk mornings, sitting in rocking chairs, calloused elbows perched on dusty window sills while gazing hopelessly into the infinity of desert sunrise horizons. New York's Rex, with their stripped down approach to music making that drifts into the gray areas between Palace Brothers, early Sebadoh, and Codeine, have a way of making you feel like you're out in the middle of nowhere, all woozy drowsy. Curtis Harvey's resigned vocal stylings rest comfortably over slide guitars that creep in and out while Kristen McCord's cello sweep dustbunnies under the rug. Drummer Doug Scharin (Codeine, June of '44) keeps everything in check with his immaculate sense of timing and slightly odd arrangements. The one song that sticks out like a sore thumb is "This Is a Recording", devilish in a way that the Jesus Lizard would approve of. Restless and lazy, painfully clear but sometimes wrapped in fog, it's difficult to tell if Rex's music is going to lead you anywhere. On that note, you just fail to care anymore, allowing it take you wherever it pleases. (Southern Records, P.O. Box 25529, Chicago, IL 60625)

Sandycoates

Noones + Marbles

Beautiful acoustic guitar and wonderful lyrics. Greg Moore is one intelligent guy, believe you me, and his music doesn't let you forget it. Often accompanied by his brother, Tom, or by other talented locals (including Becky the fantastic violinist, Byron, Chad, Corina, and Pete), Greg spins gorgeous melodies with his uncluttered sound. His songs are often sweet, often sad, and always leave you filled with longing—a longing which makes you want to hear more. See him live and not only will you sway softly to his music, you'll fall in love with the most incredible dimples on the continent. — *Leah Reich* (Filter Records, P.O. Box 4948, Berkeley, CA 94704)

The Sea and Cake

The Biz

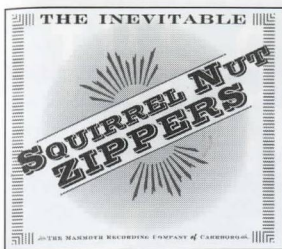
This prolific foursome from the Windy City take an unflinching approach to pop music and avant-jazz unpredictability that is

refreshingly *now*, not unlike the ecstatic burst of minty flavor from a new pack of Freshen Up™ gum. With a star-studded lineup that showcases the bottomless well of talent of Sam Prekop (ex-Shrimpboat), John McEntire (Gastr del Sol, Tortoise), Archer Prewitt (Cocktails), and Eric Claridge (ex-Shrimpboat), these guys lock onto repetitively pleasant grooves that most others haven't even considered (try "Escort" on for size). Appropriately smooth production reigns king on this third album in a year (!) that finds our fine-feathered friends blending luscious moods, quirky noise blips, and hip-swaying tempos that have made them absolutely crushworthy by the standards of today's teenage girls. From the warm guitar stylings of Aztec Camera's bossanova days to the rich R&B bounce of Talking Heads in their Huggies™; dollops of feel-good Feelies brand pop and a pinch of sadness from Prekop's relaxed vocals, the Sea and Cake's uniquely magical mix manages to make the most out of an almost non-existent musical form, finding them in a classy class all their own. Highly recommended. (Thrill Jockey)

Steven R. Smith

Log the Man Dead

When the right movie comes along, this is going to be the perfect soundtrack. Riveting incidental music, gripping the listener with an uneasy fear of the unknown and unpredictable, danger lurking around every corner, tucked in every nook and cranny. *Log the Man Dead* is a descent into an alien dementia unfolding before you like a crippled festering sight for sore, blood-red eyes. Written and performed entirely by the one and only Steven R. Smith, who's also the drummer for Algerhiss, cult heroes famous for opening up on the ill-fated Kraftwerk / Motorhead tour of East Germany and Czechoslovakia in 1979. (The tour was canceled after 4 dates due to disagreements on who would headline the much anticipated show in Prague.) Meticulously weaving Nick Cave's late-night mood swings, Sebadoh's starker, drearier instrumental moments, and Gastr del Sol's repetitive minimalism, this startling 4-track recording is not to be missed. Impressive. (For a copy of this cassette-only gem, send \$3.00 ppd. to Autopia, 139 Central Ave., San Francisco, CA 94117)



Squirrel Nut Zippers

The Inevitable

Squirrels stockpile their nuts in anticipation of winter. And to hold us over through this era of shoddy musicianship and unfeeling MTV slick over-produced pap, the Squirrel Nut Zippers have unearthed a ziplocked time-capsule of Swing Era music. You may well ask yourself, "How did those Squirrel Nut Zippers find the key to happiness and a rip-roaring goodtime?" Well, the Squirrel Nut Zippers went to the original, to the birthplace of American music and shook the Swing and Dixieland tree for all it was worth. *The Inevitable* is a sizable windfall, a treasure-trove of sound that remains as fresh and tasty today as it did when Billie Holiday and Fats Waller stomped the world into submission. This album proves that a dapper toe-tapping flapper-happy fella can still get all spruced up and paint the town ruby red. You don't have to get all decked out to listen to this music. But listening to this music is like a stroll down the Ave with a million bucks in your pocket, a martini in your hand and your sweetheart on your arm. This swanky swing and spunky Dixieland deluge was good enough for granddad, and dagnabbit, it sure is good enough for the likes of young whippersnappers like you. — Sean Bokenkamp (Mammoth)

Steel Pole Bath Tub

Scars From Falling Down

The mighty noisemaking troika of Steel Pole Bath Tub finally moved on to "major label" status and released their first full-length LP in some time, and you know what that means. The festivities kick off with "The 500 Club," following in the grand tradition of Steel Pole tunes that carry half-drunken confusion and desperation behind a furious onslaught of noise. And there's plenty of other winners here, as well: "The Conversation" starts out with an ominously spare arrangement, then reaches a blinding crescendo that's reminiscent of Black Sabbath riding a 10-ton steamroller through deserted city streets at 3 a.m. Interestingly, there's a sharp decrease in the number of samples used—probably the one concession to being on a major label—though the song "Four Barrels" utilizes some original tape recordings with chilling results. Yep, these three normal-looking boys still know how to make a big noise, and you can purchase it at the local shopping mall or Walmart. — Seth (Slash / London)

Stereolab

Refried Ectoplasm (Switched On Volume 2)

Now that my malnourished ears have finally been satiated by the effervescent, radioactive

sounds of Stereolab, I couldn't have been a happier, fatter cat. A veritable 13 course, spoon-fed meal starting where Can, the Velvet Underground, Esquivel, and Neu left off, Stereolab's *Refried Ectoplasm* is pop music at its finest, closing that gap between Heaven and Hell where all things glitter and float as only other-worldly creatures do, but with a lingering sense that things just might burst at the seams and explode with devilish, sweet release. The mesmerizing, spaced-out sounds of Moogs and farfisas drone with fabulous results while sumptuous vocal harmonies (*Laetitia and Mary are absolute goddesses!*) and insistent beats collide and melt into pools of sticky sweet coffee milkshakes. This outing is a delightful collection of all those rare singles and compilation tracks that have been teasing the masses for some time now, all deliciously wrapped in one fine package. It's all French to me, but who cares, this is one of the best presents I've received all year and words just fail to do this number any justice. Tune in or tune out, indeed. (Drag City) (Also check out the re-issues of *Pengl* and *The Groop Played Space-Age Bachelor Pad Music* on American/Too Pure or you'll be sorry.)

Tarnation

Gentle Creatures

Tarnation populates the Western ghost towns of the imagination with *Gentle Creatures*. Lullabies and lovesongs litter the dusty vacant lots where, long ago, homes were built and lives were lived. Tarnation's songs are simple and the elements are wound tightly around themselves like the rusty spring of an old music box. The worlds evoked in *Gentle Creatures* are captured in the daguerreotype of an old family album. Paula Frazer's voice soothes out the old scars left over from shattered love affairs. Filling you with the strength to go on, and yet leaving you with a dry ache in your throat that you just can't seem to swallow or wash away with whiskey. This album has the aged feeling of a broken china doll left out in the rain. A sun-bleached fragile beauty that stays with you long after the Victrola stops spinning, the wind dies down, and the music stops. — Sean Bokenkamp (4AD)

Teengenerate

Get Action!

Darlings of the boiling Japanese punk/noise scene, Tokyo's Teengenerate is one bad-ass throwback to the garage-punk trash of the 60s, revved up ditties for ugly old muscle cars with meticulously airbrushed flames on the hood. After an almost endless string of 7" singles and EPs, Fink, Fifi, Sammy, and Shoe finally got their shit together for this 19-song debut scorcher (the vinyl has two more songs than the CD). This one's driven by surprisingly pop-oriented tunes, however monolithic they may be, with enough abrasive, lo-fi punches to the kidneys to distinguish it from the multitude of radio-friendly music that's being passed off as "pop-punk." I can barely decipher a word or two from all the drunken party racket, but who fucking

cares? Buckle your seat belts, take another drag, and hide the open containers, asshole. (Crypt Records)

That Dog.

Totally Crushed Out

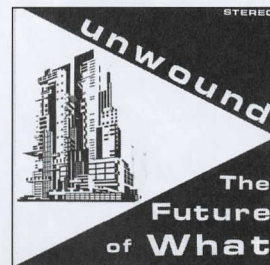
So has your significant other dumped you? Or are you still completely insignificant and unknown? Should you eat candy bars until you glut your gloomies and sate your prickly stickly need for warm fuzzies? Or should you listen to *Totally Crushed Out* instead? Why not try both? First gaze dejectedly at the sad girl on the cover. Sigh. Put the CD on loud, then fill the CD case with a bar of chocolate. Let That Dog's three-piece harmonies wash over you, caramel gooey and creamy center. You're so distracted that you forget to unwrap the candy bar. You bite down into the chocolate, Anna's guitar blasts in, the tin foil hits your fillings, distortion and feedback, then the harmonies swoop back in and gush over your still throbbing nerve endings. That Dog's first album was a slumber party of sound. It was like staying up late and getting all hopped up on Pixie Stix and Pez. But the dress-up games and treasure-hunts through Mom's make-up and dresser drawers sometimes produced mixed results. Even though I was a skeptic at first, there was an underlying tension and potential in their music; the hope that the elements they were dallying with, the musical Pop Rocks and Diet Coke, would be unleashed in that perfect explosive combo. On *Totally Crushed Out*, That Dog. not only flirts with that flammable mixture, they get drunk and take full advantage of it. They have expanded their musical vocabulary (Spelling counts!) and the guy-trouble stories, lip gloss dress-up, and crushy heartbreaks are delivered more effectively. Anna's guitar playing has filled out and matured from sounding like the elastic of a training bra being snapped against tender skin, to the needles and pins white noise that explodes in your head upon discovering your first period smeared inside your gym shorts. It is still raw, but sounds more driven and urgent. For her accompaniments, Petra has hucked her old violin bow and instead uses razor blades and shards of broken crystal unicorns to squeeze, strangle, and cajole haunting notes out of her violin strings. These songs have the impact of a yellow frilly Mack truck, bedecked with birthday streamers and sparklers, crashing through your ribcage. Sweet and hard like rock-candy. Their heavenly voices draw you in, and in the end, leave you totally crushed out. — Sean Bokenkamp (DGC)

30 Amp Fuse

Wind-Up

This trio of Tennessee's favorite full-bore pop rock all-stars (singer/guitarist Mike Smithers plus Superdrag members John Davis and Don Coffey Jr.) don't mess around on the mound: they just bring the high, hard heat like J.R. Richard did, but at least they ditched those ugly late 70s Astros uniforms, thank God. These 12 songs don't include too many change-ups or curveballs, but they do get the

ball over the plate every time at right around 100 MPH on the Juggs gun, and any coach will tell you that you should never let a batter beat you on anything less than your best pitch. The 30 Amp Fuse sound calls to mind some of the big belters from Minneapolis (and I don't mean Harmon Killebrew), recalling both the controlled pop poetry of early Replacements and Hüsker Dü-styled runaway freight-train energy and feedback—a combination that might just win this tenant sometime real soon. Here's the wind-up, and the pitch... *strike three called!* — Seth (Darla Records).



Unwound

The Future Of What

Call me crazy, but I drive 30 miles each way between work and home. The only good way to pass the time while sitting in traffic and getting frustrated at your fellow drivers' cluelessness is to listen to some tapes that are loud and driving (no pun intended), yet varied enough to keep you from slipping into cruise control. Hence, Unwound's latest effort, *The Future Of What*, has spent a lot of time in my tape deck as of late. Pop in the tape as you get onto 280 southbound at 6th Street, and you're greeted with the grinding, dissonant blast of "New Energy" as you floor it through deserted stretches of freeway near Potrero Hill; shift gears through "Demolished" with its herky-jerk tempo changes as you get stuck behind an 18-wheeler on the two-lane skyway, then jam the gas again as you pass him on the right. Now you're on 101 Southbound, sitting in the inevitable traffic snarl near Candlestick (fuck that "3Com" shit), wallowing through with "Natural Disasters." Later, as you get near your destination, you find three of the best tracks on the album. "Here Come The Dogs", built around a badly inverted and over-amped surf guitar riff, hurdles you through the carpool lane without any passengers—putting yourself in serious jeopardy of a \$250 fine from Officer Eggo Law. The funereal feedback of "Disappoint" rumbles ominously as you glance at the wreckage from a 5 car pileup on the other side of the freeway and curse all those rubberneckers slowing down in front of you. Finally, the soaring, crashing crescendo of "Swan" propels you to your final exit, its ringing feedback conclusion echoing the lingering numbness you feel from sitting in the same position for too long. I doubt this Olympia, WA trio commutes very far to work, but maybe they ought to give it a try. — Seth (Kill Rock Stars)

Blonde Redhead "10 ft high"/"Valentine"
Two Japanese women coupled with Italian (?) twin brothers. The first side was just fine, but "Valentine" felt like a cute lil' baby spitting up Gerber's apple sauce on the floor, with a menacing smile on her face, of course. It's that good. (Smells Like Records, P.O. Box 6179, Hoboken, NJ 07030)

The Champs

This band is bad-ass tight. Dueling guitars, they make you grin while bringing you back to the time when life was like Dungeons & Dragons with the gods being the Gods of Heavy Metal. Seeing them live is a *must*, however, this single is the best way to bring them home with you so you can live in a fucking heavy metal fantasy reunion with your past. Smile, bow down, and thank them for taking you on this journey you were born to go on. Trust and believe in them... after all, they are the FUCKING CHAMPS. — Rob Reger (\$4 ppd. to Galaxia Records, P.O. Box 380, Santa Cruz, CA 95061)

Chrome Cranks / Kim Salmon & the Surrealists

The Chrome Cranks are exactly the kind of good-fer-nothin' hoodlums your mother warned you about, gettin' down and dirty with the best of New York City's blues noise-makers. They kick things off on this split double 7" with "Wrapped Up In Red", oozing with an irrepressibly dark and smoky ghost town sound even Nick Cave would be proud of. Squawks and screams send an icy chill down the old spine as only the finest of Crypt bands could. But things really shift into high gear with the live flipside, "Draghouse", burning the motherfuckin' rubber like a well-greased muscle car should, blazing trails of crackling fire for all the devil children to dance around. On the other slab of plastic is Kim Salmon & the Surrealists which was boring and cheesy, almost embarrassing, but don't let that stop you, you clown. (Echostatic / Space Baby Records, 2802 E. Madison, Suite 159, Seattle, WA, 98112)

Deerhoof "The Return of the Wood M'lady"
Imagine SRL's mad creations in overdrive, gone haywire and you're somewhere in the neighborhood. Immense, noise-ridden damage, collapsing on itself, choking on exhaust fumes, cosmic debris, and dinosaur bones. One unpredictable, harrowing experience that could very well destroy the fuck out of your needle. (Kill Rock Stars)

Dope, Guns, 'n Fucking in the Streets Vol. 10

It's been a long time coming for this AmRep single. Four great songs by Steel Pole Bath Tub, Braniac, Chrome Cranks, and Today Is the Day. On "A Washed Out Monkey Star Halo," Steel Pole starts off with a syrupy instrumental that just drones drones

drones!! Lots of sampled, virtually indecipherable vocals (almost a reprise of "The Wasp Jar" from *Some Cocktail Suggestions*) buried underneath the words of the title repeated over and over. Fun. I heard Chrome Cranks awhile back and wasn't too impressed, but "Dead Man's Suit" is a super high-end punk rocker riddled with slide guitar work. Braniac go for the gusto on "Cookie Doesn't Sing". (If you don't know and love 'em, Braniac are Devo for the next century but only better driving songs.) Today Is the Day finishes this puppy off with the ever abrasive "Execution Style". These guys are definitely the cream of the AmRep crop, with well thought out songs and enough imagination to drive you to the banks. Fucking dope, indeed. — Jason White (Amphetamine Reptile Records)

Grandaddy "Could This Be Love?" / "Kim, You Bore Me to Death"
Modesto isn't all pistachios and *American Graffiti*, you know. Sometimes something interesting surfaces from this particular armpit of California; this time, it just happens to be Grandaddy. I don't know if the label "sadcore" applies (which others have so liberally used), but there is a hint of ennui and sexual frustration in the music, a sound that often drones in an ominously beautiful manner that likens them to some of Pavement and Sebadoh's earlier moments of glory. (Of interest is the unusual way the laid-back vocals were recorded, which simultaneously sound overamped and clear.) Check it. (Big Jesus Records)

Danny Frankel "Jupiter, Now!"

Much to our advantage, esteemed percussionist Danny Frankel provides doses of topsy-turvy eclecticism on this debut 4-song 7". Joined by Kid Congo Powers on guitar and Patrick Warren on chamberlin and orchestron, Frankel and company take us on a pleasantly bizarre journey to the outback of yesteryear, where truly wild things roam and ooze with irrepressible insanity. Save for the ear-splitting dementia expressed on "Voodoo Shuffle", this minimal slew of spooky movie music creates creepy moods not unlike Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew*. Worth your time and money. (Send \$3 to: W.I.N. Records, P.O. Box 26811, Los Angeles, CA 90026-0811)

Ida "It's Not Alright"

Following the strength of their debut album *Tales of Brave Ida*, New York City's Ida thickens up their erstwhile brand of atmospheric folk with the inclusion of a drummer. While the title track works simple pop sensibilities into a pleasant pulp with Dan Littleton on the mic, the flipside is what really won me over. "Thank You" soothes spent souls with Liz Mitchell's tender loving vocals draped over sullenly sparse, despondent beats. Borrowing from the best aspects of Shellyan Orphan and Suzanne Vega, among others, Ida possess the rare art of painting achingly

dismal pictures of love and loss. One of the best things I've heard all year. (Simple Machines)

Miss Murgatroid

"Shadows on My Wall"

The charming and bubbly Miss Murgatroid skips out on a few bowling nights and then treats us to spooky kooky with that dangfangled accordion. Dame Darcy scribbles a few lines and fills in the blanks and then BINGO just like real! Innocence dashed by recurrent nightmares and a terminal case of the willies, just like I thought. Wait a minute, where am I? (Worry Bird Disc, P.O. Box 95485, Atlanta, GA 30347)



Polar Goldie Cats

"Kirin Sidekick" w/ "Spider"

I ♥ the Polar Goldie Cats! This fantastic foursome from the land of chalk-colored smog has a knack for wonderfully mesmerizing loony tunes that'll certainly send you in dizzying spells for days to come. Technicolor balls of yarn unravel in this tangled mess, an intricate, repetitive web of bouncy sound that crashes and tumbles with the most pleasant of surprises, like *Pee Wee's Playhouse* on its side bellyaching from oodles of oddities. Waltz along with these weirdos as they menace the town with dustbunnies and heebie jeebies. Watch for their triumphant return when the Cats release their debut full-length in January on Ecstatic Peace! (Karate Brand Records, P.O. Box 93296, Los Angeles, CA, 90093-0296)

Porn

AmRep gets back to business with the very much collectable *Porn* series, which is essentially the original motion picture soundtrack to the documentary film of the same name. Out in select theaters any day now, *Porn* is a feature length documentary revolving around Al Goldstein & The American Sex Industry. The film promises to be an intimate, uncensored peek into the seedy underworld of the skin trade "and the porn moguls, porn stars and porn addicts that make America the beautiful." Running in limited editions of 1,000-2,000, these four babies, wrapped in cheap, nondescript black and white paper, are quite appropo. On the first single, Halo of Kitten's (Julie Cafritz of Free Kitten and Daisy Von Furth of X-Girl clothes teaming up with Tim McLaughlin and Tom Hazelmeyer) of Halo of Flies) song, "I Hate Porn", proves to be nothing short of retarded, midtempo scumrock and that's a good thing. Ugly people doing ugly

things, of course. The flipside is Hammerhead's "Camaro", fraught with filthy guitars and Kat Bjelland's overbearing vocal cameo. The second of the series showcases the softer side of the Melvins, who start it off with "I Like Porn", a bass heavy jazz ditty complete with "shoooo... sha-la" crooning strewn throughout. Guv'ner turns up the tambourines with the pop stylings of "Coitus City" which sums up a woman's dismay with her boyfriend's choice of film as she sings "lesbo scene / is too serene." The third single features the inbred backwardness of Mudhoney ("Goat Cheese") and the very kooky song "Porn Weasel" by the Strapping Fieldhands, a giggle-tipsy doozy that rolls up polka, junk trash, and old strip joint music into one bouncy ball. But the dope shit is on the fourth single, blasting off with Boss Hog's tribute to porn kings the Dark Brothers ("Black Throat"), a sexy retarded romp that sets a whole group of cheerleaders on fire for good measure. This is an old cut from their heralded *Action Box* days. Take that, and add the Cows' blazin' "Pictorial" track and you've got one fine piece of plastic there, tough guy. (Amphetamine Reptile)

The Softies

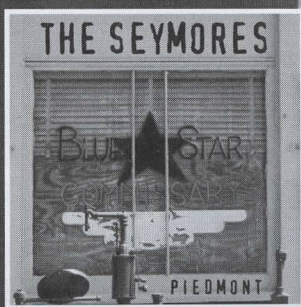
"He'll Never Have to Know"

The Softies are as fluffy as they seem, comforting us with acoustic girly-pop at its finest. Four songs about lost love and all those thoughts that get in the way. Lush harmonies thanks to Rose (Tiger Trap) and Jen (Pretty Face) weaved through airy, lively layered guitars. Their sound is simple and seems incredibly familiar, almost retro, but entirely now, stripped down to the bare essentials like the best of any Beatles song. Note: Their full-length album *It's Love* was recently released so look for it. (K Records)

Addresses

- Alias Records, 2815 West Olive Avenue, Dept. Bunny, Burbank, CA 91505-4534
- Amphetamine Reptile Records, 2645 First Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55408
- Big Jesus Records, P.O. Box 21192, Long Beach, CA 90801-4192
- Crypt Records USA, P.O. Box 140528, Staten Island, NY 10314-0528
- Daria Records, 625 Scott #301, San Francisco, CA 94117
- Drag City, P.O. Box 476867, Chicago, IL 60647
- K Records, P.O. Box 7154, Olympia, WA, 98507
- Kill Rock Stars, 120 NE State, #418, Olympia, WA, 98501
- Kranky, P.O. Box 578743, Chicago, IL 60657
- Lookout Records, P.O. Box 11374, Berkeley, CA 94712
- Mammoth Records, Carr Mill, 2nd Floor, Carrboro, NC 27510
- Matador Records, 676 Broadway, NYC 10012
- Simple Machines, P.O. Box 10290, Arlington, VA 22210-1290
- Thrill Jockey, P.O. Box 476794, Chicago, IL 60647
- Tim/Kerr Records, P.O. Box 42423, Portland, OR 97242
- Touch and Go, P.O. Box 25520, Chicago, IL 60625
- Trance Syndicate, P.O. Box 49771, Austin, TX 78765

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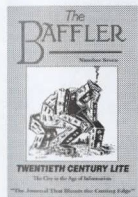
Publication Reviews

by Seth & Noël

Here's some of the better publications we've come across recently. Bear in mind that it's always a good idea to send well-concealed cash (not checks made out to the magazine, since most of these kids are small fries and don't have bank accounts for their publications) and a couple of 32¢ stamps to help cover postage cuz publishing a zine is more expensive than ever, what with all the price increases on postage and paper. And show a little fortitude—some editors might take a while to fulfill your order, since they tend to have actual lives, as well.

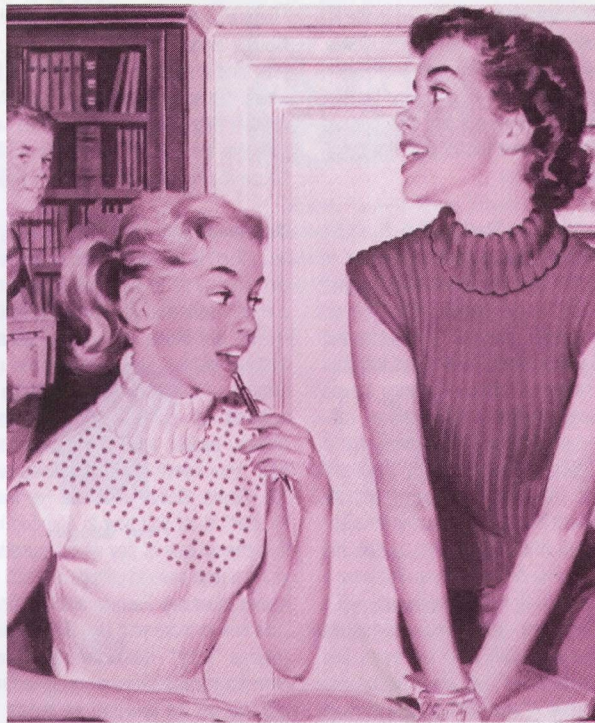
Ain't Nothin' Like Fuckin' Moonshine!

#10 (8 3/8" x 10 7/8", 60 pp., offset) bursts back onto an unsuspecting world with an impressive riot of color and imagery. The lovely green and metallic purple cover should be more than enough to draw you in to this latest installment of Brandon Stepp's ongoing Micronaut-fuelled saga. but wait—there's more! Ish #10 is dedicated to "super heroes in red tights," explored in detail through tons of original and reprinted comics, plus some interviews, tales of childhood superhero fixations, and skateboarding notes thrown in for good measure. One of the most visually engaging zines to come out this year...you just can't go wrong. (\$3.00 ppd. to 2667 37th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116)



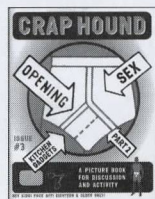
The Baffler #7 (6" x 9", 128 pp., offset) is quite simply the finest journal of cultural criticism out there today. This latest installment of searingly witty and dangerously intelligent

discourse focuses on the changing role of the City in the age of information—discussing how economic, technological, and cultural forces have changed the role of the great metropolis from vibrant concentrations of industry and culture to declining enclaves of banality where the only inhabitants left are the working poor or yuppie tourists. Articles include Paul Lukas' discussion of New York City's bungling attempts to gentrify the area around Times Square; Stephen Duncombe chronicles the inexorable conquest of "public space" by corporate interests; Edward Castleton writes about how the "anti-urban fantasies of the new corporate right" are being implemented through new developments in telecommunications (i.e. the information super-hype-way) that are being used to render the very idea of "place" obsolete. Many of the critical targets in this issue of *The Baffler* are familiar from previous outings: yuppies and their destructive patterns of gentrification, the insidious "culture industry", technology-crazed businessmen and politicians such as Newt Gingrich, and the shift in the American economy from an industrial base to a service base. Before you



even think about visiting that new Niketown store or riding the ferris wheel at Chicago's Navy Pier, pick up a copy of *The Baffler* and you'll definitely reconsider your role in our consumer society. (\$5 ppd. to *The Baffler*, P.O. Box 378293, Chicago, IL 60637)

Bunnyrabbit #5 (8.5" x 5.5", 36 pp., xeroxed) has a lot more going for it than just a classy name. In issue #5, Amy Fusselman gives a report from the front lines of "The Depression Competition," chronicling some of the day-to-day foibles of her family when she was in a junior high school student in nowhere, Ohio. Some of the episodes she describes, such as her father's ritual of cleaning his pistol and the various little ways her parents express their displeasure to each other, are made all the more poignant by her gentle, detailed prose. Also included are some poems and cute drawings, so you should hurry up and buy this already. Check out Amy's latest installment (#6), which I haven't gotten ahold of as of yet. (\$2 plus postage to Bunnyrabbit, 51 MacDougal St. Box 319, NY NY 10012)

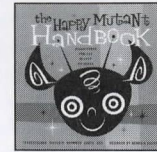


Crap Hound #3 (8.5" x 11", 76 pp., offset) is doing the world a huge favor by compiling all manner of wacky yet shocking clip art into a user-friendly, periodical format. Compiled by tough-guy Sean Tejaratchi, issue #3 is the second of two volumes concerning "Sex and Kitchen Gadgets," which makes perfect sense if you think about

it. In response to some potential legal pot-holes, Sean included a fair amount more writing than in issues past, expanding *Crap Hound* from a mere clip-art compendium to "A Picture Book for Discussion and Activity." Also thrown in for a laugh or two are some interesting fonts (with equally interesting names such as "King Fucker Chicken" and "Hamsterized '95"), some of which are even available in PostScript® format for you desktop publishing junkies out there. If you publish your own zine or do any kind of graphics work, just send Sean your \$14 and have the next four issues sent straight to your box—it sure beats those boring, zillion year-old Dover Clip Art books. (\$4 to *Crap Hound*, P.O. Box 40373, Portland, OR 97240-0373. Please include an age statement, thanks).

Giant Robot #3 (8.5" x 11", 72 pp., offset) is the #1 zine for Asian and Asian-American pop culture, and this issue—their first letter-sized, produced-on-a-Mac effort—is packed with more goodies than a hundred Chinatown gift shops. Erik Nakamura details his adventures on the Apple II software pirate's junket: a past I know all too well. The exhaustive candy review section even mentions one of the *Bunnyhop* office faves, Every Burger (though we're still partial to White Rabbit, for obvious reasons). The Cambodian donut cartel and their ultimate mission—to put Winchell's out of business—is painstakingly deconstructed. For all you gun buffs, the advantages of the Chinese-made MAK-90 over the Made In USA M16 are explained. Asian themes in old punk songs are explored, and the question of why so many Sebadiah fans are Asian females is considered. *Giant*

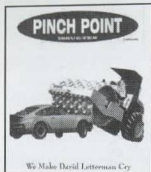
Robot may have grown up a little, but it's still just as tasty as a fresh box of Marble Pocky. (\$3 to Giant Robot, P.O. Box 2053, Los Angeles, CA 90064)



The Happy Mutant Handbook

(8" x 8", 205 pp., offset) Sick and tired of the pre-packaged, ready-to-eat, hum-drum nothingness of normal,

everyday living? Well, my little happy mutant friend, you're not alone in your thirst for mischief and wonder, and in the company of those delightful clowns at *boING boING*, you're just bound for a whirlwind of fun and excitement! You see, there are three kinds of people on this planet: **NORMAL** (*neophobe sixpackus*), which constitutes 90% of the population, avoids anything new, seeks predictability and stability in life, and fears authority. Then there's **THE UNHAPPY MUTANT** (*neophilic pessimisticus*), who seeks out new experiences but revels in perpetuating dark and miserable attitudes; they hate authority. But then there's **THE HAPPY MUTANT** (*neophilic optimisticus*), who prances around the planet, constantly in search of novelty and brain candy "to open new possibilities for living a life filled with astonishment, wonder, and entertaining weirdness." The Happy Mutant simply laughs at authority and moves on. So are you one of us or one of *them*? Editors Mark Frauenfelder, Carla Sinclair, and Gareth Branwyn are convinced that there's more Happy Mutants out there than we think. With help from a barrel of cybermonkeys like R.U. Sirius, Richard Kadrey, and Jerod Pore, this beautifully packaged book packs a wallop of information and eye candy, guiding you through a number of slippery waterslides into the multi-faceted galaxy of D.I.Y. "alternative" culture. Learn how to tinker with your own reality, whether that means creating your own zines, records, toys, TV and radio stations, or becoming the happy little prankster you've always wanted to be! And that's just for starters, kids, cuz this book provides you with a ton of names and addresses of people, places, and happenings that just might tickle your fancy and restore your faith in Mutantkind. From guerrilla poster artist Robbie Conal to the related Billboard Liberation Front, the Cacophony Society to the Church of the Subgenius, etc., you'll discover a world a million times brighter and kookier than that stale processed cheese being piped through MTV. Optimistic, insightful, funny, colorful, and haphazardly informative, *The Happy Mutant Handbook* paints a silly smile on my face and makes me want to be goofier than usual! So c'mon, bozos, and pile in the clown car! There's room for more! (From Riverhead Books. Available for \$15 at only the finest of bookstores.) — Noël



Pinch Point (8.5" x 11", 24 pp.) ranks among the most wise-ass zines out there, and I mean that in a good way. In issue #10, Michael

Gorgei & "Co." continue their tradition of stinging "interviews", this time focusing on David Letterman — with *Pinch Point* "correspondants" cornering their unwitting target at Upper West Side parties, Knicks games, and at red lights. This issue also includes a lo-budge spoof of those annoying teenage male-targeted magazines, called "Pinch Point, DUDE!" Michael Gorgei examines everything that's wrong about VH-1 with his description of a music talk show called "Four On The Floor." The "Ask Mike Gorgei" column features Mr. Gorgei slam-dunking a medley of slightly retarded questions, such as "would you call 'Hand In Glove' by The Smiths good poetry?" Hey, it's at least \$7.78 worth of laughs for two measley dollars! (\$2 to Pinch Point, P.O. Box 128, North Lima, OH 44452)

RacecaR #2 (8.5" x 7", 52 pp., offset) shifts into high gear in this their second issue. Rae Sturtevant, a vastly underrated bowler, delights and amuses in a whimsical interview with Timco, her notes from the Bammies and the SXSW music conference, and her ideas about people and their collections (I think we need to track down the girl who collected stuffed rabbits when she was younger...).

Special bonus items include "pin-up" pictures of Doo Rag (no interview, unfortunately), interviews with Mare Winningham and Archers Of Loaf, plus a hilarious article by Brian Lew (reprinted from the zine *Umlaut*) in which the lyrics of Kiss are placed in the literary canon next to T.S. Eliot and Hemingway. All in all, a light-hearted and enthusiastic effort that some of you overly-jaded hipsters might learn something from. (\$3 ppd. to RacecaR, P.O. Box 410010, San Francisco, CA 94141-0010)

The Scaredy-Cat Stalker #2 (5.5" x 8.5", 52 pp., xeroxed) Taking the term "fanzine" to heart, Krista's little creation here is "devoted to all things Henry Thomas" (yeah, the kid from *E.T.* is right, kiddo) and a cornucopia of pop culture madness. She explains that your average stalker is "blatant—lingering around their obsession's homes or workplaces, calling or sending threats, the scaredy-cat is more calculated and seemingly harmless. Watch out!" Her particular obsession with the man is almost frightening, scouring the planet for all sorts of obscure gossip, quotes, and tidbits regarding her loved one. She cites a number of running themes throughout H.T.'s (or "Hank") work, which includes horses, singing (on his behalf), penis references, and that "made-for-cable" tag, which his starring role in *Psycho IV* was. (Her detailed account of this scrumptiously absurd flick makes me want to see it for myself!) But perhaps the best thing in this issue is this trip down

memory lane where Krista and her younger sister, Melissa, document the origins of their obsessive stalking nature 8 years back, when they were completely head over heels over a lanky record store clerk for years on end. "Torture" is the word I'm looking for, isn't it? Indulge in her insulated mania and maybe even find a part of yourself in there somewhere. I'm so glad she found Tracy Nelson (*Square Pegs, Melrose Place*) to be so very stalkable, too. (\$2 to Krista Garcia, 5535 N.E. Glisan #5, Portland, OR 97213) — *Noël*

Seventeen April 1947 (10.5" x 13.25", 210 pp., offset) is the sourcebook for any teenage girl who wants to be popular, fashionable, and well-mannered all at the same time. This is the "Girl Meets Boy" issue, featuring a fetching fashion spread set at the circus: demure yet vivacious girls model the latest fashions for some very smitten-looking clowns, trapeze artists, and whitewashing boys. How sweet! Insightful articles such as "On Going Steady" and "Is He Man...Or Mouse?" show you how to find and keep a take-charge type of boy who'll someday get you that rose-covered cottage of which you're forever dreaming. Fashion articles often discuss how to make your own dresses (for that genuine "D.I.Y." look), the record reviews cover the latest in classical music recordings, and you get the lowdown on "future heart-throb" Vic Damone. Even the ads are educational: from all those cute little dresses, nightgowns and fashionable moccasins that

you can enjoy while you're young and fancyfree, to the wall-to-wall carpeting and silver settings you'll be sub-consciously dreaming about until your wedding day. That's an awful lot of useful stuff for only 15 cents!

Some other zines that you should own already, unless you just came back from Antarctica or something: **Grand Royal** #2 (\$5, P.O. Box 26689, Los Angeles, CA 90026), **Spec** #2: The Family Issue (\$2.95, P.O. Box 40248, SF, CA 94140), **boING boING** #14 (\$4, 11228 Ventura Blvd. #818, Studio City, CA 91604), **Emigre** #34 (\$7.95, 4475 "D" Street, Sacramento CA 95819), **Flatter!** #6: The Japanese / Jewish Issue (\$4, P.O. Box 391655, Cambridge, MA 02139-0017), **Inquisitor** #3 (\$5, P.O. Box 132, New York NY 10024), **X Magazine** #13 (\$3, Box 1077, Royal Oak, MI 48068), **Roller derby** #18 (\$3, P.O. Box 26039, Wilmington, DE 19899-6039), **Yakuza** #6 (\$4, P.O. Box 16041, Oakland CA 94610), **Ben Is Dead** #26: Retro Hell! [Part 2] (\$5, P.O. Box 3166, Hollywood, CA 90028), **Bust** #6: The Men We Love Issue (\$3, P.O. Box 319, Ansonia Station, New York, New York 10023), **Might** #7: The Cheese Issue! (\$4, 150 Fourth St., Suite 650, SF CA 94103), **Get Off My Wagon** #2 (\$4, P.O. Box 16041, Oakland CA 94610), **Playboy** December 1995 with the peculiar Farrah Fawcett holiday pictorial (\$5.95 at newsstands everywhere)

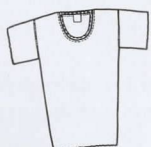
And what are **YOU**
going to spend your
milk money on?



regular tee



ringer



ribbed girlie tee



Limited Edition Prints...

"Sonic Goofs" (left) \$7 (Waffle #2 cover art, 28" x 28")

Raglove (above) \$8 (Waffle #4 cover art, full-color)

Bunny Parade (below) \$8 (full-color, very cute, 22" x 28")

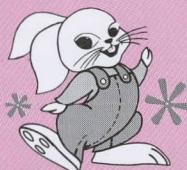
The Family Ruckus \$10 (cover art for this issue, full-color, 24" x 30", quite bonkers if you ask us)



Back Issues...

In a former life, we were known as **Waffle**. **Waffle #1**: Steel Pole Bath Tub, FIREHOSE, sea monkeys, didley (sold out); **Waffle #2**: Melvins, Duh, A Tribe Called Quest, Mr. Bungle, Helmet, Sancho Panza, Real Bummies, cheese (sold out); **Waffle #3**: Beastie Boys, Breeders, Bomb, boobs, Erik Estrada, Making Love To A Man With AIDS (in stock!!); **Waffle #4**: The "Love & Hate" issue with Lisa Carver, Jesus Lizard, Darby, Seam, Jim Goad, Peter Bagge, Smurfs, and a whole lotta love (sold out, thank you!). Now, we're known as **Bunnyhop**. **Bunnyhop #5**: The "Geeks vs. Jocks" year-book issue starring Mister Rogers, Pavement, Daniel Clowes, Combustible Edison, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Kerri Kenney, Anthony Michael Hall, death rockers, and Snapple's Detention Boy (sold out). Do you see a pattern here? Get your subscription to **Bunnyhop** magazine before they all scamper away! (Copies of **Waffle #3** still available for \$3 ppd.)

Screen print t-shirt designs... (\$10)



Boogie Bunny
(T-002)

Also available as a limited-edition embroidery! (E-002)



Yum
(T-003)



Marshmallow Bunny
(T-004)



Bunnyhop logo
(T-001)

Fabulous glitter transfers tees... (\$12)



Fruit Stripe
(G-005)



Sexy Kitty
(G-006)



Big Deal
(G-007)

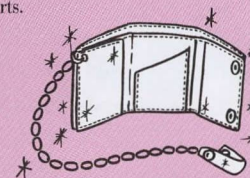
All screen-prints and glitter transfers are on 50/50 t-shirts. Bunnyhop logo (T-001) is available in white on pink (youth sizes M, L) or silver on black (adult sizes S, M, L). Yum (T-003) and Marshmallow Bunny (T-004) are available in pink, lt. blue, and yellow (youth sizes M, L) or white and purple (adult sizes S, M, L). Boogie Bunny (T-002) is available in pink, lt. blue, and white (youth sizes M, L). The embroidered version of Boogie Bunny (E-002) is available in lt. yellow, pink, lt. blue, and white (youth sizes M, L) on fancy ribbed girlie tees. Glitter transfers are available in most colors so please provide three colors in order of preference. For an additional \$3, all glitter transfers are also available on ringer t-shirts.

Glitter accessories...

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coin purse



tri-fold wallet

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FOREIGN ORDERS: **SAMPLE COPIES:** Canada add \$2, Europe and elsewhere add \$3. **FIRST CLASS SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Canada \$25, Europe and elsewhere \$30. **ALL OTHER ITEMS:** Canada add \$3, Europe and elsewhere add \$5. All sales final.

Allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery. Make check or money order out to Bunnyhop. Send to Bunnyhop Magazine, P.O. Box 423930, San Francisco, CA 94142.



...Because every season is rabbit season!

THE SOFT & FLUFFY ISSUE

Join us as we travel back to Smurf Village and wax philosophic about boobs, bunnies, mushiness, and gushiness! Smashing our head on the Fraggie Rock! Behold, the "Soft & Fluffy" issue! Just the moment you've been waiting for! Talented and self-motivated thrill-seekers with dollops of wit and razor sharp attitude are encouraged to fenagle their way into a number of highly coveted positions. We need writers, interviewers, artists, illustrators, photographers, interns, research assistants, record reviewers, money, backrubs, and Mrs. Garrett to do all the cooking and cleaning (maybe even flush Abraham down the toilet if necessary). Obviously, we can't pay you cold hard cash for your time and heartache, but we can certainly compensate in a variety of ways, mainly free music, shows, Peeps®, and fabulous new dance moves to impress your long lost relatives with! Oh my! Must be able to make deadlines or else. Send a SASE for an updated list of ideas pertaining to "Soft & Fluffy", or e-mail your request if you're one of *those* people. Otherwise, send examples of your current work and/or interview/article proposals to:

Bunnyhop
P.O. Box 423930
San Francisco, CA 94142-3930
E-mail: bunnyhop@slip.net

So what are you waiting for? *Hop to it!*

Classifieds

Hey there all you hip cats and cultural wankers! Noël here scop-ing for some things that, hey, maybe even some kid like *you* don't need littering your digs. Are you ready?! Set?! Then let's get to it, Punchy!

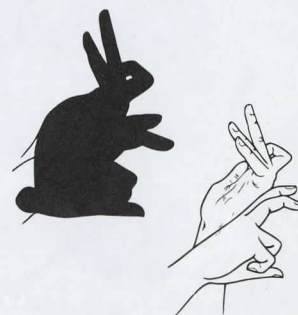
- Any and all Smurf items, especially toys and children's books. I've got a few things (thanks, Angie) but not enough to keep me happy, damnit.
- Magazine advertisements from the ill-fated Calvin Klein "kiddie porn" campaign. Also, any article and or news clipping related to it. Big *Bunnyhop* points to those who have videotaped copies of the commercials.
- Cute bunny ephemera to add to my new museum, the Museum of Bunnies. (Open for business Monday through Saturday, 10 AM - 6 PM. Admission is free.)
- Fisher-Price Pixelvision camera. Must be in good working condition with all the parts and pieces intact. Will pay money for this, Tiger, but not a whole lot.
- Six-packs of OK Soda.
- If you haven't already sent all your Micronauts to Brandon of *Ain't Nothin' Like Fuckin' Moonshine* fame, send 'em this way. (Sorry, Brandon. When I was a kid, my Grandma would secretly send all my toys over to relatives in the Philippines. I've been trying to find them ever since.) I also love Transformers but completely hate Go-Bots and all that other cheap imitation crap.

But most importantly...

As the CEO of Future House Husbands of America, I'd like to make a proposal. I'm looking for a Sugar Mama. Restaurants bug. Temp agencies bite. The NEA is on its death-bed. FAO Schwarz is scary. *Ben Is Dead* is several hundred miles away. Help me do *Bunnyhop* morning, noon and night by monetary support. If you live in San Francisco, which would be preferable, I'd be more than happy to cook you meals, clean your house, give you backrubs, fold your laundry, rub your toes, and entertain you with stupid jokes at no extra charge. Make you feel like the princess that you are. I'll even share my Pocky with you and that, my friend, is no joke. This is REAL. This is not some light form of prostitution. Nothing up my sleeves, mind you. Could this be you?! Ready for loads of fun and clean April-fresh clothes? Shall we play... a... game? Contact me soon, you li'l whippersnapper! Time's a wastin'!

THANK YOU...

You know who you are and we know where you live. Have at least one bowel movement a day. We love our audience. Good night, sleep tight, and do let the bedbunnies bite, you li'l sex vampire.



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