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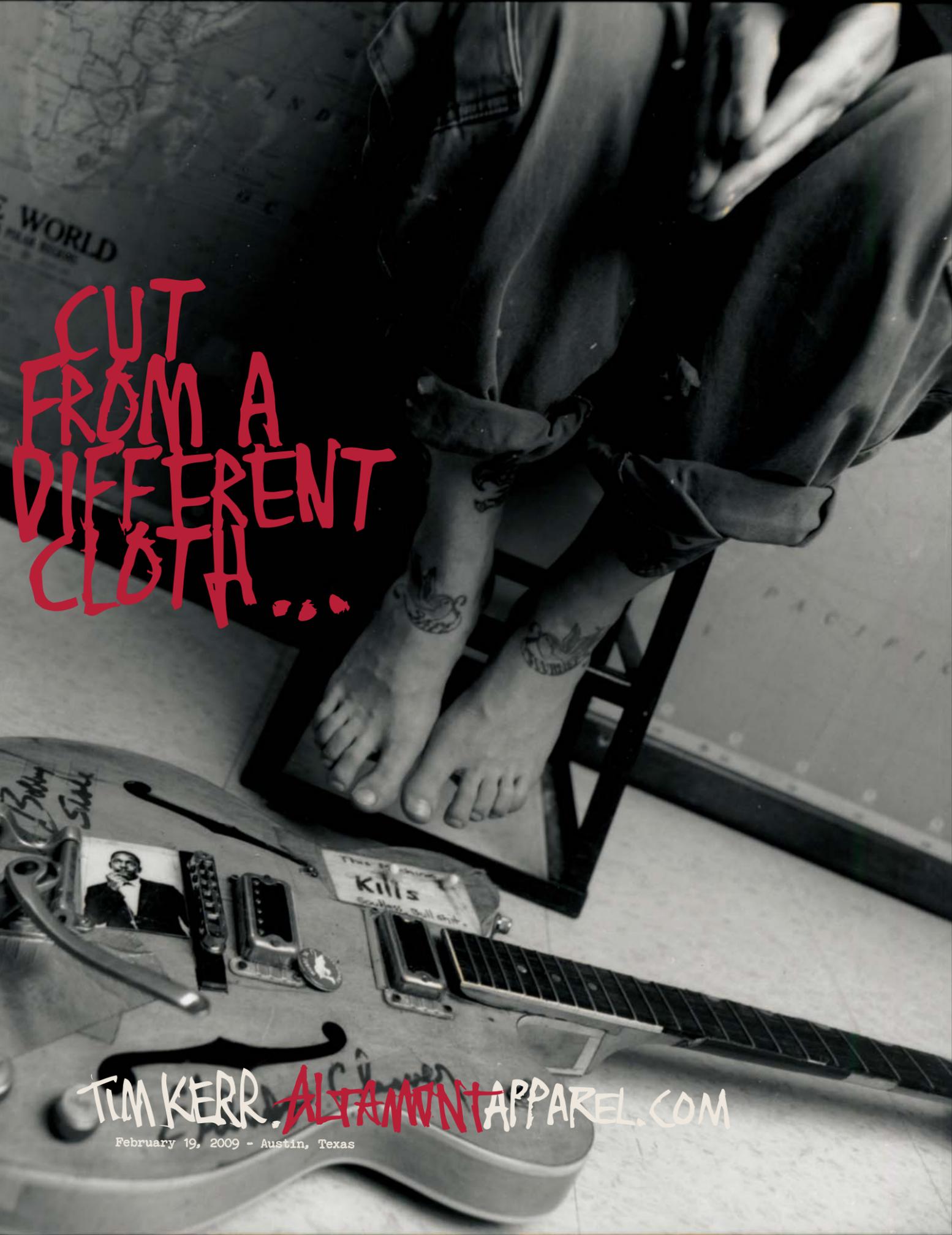


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Chris Nieratko is the greatest writer by that name we've ever met. Chris been writing about skateboarding, dirty movies and himself for over 15 years. He's been with VICE for a decade now and won't leave. He's basically the fat guy from Office Space. We put out his book, Skinema, so he won't set fire to the VICE offices.

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Painting by Jim Krewson

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Cover photo by Jason Henry

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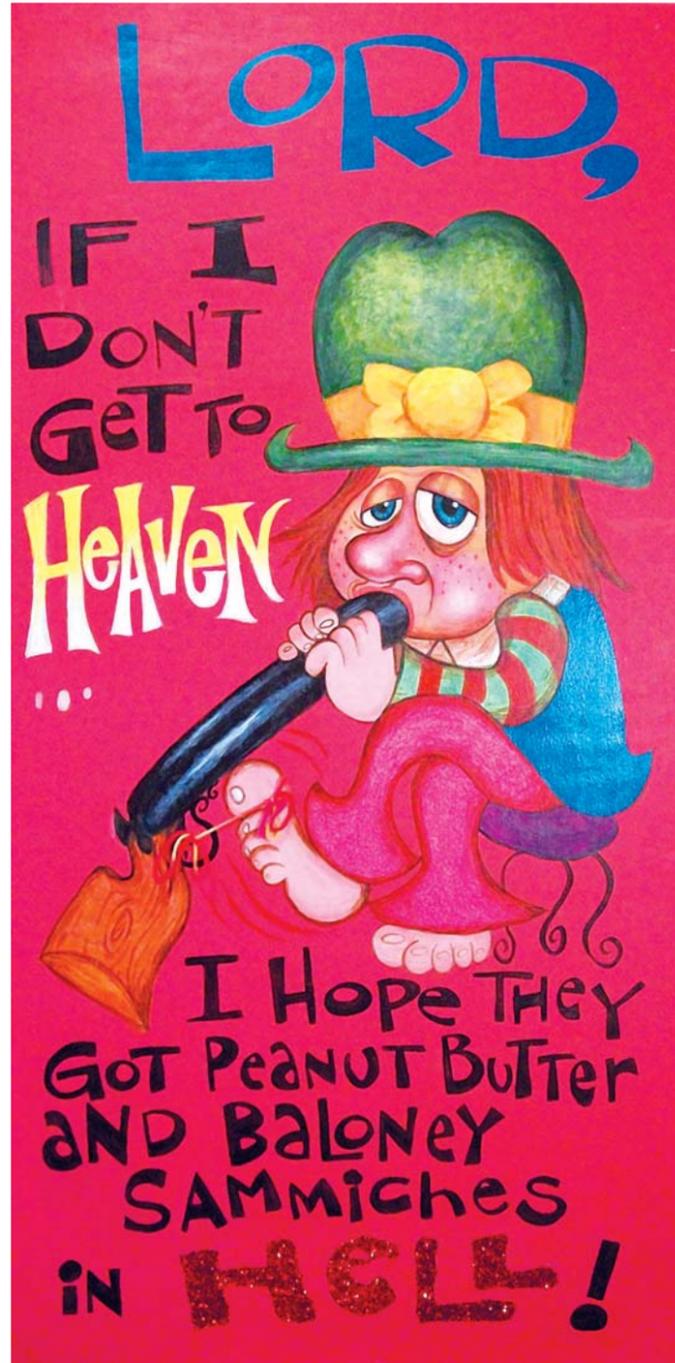
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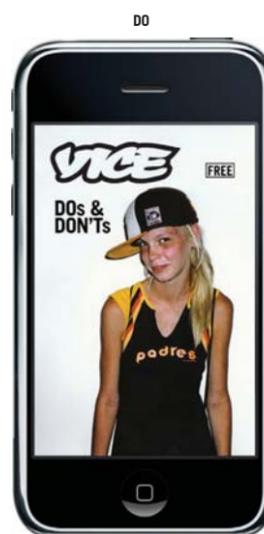
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JASON HENRY

Jason is a young photographer and a recent graduate of the University of Florida. He has spent the last few months floating around the state of his alma mater, sleeping on people's couches, and documenting whatever subjects catch his interest in between bread-and-butter freelance assignments for the *New York Times*, *SLAP Skateboard Magazine*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. Fun facts: He has four first names (Richard Jason Edward Henry) and he's never eaten a hamburger even though he is not and has never been a vegetarian. Jason has also never photographed for *Vice* before, but we recently asked him to shoot a ninth-generation circus family of animal trainers at their sanctuary in Sarasota. And boy did he knock it out of the big top. He even scored this month's cover, for Christ's sake.

See THIS PLACE IS A ZOO, page 112.



HENRIK SALTZSTEIN

Henrik used to study television and media production at the reputable Danish School of Media and Journalism and would probably have found gainful employment by now if it weren't for his questionable decision to start interning at the Scandinavian *Vice* office about a year ago. But at least he's busy. As our resident Dane, we're always sending him out to interview Denmark's smartest, most fascinating people—a list that, until this issue, included only Lars von Trier. Recently we had him run down documentary photographer Jacob Holdt, the curious Danish vagabond whose book *American Pictures* redefined the genre of documentary photography. And wouldn't you know, it turns out our wee Robert Plant knockoff here is quite the conversationalist.

See JACOB HOLDT IS NOT A HIPPIE, page 54.



SARA GOLDA RAFSKY

Sara is a journalist and native Brooklynite who is usually off investigating some crazy thing in some insane part of the world. After spending a year in Colombia researching and taking pictures of the armed conflict in Bogotá, she set off this past fall for Southeast Asia, where she watched a friend slice open a live snake and eat its still-beating heart, piloted motor-bikes through Vietnam, and was almost stranded forever in Myanmar due to a currency dilemma. It took some work to pry herself away from the tranquil beaches and tiki bars of Cambodia, but she eventually got on the trail of an elusive artist and Khmer Rouge survivor named Vann Nath. In the end, she found herself an interpreter in the Cambodian Yellow Pages, showed up unannounced at Vann Nath's gallery, and started unfurling the story of the special court created to try Pol Pot's murderous regime.

See A HOLIDAY ENDS IN CAMBODIA, page 128.



RHINO RECORDS 2010 CALENDAR

We're sure by now you've seen *Happy Birthday: The Birthday Show*, *Viceland.com*'s daily online video in which our managing editor wishes a happy birthday to noted luminaries and delivers various shout-outs and congratulatory statements submitted by viewers. It's a runaway smash hit. We owe the enormous success of the show to this handy calendar that Rhino Records sent us. Every day it lists the birthdays of cool rock icons such as Rod Stewart (January 10, 1945) and Seal (February 19, 1963), along with the dates of cultural milestones like "Steely Dan break up" (June 21, 1981). It's great fun and makes the world seem slightly less worthless, if only for a day. Thanks, Rhino. And don't forget to watch *Happy Birthday: The Birthday Show!* Send in your birthdays, well-wishes, love proclamations, musical dedications, and general requests for upcoming episodes today!

See *Viceland.com*.

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REVENGE OF THE ZANILY MUSTACHIOED NERD

Dear *Vice*,

I was incredulous at all the bullshit literature illustrated on the cover of your Fiction Issue. Whose bookshelf was that? Some 19-year-old with a sweater complex who thinks he's Holden Caulfield?

I thought you guys were cool but it turns out that you're just a buncha nerds. *Tree of Smoke*?! More like "trees to smoke," as in, let's get some trees to smoke over here, away from these gay and lame books. Jack Kerouac, Woody Allen, and Bret Easton Ellis? Let me teach you know-nothing know-it-alls a little something about a real shelf.

I've included a photo of one of the favorite levels of my bookshelf. Some of the other shelves in this bookcase have piles of Marvel comics, board games that are packaged to look like books, and CD box sets. This one has the most books on it so I figured I'd share it.

Here's what's on my shelf from left to right.

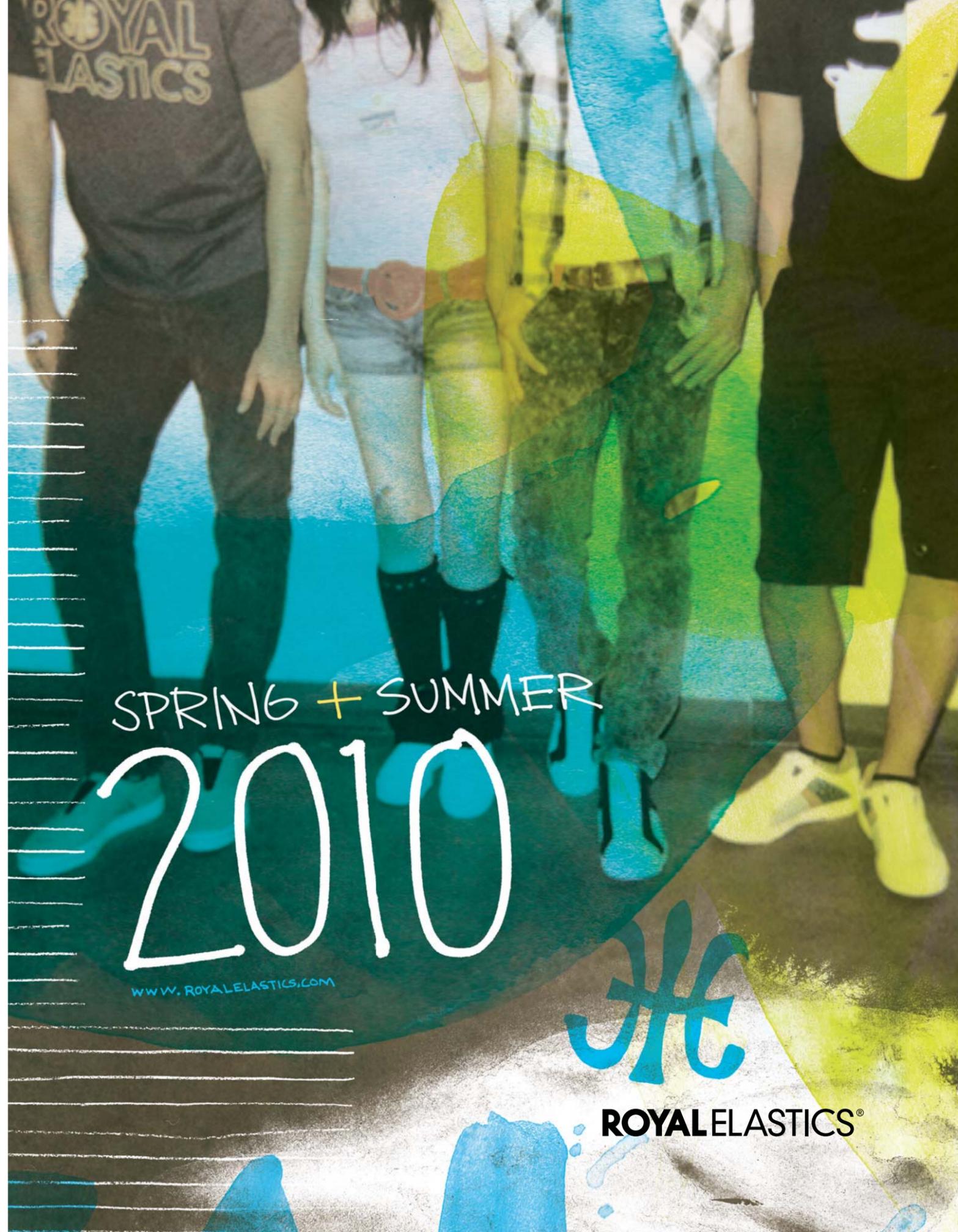
1. A shitload of *Star Wars* novels—People talk like these are an embarrassment, but *Star Wars* is the best movie so it's no surprise that it is also subject of the best books. These are great because you can get them for a dollar or less at any Salvation Army or the dump. They are the kind of books you can buy by the pound and you get your money's worth. If you want to know what Luke, Han, and Leia did before and after the movies you can read a book and it'll tell you. I'd buy that for a dollar.
2. *Guns of the Third Reich*—Nazis sucked and we kicked their asses bad, but everyone will relent and admit that they were superior in a lot of aesthetic ways. Mausers, Lugers—those are rad guns. Most guns are pretty cool, but Nazi guns were beautiful. Sorry.
3. *NO* by Boyd Rice—Some hear Boyd Rice's name and instantly get angry and accuse you of being a bad guy and say, "How can you have this in your house?" He's really funny, is how, and also has good stuff to say. Did you know he was visiting Charles Manson in prison on a regular basis? Not everybody got to do that.
4. *How to Give Her Absolute Pleasure* by Lou Paget—This book was written by a girl and she dedicated it to "My father, the first man I ever loved." There's no way that isn't gross. This book was a gift from my first girlfriend. It's inscribed to her older brother, from his girlfriend at the time. Most of it is pretty stupid, but there's a funny diagram of a dildo that you strap to your head called "The Accommodator" and it juts out of your chin, making you look like a *New Yorker* caricature of Jay Leno.
5. Holocaust book—I got this at Dachau. It's weird that a Holocaust museum has a gift shop. Looking back, it's also weird that I was moved to buy a book so that I could remember it always.



6. *Faces of the Enemy*—It's good to know who your enemies are. You get to the last page of the book and it's a mirror. Not really. I can't remember what this book is about and I am too lazy to look.
7. *Guns of the Reich*—This is another of my books about guns that Nazis used. I wish I could subscribe to a Nazi-gun-book-of-the-month club.
8. Statuette of the devil with huge boner—I bought this from three homos in Hell's Kitchen. They told me that they'd painstakingly scrubbed paint off of it and that I could use his giant golden penis to keep rings on.
9. Six issues of *Playboy* from the 60s in a *Playboy* binder—This is a big binder with old *Playboys* in it. I jerk off to women who are either dead or very haggard now.
10. *The New Encyclopedia of Handguns & Small Arms*—I think it's important to have this so that people see that I have some books about American guns too and don't just think I'm a freak who's totally into Nazi guns exclusively. This is my beard. I don't care about most American guns.
11. Marilyn Manson's autobiography—The first half of this is awesome. The second half is just him cheating on his girlfriends and complaining about how it's hard to get good coke in some towns. I've read this about five times.
12. *Handjobs* magazine from February 2002—This is a magazine for gays with daddy/boy fixations. It would be illegal to publish any of the content if it were real so it's just drawings and stories about dads fucking their sons.
13. *Sex in the Outdoors*—Don't have sex in the outdoors. Bugs will bite you on the balls.
14. Copies of *Penthouse* and *Playboy* from a long time ago—I found these under my dad's

bed when I was little. I think he figured that my mom threw them away. I think if people have drugs or porn or something hidden in their room and it disappears, they tend to not ask around.

15. *Get in the Van* by Henry Rollins—Man, this book's so good. This guy gets smarter all the time.
 16. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* collection of the first 12 issues—These are amazing. So much black blood.
 17. *Man, Myth & Magic*, vols. 1, 2, 4, 5—Pretty much everything you need to know about the occult is in here. Satanic rituals? Druids? Crystals? Thrice, yes.
 18. *The Book of Erotic Failures*—This book isn't as funny as the cover and title might make you think. It's mostly about people who died or were misinformed about how sex worked. It's mostly incredibly sad or horrifying.
 19. Scientology book—There are a lot of good points in Scientology. The only bad parts are where you give them all your money and the guy who runs it is possibly a violent maniac who is beating his underlings halfway to death before taking them the rest of the way there.
- And there you have it. I hope you've learned your lesson.
- Sincerely,
NICHOLAS GAZIN
New York, NY
-
- Send correspondence to vice@viceland.com (include city and state/province) or to *Vice* magazine, 97 North 10th Street, Suite 204, Brooklyn, NY 11211. Letters are edited for length.



Dicksplosion!

A Visit With Seminal Band Fuck Me in My Condo

INTERVIEW BY JON BENJAMIN AND PATRICK BORELLI
PHOTO BY ED ZIPCO

In 1983, three boys from Lindsfield, New Jersey, named Anthony Bazzo, Joey Roach, and Chris “Lil’ Chris” Thames formed the postpunk band Fuck Me in My Condo. Their path to success included huge crests and valleys, but thankfully they all lived to tell the tale. They’re still gritty rock ‘n’ rollers who never gave up the dream or the pledge to live the life of the troubadour—no home but the music itself, and the rest, well, that just killed the pain. Anthony’s memoir, *Explosive: A Rock ‘n’ Roll Life*, has just come out on Planet Manic Press. Here’s a little taste.

We were in the Liberty Hotel the third time my dick exploded (technically called a corpus cavernosum penis rupture, most common with bulls). It happens because of fucking a lot. The first time it happened, I was scared for my life. The second time, it was my fault entirely; and the third time, I was just plain annoyed. If you’ve never had your dick explode, then you could never understand what it feels like. There’s not a lot of pain when it happens. Actually, it kinda feels good, like that feeling you get when you pop a zit on your thigh or get earwax removed or pop a canker sore in the back of your mouth. At the time it happens, no big deal. It’s the aftermath that really sucks. First off, the recovery time is like six weeks. That means no fucking for six weeks. That’s how the second time my dick explosion happened. I didn’t wait the full six weeks and it exploded again. Fortunately, I had experienced it before so I knew right away to hightail it to the emergency room. The girl was certainly freaked out, though, because there’s a ton of blood. Let’s put it this way: Blood and sex don’t mix unless you’re a vampire, and I might sleep all day and drink, eat, and fuck all night, but I ain’t no vampire. Anyway, the third time I was in Toronto and was fucking missionary style (the only way for me to ride it out long-time) and pop, my dick exploded again. This time I was basically like, “C’mon, are you serious?” It’s like when you’re in line at the market and they close down the register when you’re one away from it and you’ve been in line for ten minutes already and you’re like, “Wait, I just waited for nothing and now I gotta start all over again, what the fuck?!” Now, I got like Franken-dick with all the surgeries, but hey, I’m not going to lie, I realize that it’s just one of the pitfalls of rock ‘n’ roll and I wouldn’t change the past if I could. I look down at my dick now and I see all those scars and it represents all the fucking I’ve done. It’s like nature’s tattoo. I’m proud of the fact my dick exploded all those times. It’s like rock ‘n’ roll is a war and those are my war wounds and I won the Purple Heart for fucking pussy.

Vice recently visited Fuck Me in My Condo for an interview at their studio in Lindsfield. Here’s what happened...

Vice: I read that before you were Fuck Me in My Condo, you were called Fuck Me Without a Condom.

Chris “Lil’ Chris” Thames: At first we were called Joey’s Closet because that’s where we would go to get high, then after about a year or so, Anthony wanted to change our band name to Fuck Me Without a Condom because it was something he said to his girlfriend, not to mention that it was something everyone liked to do. It felt more real and impactful, like our music, and anyway people thought Joey’s Closet meant that Joey was gay, and that was the furthest thing from reality then.

Then?

Chris: Joey’s bisexual, but we didn’t find out till ‘88.

And when did you change your name to Fuck Me in My Condo?

Joey Roach: In ‘89, after we got our deal with Atlantic Records.

Anthony Bazzo: They made us change it.

Chris: Yeah, we were really against it, but the label felt that because AIDS was such a big deal then...

Joey: ...and still is.

Anthony: Not really, except in Africa.

Chris: Anyway, they felt that Fuck Me Without a Condom sent the wrong message.

Joey: Yeah, and Anthony had just bought a condo so we were all like, “Why don’t we change the name to Fuck Me in My Condo instead of Without a Condom?” It sounded similar and Anthony’s condo was a huge part of the band’s life then. It was where we partied.

How did the song “Hole in My Dick” come about?

Chris: That is a crazy story.

Joey: One night after a show, we went to the condo to party and Anthony, Chris, and I had our fuck moccasins on. Chris and I were fucking Anthony’s girlfriend (with his blessing) when she looked over and saw Anthony rump-running some other chick and she flipped out. She couldn’t stand to see Anthony disrespecting another woman. They had crazy arguments and she was über-jealous. She had tried to kill herself maybe 30 times. Anyway, they argued for a while and she ended up making Anthony fuck the girl vaginally, which he hated. The next day when Anthony woke up, he found that his dick had been nailed to a coffee table. There were a bunch of people who could have done it, but we never found out who did. Anyway, that’s how “Hole in My Dick” came about. Anthony wrote the lyrics and Chris wrote the music.

Anthony: Most people thought it was about a lover forlorn, but it wasn’t really. It was actually about an actual hole in my dick.

Are all your songs about sex?

Chris: Sex was a huge part of our lives back then, and yes, most of our songs were about sex.

Anthony: “Steel Penis” was about sex.

Joey: “Battle of the Bulges” was about sex, not about weight loss or World War II.

Chris: “Clam Digging” was about eating pussy.

Joey: “Swab the Deck” was about the sponge, which was a female contraceptive device nobody uses anymore.

Anthony: And “QUEEF” was about queefs but we made it into an acronym that stands for “Queefs Upset Every Enjoyable Fuck.”

Chris: “North of the Border,” though, was about Iran-Contra, not about tit fucking.

Anthony: Also, “The Grass Is Always Greener” was about pussy hair and not about pot.

Chris: Yeah, and “Bush-Hunters” was about the CIA and not about pussy.

Anthony: Yes, but “Hair of the Dog” was about bushy pussies and not about alcohol.



Was “Head to Head” about two dicks touching?

Anthony: No, that was about getting head from one girl, then switching to immediately getting head from another one.

Joey: “Generation Z” was about a girl giving head to a guy while the guy gives head to another girl.

Anthony: “Lollipop Surprise” was about the time I was getting head from this girl, then saw a hard-on in her underwear, only to find out that she was a he...

Joey: ...and “Lollipop Surprise Reprise” was about me sucking that girl’s dick.

Chris: “Between Your Legs” was not about

pussy, but about Bill Buckner missing that slow grounder Mookie hit that was the catalyst for the Mets winning it all.

All: [*chanting*] METS, METS, METS...

Chris: “Roughin’ It” was about the time Joey put cocaine and peanut butter on his dick and made his dog lick it off.

Joey: “Rest in Denise” was about Anthony falling asleep every time he fucked this German chick named Petra, but we changed her name to Denise so it would rhyme with “peace.”

Chris: “Heaven’s Doggie Door” was about Joey’s dog dying.

Joey: “French Fried” was about being tired on tour in France.

Anthony: “Cum Finger” was about cumming on a girl’s ring finger and making her let it dry and congeal there.

Chris: “Hot Tubs” was about fucking fat girls.

Anthony: “Window Pain” was about my room when I was a kid, and “Register to Poke” was about changing the age of consent to 15.

What’s next for FMiMC?

Chris: We are recording a jazz album right now called *Scar Lines*, which is a bunch of instrumentals we’ve written in the past few years about fucking chicks who’ve had lipo. ■

Watch for more from Fuck Me in My Condo on VBS.TV one of these days...

Hello Father

Johanna Heldebro Stalked Her Dad for Art

PHOTOS BY JOHANNA HELDEBRO
INTERVIEW BY ROCCO CASTORO

About four years ago, photographer Johanna Heldebro's father abruptly left his family in Montreal and relocated to his native Sweden. Johanna's parents had just finalized a sudden divorce after Mr. Heldebro disclosed that he was having an affair with a mother of two who lived in Stockholm. Of course, everyone was angry and confused. But instead of writing her dad's name 30 times on a piece of paper in black ink and burning it over a black candle, Johanna decided to use the unfortunate situation as inspiration for her artwork. She traveled to Sweden to stalk her dad and find out about his new life firsthand.

The outcome was *To Come Within Reach of You (Gunnar Heldebro, Hässelby Strandväg 55, 165 65 Hässelby)*, a photo series that acted as her graduate thesis for New York City's School of Visual Arts. After viewing her work, we asked Johanna if she'd allow us to publish some of the images in *Vice*. She agreed and even did us one better by granting us an interview about the whole ordeal.

Vice: How did you end up stalking your dad?
Johanna Heldebro: My parents' divorce happened, and my dad and I had a pretty big falling-out. I would talk to him once in a while, but I mostly severed ties with him. I knew he lived in Stockholm. I didn't know where he had moved exactly, just that he lived with his girlfriend and her two kids. A couple of years passed and one time when he was in New York for business we got lunch. I had my camera with me, and I ended up following him after we said good-bye.

What were you hoping to discover?
I wanted to see what he did when he was by himself. That was the inspiration for the project, and then I started looking him up on the internet. Using satellite images, I found out where his house was located. I did research and started traveling back and forth between New York and Sweden, photographing him over a period of eight or nine months.

And he had no idea you were tailing him?
None. I really wanted to be able to watch him without him being able to put on a mask or act a certain way. I didn't feel like I knew him at all because of the things that had happened between him and my mom and me during the divorce. I guess I was kind of expecting to see him living this wild, exciting life.

If you don't mind me asking, why did your parents get a divorce?

Basically my dad just decided that he didn't want anything to do with us. He decided that he wasn't living the life that he wanted to live. He realized he didn't like my mom at all. Right before Christmas '05 he was totally fine, then over the holidays something happened. He fell when he was out dancing with my mom or something. After that he just got cranky. In February he didn't come on this family trip we had planned for my mom's birthday. About a month later he said he wanted a divorce and then, after my mom went to Sweden to try and save their marriage, it turned out that he was in a relationship with this woman he worked with. I don't know how long that relationship went on. He claims that it started recently, but it could have been going on for years as far as we know.

Is your mom now living in Sweden too?
Yeah, she didn't really have a choice. She couldn't stay in Montreal by herself because she wasn't able to work there without a visa; she was pretty financially dependent on my dad.

So how many times did you go to Sweden with the intent of following him around?
Three times. I would just take the train out to where he lived when I knew that no one would be home.

Did you tell your mom about what you were doing? What did she think about it?
Yeah, she thought it was really funny.



"This is where my dad lives in Sweden. Before arriving, I had only seen it on a satellite photo. I wanted the viewer to see the way I followed him—how with each shot I'm trying to get closer and closer."

How did you prepare for the photos? Were you running around Stockholm looking for hiding places?

Well, my dad and his girlfriend live together, so when I knew no one would be there I went and explored the neighborhood and photographed around the house. I wanted to get a feel for where I could stand without being seen. That was the first time I took photos of him, and during my next trip I went to his work and walked around. There was a lot of waiting. It was a lot less fun and exciting than you would think.

Did you use a telephoto lens?

Yeah, but what I used depended on whether I was expecting him or not. When I had time, I would photograph whatever I was curious about around Stockholm. When he showed up, I would switch to my telephoto lens so I could keep my distance and not be discovered.

What did you hope to learn by doing this?

I guess I was trying to find some sort of answer to why he left my mom. I figured that he was with a 25-year-old or something like that, but that's not what I discovered. I found out that he had an almost identical life to the one he had with my family, except with different children and a different woman who was basically the same age as my mother.

Did you have to literally break into the house, or was the door unlocked?

No, no, my older sister let me in. She's lived in Sweden for a while. She has a better relationship with my father than I do. I also have a younger brother.

What did your professor say when you proposed this project as your graduate thesis?

At first she thought I was totally nuts for taking the risk of going so far away and hoping to build my entire thesis for grad school on it. I think she was concerned that it wouldn't pan out, and I never thought it would go as well as it did.

Has your dad seen the photos?

I had to tell him because he was planning to attend my graduation, where the work would be displayed. I explained what I had done, and he had an obvious reaction—he was pretty pissed off and disappointed at first. I think he's a little bit sick and tired of the divorce still being an issue, but at the same time I think he was partly flattered that I had an interest in his life because I had told him I didn't want anything to do with him.

So he eventually came around and accepted what you did?

Yeah, I think he's been a good sport about it, but we still don't have a very close relationship. That's not specifically because of this project, though. ■



"I sectioned the projects into chapters like a book. Each chapter has a title, and the one that includes this photo is called 'My Father From a Distance.' The second chapter, 'Finding My Way Inside,' is about me entering the house. I was curious about what it was going to look like. Was it going to look like my house? Were there going to be pictures of me?"



"These are pictures I found on a shelf in the house of myself, my brother, Erik, and my sister, Sofie. I was inside for about 25 minutes total."



"A couple of days later I went back and he was home alone again. Here he's filling up a pitcher to water the plants."



"Someone called him while I was outside, and the funniest thing was that he was microwaving soup the entire time. It should only take a minute or two to warm up soup, but he must've had it in there for over 30 minutes."



"This was one of the first pictures I took of my dad. I followed him to his office, which is part of a larger, mall-like building in the suburbs of Stockholm. He's eating alone in the food court, surrounded by other businesspeople."



"This is my dad walking back to his office after lunch."



"He was also using the computer that night. I'm pretty sure he was just checking emails and putting some music on, but he closed all the windows when he got up from his desk so I don't really know what was going on. It's kind of an open area without light, so the screen was the only bright spot."



"One day he just took his motor scooter out for a minute and came right back. I think he had to reposition it in the garage or something."



"I visited the house a few times at night, when I knew he would be alone and just doing chores and relaxing."



"This is one of the photos I took from the veranda outside the window. Here he's painting the kitchen."



"I knew my dad liked to run, so when I was doing my internet research I looked for a place where he might go for a jog. And, luckily, he did."



"This is the end of the final chapter of the project, which followed him running and now shows that he's gone."

Weather and Sleep

Two Perfect Obsessions

BY LISA CARVER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JIM KREWSON

Those of you old enough to remember the 80s know that it was the decade in which everyone suddenly realized they were bisexual. In the 90s, we diagnosed ourselves as bipolar and prescribed ourselves cocaine. Then in the 2000s, we all suffered the mass hysteria of introspection and had an orgy of reality.

At first I loved it. I thought my life was so interesting and so was everyone else's. Then I had a reality hangover. I got so tired of all the TV shows, the intricacies of self-medicating, talk therapy, memoirs, emo, and... frankly... the human race. Aren't you tired of it too? I was completely fascinated by mankind for so long, but now I'm overinundated with the minutiae of what it means to be oneself. Without that question, what is left? I'll tell you: the nonself. That's why I'm still interested in obsessives, long after my patience with the rest of the spectrum of mental disorders has run out. I find it delightfully refreshing that the object of obsessives' most profound interest is, unlike almost everyone else crazy or sane, something other than themselves.

Wolfgang Carver studies sociology and religion through what's happening in the sky, and Gordon Massman works on creating a seven-by-four-foot utopia, a welcoming nest for elusive sleep. Neither of these gentlemen, please note, dwells on his feelings. They are almost entirely focused on the atmosphere.

THE PERFECT WEATHER: WOLFGANG CARVER

My 15-year-old son, Wolfgang, has had a tempestuous relationship with climate conditions since before he could even speak. He is endlessly fascinated by the weather, and not knowing what is happening with it for even half an hour is torment to him. When he was one year old I'd have to carry him around town every day to check all the satellite dishes. His first words were about clouds, wind, and mud, and most of his words ever since have been centered on those same topics. His artwork, from childhood finger paintings to current oils on canvas and sculptures, heavily features erupting volcanoes, obliterating snow, and hail. Even his religious beliefs—which no one in his family or among his friends share—begin and end with the natural disasters of the apocalypse and the balminess of heaven.

Lisa Carver: How many times a day do your sister and I ask you to stop talking about the weather?

Wolfgang Carver: I would say about ten. It's less since I got my 24-hour weather radio, because I can have it anywhere I want and I don't have to turn on the TV every hour and wait for the weather.

What does the weather radio talk about?

How it's supposed to be that day or the next few days, or barometric pressure, or wind chill in the Dover area, Maine, Boston, and Mount Washington. Plus they give warnings, like if there's flooding, go to high places. "Turn around, don't drown." Or if there's lightning, don't touch metal.

How do they make the forecast?

Satellites in space and satellite dishes on earth receiving signals.

You have two CDs that you listen to over and over when you're not listening to your weather radio. What are they?

Al Gore and a storm CD—thunder and rain, that's all.

What does Al Gore talk about?

The world ending. And how we're infecting the environment. And a hole in the atmosphere we made with pollution that the sun gets through. And the greenhouse effect—lots and lots of heat getting trapped, changing the weather.

What does weather mean to you?

It always makes me feel safe because... if I don't listen to it, how will I know what's going to happen?

What's the forecast for the next few days?

Sunny today, around 20 degrees, but wind chill zero or below zero. Storm coming in Saturday, coming from out West. Three to six inches of snow Saturday night and Sunday.

How would you describe our family vacation to Florida?

It was between 70 and 80 degrees. There was a storm. Gusts of wind picked up sand and got it in my eyes. Hurricane Ida was in Texas and then Jacksonville and turning down and swirling in the Gulf coming around the tip of Florida to us where we were in Miami.

What would stop you—rain, sleet, hail, or snow?

I think hail. Sometimes it's four inches across and I could get knocked out.

What's your favorite weather?

Thunderstorms.

How did you feel when those bullies snatched your umbrella and stomped on it?

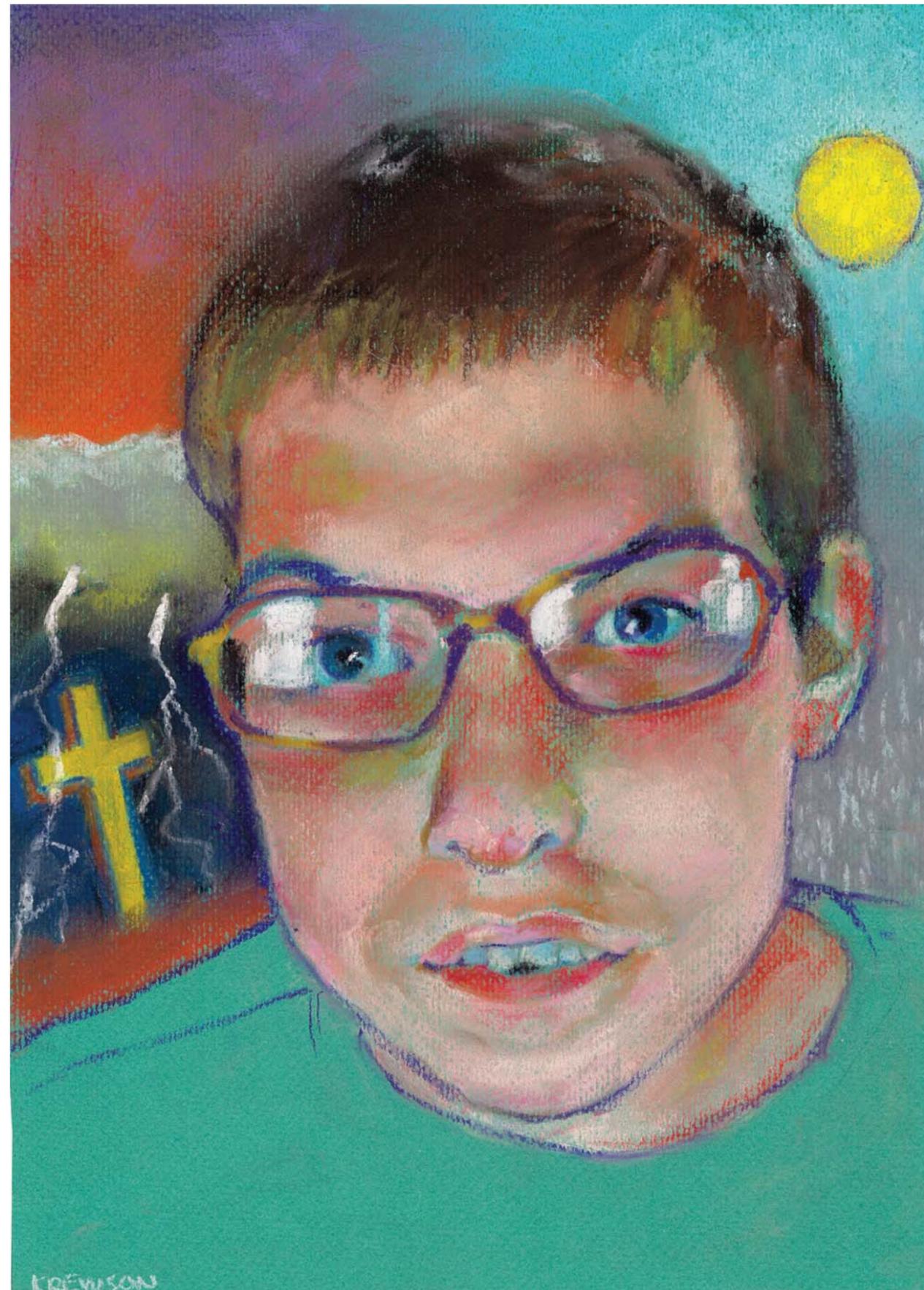
I felt like I was cold and wet. It was raining off and on all day. This was around 2:30 PM, walking home. It was around 65 degrees Fahrenheit. But I was walking through the forest, in the shade, so it was probably more like 64 or 63.

What are you most afraid of?

The apocalypse, because it's about people dying, and I don't want to die yet. No one really knows how the earth will end, but my theory is earthquakes, volcanoes erupting, tornadoes, thunder, and lightning all around the world.

Tell me more about the apocalypse.

If people are worshipping the devil in the form of witchcraft and bad movies, then God would burn the earth when he comes here. But we would be safe in the gates of the Holy City. The weather is sunny there. And warm, but we wouldn't feel it the way we do now because we wouldn't be in the form our bodies are in now—no sickness and broken bones. We'd be flying through the warmth more than walking.



We would still have our heart and soul, which would feel love and happiness but doesn't touch things the same way, doesn't feel hurt. Everyone would be vegetarians, so animals would be free. We'd have a new earth, all pure and sweet, and it would be only spring and summer. No air pollution.

What was that DVD you picked out in Walmart yesterday?

It was about natural disasters: earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, and floods. But I ended up not buying it because I got scared.

But you didn't want any other DVD, even though I said you could have any DVD at all. It's funny that what you're most attracted to in the world is also what most terrifies you. Some people are like that about love. It's very powerful.

I'm attracted to knowing what's going to happen. I feel safe then.

Are you interested in dating ever?

I don't know yet. I think I'll just wait, because I don't want to end up like you.

[laughs] End up like me how?

Divorcing everybody.

Oh my God. OK, I'll take that hit. I won't edit that out. Do you have any obsessions other than the weather?

Time. [gets up and leaves the room]

Did you just go check the microwave to make sure it was on the time rather than how many seconds left to cook?

Yeah.

We have ten other clocks in the house. Why do you always have to have the microwave tell time, too?

I don't know. So I won't be late? [laughs]

THE PERFECT SLEEP: GORDON MASSMAN

There's this magnificent, filthy, disturbing poet named Gordon Massman. I—like everyone—hate poets. In fact, I hate pretty much everything, so it is no easy thing to please me poetically, or at all. I sent him a fan letter and asked him about his obsession with achieving the perfect sleeping conditions: sheets tucked in just right so that they will never snap out from under the blanket and wake him if he moves, body lotioned so there is no chance of an itch in the night to wake him, bowels emptied even if he bleeds from straining so that the need to defecate will never nudge him out of a finally achieved sound sleep, and so on. He worked so hard on perfecting his little cocoon of a sleeping environment. He pretty much worked on it all night every night for ten years until he went so crazy with sleep deprivation that he ended up in an insane asylum. Twice. And got divorced. Thrice.

Well, obviously there's a lot of sorrow behind this story, but since I don't feel the need inside me for anything to be any certain way at all, I don't relate to the pain and fear that must be associated with compulsion. I can't imagine what it feels like. So all I'm left with is what it looks like. And, as do heroin addicts in the movies with their works and slang and reedy desperation, Gordon's insomnia looks voluptuous, interesting, and sexy.

He sent me a letter about his life and it was so overwhelming that I wrote back asking him if we could break it down to just one night, minute by minute. He didn't respond for a long time. Then he wrote that, besides being busy revising his newest book of poems, just talking about these obsessions was reactivating them (he's semi-cured these days), so he had to bow out of the project, but I was free to create out of his phrases one night in his life, and here it is.

Lamp turned off and on and off and on and off and on and off. Urinate a few drops. Check clocks. Repeat.

When the sun goes down, this is what went down (I imagine) chez Gordon Massmann:

10 PM: Rip down whatever I can: chicken leg, pork chop, cheese, bread, to aid with...

10:20 PM: Force myself to defecate, straining so hard I bleed.

10:30 PM: Set thermostat exactly right, check door locks, toilet seats down, drawers closed, things on tables secure so as not to tumble and thud me awake. Go check if car doors are locked.

10:40 PM: Make sure dog water bowl brimful. Psychically perceive dog's bladder is full, go walk him again so he won't disturb asking to be walked.

11 PM: Face shaved, teeth flossed—nothing must be caught in between (better floss again), check faucets, drawer handles all down and flat against drawer, lotion slathered on body to prevent itching, bottom sheet tightly tucked around mattress corners, foot powder caked on toes, blanket covering feet, remember shoes in closet cannot be overturned and instead must all be soles to floor—go check. Lamp turned off and on and off and on and off and on and off.

11:30 PM: Orgasm relaxes. Must have one.

11:40 PM: Finally, must urinate immediately before falling asleep, which means that if I haven't fallen asleep within five minutes in bed I have to drag myself to the bathroom to urinate the few pathetic drops I've accumulated. However, I cannot allow myself to sleep until certain numbers shine on the digital clock in a certain order. Tricky to coordinate.

11:55 PM: Remember furnace will boom when switching on. Go downstairs and fix it.

12:05 AM: Check door locks, toilet seats down, drawers closed, things on tables secure so as not to tumble and thud me awake. Go check if car doors are locked.

12:20 AM: Urinate a few drops. Floss. Check faucets, drawer handles all down and flat against drawer, shoes in closet all sole-down, bottom sheet tightly tucked around mattress corners, blanket covering feet. Lamp turned off and on and off and on and off and on and off. Watch digital clock flick the wrong numbers. Go urinate. Repeat.

1:35 AM: Check dog bowl. Walk dog. Check car locks.

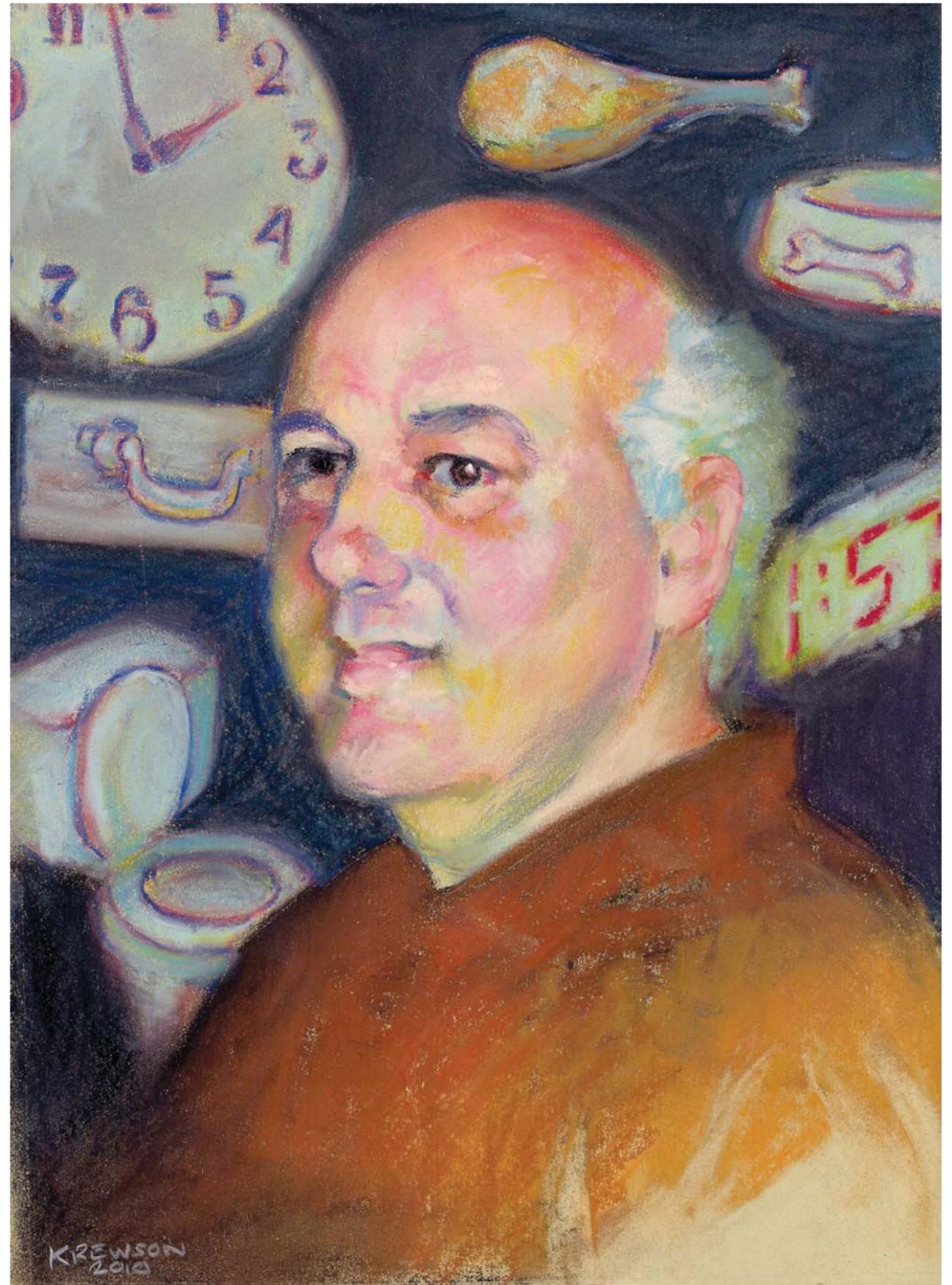
2 AM: Check thermostat, door locks, toilet seats, things on tables, lotion situation, foot-powder levels, soundness of blankets and sheets. Lamp turned off and on and off and on and off and on and off. Urinate a few drops. Check clocks. Repeat.

3:05 AM: Check locks, sheets, seats, things. Floss, slather, powder, pee. Lamp turned off and on and off and on and off and on and off. Check clock. Orgasm relaxes. Check cock.

4:05 AM: Walk dog, check car locks, check door locks, check sheets, urinate, light off on off on off on off. Check clock. Remember furnace booms.

4:30 AM: Drag mattress into concrete basement to sleep there—darker and less traffic noise.

5 AM: Orgasm relaxes. Must have one. ■





Meow Meow Meow

I Like to Have Tea With Cats in Japan Because I'm Shy

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY TOMOKAZU KOSUGA
TRANSLATED BY LENA OISHI

Cat cafés are huge in Japan right now. As the name suggests, these are coffee shops where cat lovers go to sip overpriced lattes and hang out with an adorable smooth pile of kitties. In the past five years, exactly 79 such cafés have popped up all over Japan. What's weird is that the café cats aren't expensive pedigreed felines like Persians or those other ones with the funny bendy ears, they're just the everyday mixed breeds you might find in the back lot of your local supermarket, cats who, in the immortal words of Brian Setzer, "slink down the alley, looking for a fight/Howling to the moonlight on a hot summer night." Likewise, in the past few years, there's been an explosion of photo books and DVDs featuring average-joe cats. If people are so fascinated by what are essentially domesticated alley cats, why don't they just swoop one up from the legions of strays all over Japan and take them home? I'll tell you why: because landlords in Japan are dicks.

Thirty-eight-year-old Norimasa Hanada, the owner of *Neko no mise* (Shop of Cats), Tokyo's first-ever cat café, explains the problem: "Most Japanese rental apartments prohibit pets. The only ones that allow them are condominium apartments for families. This means that young, single-dwelling workers in their 20s and 30s can't even think about getting any pets, despite the fact that they're stressed out and are seeking comfort and companionship of some kind."

It makes sense, then, that most cat-café fans are relatively young. More than 30 customers shuffled into and out of *Neko no mise* during the four hours I recently spent there, and apart from one lady in her 50s, all the other patrons were in their 20s or 30s (most of them female, with only three guys spotted the entire time). Another contributing factor to the cat-café trend is that Japanese people are chronically shy, to the extent that many can't even hold a decent conversation about the weather with a stranger. The wordless, tactile communication of kitty cats is a great source of comfort for these high-strung, antisocial urbanites.

At *Neko no mise*, a few sofas, chairs, and tables were scattered throughout the café, which emanated a relaxing, feminine atmosphere complete with soft music. One wall was lined with a bookshelf full of hundreds of manga books. Apparently there are 14 resident cats at *Neko no mise*, and because it's winter in Tokyo right now, most were huddled under the *kotatsu* (a traditional Japanese low table with an electric heater on the underside). Since the cats are obviously the kings of the café (and they know it), they seemed more arrogant than I'm used to. Some of them were skittish and jumped around every time a new person came in or walked out. I got the impression that unless you're willing to stay for the long haul, befriending a café cat is trickier than desired, especially for an establishment that makes money off the illusion that patrons will be guaranteed some pussy lovin'.

There are a few different types of cat-café customers. Newcomers will be so swept up in the distinct atmosphere that they will just sit there stunned. It looked as if most of them had never had a pet cat or even touched one before and it seemed like they were struggling to

come to terms with the unpredictable behavior of real cats while their fantasies of docile, purring balls of love were being shot to hell. In an hour's stay, most could only manage to touch a passing cat just once. Many customers seemed like the shy, meek, silent type who were in need of a hug or two. Since these sorts don't have the courage to go up to a cat and play with it themselves, they would read a book and sip coffee while they patiently hoped for a cat to come closer. It broke my heart.

Those who came in groups were generally cheerful and talked a lot, using the café as a place to catch up with friends. The cat factor was a bonus for them, and they grabbed the cat toys lying around and played with the cats quite successfully. The couples that I saw were either in new relationships or were still in the friendship stage, and were using the cats to bridge the awkward distance between them.

While I sipped my coffee in a room full of cats and cat groupies, I could slowly feel the soothing effects of the kitty café wash over me. Before I knew it, I was smiling for no reason and was so at ease that my eyes started to droop in a sort of happy stupor. Others must have been feeling the same numbing effects because occasionally the room full of people would fall silent as they stared at the cats' every move.

Most customers stayed for at least one hour, but apparently some fanatics can last more than six hours. Norimasa told me that "while the average stay is an hour and a half, some regulars take a sick day from work and stay all day. They say that they're about to buckle under the stress of their workload and need some time out. Some regulars come four or five times a week, while those who have become so mentally drained from work that they have taken an extended leave from their jobs come every day, seeking comfort and healing."

Cat cafés generally charge a time-based fee. *Neko no mise* charges \$1.50 every ten minutes (\$9 an hour), and \$21.50 for a special three-hour plan. Might sound like they're overcharging, but maintaining a clean, dreamy cat environment ain't cheap. The only way for cat cafés to survive is for them to maintain a high turnover rate and keep away the cheapskates who will otherwise undoubtedly stay for hours on end, nursing a single cup of coffee. Sadly, this also means that the regulars who stay for six hours end up paying more than \$42 just to stroke some fur.

There's a Japanese legend that says that cats become popular every time there's a recession in this country, and it's true that there's been a huge boom in cat and cat-related-merchandise sales these past few years. Something about those pointy ears and tiny paws has a calming effect on the human mind. Or perhaps it's the traditional Japanese culture of forcing people to behave like herds of sheep and act appropriately by carefully judging the vibe of every situation (what the Japanese literally call "reading the air") that makes the independent, freedom-loving cat the perfect target of obsession. I know I'm making this all sound pretty sad, but like most cute things, it's best not to think about it too much. Just stare into the hypnotizing eyes of the pretty kitties and let your troubles fall away. Purr.



WHO'S WHO AT THE CAT CAFÉ?



Left: Emiko, 22, works in fashion
Right: Yoko, 23, housewife

Vice: Do you come here often?

Emiko: It's my first time.

Yoko: It's my second time. The first time I came was six months ago.

Why did you decide to stop by today?

Yoko: I love cats but I can't get my own, so I thought I'd hang out with them here.

How did you find out about this café?

Emiko: You can see it from the platform of the train station nearby.

What do you do at a cat café?

Yoko: I just stare at the cats the whole time. Watching them makes me feel relaxed. If they happen to come near me, that's even better.



Kayoko, 32, kindergarten teacher

Vice: Are you a regular here?

Kayoko: I first visited three weeks ago, and since then I've been coming here every week. I'm completely hooked.

You sound like a devoted fan. How did you discover this place?

I ride the Yokohama Line train a lot, and one day I saw a glimpse of the café's interior while I was passing through. If you tiptoe you can see people playing with the cats from the train. I checked out their blog and it looked like a nice café, so I invited a friend to come with me and we found that it was a really friendly place. Now I come alone, like a lot of customers here. Chatting with other people is part of the fun.

It looked like the cat you were playing with earlier was scolded by one of the staff. What did he do?

I saw him grab a stick of sugar from the table with his mouth and

run, so I told one of the staff. I had heard they're not allowed to do that. So he ended up getting scolded... Apparently that was his third time today. Other cats try to lick milk out of the pot that they bring with your coffee. Maybe that's just their way of saying that they want to play with you.



Left: Masataka, 32, salesperson
Right: Satoko, 36, salesperson

Is this your first visit to a cat café?

Satoko: Yes, my boyfriend decided to bring me here today.

Masataka: I've been here a few times.

What's your impression of the place?

Satoko: It's great, there are a lot more types of cats than I expected.

How long are you planning to stay today?

Satoko: Probably about three hours.

Do you own any cats yourself?

Masataka: No.

Satoko: There are quite a few strays in my neighborhood but it's difficult to touch them because they're so aloof.

Are you a cat person?

Masataka: Yes, definitely.

Satoko: My parents own a dog so I'm not biased. I like all animals.

What sort of cat behavior makes you happy?

Satoko: When it rubs up against me and is generally friendly.

Masataka: When it plays with me. Or better yet, when it sits on my lap.



Botan (female) has the strange tendency to suck on her younger brother's dick, which she mistakes for her mother's nipple. As a result, her brother can't help pissing all over the place.



Customers can buy snacks to feed the cats for 300 yen (about \$3.50).



Nishin (male) gets his nails did.



Megumi, 33, office worker

Vice: Is this your first time at a place like this?

Megumi: No, it's my second.

Where do you live?

I came from Hokkaido, which sounds awfully far away but I was scheduled to come to Tokyo anyway, so I thought I'd drop by. I always try to come here whenever I'm in Tokyo.

Wow, Hokkaido? That's a plane ride away from Tokyo. Are there any cat cafés in Hokkaido at all?

Yes, I've been to it. It's probably the only one that exists there right now.

Do you feel like each cat café has its own vibe?

Yes. I've been to a different one in Tokyo too, but from my experience I think that the cats here aren't as afraid of strangers as they are at the other cafés and they play with you more. Maybe they're not as stressed out because it's a little more spacious here.

Do you own any cats yourself?

I had two cats but they both died. The second one passed away last week, actually. He was 18 years old.

Sorry to hear that... What do you like about this particular café?

I check the café's blog regularly because the owner always writes so much about what's happening here. That's part of the appeal.

How long are you planning to stay today?

Probably two or three hours. I'm kind of surprised how crowded it is today, though. I didn't expect that.

What exactly do you do for so many hours?

Mainly stare at the cats and play with them. I love it when they jump on my lap. Last time some of the cats sat on my lap, but I'm not so lucky today.



Nakatsuka, 39, office worker

Vice: What do you do when you're at a cat café?

Nakatsuka: I mainly shoot photos of the cats. This is the only time that I ever take photos, really. I come to take a bunch of cat photos, and that's it. I don't even read.

So you're saying that you own that expensive-looking camera just so that you can take pictures of cats?

Yes, I bought this camera after I started coming here on a regular basis. Until then, I didn't really care how the photos came out or what type of camera I used, but after shooting for a while I gradually felt an urge to use a better camera.

How often do you come here?

Once a week.

And where do you live?

In Saitama prefecture. It takes an hour and 20 minutes to get here.

How long do you usually stay?

About six hours, so I guess I use up a whole day. Sometimes I even take a paid day off work just to come.

So including the commute, that means each visit takes about nine hours! Have you always liked cats?

Yes, I've always loved animals. We had a pet cat when I was little, but now I live alone and can't really own one myself, which is why I come here. Just looking at them makes me feel at ease.

Is there anything the cats do that make you extra happy?

I love it when I'm playing with a cat using a cat toy, and the cat grabs my knee with its paws. ■



Pocky (female). Who's a pretty?



Shiratama (female). Usually quiet, this one likes being stroked and doesn't run away.



Holdt

Jacob Holdt Is Not a Hippie

Some New Photos From America's Greatest Dane

BY HENRIK SALTZSTEIN
PORTRAIT BY CAMILLA STEPHAN

Jacob Holdt is one of America's most important photographers and he's not even American. His book *American Pictures* did as much to revolutionize documentary photography as it did to paint an entirely new image of the country in the 70s, so it's at least a little fair that Americans stuck their flag in him. In truth, he's a Dane.

As the *American Pictures* story goes, Holdt, facing multiple criminal charges after some nefarious left-wing activities during the late 60s, left Denmark intent on joining one of Latin America's various guerrilla movements. He got sidetracked, hitching some 80,000 miles back and forth across America and bedding down with gangsters, junkies, prostitutes, and Klan members. His parents, wary of the outrageous letters he sent from the road, sent him a \$30 Canon Dial half-frame camera to document it all. Five years later he'd taken nearly 15,000 of the country's most indelible photographs.

Holdt still travels the States visiting with his subjects. He's even brought his two-year-old son on trips through urban ghettos and rural slums to make sure he didn't become a racist prick. This is not at all unexpected from a guy who funneled all the profits from his book toward the anti-apartheid struggle in Africa and says the best way to deal with the odd gay rape is to instantly embrace your attacker. In addition to the enlightening little chat that follows, Holdt was kind enough to share some new photographs he took of a mass murderer named Dave hanging around with his family.

Vice: Can you tell us a bit about these new images?

Jacob Holdt: I met Dave in '96 through his brother, Snoopy, whom I'd picked up in my car back in '91. I'd given up hitchhiking by then since no one would pick you up anymore. Snoopy had been waiting on a ride for three days when I came along. When he eventually started talking, he told me his brother and him had killed more people than he could even count.

Naturally, I was skeptical and just dropped him off where he needed to go.

Had he actually killed anyone?

I didn't know at that point, but five years later I tracked him down—me and a journalist, who was intrigued by this random mass-murderer story. Snoopy was in prison. Apparently, two days after I had dropped him off, he had broken into a house and tried to butcher the family living there, cutting up the woman's stomach. She barely survived. There was no reason to doubt him and his brother having murdered all those people.

And that motivated you to track down his brother, Dave.

I was curious about where all that hate comes from and what makes people act in such desperation. Dave and his family lived in the middle of a deserted swampland and everyone was afraid of them.

Were they friendly with you, though?

At first we were met with shotguns pointed at us, but you have to understand that people like that are potentially the easiest to befriend because of their hunger for love and acceptance. Obviously, me knowing Snoopy smoothed the waters. I watched Dave and his wife, Connie, smack each other around and beat on their kids. Getting actively in between them wouldn't have helped anything. I mean, I wouldn't get very far if I was perpetually criticizing people in their own homes. I just hang around and observe and help where I can. By doing that, you can enable people to believe in themselves. Dave and Snoopy probably didn't kill people because they hated them, more likely they did it because they hated themselves.

And then in May of last year you went back to visit.

Yep. I brought a friend with me, and when I told her we were going to see a mass murderer she thought I was joking. When we arrived at Dave's, the front lawn was covered in blood. I thought, "Oh no, oh no." But it turned out to be blood from his cow.



Snoopy, Dave's brother, after hitching a ride with Holdt in '91.



Dave's wife, Connie, disciplining their daughter Mel at their house in '96.

“I’m not a photographer—no more than anyone else with a camera. My talent was gaining access to people’s homes and lives. Once I was there I basically just had to point and shoot.”

He’d killed it?

Yes. He told me he’d been drunk the previous night and used his cow as target practice. As it was trying to escape he got his shotgun, started up his old pickup truck, went after it, and eventually killed it.

You’re practically laughing!

What else can you do? The spiral of violence, hate, and despair had run so deep in this family. You see that photo of Dave’s daughter Mel? She’s looking at a photo I took of her uncle Snoopy back in ’91. When he got out of prison in 2003, he raped her—his own niece. Today she’s in prison.

It’s a pretty horrid situation.

Well, I’m dogmatic in my choices—if I wasn’t I would always have chosen beauty over ugliness, pleasure over pain. You know how hippies always say, “Let’s have a good time”? To me that’s just selfish, and thinking like that would have gotten me nowhere. I would have never made *American Pictures* without being used—and without the abuse I endured.

How did *American Pictures* come about? I mean, you were going to be a revolutionary freedom fighter.

I started hitchhiking to various Vietnam rallies across America instead. In Chicago I met an 18-year-old black girl who let me stay with her family in an all-black neighborhood. Seeing firsthand how alienated the black community felt was just mind-blowing to me.

But you hadn’t started taking pictures at that point?

No, my parents sent me the camera in ’72, and at first it was just a faster way for me to keep a journal. I had no photography experience, and whenever I showed my pictures to real photographers they would shake their heads at me. But they also gave me some tips, like wrapping pink toilet paper around the flash and placing it behind lamps... stuff like that.

When did you realize you were actually in the midst of a massive photographic project?

Mostly I just thought about getting by and finding places to stay. But in ’73 I saw a juxtaposed photo slide show in Florida and I thought that this could be a way for me to present my photos and explain the stories behind them. I still don’t think my photos have stand-alone qualities to them.

A lot of people are protective of your work, though, and believe you’re a very skilled photographer.

But I’m not a photographer—no more than anyone else with a camera. I barely took a single picture for 12 years after *American Pictures*. My talent was gaining access to people’s homes and lives. Once I was there I basically just had to point and shoot. People often send me their photos of homeless people on the street, but truthfully, they bore me. Anyone could take those pictures.

Why do you think getting this sort of access came so easy to you?

It didn’t, not at first. I spent two years being mugged whenever I entered black neighborhoods. So I mostly stuck to college towns. I met black students and gradually it changed my outlook, because I also met their friends and relatives and occasionally they would be ghetto thugs.

So what changed exactly?

Simple: I stopped being a racist. I had been fearful of them, because I was told “Don’t go there” or “Be careful in that neighborhood.” When you are fearful like that you perpetuate a negative prejudice. You are telling people that they are bad and you have reason to fear them. That’s the psychology of racism, and that’s what I try to dismantle when I talk about *American Pictures* today.

That can’t be as easy as it sounds.

It doesn’t happen overnight, but when you give out acceptance you should receive it as well. After



Dave showing his oldest daughter Mary how to fire a rifle in '96.



Mel with a picture of her uncle Snoopy in '96.



Dave's mom in '96 with a picture of her third son, who is currently serving a life sentence.



Dave with his cow, which he killed the night before, in '09.



Dave with the youngest of two babies his daughter Mary left behind, in '09.

“I had some friends who would lend me their Cadillac. I filled it up with Bibles and posed as a Bible salesman.”

those two years I was never mugged again, no matter where I went. But you still have to prove yourself. Every time I arrived in a new city and ghetto, they automatically called me “boss man” because they thought I was an undercover cop. You know, everyone had long hair back then, especially undercover cops. But then I started weaving my beard and that really opened doors for me.

That’s all it took?

It also closed some. Like when I had to renew my visa I would always go to either Mexico or Canada because it was free there and I couldn’t afford the ten bucks it cost in the US. The trouble was getting back in, looking like a hippie during the Nixon administration, so I had to improvise. In Canada I had some friends who would lend me their Cadillac. I filled it up with Bibles and posed as a Bible salesman. I also had a short-haired wig for emergencies.

Smart. But how were you able to afford to buy and develop your film?

I donated blood once a week—that earned me two rolls. When I was through with them I sent them to a girlfriend in Washington and she would stock them. I went there once a month to develop them and look them over, but she wasn’t happy with our arrangement, and she kept pushing for me to marry her. Eventually I got scared she would destroy the film if I kept leading her

on, so I moved them to a more levelheaded ex-girlfriend’s in New York.

You had lots of girlfriends back then?

When you travel like I did, you didn’t get to choose. That’s why I called myself a vagabond. It’s a different philosophy.

How so?

Well, a hitchhiker travels from A to B, whereas a vagabond moves in a third dimension—you roll with the punches. I realized early on that if I allowed myself to choose, I would never get where I wanted to go: beyond and behind the scenes.

So it wasn’t a case of just catting around the country.

It wasn’t desensitized like that. I received tons of love from them and vice versa. It kept me going. But of course beggars can’t be choosers, so it wasn’t like I always loved the company of each and every woman I met. But I couldn’t say no, and that applied to men as well.

Really?

Yes. Every so often I would hitch rides with dirty old men, as I call them. I wasn’t gay, but I guess I just felt bad for them and at the same time I was fascinated by the amount of self-loathing they exhumed, the mechanisms of it all. But as a whole, the things I experienced and saw were amazing. I was having the time of my life, and people need to understand that when they see my pictures. ■



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If a black roller-skating genie who fights crime in his urban neighborhood by use of roller-skate dance-fighting wasn't a failed sitcom pilot at some point in the 1970s, I would honestly be shocked.



It's one thing to parade around in a beehive wig and stilettos looking like a character in a Broadway show about transvestites—those guys are abominable. But a man in Barnes & Noble scouting for his next great read in a pair of sensible heels? Now that's awesome.



I've always wondered what the vagina of a British gal who loves drum and bass and has dreads that look like weathered ship ropes would look like. Initially I would have guessed it looks hostile, like it has teeth and would eat your masculinity raw, but I'm gonna think outside the box and go with very pleasant and well maintained.



I've been there, brother—the deep pit of shame. Like the time I found out I had a UTI, then got upsettingly drunk and slept with a girl who looked like Drew Carey, then woke up and realized I'd missed my dentist appointment. This is one of those moments. Congratulations, sir, you are now a grown man.



This is what I imagine everyone in Europe between the ages of 18 and 28 looks like on any random afternoon: slightly androgynous, zany but in a manageable way, extremely positive attitude, and on their way to hang a futuristic-looking lamp somewhere. I don't know how someone was able to take a picture inside my brain, but whatever, I'm into it.



Desiree in the Lindy.

DON'Ts



This month's DOs & DON'Ts are written by me, the Fat Jew.



The only time it's ever acceptable to chase a chicken around is at a Dominican wedding where you're the groom and you're oiled up from head to toe—because that's tradition. What is this jerk gonna do with it once he catches it? That thing will peck your eyes the fuck out.



This bohemian nonsense has got to stop. I know you think this is fashion-forward, but Karl Lagerfeld wouldn't even wipe his life partner's fluids off his penis with that outfit. She looks like Mary-Kate LOLsen.



Whether he's an Icelandic deep-house enthusiast who thinks it's still 1995 or a Fijian mash-up DJ from the year 2021 who's so on the cutting edge of every emerging trend that it's actually intimidating, this guy is the worst.



This is a good look for a woman in her early 20s, if by "good look" you mean "destitute middle-aged Ukrainian prostitute who's been walking directly into the wind."



Question: Of the guy who looks like a lesbian, the nonthreatening black guy with a post-irony ironic trucker hat, and the guy in a bicycle helmet who's not on a bike, who is least likely to get invited to my birthday party?

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DOs



It's one thing to be the coked-up party animal at 6 AM who puts on a strapless gold dress and lets his uncircumcised dick flop around just to be hilarious, but then to also start releasing awful farts that burn the nostrils? Now that's gangster.



Yes, this is funny. Don't be a nerd.



This is how things used to be in the olden days, when a man would get disgustingly drunk and pass out in a pile of trash butt-naked but still have the decency to hang his hat over his genitals. It's nice to see the next generation carrying on the timeless traditions that make America great.



This kind of thing starts with neck kissing, progresses to the reach-around tit grab, then builds up to her getting fingered over her jeans for 20 to 25 minutes to the point where the denim is chafing her vagina, and then her giving me a handjob in my bathroom while the Fugees' first album was playing. Her hands were so rough but I was into it and... Wait, what were we just talking about again?



This girl looks like a mystical creature who would rise from the water during spring break, try to seduce you with a goblet of banana daiquiri and attempt to 69 with you against your will, and then scamper away on all fours. Think *Lord of the Rings: Daytona Beach*.

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DON'Ts



This month's DOs & DON'Ts are written by me, the Fat Jew.



Isn't it weird that anytime a meathead/frat-boy-type character who wears football jerseys and Jägermeister keychain necklaces tries to be funny or zany, he always ends up looking like a cartoon rapist from outer space?



Look guy, I don't care what the ecstasy is telling you. Right now the only people you're about to make "friends for the rest of life" with are eight bouncers, two EMTs, and whatever poor sap they get to clean up all the vomit.



This is the type of guy I have nightmares about: a college jerk-off who has never met a black person, wears "funny" boxer shorts, thinks he's the only one who understands the nonsequential humor of *Family Guy*, and is not afraid to freestyle rap in any situation at any time regardless of how much secondhand embarrassment it's causing the people around him.



Take an ex-REO Speedwagon roadie, an Australian club promoter, and a bisexual creep from LA who works at a head shop, put them in a large pot, beat rapidly with a wire whisk, and you'll get this wart on the penis of humanity.



This is the type of house that is filled with trash, smells like soup, has a black-and-white TV, and everyone dresses like they won a \$15 shopping spree at a secondhand shop, but then there's a wall of desks lined with brand-new MacBook Airs. I'd like to dick-punch these guys repeatedly.

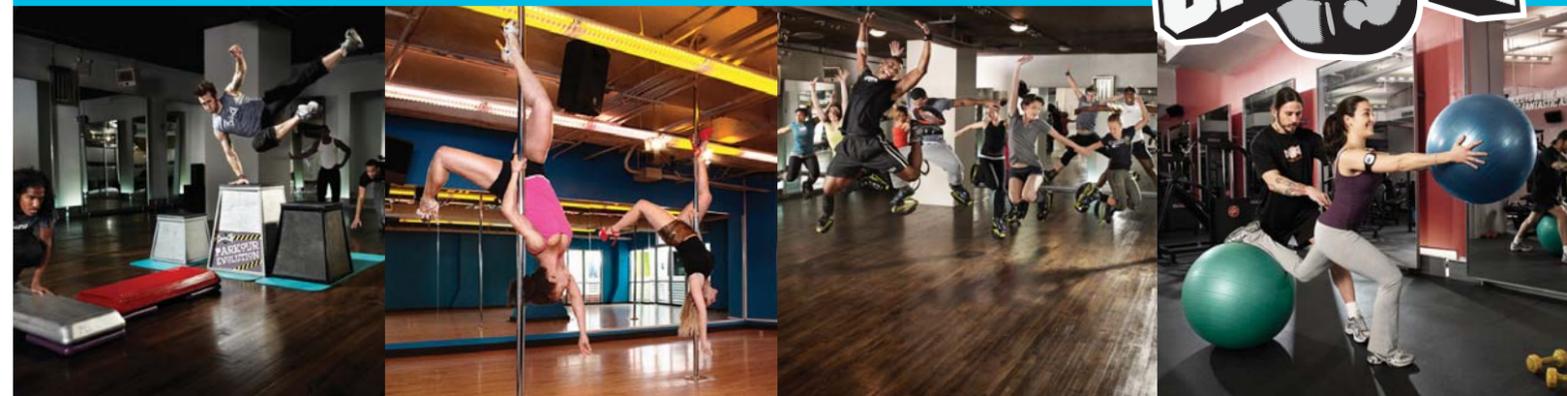


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Go Ask Alice (Abridged)

PHOTOS BY BLOSSOM BERKOFKY
STYLIST: JACLYN HODES

*Model: Ruby Aldridge at Next
Makeup: Samantha Trinh for Dior at Atelier Management
Hair: Anthony Campbell for Cutler/Redken at Atelier Management
Photo assistant: Willie Davis*

Samantha Pieef dress, vintage Cacharel blouse, Adidas socks



MINKPINK vest, vintage et dérive dress, vintage boots from Atomic Passion



Vintage jacket, vintage sweatshirt from Search & Destroy, vintage Anne Klein shorts, Fogal lights, Urban Outfitters belt, vintage boots from Edith Machinist, vintage purse from Namia



Tommy Hilfinger jacket, Vintage Laundry and Fogal lights, vintage shoes, vintage et d'evye coat (as pillow), Laura Ashley sheets



*Vintage top from Dulcinée,
Silence & Noise shorts, vintage
coat from Narnia, Wolford
tights, Betsy Giberson hat*

Vintage et dérive jacket, vintage Appletree sweater from Edith Machinist, Current/Elliott jeans, Wolford tights, vintage Ferragamo boots





et dérive vest, Champplain Leather vest, Lo skirt, LRG socks



Sussy shirt

Sensual French Film From the 70s

PHOTOGRAPHER: ISABEL ASHA PENZLIEN, STYLIST: JACLYN HODES

Makeup: Samantha Trinh for Dior at Atelier Management. Hair: Anthony Campbell for Cutler/Redken at Atelier Management
Models: Sarah Cooligan, Julia Burlingham, Dennis Nazarov, Charlie Damga. Special thanks to Otto Gillen



Built by Wendy dress, Only Hearts underwear, Agent Provocateur stockings, Uniqlo shirt



Guess shirt, Hue stockings



Vintage coat, Only Hearts bodysuit, Victoria's Secret stockings, Costume National shoes, Delphine-Charlotte Parmentier bracelet



Marc Jacobs jacket, Timpa bra, Agent Provocateur stockings, Costume National shoes



Nice Collective shirt, Calvin Klein bra and underwear, Wolford stockings



Agent Provocateur bra



Raf Simons for Fred Perry jacket, Ungaro underwear



Uniqlo shirt; Marc Jacobs jacket

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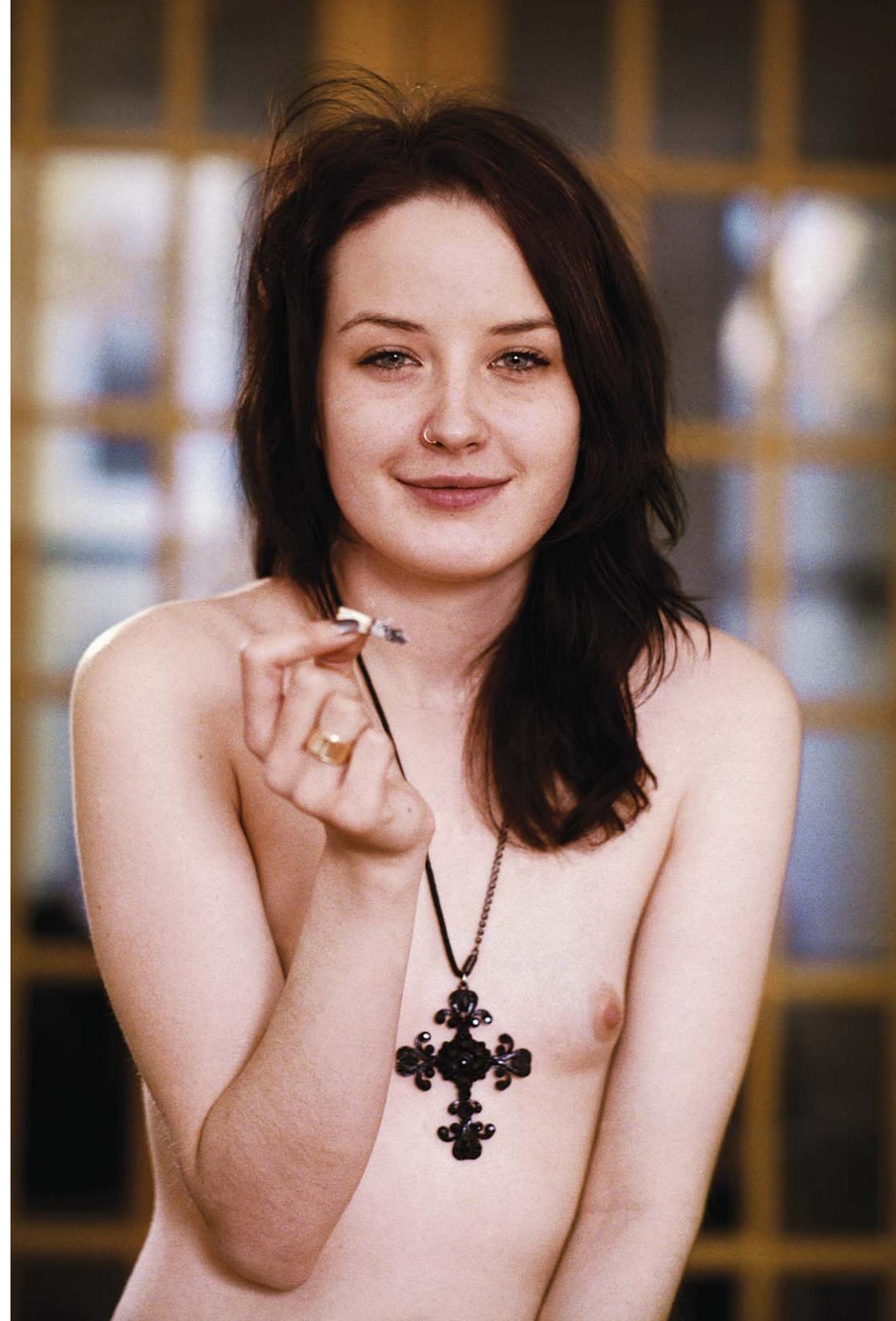


American Apparel underwear





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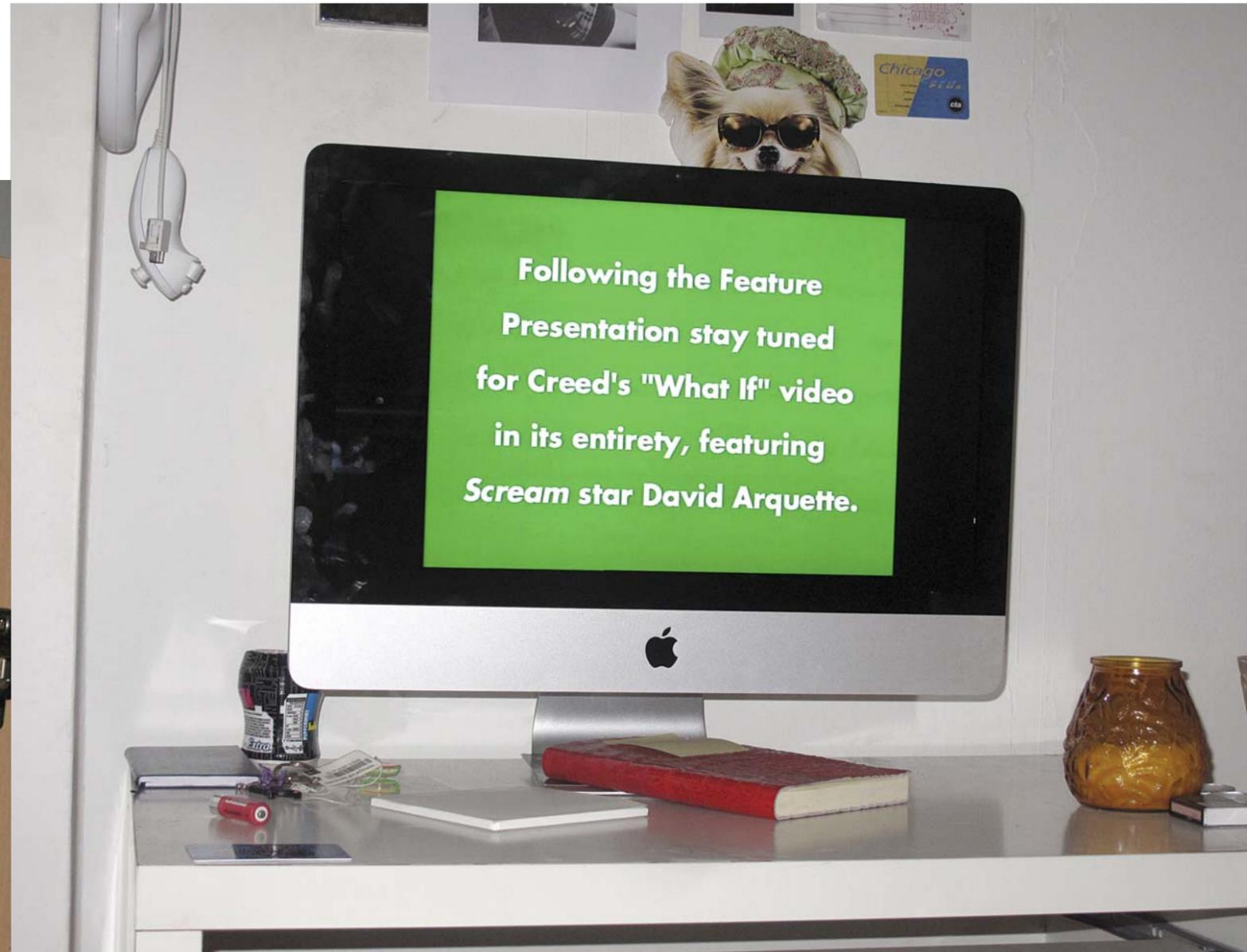
Oak necklace

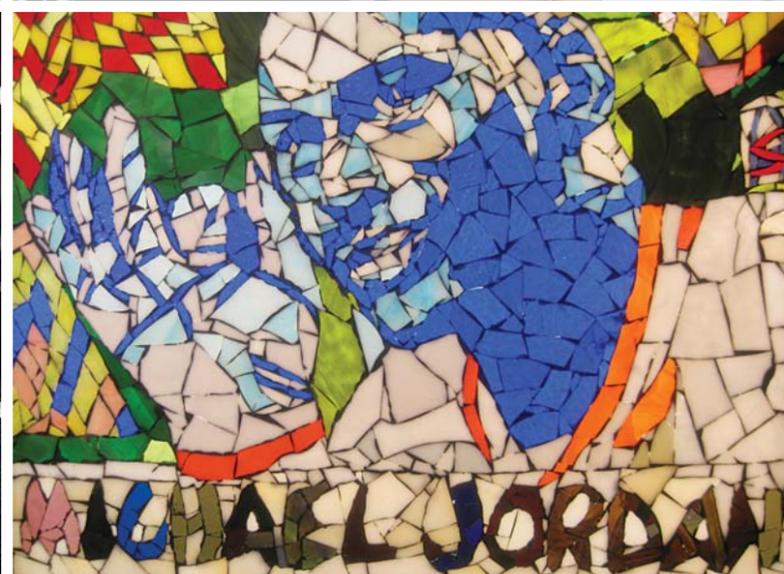


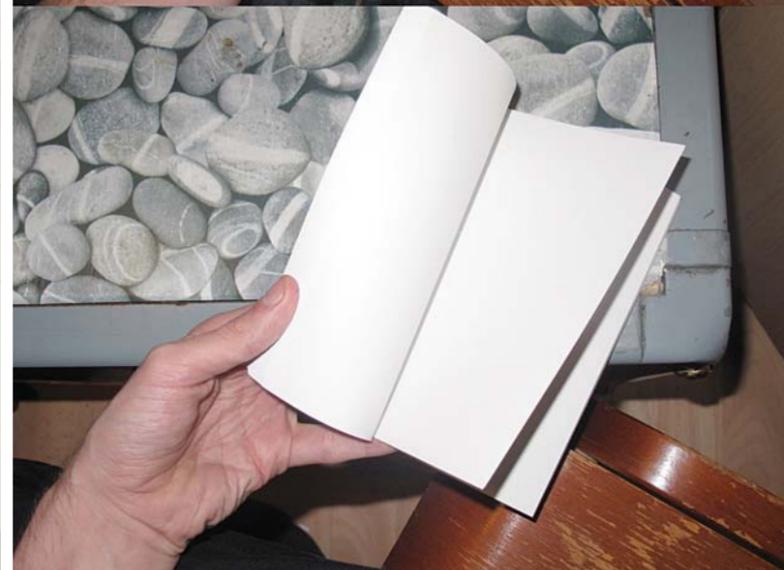
Björn Borg underwear



The Continuing Adventures of Jamie Lee Curtis Taete







Deep in the Woods

An Old Story From the Middle of Nowhere

BY ROBIN BARBER

Tim Barber—the photographer, curator, proprietor of tinyvices.com, and former Vice photo editor—recently brought us this treasure trove of photos that his mother and father, along with their fellow hippies, took during their halcyon days of gettin’ back to the land in the 1970s. First we said, “Wow, your folks weren’t fucking around!” Then we said, “Wow, these pictures are beautiful! What the hell are we doing living in this urban death trap when we could be out there in the crisp, cool snow with the goats and the eagles?” Then Tim went us one further and handed over a piece of a memoir that his father, Robin, has been working on about those long-gone days. And so here it is: a glimpse of country life courtesy of a really cool dad.

We moved Sunday to Monday, because Sunday turned out to be the day for uninvited visitors. When we tried to keep Sunday as a day of rest, for quiet pastimes such as reading, writing letters, exploring, or the complex routines of bathing, we found ourselves constantly interrupted by “Halloo!”s of greeting from the trail. They would drive down from the logging camp in yellow company pickup trucks and walk the two miles through the woods. There was just one trail, no way to get lost, nowhere else for them to end up—just the trapper’s cabin that we were bringing back to life in a clearing at the end of the trail.

This was 1971, the wilderness of British Columbia, way up near Alaska in a big empty valley, and apparently our little commune was one of the more interesting things going on. The loggers often made a family outing of it, glad for a reason to get out of the claustrophobic camp—a place with military rows of house trailers and prefab bunkhouses, work sheds, crowds of big yellow machines, and tanks of fuel on steel stands. They came with frank curiosity—expecting to see the hippies

on their commune—but also with a measure of sincere neighborliness, ready to accept us as regular people, wanting to admire our homesteading effort and to offer advice. Sometimes they brought gifts of food or tools, once a portable two-way radio—for fire safety, we were told, as we politely declined. The walk was long, rough, and steep, and they would arrive carrying exhausted children, famished and complaining. We felt obliged to brew tea and bring out food for each contingent. Our food was scrutinized but always thoroughly polished off. And when the last party headed down the trail, we wanted our Sunday all over again.

So we moved our Sabbath to Monday. The loggers were busy crashing around in the bush with their yellow machines and diesel fumes. Sunday became a regular workday for us, and Sunday visitors had the choice of watching us work or pitching in and helping us: sawing wood, carrying, hammering, digging. This turned out to be a very good idea, but that is another story. My story today concerns our Monday bathing ritual.

Getting clean was one of the hardest things when we first arrived on the Tseax

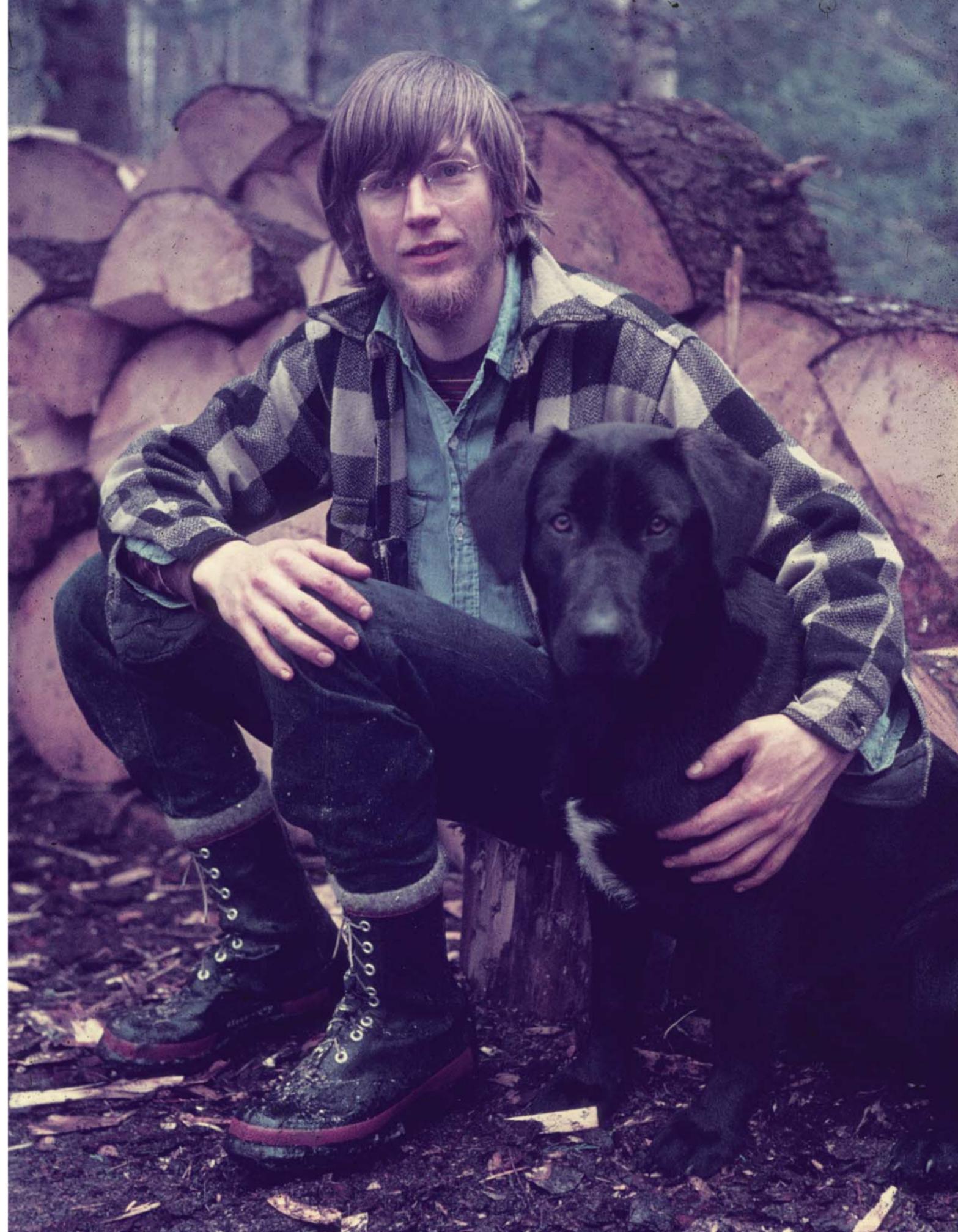


Photo by Lois Carbone Barber



Vast stretches of pure air swept far across the valley, to a line of clouds hovering above the distant Nass River. The only sounds were wind, water, and birdcalls.

River. We had no running water, no electricity, no bathtub, and the nearest town with all of that was 60 miles away. We were out on the hillside all the day long, through April and into May, in snow, then mud, wreathed in the smoke of brushfires, doing heavy stoop work. Our bodies were grimy, aromatic with smoke, work sweat, and sometimes the fear sweat of closeness and arguments, staking out territory. Rain was frequent; we were seldom completely dry. As the season warmed up, mosquitoes, blackflies, and no-see-ums swarmed, and we slathered ourselves with a homemade insect repellent made from olive oil, citronella, pine tar, and eucalyptus.

The air around us was pretty thick. But in the twilight, after supper, we strolled up to an overlook, where we could watch the light fade behind mile-high mountains. Vast stretches of pure air swept far across the valley, to a line of clouds hovering above the distant Nass River. The only sounds were wind, water, and birdcalls. No lights were visible other than the evening star. If the calendar rolled back 200 years, the only change would have been the occasional logging slash that clawed up shaggy mountainsides. The place was so clean that our all-natural sweat seemed to fit right in.

All we had for heat was a sheet-metal prospector's stove, small and light enough to carry on a backpack. Preparing to wash began with stoking the stove until the thin steel glowed, warped, and popped. While the stove got up steam we carried water from our creek in two white plastic pickle pails scrounged from the logging-camp kitchen. The water from the creek—which we named Beaver Creek because there were seven sets of beaver dams upstream—was murky, pondish, with an amber tint like weak tea and a slightly soapy feel. We heated the water in a salvaged wash boiler, an oval tub, black enamel with blue specks, with rusty dents ringed by fine radial cracks.

When Charles first found it there was a leak. But he fixed that neatly by threading a little bolt through the hole with washers on each side. We poured frothy water into the wash boiler and packed the firebox with precious firewood. Then we waited. After a very long time we had a few gallons of hot water, and each of us in turn danced in front of the stove, dipping a washcloth in a basin to rinse our itchy white hides, using every ounce of our share of that water, our front sides steaming while our backsides froze.

There was a lot of talk about a sauna or a sweat lodge, one attraction being the chance to get thoroughly warm. But other more basic needs always came first: the rotted roof, a new floor in the kitchen, the constant search for firewood, making trails, clearing and digging the garden site, putting in potatoes, squash, peas, and beans.

Then Little Joe Jackson gave us a bathtub. Because everyone in the valley knew we needed the thing so badly, we could imagine the hilarity when his gift was proposed at Peter Hughan's house. Peter was Little Joe's stepfather, the benefactor who—for \$1 an acre—leased us the land, our mentor, the oldest settler of the tiny settler community that was outside the logging camp and outside the Indian reserve. Because we were not loggers and not Indians, and we were accepted by Peter Hughan, we were considered provisional settlers. So one day, down visiting at Pete's, at breakfast Little Joe announced, "Gathered up some useful stuff for you. Need space in the shed. Hope you'll take it all away."

He swung open his shed door and chickens came flapping out of the dark. In the bed of an old pickup truck he had stacked up stuff that he pointed out piece by piece: a pressure canner that needed a seal, a broad ax, a logger's peavy pole for turning logs, an empty 50-gallon drum—the good heavy kind—and on top, a small galvanized sheet-metal bath-

Photos by (clockwise from top left): Robin Barber; Lois Carbone Barber; Robin Barber; Charles Sprague

Beside the tub was a gasoline-powered Maytag wringer washer, and while we soaked in plentiful hot water, our stiff, filthy clothing chugged and slurped toward cleanliness.

tub upside down, looking like a trough for watering livestock. The truck and its contents were frosted with chicken droppings, the cab a site for nests. "This truck runs," he assured us, "but I haven't used it in years; take the truck too. I need the space in the shed." He wouldn't listen to offers of money. "You're helping out the old guy."

It was May 10, the day that "the old guy," Peter Hughan, always set out his hardest seedlings and early potatoes. We worked all day with Peter, trying to learn what we could, preparing for a novice effort at our own garden. His farm was the best land in the valley, broad fields of rich soil, with a cluster of weathered log buildings, cedar-shake roofs, and a wide view of the mountains to the west.

At dusk Peter took us out by his noisy, crystal-clear creek where he had a tidy washhouse built on pilings to protect it from floods. He showed us his method of heating water. He had opened the side of an oil drum like a book, folding back a leaf on either side. The open drum rested on its side over a rough stove of cinder blocks. Water was supplied by gravity through a two-inch black plastic pipe that hung on a rope from the washhouse porch. The water flowed all the time, spilling back into the stream. To fill the drum Peter simply swung the pipe slightly on its rope so that the strong, steady arc of clear water splashed into the drum, filling it in a few moments. With a brisk fire underneath, the water temperature climbed quickly from glacial to a rolling boil.

Inside the washhouse was an incongruous pink bathtub with frosted glass doors. We carried pails full of water in from the boiling drum and sloshed them into the tub, mixing hot and cold until it was just right. Beside the tub was a gasoline-powered Maytag wringer washer, and while we soaked in plentiful hot water, our stiff, filthy clothing chugged and slurped toward cleanliness. Next to the washer was a sheet-metal airtight

stove, like a giant tomato can, pumping out heat. We towed off in a steamy furnace atmosphere. When we pulled the plug, our bathwater drained right back onto the black shale stream bank under the house. Later, at dinner, in the lamp-light around Hughan's table, shining clean, in borrowed clothes, we kept nodding off to sleep.

Back on our hillside over the next few days, we used Little Joe's bathtub and 50-gallon drum to set up our own open-air bath down by Beaver Creek. Charles and I carried the drum up the trail on a pole like a prize trophy bagged on a hunt, then spent the afternoon with a two-pound jack sledge and a cold chisel, our ears stuffed with cotton, cutting open the drum then bending the leaves back. The result was rough and misshapen compared with Peter's, with wicked sharp points of steel bristling along the cut edges. We imagined people slicing themselves while trying to bathe and so realized we had to spend another hour in the damp, chilly twilight pounding the points down flat. Lois came down to watch, holding her hands over her ears. I could see her lips moving so I stopped pounding for a moment to hear:

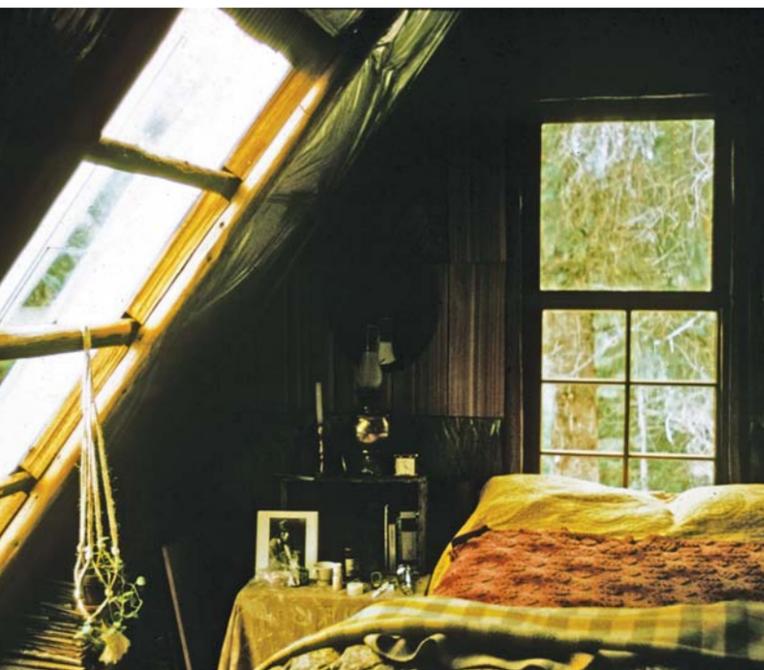
"Pound! Pound! Pound! Pound!" she was yelling. "Pound! Pound! Pound! Pound!" So as we finished up, all I could hear with each hammer blow was that word, "Pound!"

Charles had been scrounging, collecting interesting castoffs that the rest of us tended to mock. He had a pair of drill rods, eight-foot-long hexagonal steel bars with holes down the center, like giant antique gun barrels, used to drill for blasting on the logging roads. We slipped the drill rods under the flaps of our drum, like a steel sedan chair. This we hung with wire from the shaggy trunks of two cedars. The lower limbs of these trees swept down close to the ground, forming a bathing bower on two sides of the drum.

"Let's call it Beaver Baths."



Photos by Robin Barber



You could lie in the steaming tub looking up into the towering cedars and hemlocks, while the cold rain touched your face and knees.

“Let’s just call it the Bathroom.”

Using sections of two-inch pipe, also found by Charles, we fashioned our own version of Peter’s gravity water supply. We cut a hole in the bottom of a pickle bucket, fastening the end of our pipe in the hole by wrapping it with rags and a hose clamp, then tied the bucket under a small fall upstream. In a moment, a gratifying jet of beavery water came arcing out of the pipe, a small flash flood under the cedars, a portable tributary. We could lift the end of the pipe, dewy and heavy, trembling a little with the force of the flow, and quickly fill the drum. With it full, the drill rods sagged. We calculated the weight: “A pint’s a pound the world around, two pints to the quart, eight pints to the gallon, so let’s say we have 45 gallons... That’s about 360 pounds of hot water...”

Firewood represented too much hard work, so we scabbled together a sprawling, smoky fire of brush from our clearing, throwing on damp, mossy deadwood, getting it all going with some difficulty. But once ablaze under the blackened drum, it created an intense radiance that warmed and dried a comfortable circle between the trees. Even the misty rain seemed to dry up before it reached the ground.

With hand-split cedar shakes we made a boardwalk between the drum and the bathtub. The tub we enshrined in a tent of mosquito netting, draped over a pole. Trying to dip boiling water out of the drum in the fierce heat from the brushfire was hazardous, but Lois realized that the tub could be filled with a siphon, which we improvised with pipe and a giant brass faucet, made for diesel fuel, from Little Joe’s truck. Finally we could fill the tub in minutes. We brought down our long photographic thermometer, to take the temperature of the water in the drum. But the mercury went off the top of the scale at 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

“Well, it’s nearly boiling, so that’s 212 degrees, right?”

“Yeah, 100 degrees Celsius, up here in Canada.”

Then we stuck the thermometer in the cold jet from the pipe. The mercury plunged.

“Jesus. 38 degrees.”

“What’s that in Celsius?”

“I don’t know. Freezing is zero, right? So it would be just a degree or two above zero...”

“I don’t know.”

“Who cares.”

“The Beaver water is very, very cold. The hot water is very, very hot.”

Our first bath day was a chilly, misty Monday. We bathed oldest first, by Julia’s decree. She went first and I went last. The rules were you had to refill the heater and stoke the fire before you got into the tub. Then, when you got out, you lifted the mosquito net and simply dumped the tub over on its side, the rush of water carrying more needles and cones down into the stream, leaving scrubbed forest floor with a dense network of ruby-red cedar roots exposed. The tub had to be left clean, rinsed with the splashing cold water.

After Julia went down the path, we went about our business around the cabin, catching glimpses through a mist of new leaves of her distant nude figure dancing with the hoses and the faucet in the spring rain, swatting mosquitoes, cursing, then ducking under the netting and into the tub with shrieks of joy. One by one we gave it a try. You could lie in the steaming tub looking up into the towering cedars and hemlocks, while the cold rain touched your face and knees and each muscle in your body was individually dissolved and remade. Cold water splashed from the pipe, the creek purred and rustled, the fire snapped and settled, and rain hissed down. A deep lassitude and well-being began in the bath—you came out new, amazed to find yourself where you were. With clean clothes and lunch, well-being grew into a broad tolerance, kindness, love enough to last for nearly a week. ■

Photos by (clockwise from top left): Robin Barber; Robin Barber; Lois Carbone Barber; Robin Barber

This Place Is a Zoo

The Rosaires Love Their Animals Like Family

BY ROCCO CASTORO
PHOTOS BY JASON HENRY

There is a 30-acre spread of patchy land less than a mile from I-75 in Sarasota, Florida, that's home to a menagerie of lions, tigers, a liger, a couple of cougars, chimpanzees, Kodiak bears, lemurs, and all sorts of other exotic creatures from around the world. These are the adopted children of the Rosaires, a circus family whose animal-training expertise makes Dar the Beastmaster seem about as talented as Steve Irwin's corpse.

All of the Rosaires have a knack for communicating with a variety of fauna, but over the years each family member has formed a close bond with a specific genus or species. There's Pam, who trains chimps; "bear men" Derrick Jr. and his two sons, Derrick III and Frederick; equestrienne extraordinaire Ellian; Pam's twin sister, Linda, who is retired but can still make a pack of dogs and other critters perform an extensive repertoire of tricks; Clayton, who at the age of 17 became the youngest lion and tiger trainer in the world; and Clayton's mother, Kay, who taught him the ropes of handling giant felines that can rake the skin off your chest with a playful swat.

I had the honor of being invited to the Rosaires' compound to discuss the downfall of the circus industry—a form of entertainment that has its roots in ancient Rome, and one so deeply ingrained in American culture that it has been a near-ubiquitous experience for every man, woman, and child in the United States for generations.

Understandably, the Rosaires are wary of the media and its coverage of their way of life, specifically the treatment of their animals. After reassuring them that I wasn't a scheming PETA sympathizer posing as a journalist, they spoke with me at length about how the American circus has been going the way of the dodo for decades. I learned that its terminal decline has implications that stretch far beyond the obvious.

The Rosaires told me that their entertainment lineage stretches back to the court jesters of Great Britain and includes nine generations of animal trainers and other performers. At some point (no one is certain how long ago), the family found a niche in training a wide variety of animal acts. The late patriarch of the modern-day Rosaire crew, Derrick Rosaire Sr., carried the family's legacy through the latter half of 20th century. He is perhaps best known for his renowned equestrian act, Rosaire and Tony the Wonder Horse, which scored him an appearance on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson* and led to a gig training animals for the 60s children's TV show *Daktari*.

Born and based in South Wingfield, England,

Derrick spent the majority of his young adulthood touring with circuses throughout Europe. He was also busy making babies with his wife, Betty, who was a member of another Europe-based circus family that specialized in training animals, the Kayes. Derrick and Betty began schooling their kids in the family business from the moment the tykes were capable of sweeping up a pile of horseshit. Of course, there were hairy moments.

"When we were kids, Mom and Dad got a big contract to work in Algeria, so we got on a ship and went," Linda recalled. "When we arrived, there were four French Legionnaires to greet us and take us to the show grounds. My dad was like, 'What's up, mate? What's this all about?' And they said, 'Well, there's a war going on.' My parents had no clue because they didn't understand the news; they didn't speak the language. The first night my dad got a room on the top floor of the biggest hotel in Algiers, and when we looked out the window there were people shooting each other in the street."

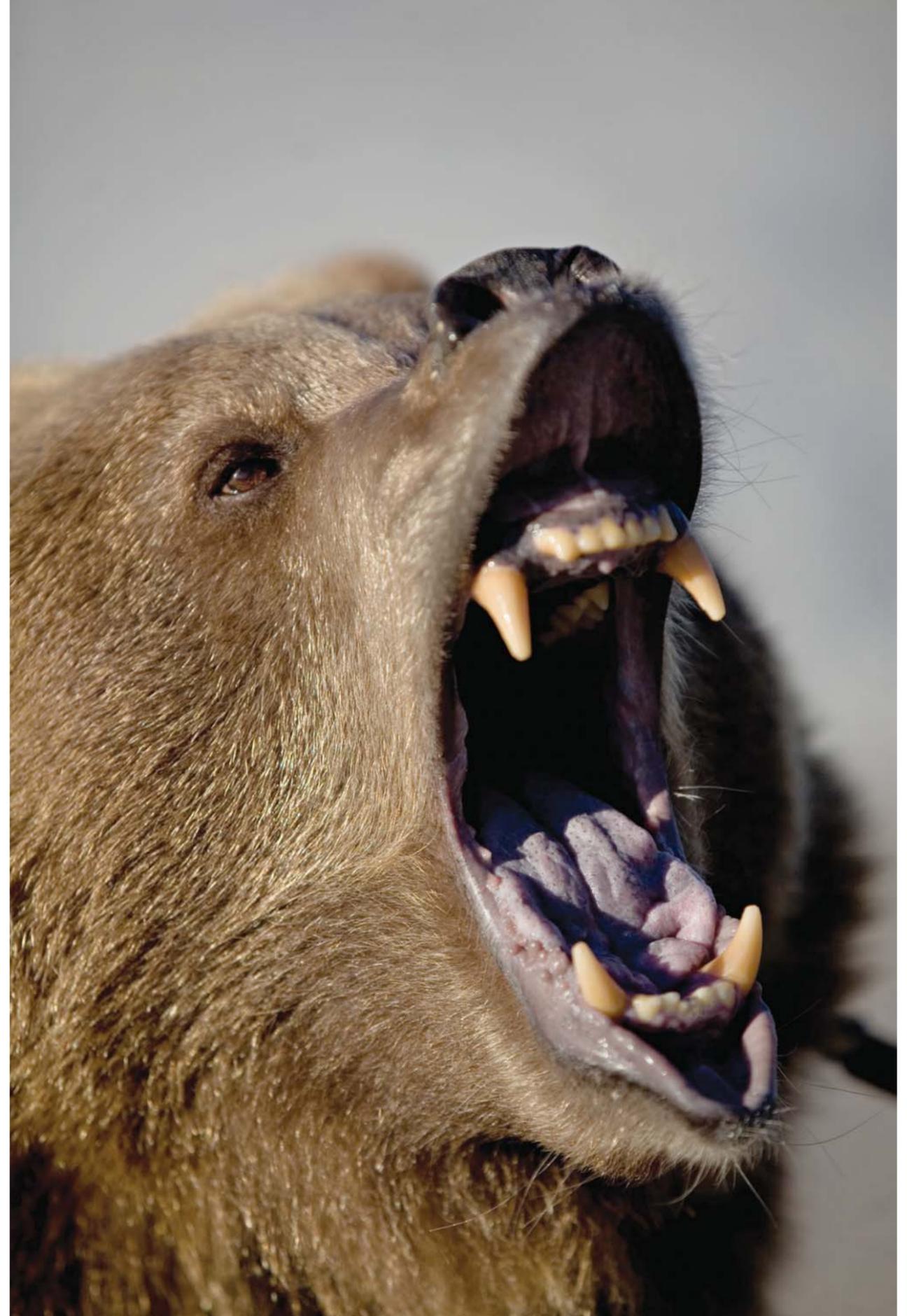
In August 1961, the family relocated from England to Waterford, Pennsylvania, in hopes of reaping the benefits of America's burgeoning circus industry. A few months later, they realized a major problem: It was too goddamn cold for the animals.

"We had no idea about American geography, and my father had a friend who lived in Waterford, so he ended up buying property there," Kay told me. "It was August, so it was beautiful. And then winter came. We'd be freezing in four feet of snow and talking to friends down in Florida who were playing tennis and enjoying the beach. We were like, 'Wait a minute, how can that be?' Eventually, we moved to Sarasota."

Today, Sarasota is a sleepy seaside community with a population of a little more than 50,000. Its residents are wealthy lushes, hardworking families, and retirees attempting to sweat out their final days on the pristine white-sand beaches of Siesta Key. In the past two decades, it has also gained notoriety as the place where Pee-wee Herman jerked off in a porno theater and where, on 9/11, George W. Bush was informed that a *second* plane had crashed into the World Trade Center as he stared blankly at a classroom of second graders reciting spelling exercises. It is also my hometown.

But back when American cities were still associated with particular industries, Sarasota was known as the Circus City.

"Driving around, you'd see rigging and animals being trained and people doing the flying trapeze and high wire in their yards," Pam told me. "It put



This gaping maw belongs to Indian, one of Derrick Jr.'s many trained bears. Don't worry, he wasn't mad—it's all just part of the show.



Ricky is the youngest of Pam's five chimpanzees. When she says that he is her "son," she's not kidding one bit. Pam's human children half-jokingly claim that she paid more attention to the chimps than to them. If that doesn't convince you, she once breast-fed an adopted chimp because its mother passed away shortly after giving birth. And no, she did not dress Ricky up for these photos. He enjoys wearing people clothes all the time.



The extended Rosaire family: [back row, left to right] Derrick III; Frederick; Clayton with Snoopy the dog; [middle row, left to right] Derrick Jr.; Derrick's wife, Kay (who coincidentally shares the name of his big-cat-training sister); Derrick Sr.'s widow, Lisa Lisette; Clayton's wife, Danielle; Clayton and Danielle's baby daughter, Ella; Pam's husband and acrobatic equestrian wonder, Roger Zoppe; Ellian; Ellian's son Kaziu Rosaire Dymek; Ellian's husband, and former world-class acrobat, Kazimierz Dymek; [bottom row, left to right] Linda; Kay; Pam; and Ellian's son Jerek Rosaire Dymek.

the circus on the map. Tourists would just drive around and watch people perform in their backyards. It was amazing.”

Sarasota's association with the circus began in the early years of the 20th century, when a few members of the Ringling family (of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus fame) chose the city as their winter residence. John Ringling and his wife, Mable, commissioned the \$1.5 million (adjusted for inflation, that's about \$16 million) Venetian-inspired Cà d'Zan Mansion in 1924. Soon, Ringling performers and staff began moving to the area, and in 1951 Cecil B. DeMille forever cemented Sarasota's bond with the circus by selecting it as the location for his Academy Award-winning film *The Greatest Show on Earth*. Developers soon realized the potential of Sarasota's real estate market, and property values skyrocketed. The circus folk were eventually priced out of the very city they had helped build.

Ringling remains the premier name in the business (and probably the only one that's still turning a profit), but the circus used to be an extremely varied and sustainable way of life for many talented Americans. Clayton, Pam, and Derrick Jr. and his two sons are the only Rosaires who are currently working and touring their animals regularly, but the gigs come much less frequently than they once did. There are all sorts of reasons for the industry's decline in popularity, but the Rosaires claim that a major historical event—one that's otherwise viewed as one of the most hopeful developments of the 20th century—pretty much destroyed their former way of life.

“The biggest downturn was when the Berlin Wall

fell,” Kay explained. “All the circus performers in the Eastern bloc countries were suddenly allowed to get out. They literally flooded the market with cheap Bulgarian and Russian and Polish acts. And a lot of them went to these sketchy circus schools, so they're not real acrobats or animal trainers—it's not in them. Around the same time, the animal rights activists got really busy, so unfortunately all of the circus producers in this country used that as an excuse to not hire animal acts. They could hire five of these cheaper acts and they could put all of the money they would've spent on the tiger act into their pockets.”

Like her sister Linda, Kay has largely retired from the family business. Unlike Linda, who left the circus to get away from the day-to-day rigors of caring for animals on the road, Kay has made them an even bigger part of her life since her departure. Six years ago, after three decades of rescuing abandoned animals, Kay founded the Big Cat Habitat and Gulf Coast Sanctuary. It is where many of the Rosaires' critters happily reside. As a nonprofit entity, it receives a large portion of its funding from donations and small grants. Of course, it's very difficult to sustain such an operation, but the Rosaires have always found inventive ways to keep things afloat.

On most weekends throughout the year, about \$10 will get you a tour of the grounds and a demonstration in a makeshift circus arena. Once a year, though, the Rosaires drag out their big top and sequined costumes and invite their circus buddies to participate in a fundraiser for the habitat that's about as close to a real circus as you can get inside the confines of what is technically someone's backyard.

Kay may be the founder of the sanctuary, but the entire family pitches in to ensure that the animals get the care and attention they need. Kay's sister Pam, who cares for five chimps and claims to be the only woman in the world confident enough to handle the infamously grouchy middle-aged beasts, has hopes of opening a similar sanctuary sometime in the near future. She stresses that people should never, under any circumstances, keep chimps as pets. Too bad Sandra Herold, the owner of the 200-pound chimp who ripped off her friend Charla Nash's lips, jaw, nose, and hands and gouged the eyes out of her head last February in Stamford, Connecticut, didn't get the memo. Still, Pam told me she likes her chimps more than most human beings.

“I work with chimps because they're my favorite people,” Pam said. “They love me. They treat me like a baby, but it took my husband ten years to be able to put his hand on me and talk to me in front of the chimps.”

Speaking with any of the Rosaires it is immediately clear that they work with animals because they love them like blood relatives. It is their destiny. They are not a wealthy family, and their operation is constantly at risk of going bankrupt. Linda is the only member of the family who owns a proper house; the rest live in trailers scattered about the property, but they remain perfectly happy. There is a job that offers no real vacations or time off—the animals must be cared for 365 days a year, and most of the profits they glean from touring, on-site demonstrations, and events literally go right back into the animals' mouths.

“It's all about paying the feed bills,” Clayton said. “People forget that exotic animals eat exotic food.”

The majority of their adopted brood was born in captivity—zoo orphans or exotic pets abandoned by rich people who finally realized their one-year-old bobcats weren't going to shit in a box. Couple that with Florida's role as the US's primary entry point for many exotic animals, and it isn't hard to imagine how many end up abandoned or neglected.

“Most of the people who had illegal pets before increased regulation were drug dealers in Florida,” Kay told me when I asked about the state's exotic-animal dilemma. “They were notorious for having big cats. They used them to get rid of bodies.”

More recently, Florida's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has gone to great lengths to

“Most of the people who had illegal pets before increased regulation were drug dealers in Florida,” Kay told me. “They used them to get rid of bodies.”

police what sorts of animals are let past its borders. It is also the organization responsible for making sure people like the Rosaires adequately house their beasts and adhere to a stringent set of codes (all of which the family surpasses). But this does little to satisfy PETA, the Animal Liberation Front, and other smaller animal rights organizations. Many of the members of these groups believe that animals, especially nonnative species, should never be trained or kept in captivity, no matter the circumstances surrounding their arrival.

“Not one of those places runs a huge nonprofit sanctuary that gives homes to the animals after they close down these facilities,” Clayton retorted when asked about animal rights groups that accuse the Rosaires and other circuses performers of animal neglect and mistreatment.

I contacted PETA to get their official stance on circus animals. Their answers were predictably definitive and damning.

“PETA is opposed to the use of exotic animals in circuses, or any performing-animal acts, and to the idea of ‘training’ wild animals in general,” Lisa Wathne, captive-exotic-animal specialist for PETA, said. “Animals used and trained for such acts are denied everything that is natural to them. They spend their lives in extreme confinement, are deprived of normal activities such as roaming, hunting, choosing their own partners, and raising their young, and are trained through abuse, deprivation, and fear.”

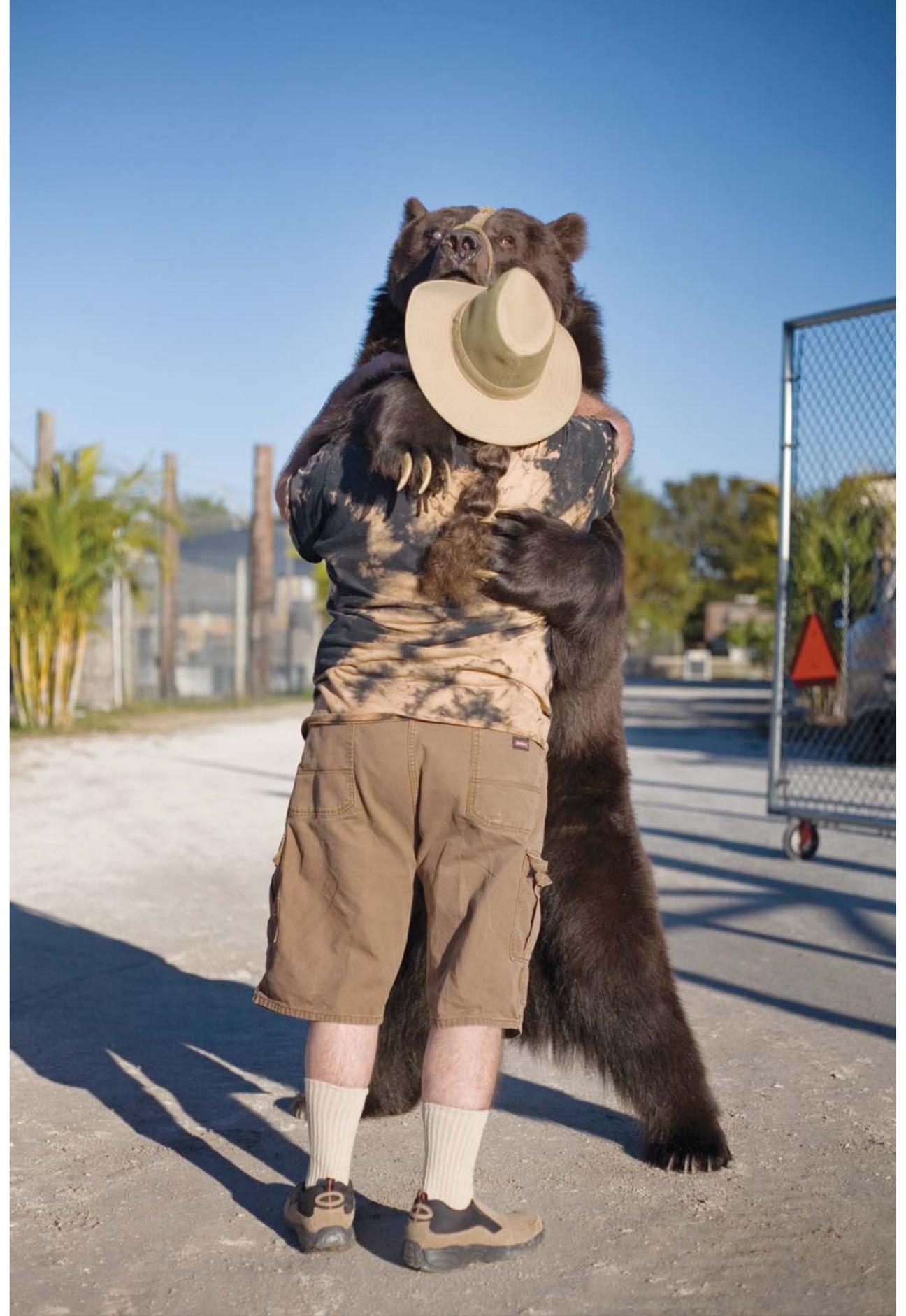
Unless you're brain-damaged or a hopeless dunce you should be capable of deducing that captive-born animals and their offspring cannot be responsibly released into the wild. So no matter what your stance is on the issue, please realize that there are only two paths



Fluffy the emu arrived at the Rosaires' sanctuary after a local zoo closed down and left its animals homeless.



About five years ago, Derrick III was tending to the bears when a fight suddenly broke out. Bears don't really show emotion, so even the most experienced trainers can't always tell when they're angry. He got caught in the middle of the scrap, and this was the result. Derrick writes it off as being at the wrong place at the wrong time and holds no grudge against the animals, but goddamn that had to hurt.



As you can see, Derrick Jr. really loves his European brown bear, Peter, which has spurred many jokes about "Derrick's big Peter" from the family. Derrick would like you to know that he only muzzles his bears when they're around unfamiliar people, such as photographers taking pictures of them for a magazine.



Ellian has trained five-year-old Navarro so well that he'll perform for just about anyone with intermediate horse-riding skills. She claims that his neigh sometimes sounds like he's saying "Mom."



Not many things make Ricky and Geraldine happier than zooming around on Pam's scooter. It also gets Pam pretty darn jazzed.



Gremlin the lemur likes getting in on the scooter action too.

for the abandoned: winding up at a sanctuary or zoo, which admittedly may or may not be able to care for them adequately, or being put to sleep. If the latter outcome sounds preferable, I double-dog-dare you to head down to the Big Cat Habitat or a similarly up-to-snuff sanctuary, talk to the caretakers, and leave a few hours later without feeling like a self-righteous asshole.

I asked Lisa what should happen with these animals in an ideal world, and whether or not PETA believes they should be euthanized if a proper home is unavailable (as claimed by the Rosaires). She skirted the second part of my question but told me that they support and facilitate finding adequate refuge for exotic creatures without homes.

"In such cases, PETA advocates for the animals to be placed only at qualified and reputable sanctuaries or at zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums," Lisa said.

Besides ad hoc protests and other slanderous activities, the Rosaires have been subjected to personal attacks. Most of the time they brush them off and move on to the next town, but some of their savvier opponents have been calling the venues that book their shows to tell promoters the Rosaires mistreat their animals.

"We're required by law to submit our itineraries to the USDA when we travel on the road for work," Kay said. "We have to fax them a route so they can come and check on us and the animals at any time. There are a few animal rights people who somehow get our itinerary and contact the people we're working for to tell them not to hire us—that they shouldn't have trained animals at their circus because it's immoral. Who knows how many venues they've contacted that didn't hire us because of it."

If there's any form of mistreatment at the Big Cat Habitat, I didn't see it. Recent economic woes have caused more people to get rid of their exotic and large animals than ever, and the Rosaires are among a handful of giant-hearted folks eager to take proper care of them.

Whether or not these animals should be trained and sent out on the road is an argument I won't get into here. But I can say that many of the displaced critters living at the Big Cat Habitat are not trained to participate in the Rosaires' acts. Most are orphans of the man-made variety (be it through abandonment or environmental havoc), and very few people have the wherewithal to dedicate their lives to fostering them. Based on what I witnessed during the short time I spent with the Rosaires, I wholeheartedly believe these lucky animals have landed

You might say the Rosaires oversee their operation like a three-ring circus, if you knew what the phrase actually meant.

in an ideal situation given the circumstances.

The Rosaire family runs the tightest of ships and has a deep devotion to both its animals and its trade. You might say the Rosaires oversee their operation like a three-ring circus, if you knew what the phrase actually meant. According to the family, and contrary to the idiom's accepted usage, the phrase a *three-ring circus* should be used to imply that meticulous, thorough, and uncompromising attention has been paid to the work.

"One thing that really, really upsets circus people all over the world is when people say things like, 'Oh, it was a terrible, wild scene over there. The courtroom erupted into a three-ring circus.' Well, if court were as organized as the circus we wouldn't have the problems that we have."

I have no real way of confirming whether what the Rosaires say about the efficiency of the circus is true, but rumor has it that the US military sent troops to observe the Ringling Bros. circus during World War I as an example of how to get shit done. And I'm inclined to believe it. Though their livelihood is necessarily methodical, it's important to note that they still consider their day-to-day work a form of charity. As long as their animals are sleeping soundly and they get to entertain people every so often. They are, after all, circus folk.

"We want people to leave thinking, 'Wow, that was amazing. Those people are amazing. Those animals are beautiful. That was fun,'" Kay told me. "And you see that: You see kids crying because they don't want to go home. They want to stay at the circus. And that's how we want people to feel when they leave a show." ■

We urge you to watch the award-winning documentary *Circus Rosaire* for more information about the family's history and their big-top escapades. You can find it at circusrosairemovie.com. The Rosaires would also like us to mention that donations big and small can be made to the Big Cat Habitat and Gulf Coast Sanctuary at bigcathabitat.org.



Ode on a Grecian Pile of Crap

A Visit to Athens's Secret and Massive Garbage Town

BY TASSOS BREKOULAKIS
PHOTOS BY FREDDIE F.

A brisk walk along Dionysiou Areopagitou and Panathinaia streets, just ten minutes from the Acropolis, brings you to probably the crummiest neighborhood in all of Athens, Greece. The area is known as Tavros, and despite being caught in an almost inescapable state of disrepair, it is also somehow experiencing a massive building spree. The banks of one of the Kifissos River's tributaries—where a row of small churches stand tall in what used to be olive groves and vineyards—is now the site of the new Panathinaiko Stadium and the city's biggest shopping mall. Nearby is the recently erected Athens Stock Exchange. Surrounding it all are junkyards, abandoned tanneries, shacks, and seedy nightclubs.

It has created a thousands-strong yet still-secret universe of garbage foragers—smack in the center of the country's capital.

Here men and women on three-wheeled motorcycle contraptions crisscross the city every day, rummaging in garbage bins for anything made of metal. They have generated a ghost economy and in turn offer a bleak snapshot of the current recycling process that many bill as “green” but is in fact poo-brown.

We were drawn to this place in the heart of Athens by *Raw Material*, a documentary that filmmaker Christos Karakepelis is putting together. The film, which he plans to take on the festival circuit later this year, took more than six years of research and interviews with scrappers and “rag collectors.” It left him dizzy.

“Scrap metal at this point is a financial commodity,” says Christos. “It is no longer profitable for industries to dig metal out of the earth. Cities are today's quarries, and the gold deposits are in the cities' trash cans and rubbish.” These days, Greece's bottom class shoulders more than 1.5 million pounds of steel to the scrapyards annually. Almost all of it is from Athens. Not exactly a great picture for the tourist board.

The way it works is like everywhere else in the world, only on a market-making scale: Gypsies hock their stuff to small yards, which in turn resell to larger ones. Trucks take the loot from the biggest suppliers to the foundries, where it is melted down and recast. Some guy who is already very rich gets decidedly richer.

“The loose garbage culture has created a *lumpenproletariat*,” Christos says.

When we arrived, though, what we found were packs of rambunctious kids, all hamming it up for the camera, running around barefoot and topless, and leading us through a maze of shacks and mammoth mounds of garbage. The youngest seemed completely oblivious to their predicament. In the older children, there is a noticeable despair.

It is estimated that Greece currently has between 80,000 and 100,000 rag collectors and metal peddlers. Many of them live in the Greek capital. Organized, they could para-

“No one goes where these people go to collect trash,” says Christos, “and where they live is off-limits and impossible to reach unaccompanied.”

lyze the industry and force the price of iron rods through the roof, creating a financial crisis in real estate across the country. This, of course, will never happen.

The work done by scrap collectors has not been included in any environmental study. But in the course of a given day they tidy hunks of the urban landscape, doing a job that should be the responsibility of the municipalities or the state. The police mostly look the other way. The scrappers are not licensed garbage collectors, and they usually steal most of their electricity and water. Rodents breed where they live, feasting on their refuse and sometimes on their children. The police wouldn't have a place to put them all even if they had any interest in putting them somewhere. “No one goes where these people go to collect trash,” says Christos, “and where they live is off-limits and impossible to reach unaccompanied.”

One recent Saturday morning, a torrential rain turned the narrow streets of Athens's Renti area into a bog. Still, the Gypsies mined the streets and we were excited to be invited along.

We met up with a couple of Christos's friends, made a few pickups, and headed into a scrapyards. The proprietor wouldn't speak to us, didn't want any photos taken, and was extremely suspicious. In this yard, a person can walk away with 30 cents for two-plus pounds of scrap metal. This means that, at very best, a scrapper with a full tricycle can earn about \$20 for two full loads. One other setback: It takes the help of an entire family to move a full load.

Christos explained that every 20 minutes a steel factory's foundries turn about 100 tons of scrap into liquid, producing between 85 and 90 tons of steel. This continues 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's beyond massive.

After making the rounds, we headed into our guides' hidden encampment, which rises against the backdrop of the Acropolis and is home to 200 families that, as far as the Greek state is concerned, don't exist. Over the years, Christos has forged several friendships inside the shanty: “I have gone to countless numbers of their weddings and baptisms, to





earn their trust and to be able to mingle with them," he told us. We walked behind him wide-eyed and aghast at the spectacle—impromptu shacks made of wooden pallets, doors from chunks of demolished buildings, hillock after hillock of dismantled metal parts, and giant laminated posters extracted from billboards and pasted up ornamentally. Incredibly, some of the living quarters feature a second story.

There are about 800 kids in the encampment's 200 shacks. Most of the families have several children, which is part of the reason they're stuck here. "I tried renting a house in Nikaia," said a chubby, red-faced man in broken Greek, "but I have 15 kids. We moved in, and after a few days the owner came and threw us out because the neighbors had complained." The guy doesn't look a day over 40.

Children here certainly count as another set of hands to be put to work. Unfortunately much of the scrap material is toxic: cathode-ray-tube panels and funnels from TVs are 40 percent lead, for example. "In Greece, the

largest telecom and electric companies would rather give their unused cables to the Gypsies than pay storage costs," Christos told me. "The Gypsies then burn the cables in order to extract the copper and bronze wire, because pure copper—minus the plastic, rubber, and other insulation—sells at \$5 per pound. With the insulation it fetches \$3." Scrappers get the cable on the sly from large companies, and, as it doesn't require that they leave the area, it is the children who go about melting it. Cancer is more than a slight concern.

Of course there are no statistics to reference, no studies to cite, and, judging by the happy-go-lucky looks on the local kids' faces in this report, you'll have to take our word for how unimaginably dire the situation is. How about we leave it at this totally unconfirmable but thoroughly canvassed tidbit: We were told repeatedly by villagers that the average seven-year-old kid in charge of burning his or her family's plastic away from the family's copper usually doesn't make it past the age of 15. ■

Scrappers get the cable on the sly from large companies, and it is the children who go about melting it. Cancer is more than a slight concern.





Members of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, a unique national experiment in trying accused war criminals.



Vann Nath, a key witness against Duch (right), and one of the few living survivors of the Khmer Rouge prison S-21

Duch, the former Khmer Rouge leader in charge of S-21, on the stand before the ECCC

A Holiday Ends in Cambodia

The Khmer Rouge Gets Its Day in Court

BY SARA GOLDA RAFSKY

The Cambodian government is not historically known for caring much about international justice or criminal arbitration. But now, far from The Hague, in a former military base off a long, dusty stretch in the outskirts of Phnom Penh, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) is undertaking a unique experiment in putting the country's most murderous masochists on the stand. More than 30 years after the start of its reign, the Khmer Rouge is getting its day in court. And for the first

time in a case that includes crimes against humanity and assorted other atrocities, the host country is partnering with the UN.

It's possible you've never heard of the ECCC. Despite the fact that the Khmer Rouge leaders who are being prosecuted were part of one of the most horrific regimes of the 20th century and were an important player in the batty geopolitics of the post-Vietnam cold-war era, the story of these trials tends not to make headlines outside Cambodia. And though the ECCC may well become the new model to replace distant, slow-moving courts like the International Criminal Court at The Hague, the trial has unfairly been relegated to tiny corners of pages in an unread section of the newspaper. As ECCC public-affairs officer Yuko Maeda told me, "It's because it happened far away and it happened 30 years ago. [People] pay attention to Afghanistan, to Iraq. They pay attention to someplace else. This is an old story for them." True enough. But given the regularity with which both murderous legitimate governments and hostile illegitimate regimes set in with the mass murder these days, a timely and effective method for trying these cases seems a reasonable objective—and cause enough to wonder why there isn't one already.

A few years back, *Vice* ran a story that featured the work of an artist named Vann Nath, one of only a few survivors of the notorious Khmer Rouge prison Tuol Sleng, aka S-21. In his paintings, Nath depicts the brutality of the torture he and others endured under S-21's notorious director, Duch. Today, Nath is the star witness in the ECCC's Case 001, which concluded at the end of last year and is due for a verdict sometime in early 2010. Duch is the defendant.

Photo courtesy of the ECCC

Nath survived his stay at S-21 solely because he was good at drawing portraits of Pol Pot—or Brother Number One, the party's deranged and homicidal leader—and scribbling up assorted other propaganda. He is tall and slender with a head of snow-white hair and bushy salt-and-pepper eyebrows. When I met him at his gallery space in Phnom Penh, he spoke calmly and softly. "All the blood is on their hands," he told me of his few surviving Khmer Rouge torturers. "I cannot reconcile with the ones who do not admit what they have done wrong." It's been a while, too: Thirty-one years ago, on January 7, 1979, after spending exactly one year in the jail, he escaped with other prisoners in the chaos that accompanied the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.

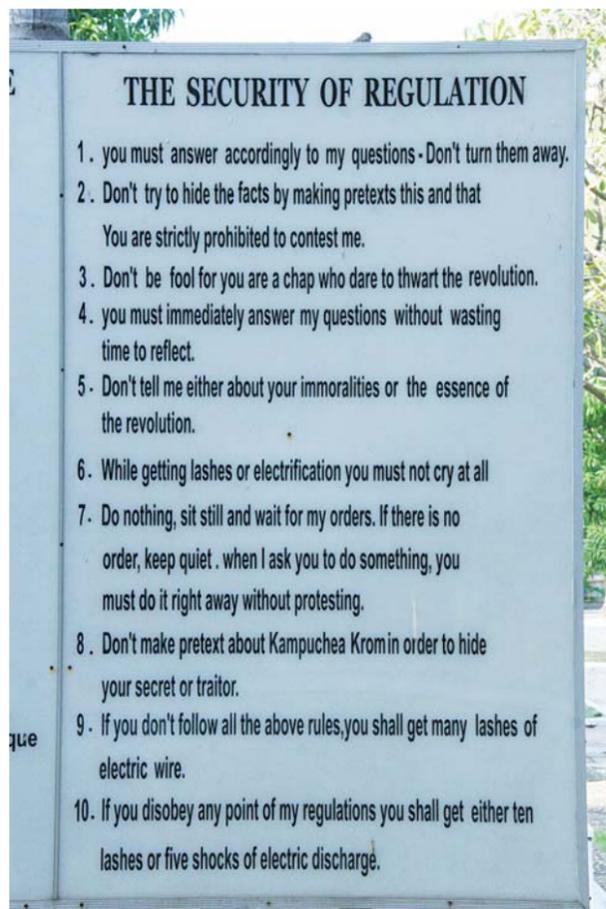
Though a verdict is expected soon, Nath didn't seem hopeful. "It is taking so long," he said. "There are other forms of reconciliation." He was alluding to private meetings he'd held with other survivors and apologetic Khmer Rouge members. While Cambodians have agonized over the nature of the court and its progress, few debate the validity of its existence. In the end, Nath said, "the only form of justice is the court."

The ECCC was created to prosecute the crimes committed during the reign of the Khmer Rouge, when, after winning a long civil war, the ultrazealous Maoist group outlawed currency, religion, and school as it ruthlessly pursued its goal of achieving a classless agrarian society. Over that same period, through disease, starvation, physical exhaustion, imprisonment, and execution, the regime took an estimated 2 million lives out of a population of 8 million—roughly a quarter of all citizens in less than four years. The Cambodians neatly summarize this period as the "auto-genocide."

Left: photo by Sara Golda Rafsky, Right: photo courtesy of the ECCC

But while counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity were brought early on, the question of whether the Khmer Rouge era falls within the legal definition of genocide has lingered quite a bit longer. The contention stemmed from the fact that the crimes of the Khmer Rouge were mostly perpetrated by and against members of the same national and ethnic group. To legally constitute genocide, the acts must be committed "with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group." The prosecution for Case 002 argued that because ethnic Vietnamese and Muslim Cham minorities were especially targeted by the regime, the terms for genocide were met. Genocide was recently added to the list of charges against a slew of the Khmer Rouge's senior members in Case 002, but were never filed against Duch.

Duch, whose given name is Kaing Guek Eav, is a former mathematics teacher-turned-avid revolutionary. He is featured heavily in Nath's account of his ordeal, *A Cambodian Prison Portrait: One Year in the Khmer Rouge's S-21*. He also plays a leading role in another famous book about the Khmer Rouge, *The Gate*, by French ethnographer François Bizot, who was himself imprisoned by the Khmer Rouge and interrogated by Duch for several months in 1971, during the civil war. Bizot describes Duch as "not a monster from the abyss but a human being, taken by nature and conditioned for killing. His intelligence had been honed as the tooth of the wolf, or the shark, but his human psychology had been carefully preserved." Nath knew him more as the guy he needed to keep happy. "My destiny was hanging on this last picture I was painting!" Nath wrote.



A list of acceptable behaviors taken from the S-21 site, which is now home to the Tuol Sleng Memorial Museum.

Then, in 1979, the Vietnamese liberated Cambodia from its own occupation. The ruling parties of both countries shared a Communist ideology, but that was no match for a century's worth of seething mutual hatred. After being provoked one too many times with cross-border attacks, the Vietnamese invaded and handily won. They dismantled the Khmer Rouge's so-called Democratic Kampuchea (DK) government and occupied Cambodia until 1989.

When Pol Pot died in 1998, the era of the Khmer Rouge was finally put to rest. Well, for most everyone but the millions of Cambodian victims and orphans. Many residents had written off the idea of ever seeing their DK tormentors take the witness stand, forced to answer for their crimes or to explain what had actually happened during the nearly four-year nightmare. With each passing year, Nath was losing hope as well.

In 1997, the Cambodian government pleaded with the United Nations for assistance in prosecuting former DK members for war crimes. After years of negotiation and a bunch of internal wrangling, the two hammered out an agreement. Today, court officials take great pains in insisting that this is a "domestic court established within the framework of the Cambodian legal system, but with international assistance and participation." Still, it is financed almost entirely by the UN and foreign donations.

The ECCC became fully operational in 2007 but didn't begin its first case, 001, until February of last year. The reason for this delay was undoubtedly the uniquely complex makeup of the court. The prosecution and defense teams are each composed of one foreign and one local lawyer, but all appointments must get final approval from the Cambodian government (many of whose members are

themselves former Khmer Rouge). A Trial Court Chamber of three Cambodian and two international judges renders verdicts, and appeals go to a Supreme Court Chamber with four Cambodian and three international judges. Convictions require the supermajority vote of four of the five judges on the Trial Chamber or five of the seven Supreme Court judges. Unless the Cambodian and international judges can reach an agreement, the defendants go free.

The architects of the ECCC added a "civil party" component by which anyone who can prove victimhood (or relation to an executed victim) of the Khmer Rouge can pitch their tent alongside the prosecution. The civil parties have the right to access any legal documents and can have their representative question any witness in the trial. They are, however, relegated to moral and collective (as opposed to financial) reparation. The number of people seeking civil-party status has become overwhelming: Ninety-four applied for Case 001, but more than 2,000 have already applied for Case 002. The court is now seeking ways to limit the number of people who can participate in upcoming cases.

The results of this strange system have been encouraging so far. As Maeda says, the ECCC "could be a model for postconflict countries to have a tribunal inside the country with international assistance. That way you can retain some level of international standards, but at the same time it can be accessible to the people who have suffered, so that they can participate in the process." The aim is closure.

Over the course of the more than nine-month-long trial of Case 001, nearly 28,000 observers filled the 500 seats of the public gallery, many of them Cambodian villagers from rural areas who took free buses organized by the ECCC. Maeda believes that this is one of the most powerful aspects of having the trial take place in the country where the crimes were committed instead of at The Hague. "People just wanted to know why it happened," she told me. The main goal of the court "is to bring justice to Cambodia, because this is a trial. But the second goal is to write the history and educate the younger generation who didn't know anything."

If the younger generation is in the dark about this part of their country's history, it wasn't by accident. There was never a clear record kept of what happened during DK prior to these trials, and the Khmer Rouge regime wasn't even included in Cambodian school curricula. In May of last year—as a result, many feel, of the ECCC proceedings—a new textbook was distributed in high school and university classrooms. The Khmer Rouge is in it.

Also included is Duch. After living for 20 years incognito, he was discovered by a journalist in 1999 and subsequently arrested by Cambodian military authorities. He has been in detention and awaiting trial for crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, homicide, and torture—as well as a body count somewhere in the 14,000 range—ever since.

Nath and I sat to discuss Duch and also what the trials mean to him. He explained calmly, "I can release my anger. It shows I do not have any desire for revenge." When I asked whether he had seen Duch since he was freed from prison, he paused for a very long time and studied his hands. He answered softly, "Never." I also explained that I was curious to know what it was like when he finally did see Duch again, at the start of the trial. He replied quickly: "I cannot tell you what my heart felt. That is too much inside my psychology, and I do not know how to open up and tell you that." But, he said, "I saw that Duch was still a very powerful person."

Nath chose not to file as a civil party, but he was far more important as a witness anyway.

The trial was generally regarded as a success. But the closing week showed fissures in this complex legal creation. As a defendant, Duch had been remarkably cooperative, admitting guilt, answering questions about operations at S-21 in detail, and repeatedly asking for forgiveness. The defendant's French lawyer, François Roux, even went so far as to say that Duch was dead, that the revolutionary persona no longer existed, and that the elderly man on trial was only Kaing Guek Eav. The lawyer used this contrition to plead for a lighter sentence of 40 years, as opposed to the maximum one of life imprisonment.

Photo by Sara Go/da Raifsky



A collection of photos of onetime S-21 captives currently hanging inside a cell on the former site of S-21.

But then, in a completely outrageous turn of events just days later, Duch's Cambodian counsel, Kar Savuth, claimed Duch was innocent. The court's mandate is to prosecute senior officials of the DK. Duch, Savuth argued, was merely a subordinate following orders he could not refuse. To the shocked spectators of the overcapacity public gallery, Savuth declared that Duch should be set free.

The headlines of the major Cambodian newspapers blared for days following the conclusion of the trial. The international media, however, left it mostly unreported. In Cambodia the reaction was not only to Duch's sudden presumed innocence but also to the fact that this painfully stitched-together system seemed to be unraveled by lawyers of the defendant. It would be laughable in some other context.

Case 002, which will be prosecuting the surviving four senior Khmer Rouge officials—all of whom deny their guilt adamantly—is even more legally complex. The country is bracing for a major national headache. That is, if the case—which is bogged down in the pretrial investigation stage—can begin before the statute of limitations expires (three years after the accused were first imprisoned in late 2007) or one of the elderly defendants dies.

No one knows whether there will be another case after 002. The court is only mandated to try senior leaders of the DK era, and few are still around. Whenever all the cases are finished, the court will be shut down and its archives will be transferred to the government of Cambodia. For many Cambodians, this is not enough, and they have been outspoken about their anger at the fact that lower-level cadres—like the ones who actually did the torturing at S-21—are not being tried and continue to lead their lives, often side by side in the same villages as their former victims. One person who has weighed in with his opinion—much to the consternation and embarrassment of the ECCC—is Cambodian prime minister Hun Sen. Shortly after Case 001 concluded, the leading Phnom Penh newspa-

Photo by Sara Go/da Raifsky

Nath survived his stay at S-21 solely because he was good at drawing portraits of Pol Pot and scribbling up assorted other propaganda.

pers all quoted Sen as saying, "Sorry, no more [prosecutions]. I would rather see the court fail than let the country fall into war." And it's not the first time he's expressed the sentiment.

Other allegations of government interference and collusion with the DK regime have dogged the tribunal as well. Sen, to use just one example, is a former member of the Khmer Rouge. At the moment, administration officials refuse to answer to subpoenas for members of their party to testify. At the same time, the defense in Case 002 has filed multiple motions claiming bias against their clients on the part of the court. At one point, donors were withholding funds from the cash-strapped court because of persistent allegations of corruption on the Cambodian side. Maeda was adamant, however, that "the ECCC has been working independently from an executive influence. The court works independently under the law."

Coincidentally, the same week Case 001 concluded, thousands of miles away in Europe, what is being heralded as "the last big Nazi trial" began with opening statements. The parallels are obvious, with similar arguments being made by both the defense and the prosecu-



“I believe this is the first step for the Cambodian people to speak up about what happened to them.”

tion as to whether or not the Nazi defendant had merely been following orders or whether he could have refused them or run away. The accused had been a prison guard at a concentration camp, though in not nearly as senior a position as Duch held. These issues are reminiscent of many international war-crimes tribunals. Several of these questions that were first asked at the Nuremberg Trials have never been fully answered.

International war-crimes tribunals have developed a flat, repetitive narrative over the years, often with unsatisfying conclusions. ECCC officials stress the most newsworthy aspect of this new hybrid court, which exists as a distinctive partnership between the Cambodian government and the United Nations: It is the first attempt at having an international tribunal within a country’s civil legal system. Unlike those of the tribunals established to prosecute the war crimes committed in Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia, this ECCC’s jurisdiction is determined by Cambodian law. In comparison with the tribunals established in Sierra Leone or East Timor, the majority of the judges of the ECCC are nationals. ECCC legal-communications officer Lars Olsen told me that the advantage of this model is that it is “cheaper

than setting up a full-fledged international tribunal, and it has the advantage of national ownership of the process, while at the same time ensuring that international fair-trial standards are being applied.” He was quick to punctuate the idea that “the court will not represent ‘imposed justice.’” He also noted the benefit of doling out some lessons on how an impartial justice system functions in a country with a notoriously corrupt judiciary.

It sometimes can be difficult, however, to determine how effective the ECCC, or any international war-crimes tribunal, can really be. A study last year from the Berlin-based Treatment Center for Torture Victims reported that nearly two-thirds of direct victims of the Khmer Rouge are not ready to reconcile. But national reconciliation is a primary goal of any war-crimes tribunal. It’s tough to say whether this court can be successful without it.

Reflecting on the difficulty of healing 30-year-old wounds, Maeda seemed equally concerned: “It’s hard to say whether we are helping people to actually reconcile or whether we are splitting people away. But I believe this is the first step for the Cambodian people to speak up about what happened to them. This is a real opportunity to be recognized by the international community about what took place in this country.” Of course, that’s if Duch gets the verdict everyone assumes he’ll get.

Nath obviously agrees with Maeda. He’s also careful to emphasize that he respects whatever the court decides. Actually, he’s careful about everything—as one of the country’s most high-profile victims, his every word is scrutinized in the local press. Ultimately, though, and at the end of my time with him, he simply seemed relieved to have finally told his story to a roomful of people who might be able to do something about it. ■



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BELLADONNA'S ASS WIDE OPEN

Dir: Aiden Riley and Belladonna
 Enterbelladonna.com/Evilangel.com
 Rating: 10

If this is a remake of that Kubrick film then I don't see the resemblance between the cover model, Bobbi Starr, and Nicole Kidman. If it's not then... I totally do. (In a show of class, I will refrain from commenting on Kubrick's recent court drama and extradition from Switzerland stemming from the drugging and sodomizing of a 13-year-old girl back in 1977.) I hope I'm not ruining the plot of *Ass Wide Open* for anyone by saying there's a lot of anal sex in this film. I particularly like the part where Ashley Blue sticks her entire hand up there (except the thumb! That's the law in America: Fist away, just no thumb. It's referred to as the Hitchhiker's Sex Law in Harvard law books). It's as if she was meeting the person who lives in her butt for the first time and introducing herself with a neighborly handshake.

Recently I was asked to come up with a number of silly Valentine's Day drawerings for the beer brand that everyone at *Vice* loves so much, Colt 45. One of the many that were rejected featured Lando Calrissian sticking out of a crudely drawn woman's butt with a roof above it and

an Andersen window on each butt cheek (you couldn't tell from the shit drawerings that they were Andersen windows. But I'm telling you, they were). The text read: "If I Lived in Your Butt, I'd Be Home Already." I thought that it conveyed a real personal message; as if Lando was trying to be closer to the consumer and in turn, maybe, just maybe, bring all of us a little closer too. It was inspired by the saying "Keep Jesus in your heart this Christmas." I guess the message I was trying to send was "World peace now." Maybe it didn't come across in my drawing (I thought it did, but art is subjective), but that's what I was going for. And who better to send that message than Lando Calrissian?

I don't want this to sound racist but I just think that now that we finally have a black president and black people are finally allowed to play professional basketball, we should have all of our powerful messages spoken by black men and women. It's obvious that they are the only ones we listen to. I trust no weatherman but Al Roker. I believe in equal rights but I don't think white people should be allowed to work in the media (I'm an exception. I'm part black). I just don't listen to anything white people have to say. I stopped listening to them years ago. It's high time we get rid of the white news anchors and replace them with black ones. And while we're cleaning house I think that, in the future, karate should be a required class from kindergarten through college. I think we'd be in fewer wars if other countries knew that every one of us knew karate. **WORLD PEACE NOW.**
 CHRIS NIERATKO

For more of Chris go to chrisnieratko.com or njskateshop.com.

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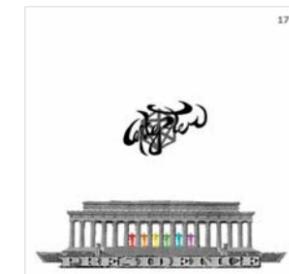
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SHEPPARD'S VIDEO-GAME PIE
BY STEPHEN LEA SHEPPARD
Photo by Dan Siney



**SILENT HILL:
SHATTERED MEMORIES**

Platform: Wii
Publisher: Konami

Silent Hill: Shattered Memories is an excellent game. It is also a giant middle finger to the Silent Hill fan base, which is awesome, and I say that as a member of said fan base. The problem with long-running horror series is that we become attached to the things that previously shocked us. Horror becomes fan service. Remember *Silent Hill: Homecoming*, with its giant Pyramid Head cameo? In *Silent Hill 2*, Pyramid Head was actually scary because we didn't know what the fuck was up with him until game's end. In *Silent Hill: Homecoming*, we know what's up with Pyramid Head, and while you can make an argument justifying his position in the narrative, it's obvious he's really there because the designers think Silent Hill fans like Pyramid Head and want to see him in Silent Hill games.

Shattered Memories has none of that. It's billed as a reimagining of the first game, but the only thing it really shares is the premise: In the middle of a blizzard on the outskirts of a town called Silent Hill, a man named Harry Mason crashes his car and falls unconscious, and when he wakes up he realizes his daughter is nowhere to be found. He sets off in search of her, and then things get weird.

The game has a few characters in common with the first *Silent Hill*—a cop named Cybil, a doctor named Kaufman, a nurse named Lucy, and someone named Dahlia whose intentions aren't clear—but uses them in completely different ways. I was seriously confused up until about three-quarters of the way through the game as to whether it was actually retelling the story of the first game with enough twists to keep me guessing or whether it was just *pretending* to retell the story of the first game to fuck with me so the real plot would be a surprise. Finally I decided to just see how it played out without trying to guess ahead,

and I was really pleased with how everything wrapped up.

Even the gameplay is completely different. There's no combat. You walk around with the nunchuck's analog stick and point Harry's flashlight with the Wii remote. When you encounter enemies you have to *run like hell*; if the monsters get you, you use a throwing motion to push them off you. Also notable is the way the game changes depending on how you play it—there are two separate Cybils in the game: a sexed-up Cybil who looks the way she did in the first game and a more realistic one. Which of the two you meet depends on how the game reads your personality.

If other games were more about artistic integrity and less about pandering, the way *Silent Hill: Shattered Memories* is, I would be so much happier as a human being than I am. Play it, and *think* about it while you're playing it. The whole industry can learn something from this game; I hope "Games like this don't sell" isn't gonna be it.

LEFT 4 DEAD 2

Platform: Xbox 360
Publisher: Valve

Left 4 Dead 2 mostly serves to remind me how much fun I had, and continue to have, with the first *Left 4 Dead*.

Both *Left 4 Dead* games are multiplayer- and replay-focused, about navigating four survivors of a zombie apocalypse from point A to point B, and fighting zombies and environmental obstacles along the way. Both stress teamwork and atmosphere. The first one is set in Generic City at twilight; the second is set in the southern US (the area around New Orleans, in particular) at various times of day. Each features a cast of four strongly characterized survivors (different sets) who play identically, a horde of generic zombies, and a few specific "boss infected" who have special abilities. The first *Left 4 Dead* also had surprisingly high-quality artificial intelligence for nonplayer survivors, so if you, like me, prefer to play it in (say) two-player mode, the two survivors not controlled by humans aren't a detriment to the team.

Left 4 Dead 2 builds on *Left 4 Dead*'s formula, but mostly what it builds is a goddamn torture chamber. A vocal portion of the original *Left 4 Dead*'s fan base apparently decided the game was too easy, so the sequel makes things harder while adding more complexity to the levels and *not* improving the companion AI, which now comes off stupider because



it has to deal with all that extra shit.

I suppose I should talk about the new stuff *Left 4 Dead 2* adds: Melee weapons, so you can hit zombies with baseball bats, skillets, guitars, or katanas. Three new types of boss infected, added to the first game's five. New scenarios (of course). A tendency to always use two or three boss infected simultaneously, and a love of placing them in the safe house at the end of every level, to ambush you. A toning-down or removal of the sound cues that tell you when a horde or tank boss is about to arrive. New goal-oriented gameplay, where in order to complete a level you usually need to hit a switch and then fight

through a never-ending pack of zombies to hit another switch instead of just hitting a switch and then surviving a smaller mob. Zombies wearing police uniforms or biohazard suits who are more difficult to kill from the front. "Realism" mode, where it's harder to revive downed survivors and headshots are more important. *Wandering witches*.

Bottom line: If you liked *Left 4 Dead* and thought it was good but too easy, this game's for you. If you liked *Left 4 Dead* and thought the difficulty was about perfect, stick with that. If you've never played either, pick up the first one, because it's still awesome and the sequel's not for beginners.

NEW SUPER MARIO BROS. WII

Platform: Wii
Publisher: Nintendo

It's a 2-D Mario game. You've bought it already and are undoubtedly reading this in between bouts of playing it. Who am I kidding here?

Yes, Shigeru Miyamoto has seen fit to bless us with the first 2-D Mario game for a home console since *Super Mario World* on the SNES. It plays like classic Mario, except for a) some new power-ups and b) simultaneous multiplayer. Simultaneous multiplayer is the big draw for me—up to four people on-screen at once, controlling Mario, Luigi, Green Toad, and Yellow Toad, picking one another up, bouncing off one another's heads, and stealing one another's power-ups. If you've got other longtime Mario players to play the game with, the simultaneous multiplayer is loads and loads of fun—when we were kids, my sisters and I used to play the fuck out of *Super Mario World*, so when I sat down with them again to



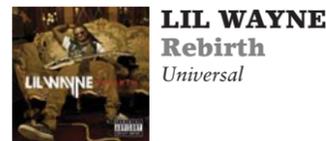
play this, all of their old reflexes came back. It was great.

My only real complaint is that the levels don't start to get really imaginative until the second half of the game. The first half feels

very much like revisiting a bunch of games I've already played, but the second half starts to play with odd level layouts and new enemy types. This isn't really a complaint, though—it's all classic 2-D Mario. It's fun as hell.



**BEST ALBUM OF THE MONTH:
MELVINS**



I am a Lil Wayne fan. Who isn't? He is one of the most inventive rappers of the last ten years. But he sure is crazy. Have you seen that documentary? Sheesh! *Rebirth* is his "rock" album, which basically means he mumbles Auto-Tuned, awkward sing-talking stuff over a Kidz Bop album. He's become so popular that he thinks he can take a dump in a recording booth and it'll be a platinum song. Not really, Weezy. This album is honestly one of the worst things I have ever heard, no hyperbole. If this is his "rebirth," I hope he gets aborted. Haha, get it? Like an abortion.
SNICKLEFRITZ MCGEE



The Game is a talented dude. Not only has he made some consistently solid hip-hop albums, but he's also a member of the Bloods, so he's killed, like, a bunch of people. He was supposed to retire after *LAX*, but I guess his *Stop Snitchin'*, *Stop Lyin'* DVD money wasn't quite what he thought it was going to be. This album isn't his strongest stuff, mostly because of the lack of those shit-hot soul beats his other albums have, but he makes up for it with guest appearances, which reads like the BET section of *TV Guide*. There's even a song about Michael Jackson featuring Chris Brown, Diddy, Usher, and Boyz II Men. No joke. It's

good, though, because now we don't have to hear five individual shitty songs about Michael Jackson by each of them.
PILLOW THE DON



This is a cool mix of bubblegum rap from Gucci with beats that make you feel like you ate a handful of drugs an hour ago. It's got a little bit of annoying hipster irony, but Gucci is legit enough (sort of) for it to be overlooked. Diplo is a bit of a one-trick pony but there's some great remixes by Memory Tapes, DJ Benzi, and Mumdance. I like the artwork, too. See you in six months, Gucci!
ALEX HALE



Ninjasnik throw great parties and their shows are a cavalcade of young trim, drinking, and drugs. I don't really care if they make records or not. This record's OK but it doesn't capture the roughness of their performances. The vocals aren't a team of drunk guys shouting into nine microphones and the music sounds different when it's not being busted out of garbage speakers. This shit could stand to be either grimmer or more intense on the dance side. The song they did with Major Lazer is great. My least favorite song is the one that shits on ugly girls, which I think is pretty fucking cruel coming from skinny young guys in a band. Why make fun

of women for being unattractive? It's just mean. Maybe I'm too sensitive for Ninjasnik.
EASE DAMONKEY



At first I thought it was kind of weird when a bunch of cool-kid New York musician types recently started getting into dubstep, techno, minimal techno, acid, acid house, and so on. I was like, um, where were you guys a couple of years ago? At an Oneida side-project show? (Not that there's anything wrong with that.) But you know what? If pasty indie dudes repping this music to their friends is going to bring more appreciation to brilliant records like Pantha Du Prince's new one here, then let's do this thing. It's techno, it's mellow, it's "funky." That's enough from me on the topic. If you're predisposed to like this sort of stuff you already know this is one of the albums of the year, genre-wise.
DA REAL NOO YAWK



Coconuts, as a name for a band, may evoke tropical sweetness and Jimmy Buffet's ball sac. But that ain't this. What this is is three men playing slow, simple, and sinister grooves, but locking into them shits like Houdini in a water-torture tank, and then beating them into the ground. The whole deal is ornamented with guitars that sound like broken glass being swallowed by

**WORST ALBUM OF THE MONTH:
LIL WAYNE**



porpoises—in a really good, melodic way. And—but wait—there are vocals too, which add a Spacemen 3-ish vibe (I bet the guys in this band will hate that I said that, but sorry lads, it's true and it's a good thing). Want me to make a TV analogy? OK, fine. Coconuts is what would be playing in the Black Lodge in *Twin Peaks* if ATP curated it. This record is dark and beautiful. Get it.
PICKLES P-S



Of all the potential bands that could have been named "Happy Birthday," I'm really glad it's actually this one. King Tuff is by my tally the only good thing to come out of Vermont in the past ten years besides syrup, photos of cow parades, and the bodies of dead skiers. This is his new(ish) group and it sounds a little less power-poppy than his solo deal and closer to the kind of horny slow jams you'd expect from *Cucumber Castle*-era Bee Gees or Let's Active. I know that maybe doesn't sound like high praise, but I assure you I'm a total jangle-fag.
SHAD BERNERI



This is a solid vinyl-only hunk of Melvins heaviness. Side A starts with an extended version of their cover of the theme music from *The Shining*. It's scary and evil, and it makes me wish that someone would tap Melvins to score a horror movie real soon. It's weird because you recognize the melody of the original music, but it's all Melvins-ed out, so you keep picturing the

evil ghost twins as stoner witches, done up in corpse paint with bong in hand. Side A concludes with a remix of the last song from the group's most recent LP, and it's a good companion to the *Shining* vibes: dark as fuck, with some Buttholes-ish vocal mess on top. And then there's Side B, which is a nine-minute cover of the classic Wipers song "Youth of America." Match made in heaven alert! It's big and majestic, and just about as good as the source material. This record is a collector's item waiting to happen. Find it! PS: The cover is by the late, great Steven Parrino. R.I.P.
CONRAD TONY



Like a fat guy who's had his shirt off since the second the party started, the band who was once the mighty Liars have again released the perfect album to glance at, kind of half-shrug, then turn back and continue talking to your friends about that drug bust at the Houston Space Center.
LONNY MOCHA



This is primal and tribal—it's pribal. You enter a haunted cave and the ghosts of your ancestors enter you through your nose, mouth, and ears. You're overcome by joy and sadness at the same time. You feel like you're less than an animal and more than human. That's what it's like listening to this echoey, jangly, wailing, banging record. Sorry, I am overly affected by the music of Golden Triangle and can only describe it in the way it makes me feel.

If you like King Khan, Black Lips, or Quintron, then you will probably also like this band and this record.
GAMBLOR



This is Weezer for people too young to relate to the old men in Weezer. Also it's harder to make out the lyrics. More echoes and less story songs, that's how you update Weezer for the kids. I can see a kid listening to this on a *Clone Wars*-themed MP3 player while slurping down some sort of plastic sock full of yogurt and absentmindedly meandering down his street on something that's like a combination of Rollerblades and a Razor scooter. If I think too hard while I listen to these guys it makes me angry, but if I concentrate on something else then I can enjoy the pleasant wimpiness of it all and hark back to a time when I would have related to this, before I could grow a beard and cried all the time.
OLDMAN CRYBABY



Don't confuse this shitty band called Sigh with the shitty band called Sigh that *The Venture Bros.* cocreator is in. That Sigh are really boring, which sucks 'cause you want to like them. This Sigh are a Japanese metal band who use a lot of tubas, oboes, clarinets, and flutes on top of death metal that ranges from average to OK. It's almost good but it ends up feeling like a rinky-dink version of when Dimmu Borgir recorded with the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. Or it's like you're watching some-



**BEST COVER OF THE MONTH:
MELVINS**

one's death-metal band play in the garage and then a parade goes by and the marching band makes everything sound weird. I would describe this as cabaret death metal, recommended only for when you want to try to blow the mind of someone very stupid.
PROMISE SNORTIN'



These guys have a real "get in the van" attitude and they creepy-crawl the nation pretty hard. Does anyone get in the van better than these guys? They're always getting into and out of vans. They are often spotted reading magazines about new series of vans coming out that they're just dying to get into. Once the van dumps them somewhere, they play energetic rock 'n' roll and all the girls have crushes on them. They are too busy getting back into the van for relationships, though.
CAT SHARON



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Stroke: Songs for Chris Knox
Merge

Tall Dwarfs always took side-stage to the Clean and the Chills and the Bats as far as New Zealand bands go (oh shit, and the Verlaines), which is fair because all those other bands are fantastic, but sucks because if they'd just had the wherewithal to move to, say, Hobart, they'd be the greatest Tasmanian band of all time. This is a tribute album to recent stroke victim Chris Knox,

who was half of Tall Dwarfs and also made a bunch of the videos and album art that helped define the Flying Nun Records aesthetic. There are too many good covers on here by Chris's scenemates and later fan bands (including a really spooky-after-the-fact version of "Pull Down the Shades" by the late Jay Reatard) to list them all, but my favorite is Stephin Merritt doing "Beauty" in early-Magnetic Fields ramshackle-keyboards style. Sorry this review wasn't funny or anything, I just really like this guy and his music and hope he gets better.
THOMAS MORTON



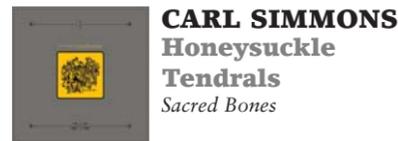
DINOSAUR FEATHERS
Fantasy Memorial
Self-released

This ultraharmonic white-guy world-beat shit was embarrassing enough when it was just Rusted Root doing it, and at least they had that bitchin' panpipe player to cut through the bongo haze and really toot it up something fierce. Where have you gone, John Buynak?
PALMER HEINEGGER



XIU XIU
Dear God, I Hate Myself
Four Paws

How much shit do you think we'd get in from the internet if we said Jamie Stewart is this generation's Morrissey?
DAVE MCMACKELBEE



CARL SIMMONS
Honeysuckle Tendrals
Sacred Bones

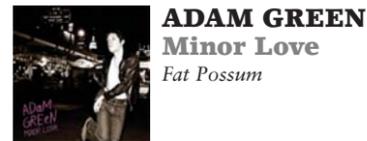
I was listening to this amazing little LP yesterday when my roommate

came home and shouted down the basement stairs, "Nick! Nick!" From the tone of his voice I thought he'd been mugged or the building was on fire. I felt my body seize up in anxiety and then he asked me if our basement was haunted and wanted to know where the spooky sounds were coming from. True story! This is a rerelease of a record that nobody ever heard of because Carl Simmons just gave it away on cassette to his friends ten years ago. Now strangers can finally hear this beautiful thing. My roommate was right in thinking that this sounds haunted. Listening to it kind of feels like watching *Gummo*. It's in the genre of spooky folk like Daniel Johnston but isn't derivative of that guy. It's simple, quiet, lonely, well recorded, and beautiful. It's got some countryishness to it. This album's release is a big deal. The vinyl version is beautifully packaged and is the kind of limited-edition thing that makes even reformed record collectors like me drool and sweat so hard that I have to go wash my hands and get a bib before I can touch it.
SACRED BONER



DEAR COMPANION
S/T
Sub Pop

I wish there was a John Belushi large enough to come along and smash all the acoustic guitars in the world at once and then look surprised at the smashed guitars in his hands and absentmindedly apologize.
OTTER



ADAM GREEN
Minor Love
Fat Possum

If you like when someone with a deep and talky voice sings over mel-

**WORST COVER OF THE MONTH:
SURFER BLOOD**



low, poppy music, you are probably into Jonathan Richman. But maybe you're ALSO into Adam Green. The standout track on this alb' is "Buddy Bradley," which you hopefully recognize as the main character from Peter Bagge's *Hate*. I think it's supposed to be about what it's like when your girlfriend is having an episode and all you can do is sit there and wait it out and wonder if you have no feelings. The chorus goes, "And all I can be is Buddy Braa-aa-aa-aadley." I think we've all been there. You know, when you say, "Whad I do?" and wonder if you're a Stanley Kowalski monster.
STINKY'S CORPSE



ANGELO SPENCER ET LES HAUTS SOMMETS
S/T
K

Plink plank plunk, who gives a fuck?
KIRBY PLUNKETT



KEVIN BARKER
You and Me
Gnomonsong

Oh, this is so nice and pleasant. He sounds like Jackson Browne or James Taylor or any number of those rustic, smooth-voiced 70s men with pretty, wingy bowl hairdos. I thought they didn't make 'em like that anymore, but apparently they do! Kevin Barker is a skillful guitar player and has a long, illustrious history of plucking alongside so-called freak-folk staples like Vashti Bunyan, Joanna Newsom, Espers, and Vetiver. But thankfully, this is the opposite of freaky, if the opposite of freaky is awesome, which it is. This is the only thing I've listened to today that hasn't annoyed the living shit out of me. Thanks, Kevin.
KELLY AMNER



INTERFERENCE
S/T
The Social Registry

Holy crap, *more* early-80s New York no-wave music that is somehow Sonic Youth-related? How much more of this stuff can they keep unearthing? Was everyone in downtown NYC in the early 80s in a band with a member of Sonic Youth or a friend of Sonic Youth or formed at a gallery that Sonic Youth were at? The woman in this band cocurated the legendary Noise Fest at White Columns in 1981 with Thurston Moore and was in an early incarnation of Sonic Youth, and one of the guys in this band went to school and was in a band with Lee Ranaldo. There's a joke to be made here somehow involving Sonic Youth, six degrees of Kevin Bacon, a curse, and a time machine, but listening to this intense, pounding music is making me unfunny.
MEG SNEED



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Black Man's Cry: The Inspiration of Fela Kuti
Now-Again

Now-Again did a bang-up job when they knocked this out. It's a bunch of songs that sound similar to Fela Kuti on a CD that is packaged in the back of a little teeny hardcover book that tells you all about how great a fella Fela was. Most of these songs are fun and dancey and engaging. If you buy one CD this year, then you will be buying more than most people end up buying. Maybe buy this one—it's a beautiful object that you can read and listen to at the same time.
BLEEP BLOOP



AZIZ ANSARI
Intimate Moments for a Sensual Evening
Comedy Central

This guy's got a voice that's all high and chocolatey like doughnuts on top of the refrigerator. His jokes are funny but his voice and delivery are so good that he could just say "Wimwam wogga blagga boobabalooba!" and if he did it with his trademark pacing and inflection, everyone would still laugh. You just automatically like this little guy and his crazy eyes. So many jokes about the internet.
NED KLINGER



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Constellation

Not sure how many more earnest 8- to 13-minute musical swells we need for undergrads to nervously hump to, but I guess it's smart to keep a surplus. PS: Bet you thought I was going to say "cinematic."
AL BATINSTO



EXCEPTER
Presidence
Paw Tracks

First of all, this thing is like two and a half hours long, which is hilarious, and at about 18:15 they run the vocals from "Smooth Operator" through the Throbbing Gristle "Hamburger Lady" effect, which is terrifying. It's also got nicer packaging than most Bibles, which tells me that either a lot of music listeners are performing lengthy semi-improvisational occult rituals with periodic dance intervals on painkillers at their homes or someone at Paw Tracks recently lost a wealthy distant uncle.
FELTON LEVATINO



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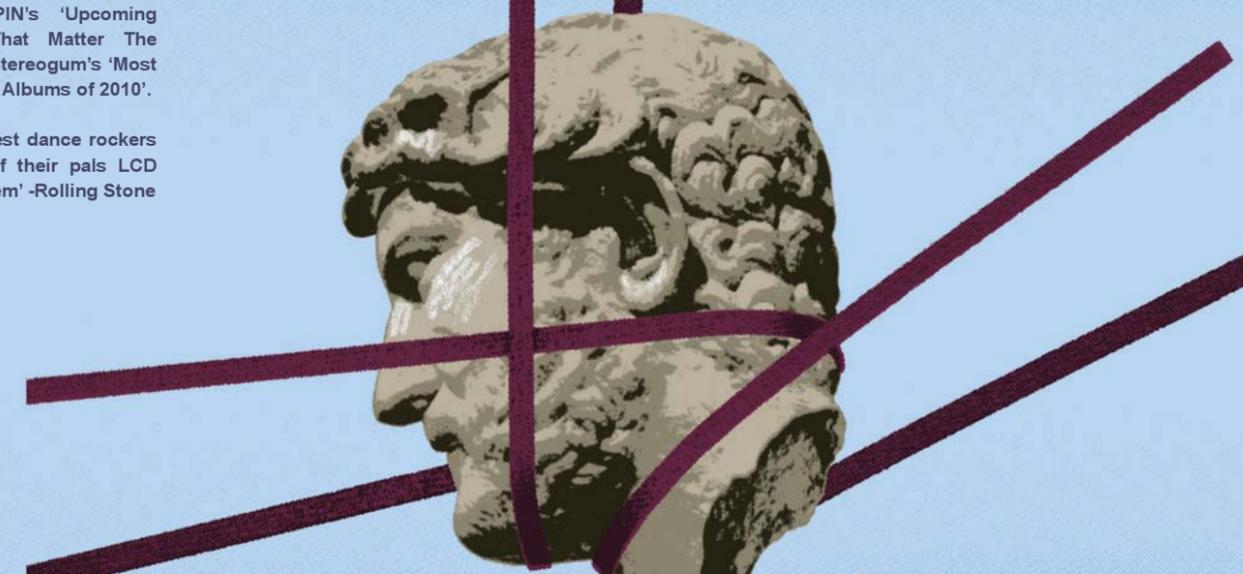
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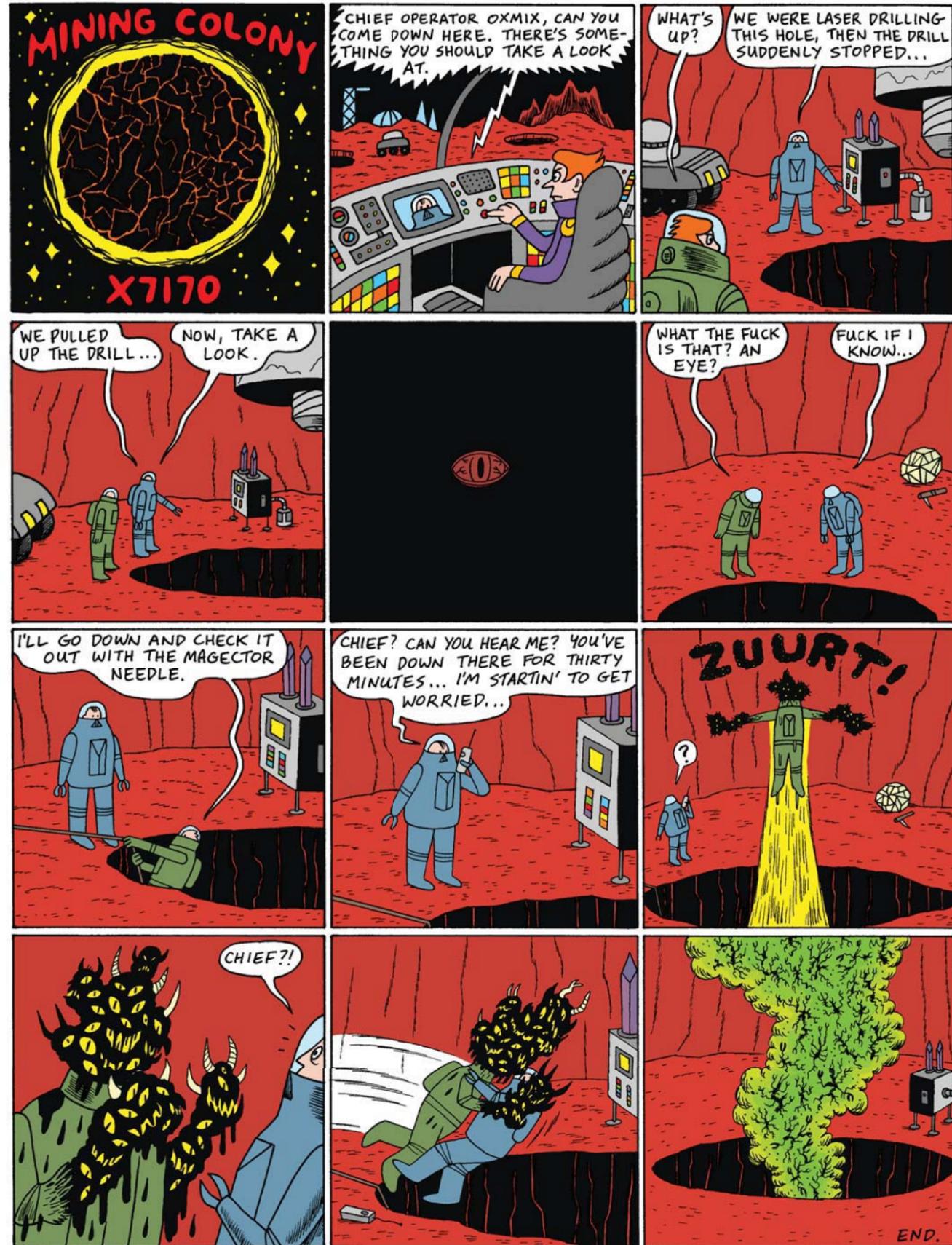
Smokey Robinson to deliver the keynote address on Thur., March 18, 2010.

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