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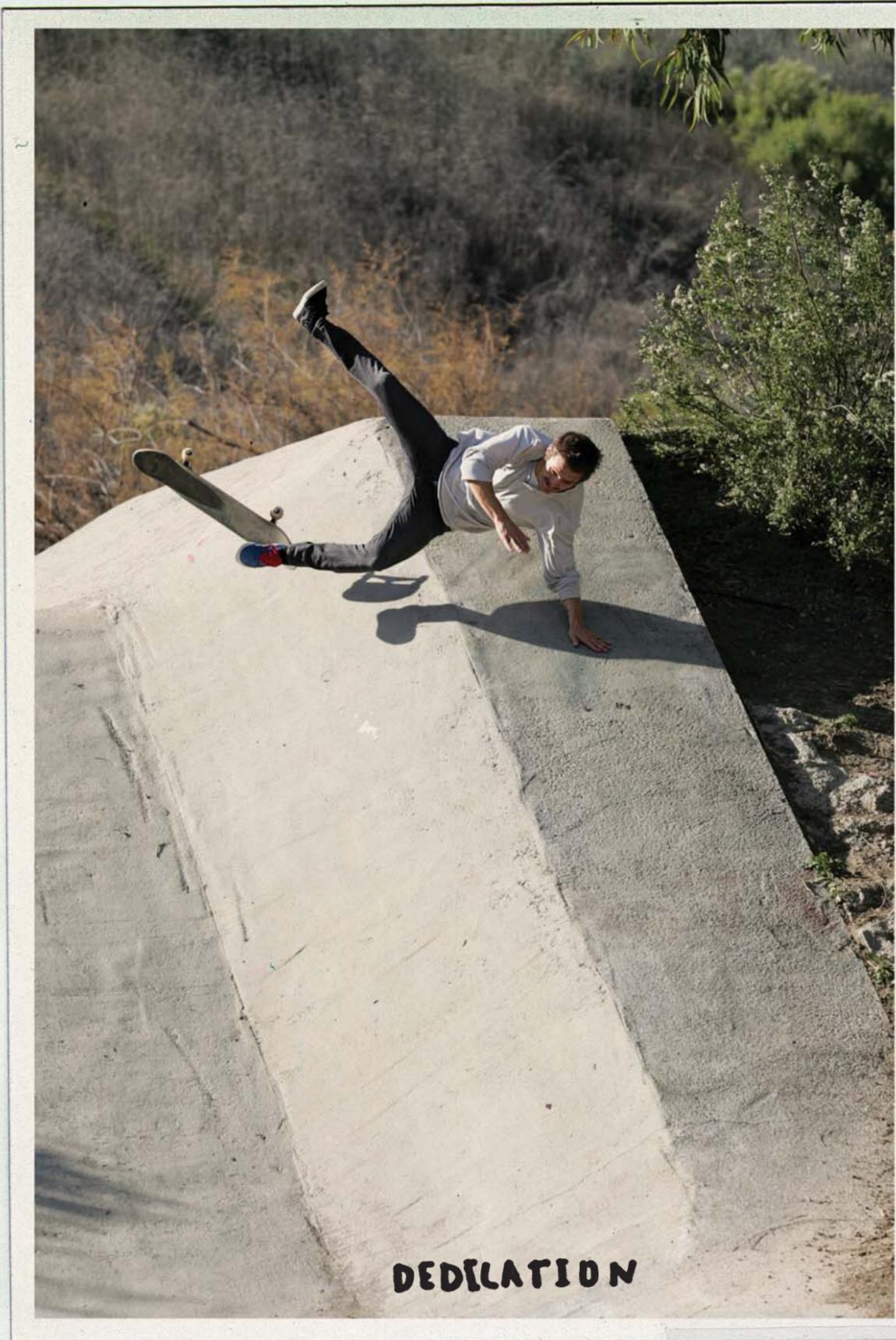
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Snake whiskey on sale in Hanoi, Vietnam. It's an acquired taste, but this spicy reptile juice is a pretty common sight in Southeast Asia and some people regard it as an aphrodisiac. Photo by Patrick Brown.

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Cover by Maurizio Cattelan and Pierpaolo Ferrari

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Bats on display at a roadside restaurant on the outskirts of Medan, Indonesia. Bat skin is said to cure ailments, including the flu and herpes. Photo by Patrick Brown, who will be featured in the next episode of Picture Perfect, coming out this month on VICE.com.

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## EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



### MAURIZIO CATTELAN AND PIERPAOLO FERRARI

Maurizio Cattelan and Pierpaolo Ferrari are two super-duper talented Italian art stars. Maurizio recently hung almost every piece he ever created from the ceiling of the Guggenheim, giving art lovers some pretty serious neck problems. Pierpaolo, meanwhile, shoots everything from fashion to celebrity portraits to sports and also does some art photography on the side. He's a machine, basically (but a very amicable one). Together, they're the masterminds behind the biannual magazine *Toilet Paper*, possibly the best thing anyone's printed in the past two years (outside of VICE, of course). We got them to agree to send some new work that may or may not appear in a forthcoming issue of *Toilet Paper*. You'll just have to buy it to find out.

See THE COVER and A FEW PIECES OF TOILET PAPER, page 94



### BRUCE GILDEN

Bruce Gilden spent his childhood teaching himself photography and observing the customs of the urban tribes of Brooklyn. He combined these two interests and soon started roaming the streets, snapping candid shots of the most bizarre characters New York had to offer. Bruce's work documenting Coney Island and Mardi Gras in New Orleans made him one of the most respected street photographers in the world, and he joined the prestigious Magnum photography collective in 1998, where to this day he continues to do whatever the hell he wants. (He spent last summer in Australia photographing famed criminal Mick Gatto and his friends.) For this issue, Bruce shot what for him counts as lighter material: a murder-scene fashion shoot.

See IN BROAD DAYLIGHT, page 76



### ELEKTRA KOTSONI

Elektra started at VICE about a year ago, which worked out very nicely; having a Greek in the office was extremely convenient when Greece erupted in fiery protests last year due to the country's financial situation, which is now basically a porta-potty on the last day of Bonnaroo. It was Elektra who facilitated our trip to Athens to film our documentary about the crisis, *Teenage Riot: Athens*. As Greece continues to slide into full-blown anarchy, Elektra returned to investigate the influx of migrants currently using Greece as their slingshot into the rest of Europe, which included a stop at one of the depressing illegal-immigrant detention centers on the Turkish border. She also received a marriage proposal from a guy who wanted a visa.

See A BORDERLINE CRISIS, page 44



### BREA SOUDERS

Brea Souders sometimes takes portraits of celebrities for glossy magazines, but we're more interested in her *other* work, which tends to veer toward minimalism—surreal, meticulous compositions that feature body parts, sea shells, shadows, dark clusters of leaves, and other things that she transforms into images resembling paintings with hidden messages. Her photos have been exhibited all over the world, but more importantly for our purposes, when we asked her to contribute some images we could use in conjunction with an excerpt from a book called *The Sugar Frosted Nutsack*, she didn't bat an eye before sending us a trio of gorgeous, slightly mysterious pictures that have nothing to do with nutsacks or sugar but are fitting all the same.

See THE GENESIS OF 'THE SUGAR FROSTED NUTSACK,' page 104



### MITCHELL PROTHERO

If any young journalists are looking for tips on how to get an editor's attention, here's one: Send an email that starts out, "I played a game of paintball with Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon." That's what Mitchell Prothero did, and we sure as hell wrote back immediately. (Warning, though: If you send this and have not actually played paintball with Hezbollah, your email address will be banned forever). It took him over a year to organize the game, and he told us it was the single weirdest night he's had in his near-decade of covering the Middle East and the War on Terror. Well, maybe except for the time he covered the 2006 Israeli air strikes and went out afterwards to bars that were open despite bombs whistling through the air.

See PAINTBALLING WITH HEZBOLLAH, page 118

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## BLACKFACE IS THE NEW BLACK

Recently, posters of two jeering old men appeared around Berlin. They were advertisements for Schlosspark Theater's production of Herb Gardner's *I'm Not Rappaport*, a comedy about two old guys hanging out in Central Park—one of them Jewish, the other black. Diddi Hallervorden plays Nat, the white guy, and Joachim Bliese plays Midge, which is a big deal because Joachim is white and wears blackface for the role. In an attempt to independently verify just how racist this was (spoiler: very), we interviewed Tahir Della, a board member of Initiative Schwarzer Deutscher, a support group for blacks in Germany that was one of the first organizations to denounce the play.



**VICE:** Does it seem odd to you that they couldn't find a single black actor in Berlin who was qualified for this role?

**Tahir Della:** There is a group of black actors in Berlin called Label Noir. They had a nationwide casting recently with tons of people auditioning. It's impossible that the theater couldn't find someone.

**The company claims that it wasn't their intention to be racist.**

I think it's all about the power of defining racism. The theater and its apologists claim to have that power. We don't think so. They're painting us as an anonymous internet mob.

**The play has been shown many times with white actors in blackface, which is apparently totally**

acceptable in German theaters. That's not true either. There has been resistance all along. The prestigious Deutsches Theater had to actually cancel *Clybourne Park* by Bruce Norris, because Norris forbade them from casting white actors in black roles.

**The theater says criticizing the play is ridiculous because it's all about human understanding—how these guys become friends even though they come from different backgrounds.**

This isn't about the play or the theater or the actors. We're criticizing the fact that black actors are discriminated against in Germany. And that is exactly what they're admitting when they say that there aren't enough parts and they can't employ blacks because of that.

**They also say that if they aren't allowed to use blackface on white actors, classic plays like *Othello* can't be produced any longer.**

We want black actors to be able to play black roles. At this point, a white actor can play every part there is, while black people can't even play themselves. One of the reasons blackface occurred in the US was to keep black actors away from the stage, and that is exactly what's happening here.



## MORE ITALIAN TAX TROUBLES

BY WILBERT L. COOPER  
Illustration by Daniel David Freeman

Like pizza and not showering, flagrant tax evasion is commonplace in Italy—a place where even former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi once claimed that dodging the tax man is a “natural right” and people smuggle their unreported ducats out of the country in their underpants.

Lately, however, the financially beleaguered Italian government has finally begun cracking down on widespread tax evasion by using its state-run tax-collecting company, Equitalia, to bring in revenue from the so-called shadow economy that in 2007 was estimated by economists to make up 22.3 percent of the country's GDP. Equitalia has faced severe criticism from the public, who deride it for going after average people instead of the private jet owners who report no earnings.

Italy's Informal Anarchist Federation was so fed up with Equitalia that they letter-bombed its Rome headquarters in December. Equitalia director Marco Cuccagna was hospitalized after the parcel attack, having lost part of his finger and damage to his eye. Equitalia's Naples office was also attacked with explosives in both December and January; however, no one was injured in or claimed responsibility for either attack.

Dan Ariely, a leading behavioral economist and professor at Duke University, thinks Equitalia is ineffective. “When you make it clear that lots of people are cheating, that creates a new social norm for it. [Italy needs to] promote people who pay taxes instead of emphasizing deviants.”

## Free the Hooch

BY ROSE ATHENA  
Illustration by Kara Crabb



Are you a homeless alcoholic in Vancouver, BC, who is using this free magazine to shelter yourself from the elements? We've got good news for you! A band of Vancouver community activists who call themselves the Eastside Illicit Drinkers Group for Education are trying to establish a “members-only lounge,” where drunks can conveniently satisfy their insatiable thirst for booze in a safe environment. This isn't some hazy, drunken fantasy either: The group recently landed a \$52,000 grant from the nonprofit Vancouver Foundation. While conservative critics point to it as a rotgut-dealing operation that panders to humanity's basest desires, the group insists that the cost of providing homeless alcoholics free liquor is much lower than

policing and medical fees associated with illicit drinking on the street.

Nasty side effects of drinking improvised hooch include blindness (usually as a result of downing diluted hand sanitizer), bone-erosion fractures (from quaffing mouthwash), and something called hemorrhagic gastritis (from guzzling rubbing alcohol). The group hopes that by offering desperate addicts an alternative, health risks will be scaled back. And by next year, the Eastside Illicit Drinkers Group is looking to form a partnership with Vancouver Health Services and construct a swanky lounge stocked with vodka, sherry, and high-alcohol beer, which is a definite step up from hand sanitizer on the rocks.

# 2012

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## SO YOU'RE GOING TO PRISON...



Rich dudes have people who help them through every aspect of their lives, from nannies to drivers to accountants to business advisers. But who assists them when they're convicted of crimes and have to get carted off to federal pound-me-in-the-ass prison? That would be Executive Prison Consultants LLC, a company founded by Richard Zaranek (himself a white-collar ex-con) to help well-heeled nonviolent criminals navigate the confusing and Kafkaesque justice system throughout the journey from Master of the Universe to common jailbird to free-at-last. We spoke with Richard to ask him what his job is like.



BY HARRY HEADLE  
Photo courtesy of Richard Zaranek

**VICE:** Say I get charged with a crime by the feds and I'm in a lot of trouble. How can you help me?

**Richard Zaranek:** What we'll try to do is see if the prosecutor is in a bargaining mode, which most of them are, and then we'll try to add certain enhancements to the deal that will aid in getting that person placed at a facility that is appropriate for him or her. Essentially we're putting together a package of materials that demonstrates to that judge why the sentence should favor the defendant.

**How heinous is the level of crime on average?**

We're not talking about molestation, rape, murder, armed robbery, weapons, or violence. We're talking about this white-collar world where it's a simple thing of signing off on some papers or ignoring information that perhaps they should've scrutinized more deeply, maybe taking a bribe to look the other way when certain things are happening, stuff like this that kind of happens out there every day. You delineate the positive attributes, put the best foot forward, and simply ask the judge to consider that.

**What happens after one of your clients is sentenced to prison?**

We then engage in a whole series of training, education, and preparation that addresses the change of lifestyle that's about to be imposed. Once they become an inmate—from the day they walk into the front door of that prison until the day they leave—their life takes on a whole different set of issues that they must deal with.

**What kind of issues?**

The fundamental change is that it's a very procedural-oriented environment. You have to comply with the rules and regs that are set down, and for many white-collar people that is a big change in lifestyle, because you have to do what these correctional officers tell you to. You're gonna be dealing with people who make nine to ten bucks an hour, who are minimally educated.

**It's a reversal of the outside order.**

That's exactly right. Those lowlifes and peons at the bottom of the food chain are now the ones running your life, and you need to comply with that or else you're going to have a nightmare of problems.

## From the Circus to Your Stomach

BY DAVID MURRIETA  
Illustration by Sam Taylor

If you want to buy exotic meat in Mexico City (and really, why wouldn't you?) get yourself to the middle of the San Juan market and find El Gran Cazador (The Great Hunter) butcher shop. Adventurous carnivores make the pilgrimage every day, in search of every meaty bounty provided by God: boar, crocodile, deer, armadillo, buffalo, insects, ostrich, rabbit, goat, and frozen medallions of lion.

According to Fernando, the owner, all the meat (even the insects) he sells are certified and approved by the Mexican equivalent of the FDA. Though a widely held belief persists that people breed lions and tigers to sell their meat illegally on the black market, most of Fernando's flesh actually comes from felines who die while performing in circuses and state fairs. In addition, some exotic pets grow too big to fit in the backyard and end up on the dinner table.

Fernando told us the story of a circus giraffe that broke its neck traveling on a train and had to be put down. The circus sold the dead animal for \$80,000 to the market's butchers, and Fernando chopped it up and sold tasty giraffe steaks by the pound. On another occasion, a zoo owner showed up with a dead hippo, and the butchers at the San Juan market jumped at the chance to sell meat enthusiasts a once-in-a-lifetime barbecue opportunity.

But the average Joe can't just walk up at any time of day and grab a lion rump roast. You have to be willing to pay around \$40 a pound, and you have to wait on suppliers who show up four times a year at most. But it's worth it when you get to sink your teeth into a lion, which is way better than the other way around.



## THE ONLY LION MEDALLION RECIPE YOU'LL EVER NEED

As far we know, there is only one guy in Mexico City who can cook your medallions properly: Don Fortino, the chef at Fonda Don Chon—a restaurant specializing in exotic meats, insects, and precolonial food. He's been in the business for more than 50 years. We visited the man and asked him to share his wisdom. This is the recipe he gave us:

- 1 pound of lion meat
- 1 finely sliced onion
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 parsley branches
- Salt & pepper

*Fry the onion and garlic in olive oil. When they begin to turn yellow, drop the lion medallions in the pan. Add parsley, salt, and pepper. Cook until mildly broiled. Serve with salad and mashed potatoes. Enjoy!*



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BEWARE: TRANSCENDENTAL TRANSLUCENCE AWAITS.

FLYNN

## THE BIG-CITY COMMUNES OF BARCA

VICE is working on a new film based around an emerging subculture in Barcelona—one made up of working-class families and gangs of anarchist punk-rock kids who've been forced to coexist thanks to global economic collapse and the deterioration of Spanish social services. Here's a sneak-peek of what to expect.



BY ANDY CAPPER

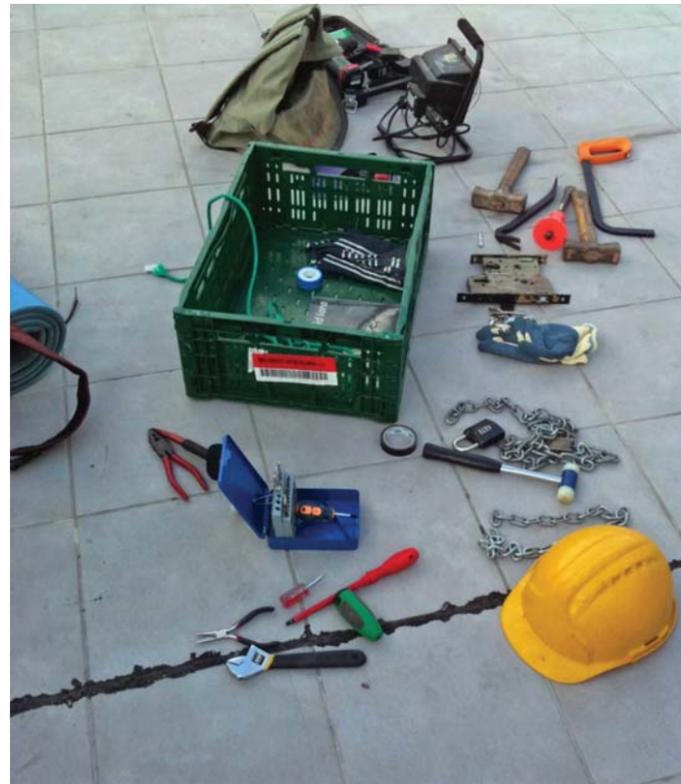
Photo by Malú Rodríguez Arnedo

The Barcelona district of Nou Barris is downright beautiful in January. The weather is unseasonably warm, and at sunset the surrounding hills and valleys are mottled with soft light as the sky turns from purple to black. Up close, however, the streets reek of piss, shit, and garbage, and the residents exude palpable desperation, as if sweating misery.

Nou Barris's man-made problems started in 2008, when the banks collapsed and ridiculous mortgage deals handed out to poor families began to destroy the people they were originally meant to help. Many residents worked in construction and lost their jobs when, overnight, the market for cheap housing fell apart.

Unlike in other markets around the world, defaulting on a mortgage in Spain doesn't mean that your debt is forgiven. The result is homeless families who owe up to 200,000 euros. Nowhere in Barcelona have government-enforced evictions of families been more intense than Nou Barris.

Since social services are scant, it's been left to an ever-growing group of anarchists, hippies, and punk rockers to provide necessities to the swelling population of homeless working-class residents. A few times a week, these young people relocate families to buildings closed down by the banks and teach them to cook with food salvaged from garbage cans. Within the squats are piles of rotting vegetables and prawn shells taken from the dumpsters of downtown restaurants frequented by affluent tourists.



Last month, we met a 15-year-old named Tete Delgado, who seemed well-off, dressed in baggy tracksuit bottoms, white sneakers, and a hoody. But Tete has been so inspired by the Barca anarchist punk scene that he now sports a gothic lip piercing and paints his nails black from the same bottle of cheap nail varnish used by his new friends Vero, a skinhead girl, and Pol, a long-haired

hippie. The two 20-somethings are extremely active in seizing homes and rehousing families.

While atop a five-story squat, Pol and Vero showed us the kit they use to equip foreclosed buildings with lights, running water, and locks.

A collection of bolt cutters, chains, torches, saws, and DIY electrical devices glinted in the sun. It was just another beautiful Barcelona day.

## Mixed Tantric Pleasures



BY KELLY McCLURE

My former title was "Reviews Editor," so people would constantly email me in an attempt to get me to sample and write about their weird products. One lady wanted to mail me this stuffed animal that sang songs that supposedly help your self-esteem, and I was like, "What are you trying to say?" Now that I go by the way more legit title of "Music Editor," I mostly get emails from bands trying to tongue kiss me, but crap "for review" still arrives in the mail from time to time. A month ago FedEx brought me a package from ONE Condoms. Inside were two tubes filled with 12 condoms each that I do not need because I eat vagina.



The condoms are two new varieties that ONE is launching: Mixed Pleasures and Tantric Pleasures. I asked my girlfriend what she thought could possibly make a condom "tantric" and she said, "Making direct eye contact

while fucking with it on, and already having tickets to Burning Man." I think she's right. As far as Mixed Pleasures goes, I guess it implies that you will put it on a penis and have just a so-so time? Like, your pleasure will be equal parts yay and gross? Seems honest.

Never mind. I just opened up the USB keychain that was included in the package and it turns out we were both wrong. The Tantric Pleasures condom turns your dink into a rocket-shaped tribal tattoo, and the Mixed Pleasures variety produces something called "Flavor Waves." Straight people, what's wrong with you?

Photo: Vincent Siqueland



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# I'VE GOT AN ALIEN IN MY HEAD

Silvio Berlusconi's Fortune-Teller Predicts a Bleak Future

BY BLAGOVEST  
BLAGOEV

PORTRAIT BY  
BEA DE GIACOMO

After arriving in Italy from Bulgaria 28 years ago to work as an au pair, Teodora Stefanova soon became known for her psychic powers. Eventually, she captured the attention of Silvio Berlusconi, then a millionaire businessman. She foretold that he would become prime minister, to which he replied that if her predictions came true, he'd guarantee her TV appearances—and riches—for life. Teodora went on to fame and fortune, warning Princess Di of her fatal accident, perplexing Larry King by referring to an event in his past known only to him, and predicting on-air the results of soccer matches broadcast on Berlusconi's TV stations (he was a man of his word). Recently, Teodora was kind enough to consent to an interview, which must have been boring since she presumably knew what I would ask beforehand.

**VICE: Tell us how your psychic career started.**

**Teodora Stefanova:** I never imagined I'd be telling people's fortunes. I had quite a happy childhood, without a trace of the supernatural. In 1984, however, during a holiday by the sea, I was in a car accident, which put me in a coma for 14 days. When I came around, I had these strange feelings. I thought I was going insane. Hearing the voice in my head for the first time, I refused to accept it was real. Back in communist times it was particularly difficult to share such bizarre experiences. I was facing the madhouse.

**Whose fortune did you first tell?**

I was still in the hospital, and I started seeing things from the lives of the people around me, and when I told them things, they were awed. Soon enough, the doctors were dropping by, asking to know stuff about themselves. Those were the first witnesses of my power.

**So who, exactly, is the entity behind the omnipotent voice that is broadcast inside your head?**

His name is Unilson, and he comes from the planet Vanfim. What he told me is that everything around us is energy, which contains information about all that exists, much like a giant computer. All you need is the key: a name and birth date. The key allows you to look into the past and the present, and therefore the future.

**Did Unilson tell you about the origin of this world, of human beings?**

Both us and them are God's creatures, and the extraterrestrials made the robot, which helps us in many spheres of our living and is part of their presence here.

**Does it seem like your alien friends may wish to pay us a visit anytime soon?**

They're already here, they're the energy making contact with us. But we are not ready yet. They wouldn't scare us; they just want to help us lead a more earthly and natural life. Those indigo and crystal children who have been coming into the world recently are prepared to make contact with them.

**What do the scientists say about your gift?**

They keep inviting me to those UFO-ology shows on TV. I am regarded as some kind of expert because of the extraterrestrial I have contact with. The other participants in those shows are usually scientists who believe in the existence of the extraterrestrials. The others probably think I'm crazy.

**Will the world be ending soon?**

2012 will not be the end of the world. However, the system will change, and the year will provide answers to a number of important questions that have been piquing the human mind. For instance, the euro will continue to decline, and by 2016 there will be a new European currency. The much relied-on Germany will embark on

a new path and will establish its own currency. Italy will be revived and, though not among the biggest world powers, will prosper once more. The Balkans will unite when all borders get abolished. Turkey, in turn, will become the leader of the Islamic world. China has been trying to see how the land lies before it starts to expand and will eventually become one of the leading world powers alongside Russia and India.

**How about the USA?**

America is still the top power, but China is claiming the position. There will be much arguing and disagreement as to who is the world leader; there will be some turmoil over the countries' debts, but the future belongs to the Asian race. This will favor Europe, for it is advantageous to have a partner as financially and economically stable as China. America will clash with Iran in an Israel-inspired conflict. Chemical and nuclear war will start from there.

**Oh, man, this doesn't sound good. Iranians can be a tad extreme.**

This is inevitable, and so is the war. Parts of the ocean will be poisoned, the air too, and some of the crops, and not only in Iran but in many parts of the planet. We'll stop buying certain fruits and vegetables because they will be poisoned. Sea animals will start dying for no visible reason. Countries will become self-encapsulated. Those that have freshwater will not share it; those that have oil will keep it to themselves. Another thing: There will be some problems caused by an asteroid that will trigger a number of disasters like the one that hit Japan recently. France will suffer; I see a nuclear accident at one of its power plants. There will be a serious blackout.

**Do you mean volcanic ash will block the sun, or will it be more of a massive power outage?**

Volcanoes. This will be the result of the asteroid, which will not obliterate the entire earth but will very seriously affect it. People will reconsider the value of resources and become environmentally responsible. By 2050, capsule-like eco-homes will be built, fit to endure extreme weather conditions, and everyone will be producing their own food, which will be mainly vegetarian. Humans will gradually stop eating meat; freshwater will become the most precious of resources. We'll be using mostly renewable energy sources, and we'll have long forgotten that the euro and the dollar once existed.

**What is the future of the Middle East following the Arab Spring?**

Big evolution: They will turn to modern Islam, and great changes are in store for their governments. They will be united around their sheikhs and have their own currency. Libya is facing even more unrest and will find it hard to restore the world's trust—but this and other things I should not tell you, for they are in my new book, which is due out soon.

**I've examined previous prognostications you've made, and I must say that a good part of them failed to come true. For instance, you predicted that Berlusconi would complete his full term, and look what happened.**

I am only a tiny conductor of all this energy. I am not

perfect, and good for me: Imagine the CIA abducting me [laughs], and then I'd have to work for them. Generally, I have about 80 percent reliability, plus the future can be altered by other factors.

**What other factors?**

Well, humans, for example. People have to turn to the spiritual. We have been excessively investing in the material, and therefore nothing good awaits us. In 2012, people's thinking will undergo a process of trial and reevaluation. The flexible ones, who are fit to live with plenty and with little, shall survive, while the rest fall away. The rich shall become less and less so. They will have to help with the survival of the planet and will become aware that riches are nothing if there is nowhere to spend them.

**Do you honestly believe such a change is possible?**

Look at the way the year has started with a tragedy in Italy, and remember what happened in Japan last year. All those calamities will bring people together, and there are more to come. People will be continuously scanned; the computer will become an integral part of any man, like a wristwatch. We shall all be scanned, financially and otherwise, but we'll also be watched by other civilizations. Time will be running out, and it will seem to us that life is getting shorter and shorter.

**Won't it be getting longer?**

It surely will. Some people will look like mummies but will live as long as 150 years, thanks to advanced medicine.

**How do people of faith respond to your powers?**

The Catholic Church will acknowledge the extraterrestrials, who implicitly obey God anyway, so the Vatican and the rest of the churches will have to reconsider their attitude in terms of this particular issue. The first disconcerting thing to happen will be the discovery of God's particle. This is due to happen very shortly.

**Does your gift affect your personal life? I presume a boyfriend would have a hard time trying to hide something from you.**

It hasn't been helpful. My boyfriends tend to get too intimidated by it and find it difficult to get accustomed to this presence. The good thing is that if there are genuine feelings, the presence sort of resigns. I can only see inside someone as long as I have not become too close with that someone.

**I am tempted to ask about the future of VICE...**

This year is a new beginning for you. There will be a new sponsor, and there will be some extending of the media. I see something like a DVD being sold together with the magazine.

**Would you like to add anything?**

I should have mentioned that all religions and people shall become one—a global leader and unifier will come.

**Has he or she been born yet?**

Yes, he has, but he has not yet made his appearance on the stage of events. 





A wheelchair was the author's ticket to the mysterious and wonderful world of the handicapped stall.

## ROLLIN', ROLLIN', ROLLIN'

*Pretending to Be Handicapped for a Day*

BY KARA CRABB

PHOTOS BY  
KARA-LIS COVERDALE

**M**y brother has hemiplegic cerebral palsy, and he's a total dick about it. He's always like, "Oh, I'm crippled so I can't do the dishes," or he'll just blow all of his disability checks on video games and take-out food. For two decades I've been secretly jealous of him, yearning for all that extra attention, free stuff, and lowered expectations. I was so envious I hijacked a wheelchair from a loading dock when I was six years old. I contorted my hands and feet and drove it around like I owned that motherfucker, just to see what it was like. People were smiling at me and waving; it was like being a celebrity.

Since then my curiosity has only intensified, until one day when I realized: I'm an adult now. I don't need to *steal* a wheelchair to take a peek into the glamorous world of the physically disabled. I can simply rent one with my credit card! It'd be like the time Tyra Banks wore a fat suit to reveal that obese people are really just attention hogs.

The first step was to call up my brother to get the handicapped low-down. The most annoying thing, he told me, is when people refer to him as "handicapped." He also said he blocks out all of his shitty experiences with strangers. Therefore his perception is that most people are either curious or overly nice. I couldn't wait to be confined to my go-go seat and paint the town disabled.

Let me just say, I felt the burden of the wheelchair as soon as I sat down. I live in Montreal and it was winter. A day of "rollin' around town" would consist of wheeling up and down a giant icy hill of death. My mantra

became: "Without my wheelchair, I am just a rubbery mess of skin with bed sores and poop stains." I called a couple of friends to see what they were up to, laying my disability on thick, telling them that the only choices were the art gallery, the casino, or the indoor zoo—the only wheelchair-accessible places in this city.

As I wheeled out of the house I realized I could hardly push myself down the sidewalk. The ice was thick and bumpy, which meant that I either had to go into the middle of the street like an asshole or give up my pride and let someone else push me. That wasn't going to happen.

I managed to make it onto the metro, which was a lot of work even though I was sitting down the whole time. When I tried to get on the train I got stuck in the gap between the car and platform. Everybody was horrified as I tried to use the railings of the train to pull myself in. Nobody knew what to do; they were paralyzed. Then the bell rang, signaling that the doors were shutting, and I panicked. I hopped out of the wheelchair, pulled it in, and sat down. Jaws dropped. Still, it took twice the usual amount of time to get to my chosen destination, the zoo.

The main thing I noticed at the zoo was my height. Being paraplegic put me on the same eye level as children. It's a horizon of insanity. My brother told me that he used to tell kids he was contagious and they'd stay away.

I heard kids and adults alike say, "Watch out!" when they saw me coming, and a few do-gooders self-satisfyingly held open the door for me. To be honest, it was actually awesome to have people stressing out about my presence, but I had to keep pretending I was used to the attention.

# THE OWEN

THE FIRST LIGHTWEIGHT  
RUNNING SHOE FROM SUPRA.



## SUPRA

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A visit to the Montreal Zoo, one of the city's few wheelchair-accessible attractions. These fish don't have legs either.

When it was time to leave, I called a taxi company that advertised wheelchair-accessible vans. The zoo worker who led me to the taxi stand was extremely annoying and spoke to me as if I were a toddler. He bent down to get right in my face and spoke slow and loudly. Naively, I wanted to believe that maybe he interacted like this with everyone. But this was precisely what my brother had warned me about—the worst part about his physical disability is that a lot of people underestimate his intellectual abilities, and not just strangers. He told me that teachers, classmates, and even family members have all been devastatingly ignorant about his cerebral palsy, blatantly or subconsciously treating him as if he were mentally inferior.

In an attempt to engineer a more positive outcome to my social experiment, I decided to attend a wheelchair-basketball tournament. Watching the first game, I noticed something odd about all of the players: They were laughing and smiling, seemingly unconcerned about winning or losing. This stuck out in contrast from the wheelchair-basketball games I watched as a kid, where the guys were so top-heavy they seemed part buffalo, with burly handlebar mustaches and raggedy cutoff t-shirts. Those games were intense, full of yelling and sweating and blood. At this match, after the whistle blew and the game came to a stop, everybody just *got up* from their wheelchairs and walked away. I'd never felt so incredibly cheated.

Afterward I prepared for a night of intense drinking and driving at the only wheelchair-accessible place that served alcohol near my house. The nice thing about being in a wheelchair is that your shoes never get dirty or wet, and you don't actually have to walk while wearing high heels. My plan was to bring home a cute guy from the bar and make him lift me into bed, or at least get him to straddle me in my wheelchair.

Unfortunately, when I got to the club it turned out it was "Regay Night" and there just happened to be a disabled lesbian

tearing it up on the dance floor, making disabled-lesbian eyes at me. I pounded drinks to make things less awkward, and along the way realized another nice thing about being in a wheelchair is that bartenders remember exactly who you are and what you order.

Then, I decided, it was time to dance. I'd been researching wheelchair moves on YouTube all week in preparation. And I was ready to bust out all of the best arm movements I'd practiced, but I was *still* so awkward about the lesbian roller to the left of me. I could sense her in my periphery all night, giving me the eyes, presumably expecting to make whatever kind of love handicapped lesbians can manage.

Eventually I was so drunk I passed out with my head pressed up against the bar table (which was the perfect height). I felt a tap on my shoulder, and when I looked up, Handi-Lesbo was uncomfortably inside my domain, aggressively saying shit I couldn't understand. I freaked out and wheeled away while some ginger person (my vision was too blurry to tell which sex) helped me through the door. As soon as I exited the building I bolted back to my apartment and swore I'd never make-believe that I was disabled again.

This brings me to my last point, or, if it were a science-fair experiment, "What I Learned": Yes, having a physical impairment sucks, but it shouldn't define a person. I also had the thought that perhaps my disabled friends would one day establish their own version of Israel, but for gimps instead of Jews. They could live peacefully among themselves, rolling around all of the open space they've ever wanted.

What I really should have been focusing on was how to make my heart more handicappable. Like, maybe it's true that my brother actually can't *do* the dishes. Perhaps he deserves more money from the government. And maybe I'm just an asshole, wasting my fully functioning body day after day after day. *WCE*

## The Mr. Kong:

*1 Part toothless hobo-rockstar*

*2 Parts roll in the hay with the farmer's daughter*

*A Pinch of vintage-vinyl bluegrass*

*A Bellyfull of rotgut rye*

*Blended to comfort perfection*

*Garnished with cherry surf-wax and served chilled*



THEY'RE NOT SHOES  
(THEY'RE SANDALS)



The Evros river, deceptively calm here, contains violent currents that can make it very difficult for would-be border jumpers to cross.

## A BORDERLINE CRISIS

*Greece Has Had It Up to Here with Illegal Immigrants*

BY ELEKTRA KOTSONI

PHOTOS BY  
HENRY LANGSTON

I grew up in Athens, and it's been heartbreaking to witness the city's transformation from the booming cultural metropolis of my childhood to ground zero of Greece's financial apocalypse. The atmosphere is hostile and strange. It's not an exaggeration to say that many seem to have lost their minds; they walk around chanting nonsense, or randomly burst out screaming. It's bleak.

Despite the looming backdrop of potential bankruptcy and widespread corruption, one of the most striking aspects of contemporary Greece is the number of illegal immigrants walking through its streets. Many of them have escaped war, famine, or disease-ridden countries in search of a better future. Unfortunately, they have picked a bad time to visit, and things may not be much better here than where they came from. Curious about how Greece's excruciating austerity measures are affecting the country's least privileged—and vice versa—photojournalist Henry Langston and I rented a car and

headed for Orestiada, a border town that's becoming infamous as an entry point to the rest of Europe.

Greece witnessed its first wave of economic migration in 1989, after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. Back then, the immigrants passing through were mainly Albanians, Bulgarians, and Romanians who exploited the country's porous northern border. Over the past decade, however, this traffic flow has shifted and eastern Greece has become a major gateway into Europe, mainly due to war and political unrest in Africa and the Middle East. According to Frontex, the agency responsible for patrolling EU borders, 112,844 immigrants were registered by authorities in the first nine months of 2011, up from 76,697 during the same period in 2010.

The most common route for immigrants to enter the EU now is through Greece's border with Turkey, which coincides with the Evros River. In 2010, Orestiada police found 26 bodies in and around the river. In an attempt to stop the crossings, the government decided to build a barrier to block the land border. The project has since been delayed and relaunched a number of times, with human rights groups protesting its construction and the EU pulling funding for the project. Alas, the barrier's foundations were laid in early February, but whether or not the wall will be fully realized is anyone's guess.

We had only been driving through the endless valley of cotton and sugarcane fields of the Evros region for a few minutes when we spotted five men walking along the highway toward Alexandroupoli, the capital of Evros. Lightly dressed despite the cold weather, and clearly worn out, they looked away when they saw we had a camera. It was a sign that we were headed in the right direction. We continued to pass many more migrants en route to our destination, none of them eager to talk to us. On our arrival we met up with the former mayor of Orestiada, Aggelos Papaioannou, and his friend Stathis at a local restaurant. We quickly learned that Stathis works as a garlic farmer, his land only a few meters from the border.

"They pass through the field looking miserable, hungry, and wet," Stathis said, spraying us with tiny pieces of half-chewed meat. "They are usually just kids, not much older than 20. There isn't much you can do for them. I remember back in the 1980s, I would wait by the borders in my truck in case someone who needed help crossing appeared. It was an easy way to make some pocket money. Now that's considered a felony. So we'll give them a bottle of water or some food, but that's pretty much it." I asked whether the number of people crossing the border fluctuates with the seasons. "Not really," Stathis answered. "They come in dozens all the time. Hell, I've even seen people in wheelchairs passing through. The other week, five dead bodies were fished out of the river."

"You've got the old border minefields right next to your land. Are they still live?" Aggelos cut in as Stathis ordered our third bottle of wine. "The mines have been there since 1964," Aggelos said. "Back then, the Turkish smugglers would often tell Christian migrants they were kitchen gardens that they could pass through freely. We'd hear explosions every day and find body parts all over the fields. But they cleared the place up five years ago."

The next morning, we visited the Orestiada police station to meet with Chief George Salamangas, a big man with a strange penchant for spitting on his fingers while talking. After sending out an officer to bring us coffee, he switched on his computer and guided us through a PowerPoint presentation, complete with graphs, photographs, and night-vision footage of migrants walking across the border and their subsequent arrests. He told us that Turkey has stopped asking people from Islamic countries for a visa. As a result, instead of taking the once-preferred route from Morocco and then Spain, many migrants looking to illegally enter Europe now take a plane to Istanbul from Casablanca. From there, they'll pay smugglers a considerable fee—usually between 1,000 and 2,000 euros—to deliver them from Istanbul to Alexandroupolis. Evros became the preferred point of entry in 2010, a year in which approximately 36,000 illegal immigrants were arrested (compared with just 3,500 the year before). That's when Frontex came into the picture.

"Together, we worked on Operation RABIT and managed to keep the numbers under control," Salamangas said. "This year, however, the river had almost no water so our efforts didn't really make any difference. When the river is wet, the dangers are much greater. The traffickers' boats don't have engines, so the migrants have to row. Most of them don't know how to row or swim, and the currents are so strong it drifts the boats. Often the smugglers will force them to get into the river, sometimes using extreme violence." He then showed us some footage of a group of people getting off a truck, each receiving a rifle butt to the spine as a good-bye present from their trafficker. "Those we do not arrest come and turn themselves in," he continued. "That's the strange thing."



Aras, a Pakistani migrant, holds up a picture of his 15-year-old brother, who he is trying to free from a detention center.

Salamangas explained that the migrants want to be screened in Greece so that the country becomes responsible for their application for asylum, as mandated by the Dublin Regulation. So the moment a migrant gets caught roaming Europe without a passport—which happens very often—he or she is sent back to Greece. "To qualify as political asylum seekers," Salamangas said, "white migrants often claim to be Palestinian, and blacks claim they are from Somalia. The only thing we can do on our end is hope the wall will be finished by the middle of 2012. None of them want to stay in Greece, especially now with the crisis. They use our borders merely as a way in. It's important to stress this: These are not Greek borders, they are European borders."

I asked Salamangas about reports of poor living conditions in the detention centers and he replied, "We run one center in Filakio, Orestiada. It is a space that can house 294 people. This is too small for the numbers of immigrants we are asked to deal with. Things were fine up until 2009. I know for a fact that the Ministry of Citizen Protection and the police are trying very hard to find larger spaces for them. Not only for the sake of the immigrants but also for our staff." He then spit on his thumb, which we took as our cue to leave.

Our next stop, of course, was Filakio. Entering the detention-center courtyard, we saw about 30 men (and one baby) who



A 24-year-old Algerian, evidently the last romantic on Earth, proposes marriage to our writer for visa purposes.

had just been screened and were now waiting for a bus that would take them to Athens, where they would be allowed to stay for a maximum of three months before risking permanent imprisonment. "I want to go to Athens, but it's 50 euros," said Hamza Attatfa, a 24-year-old Algerian. "Where are you going? Do you want to marry me? I'll get a visa if you do."

Hamza's fellow countryman Kyle Farid seemed worldlier: "I've already done this and managed to get to England without getting caught. I lived in Roehampton. Then my mom, who is in Algeria, got sick and I had to return. But my girlfriend is in England." According to Kyle, the Turkish Army picked him up the day before our visit and gave him a few beatings before passing him to smugglers at the border. "At least here they don't treat us badly, but the conditions are the worst," he said. "There are no showers, and the food is horrible."

Aras, a 22-year-old Pakistani, told us that he planned to leave Greece after his 15-year-old brother was released from detention. "I've already been here for four years, but right now there is no money so I want to go back to Pakistan," he said. "At the stable where I work there used to be 27 horses, and now there are only three. I'm trying to get my brother released, and then we'll make our way to Athens."

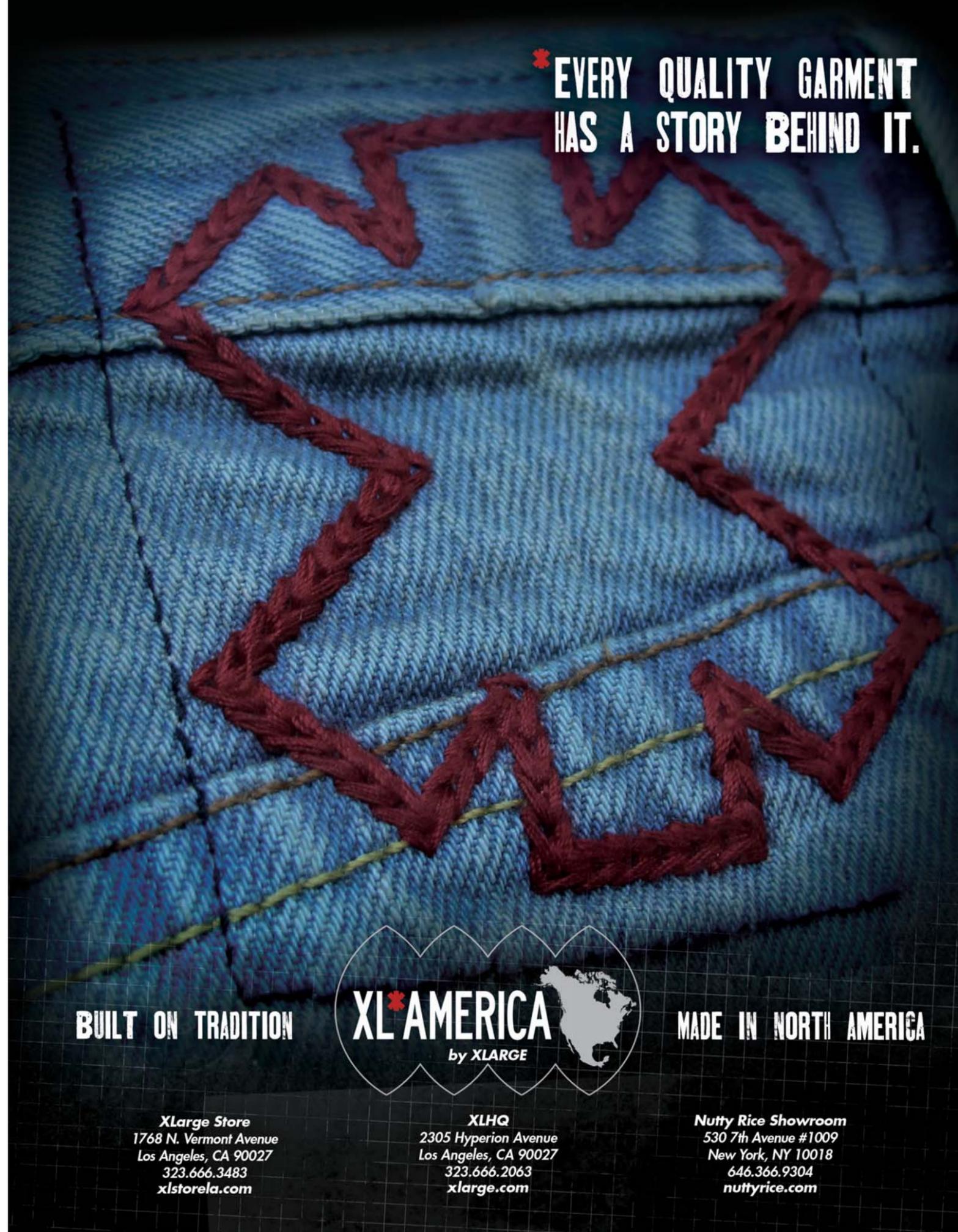
Our trip was coming to a close, but I was still unsure how I felt about the situation. After just a few days in the region it was obvious that the rest of Europe has been neglecting Greece's

border troubles, but it's an issue that can't be resolved until the EU overcomes the laundry list of challenges that partially spawned this situation. On the other hand, the world is a desperate place, and everyone should have the right to seek a better life without having to face minefields, cold rivers, and thugs with guns.

That night, our final in Evros, we had dinner in Vissa, a minuscule village just outside Orestiada and only meters from the border. We sat in the only café we could find—a large, perpendicular space that was almost completely void of decoration. Besides us, its sole patrons were a couple dozen men who looked to be in their 80s. They were fascinated by our presence, forming a circle around us. Then the owner, George, began telling us of their village's long-standing tradition of smuggling: "It all started in the 1940s with the war; we'd smuggle in meat and animals from Turkey. In the 1950s and 60s it was mostly fur, and then in the 70s we'd bring in marijuana. Cocaine and Pakistani men during the 1980s. Then the Turks woke up and slowly, our own trade died down."

It might have not done much to help my moral dilemma, but at least things were slightly put into perspective. Who knows what other tricky business these lovable granddads had gotten themselves into back in their day? Who knows how cute our crimes might look in just a few decades' time? I guess there's nothing like the human condition to lighten the mood. *VCB*

EVERY QUALITY GARMENT HAS A STORY BEHIND IT.



BUILT ON TRADITION

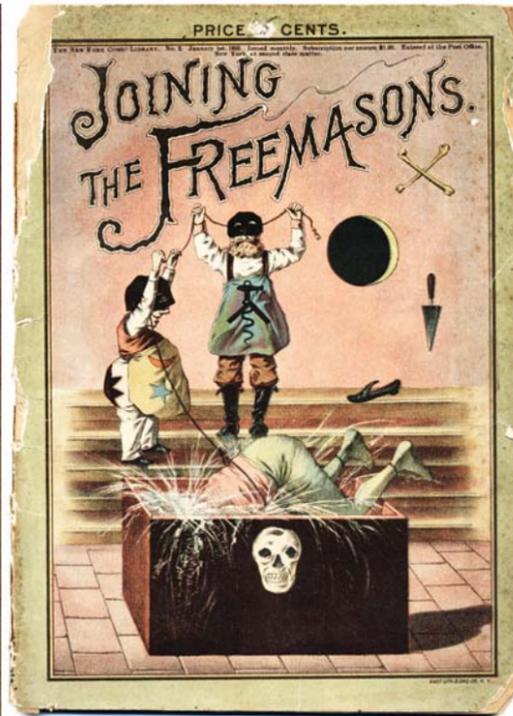


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Memorabilia that extols the virtues of being (clockwise from left) ritually beaten, drowned, and sawed in half to prove one's loyalty to your lodge.

## MEN IN FUNNY HATS STILL RULE THE WORLD

*Adam Parfrey Knows All About the Nutters in Secret Societies*

BY ANDY CAPPER  
ARCHIVAL IMAGES  
COURTESY OF  
ADAM PARFREY

**M**y relationship with Freemasonry started the day I was born, courtesy of my grandfather. He was once a Mason in Liverpool, but eventually turned his back on the society and its activities. The main reason he defected was because my grandmother, as a woman, was forbidden to know anything about what went on at the meetings. Being that a bunch of his relatives were associated with the Masons, he and his wife

became estranged from his part of the family and never really spoke to them again, and so I have many relatives out there whom I've never met.

Would I be happier and more successful if I'd have known them? Probably not. I believe they were from the Wirral, a part of Liverpool whose citizens I have never really found to be that appealing anyway. What I love most about this story is that my grandfather chose the love of his wife over drinking with cops and barristers in funny hats while they cuddled skeletons or whatever they did to prosper in their super-secret club. Either that, or he was terrified of my grandmother's wrath, which could be quite fierce.

The level of family-shunning loyalty and other weird rules that you must follow to be part of the Masons and similar secret societies have always fascinated me, but my level of interest doesn't approach that of American publisher and writer Adam Parfrey. The



**Picture Perfect** with Patrick Brown  
*Location: Beijing, China*

## Picture Perfect

*VICE goes behind the lens with our favorite documentary photographers.*

Coming in March  
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founder and owner of Feral House books, Adam has spent the past 20 years amassing a huge collection of Masonic ephemera and, along with his coauthor, Craig Heimbichner, has just completed a weighty book called *Ritual America: Secret Brotherhoods and Their Influence on American Society*. VICE was lucky enough to obtain a sneak preview of some of the best imagery in the book, along with an interview with Adam about his obsession with the Masons and similar groups.

**VICE:** In your new book, you claim that at the peak of their popularity, one in three Americans belonged to a secret society. That seems crazy. What's that number like these days?

**Adam Parfrey:** That figure came from two sources. One was an 1898 book, an encyclopedia of fraternal organizations, and the other was a more recent book called *Fraternal Organizations*. It sounds crazy, but it's not, because these societies provided important things to people of their era, like medical insurance, social networking, entertainment, and places to get away from the family and booze it up.

**Have you ever belonged to a secret society?**

My Texas friend Bruce Webb runs a gallery with his wife, Julie, that contains all of his secret-society purchases, which were usually taken from lodges after they shut down. Bruce encouraged me to join the Odd Fellows, and so I went through the initiation ceremony in their Waxahatchie, Texas, lodge. I must admit to having forgotten the secret password and handshake.

**What else did you have to do to join the Odd Fellows?**

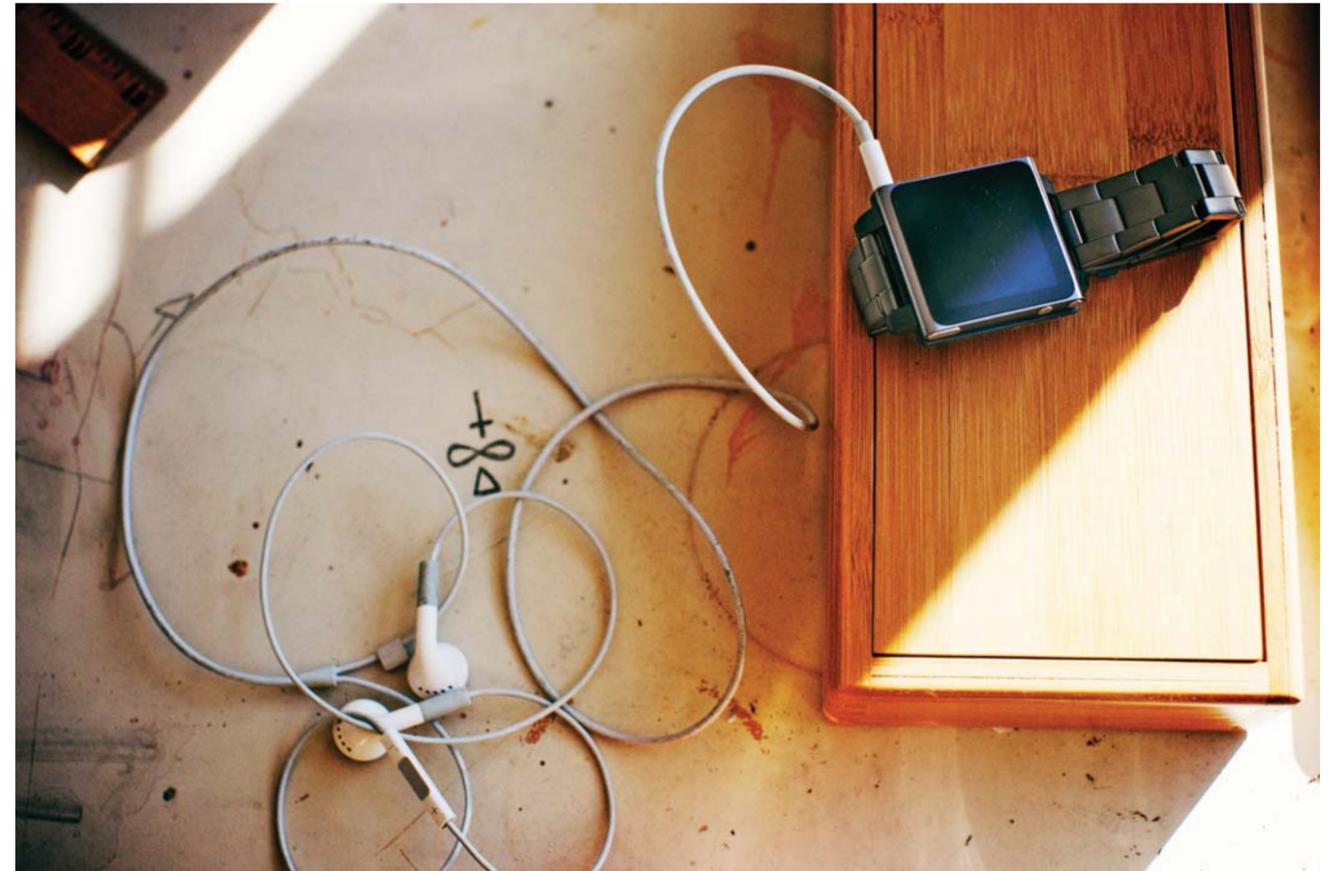
During the "initiation ritual," you have to stare at a goofy skeleton in a coffin to remind you of your few days left on earth, and so you'd better get in line with a society that supposedly cares about you.

**You've been involved with the Church of Satan in the past through your friendship with the late Anton LaVey. How does the CoS compare with these Masonic societies?**

Anton said somewhere that the Church of Satan was partly based on Masonic ideas and rituals. But when I knew him, Anton never led a "ceremony" outside of playing an organ and a synthesizer for hours at a time. Keep in mind that Freemasonry was in fact the basis for hundreds of societies, much like the 12 Steps paradigm is used by many different sobriety groups.

**How prevalent do you think all these men in funny hats and aprons are in society today?**

Freemasonry is still huge for police and military organizations, but less so for run-of-the-mill Americans. My coauthor, Craig Heimbichner, and I speculate that the Freemason paradigm is so entrenched in American culture that it's hardly necessary to go through the old rituals and membership drives anymore.



**TOP:** This is what some online-forum-dwelling conspiracy theorists think the world-controlling Freemasons look like. **BOTTOM:** This photo of a painting of President Harry Truman in full Masonic regalia is what Masons actually look like. They still control the world, though.



Installation

Reed Space

Wish

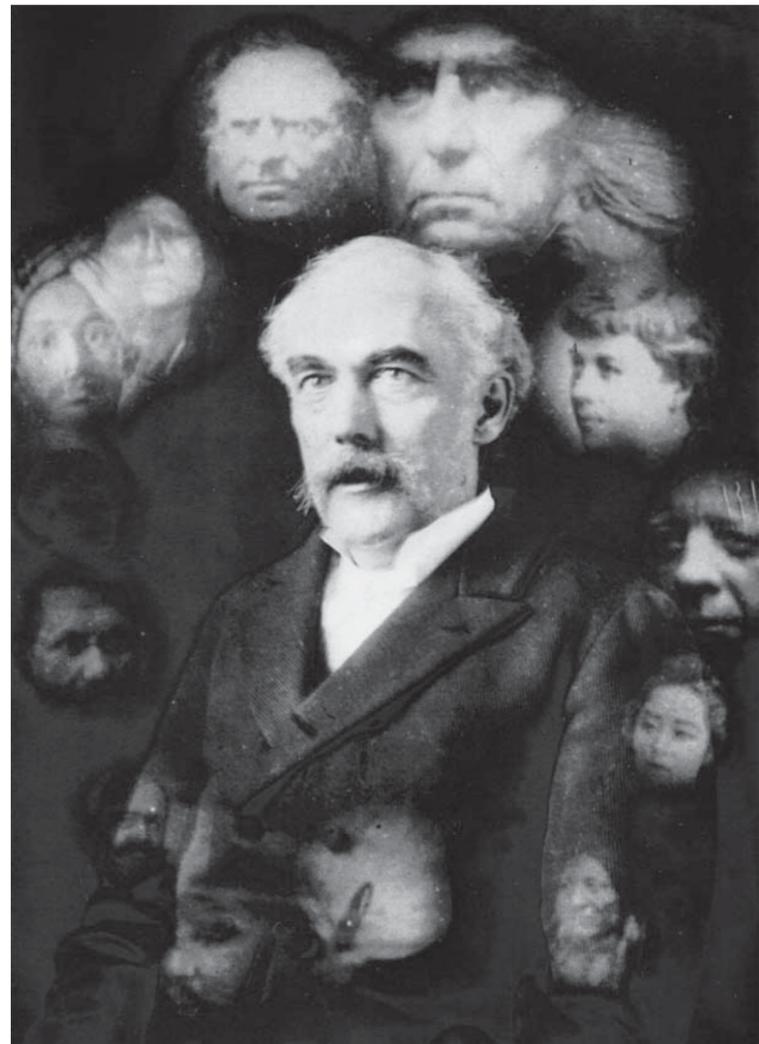
Oneness

Apple

ShopHex.com



INITIATION CEREMONIES OF THE DARKTOWN LODGE - PART FIRST.  
The Grand Boss. Charging the Candidate



TOP: This drawing of an initiation ritual is probably not a good representation of current Masonic rites. BOTTOM: If you can see more than one person in this old Masonic photograph, it means you're possessed by Satan.

In other words, the people who brought about Freemasonry as a means of controlling people have done their job so well they no longer need to have any proles in there. And these days, isn't it the Illuminati who really control the world?

The Illuminati were a totally real anti-Catholic, anti-monarchical organization at a time when such thoughts earned you the rope. I have respect for the original organization formed by Adam Weishaupt. But today the Illuminati are thought to be a secretive satanic bunch of murdering thieves who have mated with reptilian extraterrestrials.

What prompted you to write this book at this particular time? Often the backstories are as interesting as the books themselves, if not more so.

Sinister conspiracies have always attracted my interest. You know—the Process Church, Manson, and all that—so I wondered about the Freemasons and other such “orders” and what the fuck is the deal with the secrets and the parades and dressing up so strangely. I started reading the conspiracy literature about it, and also what I call the “Chamber of Commerce” official line from the groups themselves. And what I discovered is that the reality is even stranger than you'd expect.

Visually, it's amazing. Where did all the imagery come from?

It all comes from my collection. They're from eBay mostly, but also used-book dealers and friends. It's from two decades' worth of collecting. There was a long production process because it's a HUGE motherfucker of a book; however, I also had to trim it significantly. There were 4,000 images I wanted to use, but I had to pick out only 400 for the final edit.

Which are your favorites?

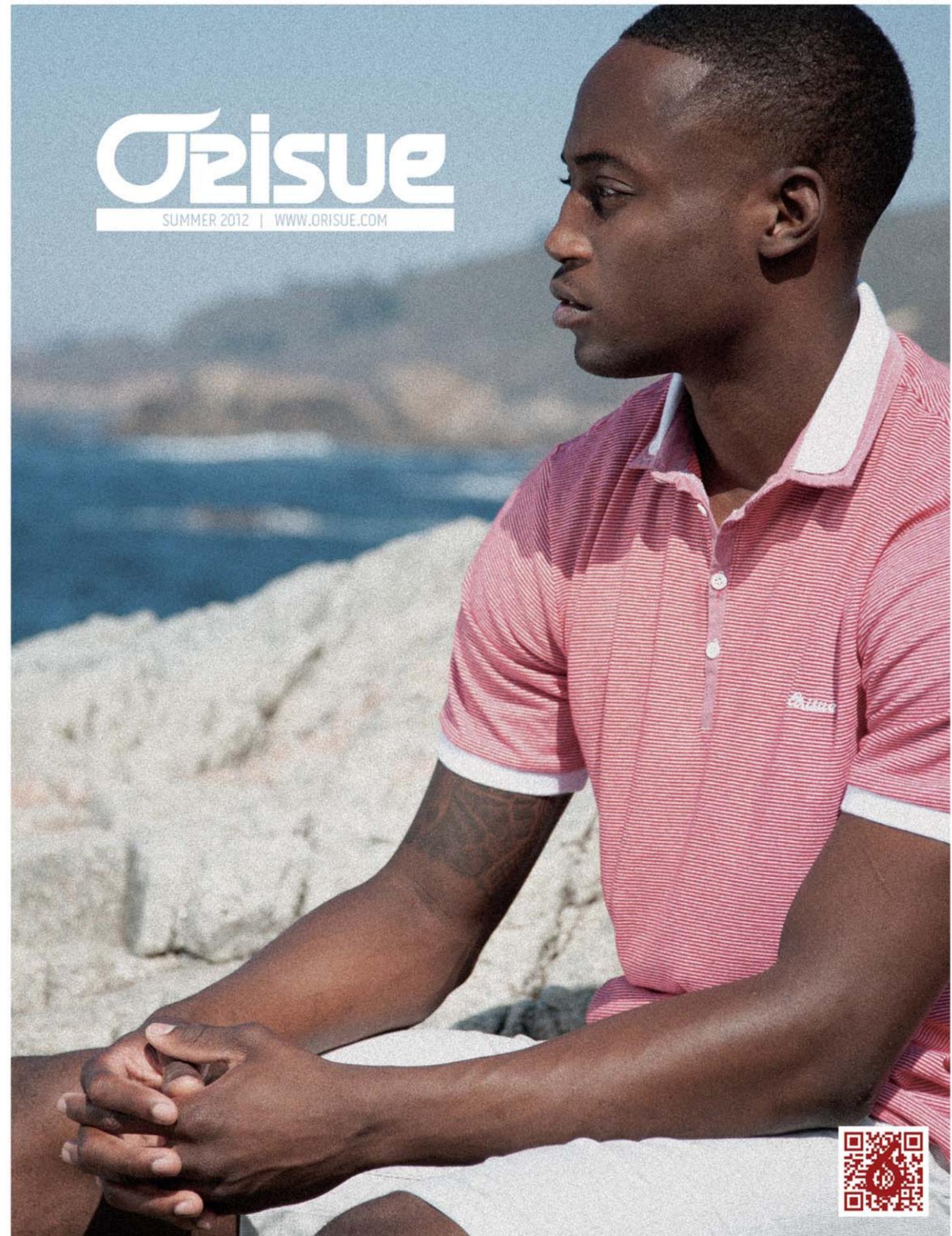
I started fixating on the Shriners' obsession with crippled children and doing thousands of PR photos of Shriner clowns terrifying kids in hospitals; also the Klan rituals and the Nazi visuals that link Freemasons and Jews in “a nefarious plot.” I've been working on the book for a decade or more. My fraternal obsession led to collecting books, magazines, newspapers, postcards, snapshots, banners, paintings, posters, liquor decanters, and even weird initiation gizmos, all kinds of shit. But then the fucking Dan Brown novels came out, which encouraged publishers to release a thousand books about secret societies.

And a thousand cable TV specials called things like *Secrets of the Alien SS: From the Vatican to the White House*.

For crying out loud, there are so many boring reprints of esoterica, shitty exploitation, and anticonspiratorial dullness from the fraternities themselves. What really helped me keep focused on this book was all this GARBAGE churned out by the publishing industry. 

Ritual America: Secret Brotherhoods and Their Influence on American Society is out now from Feral House.

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The Mexican upper classes blamed the Chinese immigrants for the early drug-trafficking networks while those same people got high in Chinese-run opium dens. Meanwhile, most of the profit from the drug trade went into the pockets of European traffickers and corrupt politicians.

## WE CAN'T GET HIGH LIKE WE USED TO

*When Drugs Were Legal in Mexico, and Why They Aren't Now*

BY FROYLAN ENCISO

*Archival photos courtesy of Archivo Casasola*

**M**ore and more often when I go out partying in Mexico City, I notice that my friends somehow feel guilty for indulging in a joint or doing a line. When they do it, they can't avoid thinking—at least for a second—that they are in some small way contributing to Mexico's drug war, which has been responsible for 50,000 deaths and the disappearance of tens of thousands of people during the current government's reign. Perhaps it's even fair to say they no longer just smoke some weed or do a bump of coke: They smoke a finger, snort a tongue, take a bong rip of a torso. Then they laugh and get over it.

Since the 1940s, Mexicans have prosecuted, jailed, and killed one another because of the joys and profits that come from controlled psychoactive substances—profits that derive, at least in part, from the war on drugs having made supply scarcer while demand remains insatiable. But today, the violence has reached a new level of intensity.

The problems deepened in 2000, when the right-wing National Action Party won national elections against the Institutional Revolutionary Party for the first time in more than 70 years. Then, in 2006, Felipe Calderón was elected president after running



In the early 20th century, no one really understood the newly established prohibition on drugs. Cocaine and morphine produced by European pharmaceutical companies were easily available by prescription.

on a platform of job creation. As soon as he took office, he instead decided to wage a brutal war on Mexico's drug lords. Calderón's crusade quickly affected—and infected—the entire country.

Surveying documentary photos from the early 20th century, it would seem as though it were OK to get high as a kite throughout Mexico, but the truth is using certain substances has been prohibited as far back as colonial times. When the Spanish realized that the indigenous people would use all sorts of trippy goodies to speak to their gods, or just space out, they began to ban them. That's what happened to peyote in 1670, when the Inquisition posted edicts in churches throughout New Spain declaring its use a sin.

By the 19th century, drug use had become secular. Peyote, weed, and coca leaves weren't sinful anymore, and they began to get used in the name of science and medicine. As was the case in most of the world back then, doctors and scientists became the gatekeepers to the beautiful kingdom of getting high.

## Business was too damn good to entirely ban narcotics shipments.

By the beginning of the 20th century, drugs had become a class issue, and that's where the problems started. Indigenous people, inmates, and soldiers were seen as the primary users of marijuana; therefore it was considered vulgar. The Spanish and whiter mestizos used more "scientific" and foreign drugs like heroin and opium. In the midst of the Mexican Revolution, the rich, especially well-to-do housewives, would frequent Chinese-run opium dens, where they could forget about their troubles with just a couple puffs.

Such was the life back in a Mexico divided by the boundaries of race, class, and education. But by 1920, when the revolution was complete, a new war had begun that would soon be fought throughout the world. Between 1909 and 1919, the American government and its allies lobbied to ban opium globally. Many countries supported the measure, including Mexico. The ban was signed in 1912 at the Hague and was incorporated into the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, beginning a brave new antidrug era that would see Mexico buried under mountains of dead bodies.

Mexico became the crossing point for all the substances illegal in the US, thanks to an odd loophole. In 1909, the US government banned the import of opium for internal consumption (except for "medicinal" use); however, it was legal for it to be imported into the States and immediately exported to Mexico and other countries. Business was too damn good to entirely ban narcotics shipments into the US. Soon American and European smugglers found Mexican partners who would bring opium from Macau to San Francisco, immediately send it to Mexico, and from there smuggle it back into the US. Mexico began to develop a reputation for facilitating drug use and other questionable habits.

The Mexican government and its citizens reacted by blaming Chinese immigrants, an easy target. Mexican businessmen were envious of how successful some Chinese entrepreneurs had been, and everybody, even the indigenous people, considered them inferior. Soon the government passed a slew of prohibitions. In 1923, President Álvaro Obregón banned the import of all narcotics. Two years later, President Plutarco Elías Calles negotiated with the US government to ramp up the prosecution of narcotics and alcohol traffickers. But none of that stopped the influx of drugs.

The armed struggle against drugs in Mexico catalyzed in 1947, when Harry Anslinger, the first commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (a precursor to the DEA), put pressure on the Mexican government to launch antidrug operations in the northwest of Mexico (specifically, Sonora, Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua). This armed struggle intensified in the 1960s and 70s, when recreational drug use by young people became more popular on both sides of the border.

The war on drugs became an American obsession, and both Nixon and Reagan waged campaigns that verged on insanity. For example, in 1969, during Operation Interception, the US-Mexico border was temporarily shut down in an attempt to persuade Mexican officials to capture and kill more traffickers. In 1976, Mexico's government launched Operation Condor, in which soldiers would destroy towns and kill entire populations to protect the world from the evil of marijuana and poppy producers.

The trafficking organizations that moved drugs across the border reacted to these aggressions by buying more guns and other high-powered weaponry, investing more money in corrupting politicians and cops, and becoming increasingly violent and unpredictable.

There was a time when drug users were considered a public-health problem. This was thanks to doctors, who saw to it that all the fun stuff remained under their jurisdiction. In fact, in 1940, Mexico's Department of Health managed to successfully put forth a case to legalize drugs throughout the country. For a brief time, users could go to dispensaries where doctors would offer daily doses of heroin and other substances at cheaper prices than the black market. The government's logic was that they could keep consumers at ease and out of trouble while putting an end to illegal trafficking. The legalization lasted only a few months before it was overturned, mainly because of pressure from the US government.

This war continues to this day but is now bloodier and more brutal than ever before, and there doesn't seem to be an end in sight. Most people think the idea of legalization is crazy—an unrealistic waste of time. They could be right; there may be too much money at play for politicians to ever let us do drugs as we wish while simultaneously eliminating the black market that has caused so much death and heartache. I won't judge them, but I'll never agree. Legalization already happened once, and I can see peace in the watery eyes of the stoners from those days. *CEB*

Froylan Enciso is a history PhD candidate at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. His dissertation focuses on the drug markets in Sinaloa, Mexico.



Drugs like weed were considered *déclassé* because poor people used them; the classy people used uptown drugs like opium and heroin that were often prescribed by doctors.



Just to update the *Codex Bonerficarum* for this year—ladies, here is all you need to give a guy unyielding wood in 2012: dark socks, heels with shorts, dark socks with heels with shorts, heels in general, a lazy eye, an eye patch, janky teeth, a weird nose, visible scars, leg bruises, or, as always, a broken leg. Combinations are more than welcome.



Of course if you want to forego the specialty route, our corpora cavernosae will also accept brigadier-new-wave-pixie-in-casual-yachtwear or suitable variations thereof. Happy stiffening, gals!



Before you head out to the club it's important that you designate at least one of your friends as the person who will shove your drunk ass into a shopping cart and roll you into a scary alleyway where homeless people will use you as toilet paper.



Some looks aren't for everyone. Just like people with Graves' disease probably want to avoid accessories like John Lennon glasses or a ski mask, a plush vaginal-wall hoodie with complementary leggings and lipstick couch don't really work without a big ol' Marty Feldman eye bugging out from the middle.

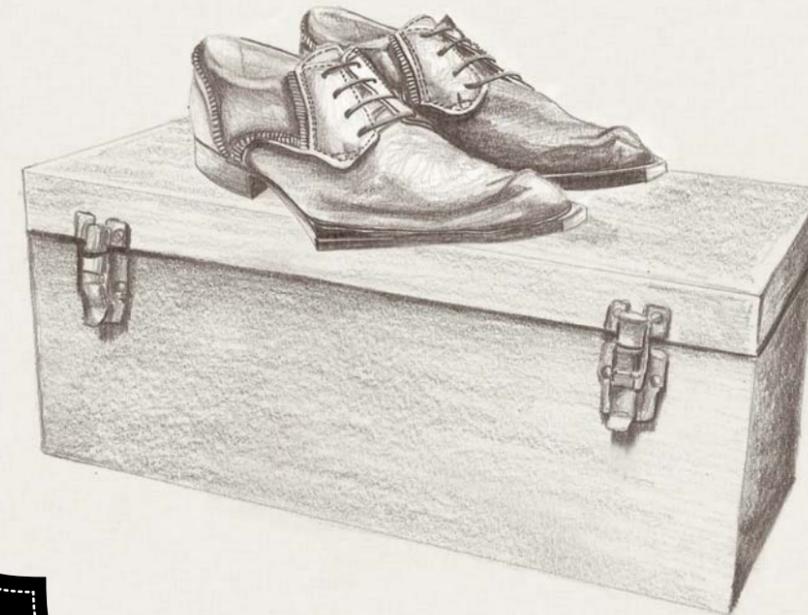


Same with this deal. Do you have any idea how ludicrous she'd look if she had arms? Pretty re-fucking-ludicrous.



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## DON'Ts



It's really, *really* hard to piss when you got fucking Eleanor Rigby staring down at you, judging. Or enjoying.



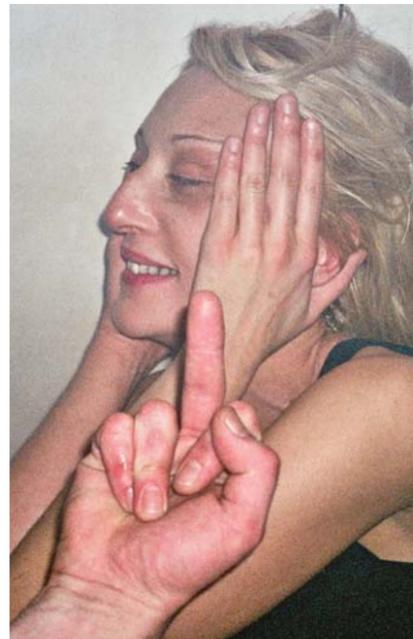
I cannot WAIT until Cirque du Soleil does a show based around the groundbreaking music of 311.



G stands for Gross Geek in a Grimy God Garment.



Hey, poetry club, when we said dark socks make us horny we meant in a naked-bedroom context, not reeking up the park above a pair of ten-year-old running shoes that should be on your feet in fucking public. You couldn't have gotten this more wrong. Unless this is some deep-cover feminist plot to ruin dark socks forever. Oh shit!



No matter how much you try to ignore it or pretend it's not happening you just can't hide from FUCK YOU.

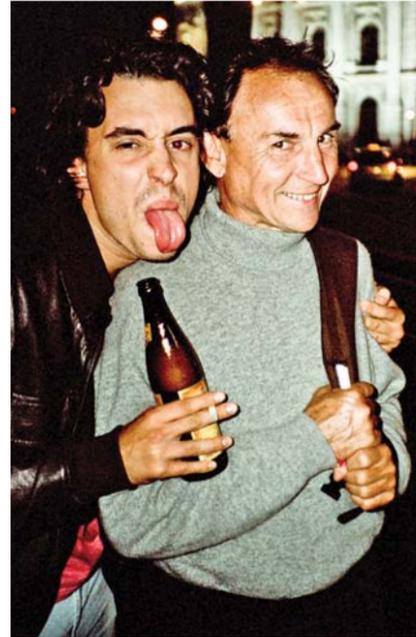
LAUNCH LA TRADESHOW // JULY 25-26 2012 // BARKER HANGAR, SANTA MONICA



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After years of picking the living shit out of both our nose and our friends, it looks like this generation is finally ready to break the 20th century's last great taboo.



In every couple it's important to have one goofball and one smirkmeister general. These guys have got it covered. BIG TIME! Young's got the tongue! Old's got the mischievous fuck-me eyes. They will last forever.



Disregard the smarmy art-world doofus in the fedora and Bono glasses for a second (I know it's hard) and answer me this. How the hell did that hair come out of that helmet?



The three of us have different reasons why we're acting this way. Tall guy is just having a chill time, middle (that's me) is discovering who he really is, and short dude just wants to fuck his own face off. Friendship, Acceptance, and Goodwill is the new PLUR.



Everything you feel is right. No one cares. You will die alone. There is no reason to keep going. This is as good as it will ever get. Don't leave a note. Just go. It's better this way.

# MAKE



## DON'Ts



OK, let's not jump to any conclusions here or make this poor guy the victim of fecal profiling. I'm sure there's a perfectly good explanation for where this stain came from. One of his drivers probably accidentally left a Toblerone bar on the passenger seat of his BMW and then all that chocolate went up his butt and he passed out from sugar shock.



When I was living in Madrid my boyfriend was this guy Alberto from Galicia. He had hoop earrings, wore real bad jeans and Sambas like every day, and had these tiny little bumps on his upper lip that always seemed a little suspect. But the worst thing wasn't any of that, or that he was maybe a little racist, it was that no matter what he ate his pee-pee tasted like wet, fatty pork.



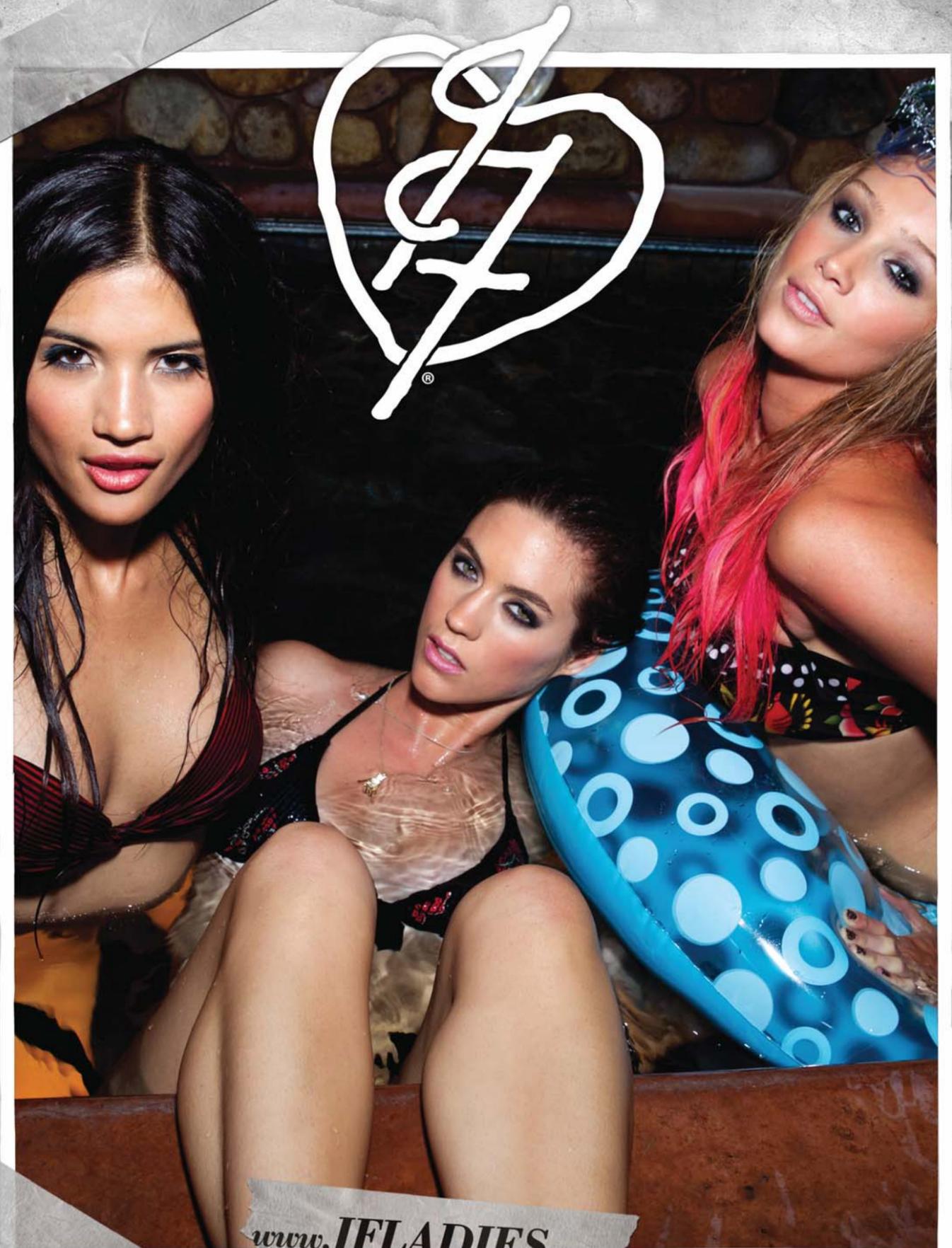
All right, almost there. All this tattoo needs now is a Tasmanian Devil and Bart Simpson wearing cowboy hats and blowing each other and we've got ourselves a DO.



This is the perfect summer look for when you're traveling around the globe to all those countries that still don't have laws against child rape.



If I knew that one day I would have a son who would grow up to be just like this, I would let that pregnancy come to full term. I wouldn't regret every choice I'd made up to this point and book an appointment at my local Planned Parenthood. I wouldn't sit in the waiting room all by myself and wish I was dead because of what you did to me.



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# FUCK WINTER

PHOTOS AND STYLING  
BY PETRA COLLINS

*Models: Allegra, Carmen, Fraser,  
Jamie, and Rachel*

*American Apparel swimsuit; American Apparel swimsuit; vintage bracelets;  
American Apparel swimsuit; vintage bracelets*



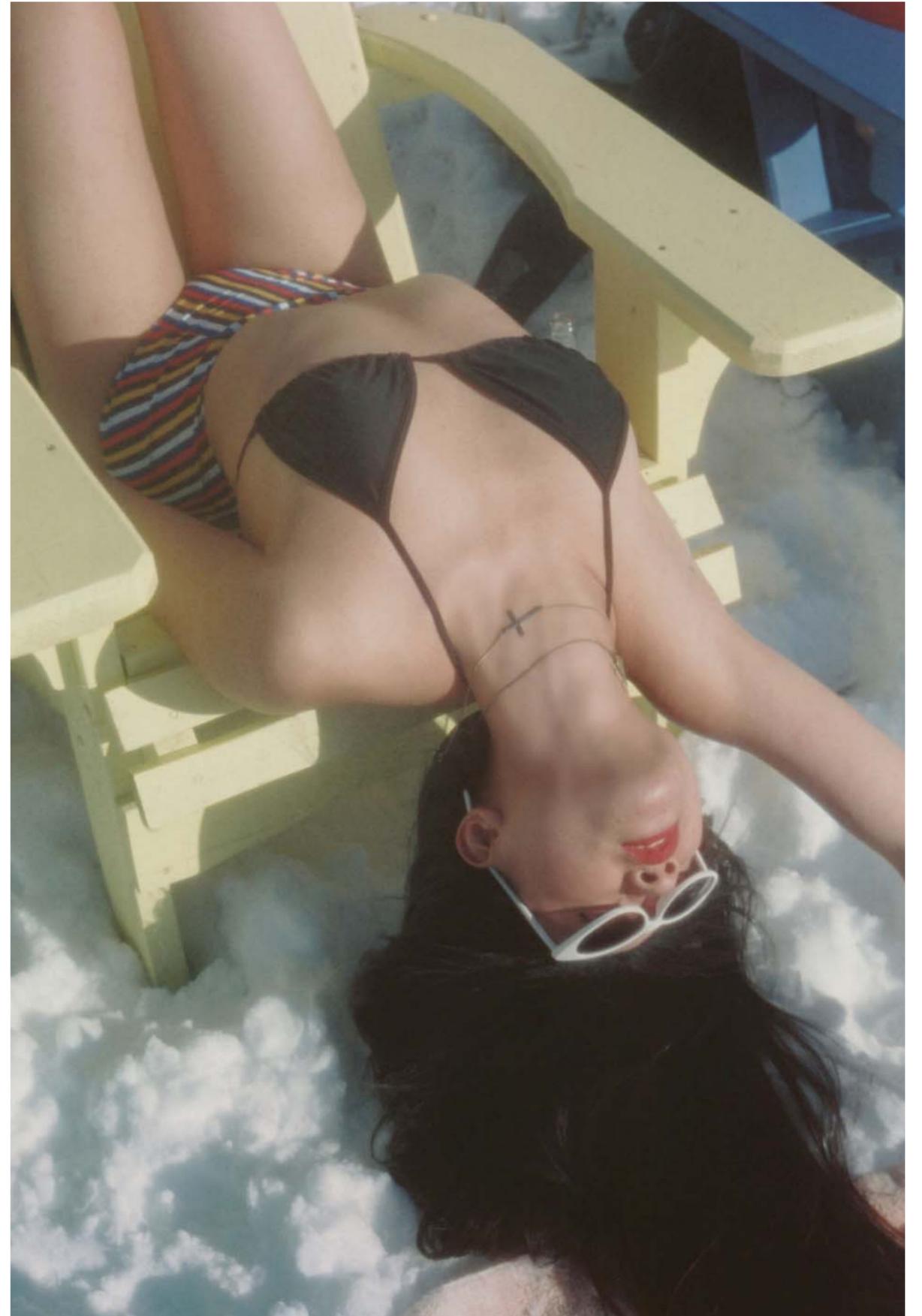
American Apparel swim trunks, American Apparel swimsuits



American Apparel swimsuit



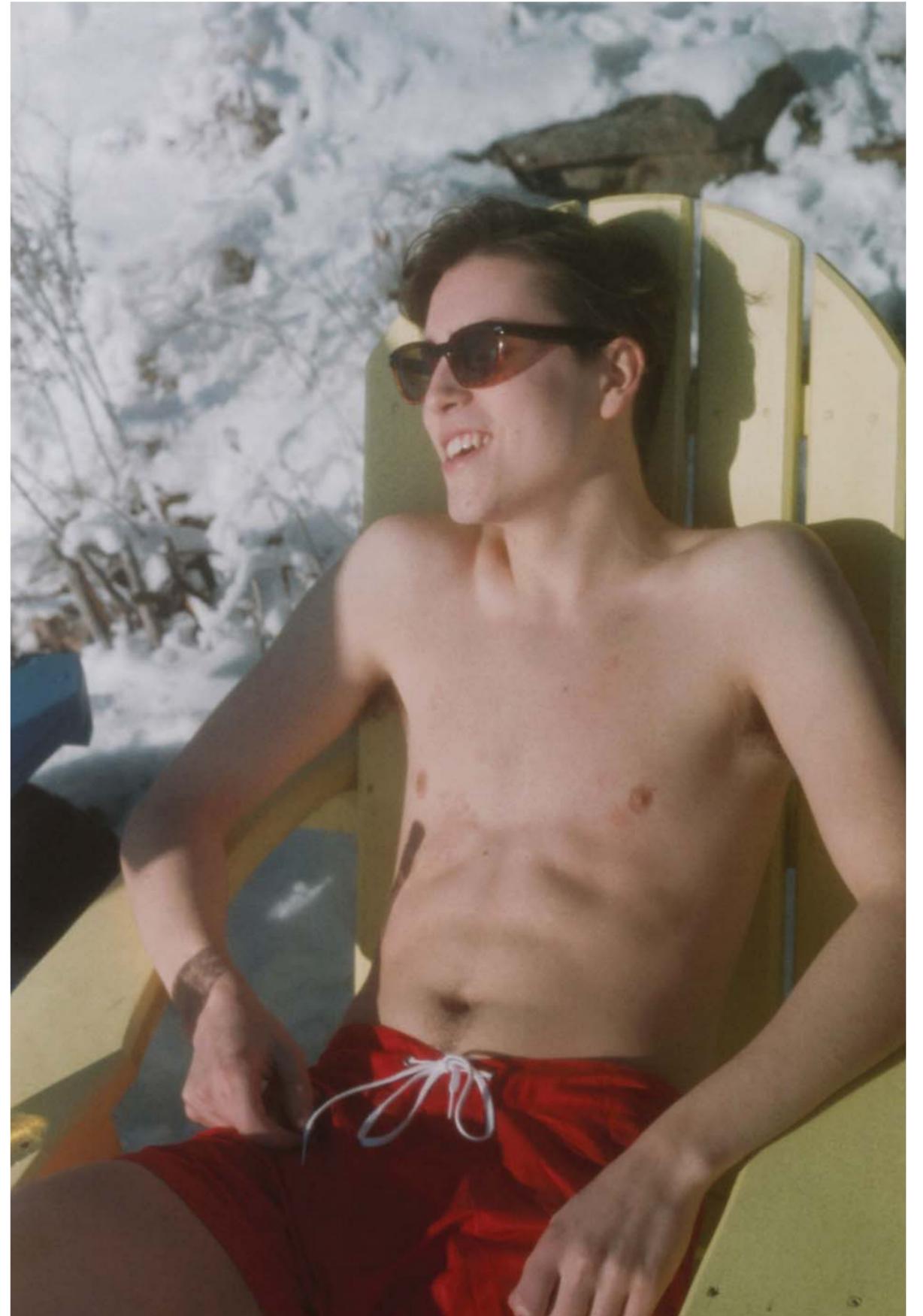
American Apparel swimsuit, Petit Lapin sunglasses



American Apparel swimsuit, Petit Lapin sunglasses, vintage necklace



American Apparel swimsuit, vintage necklace and bracelets



American Apparel swim trunks, vintage sunglasses



American Apparel swimsuit



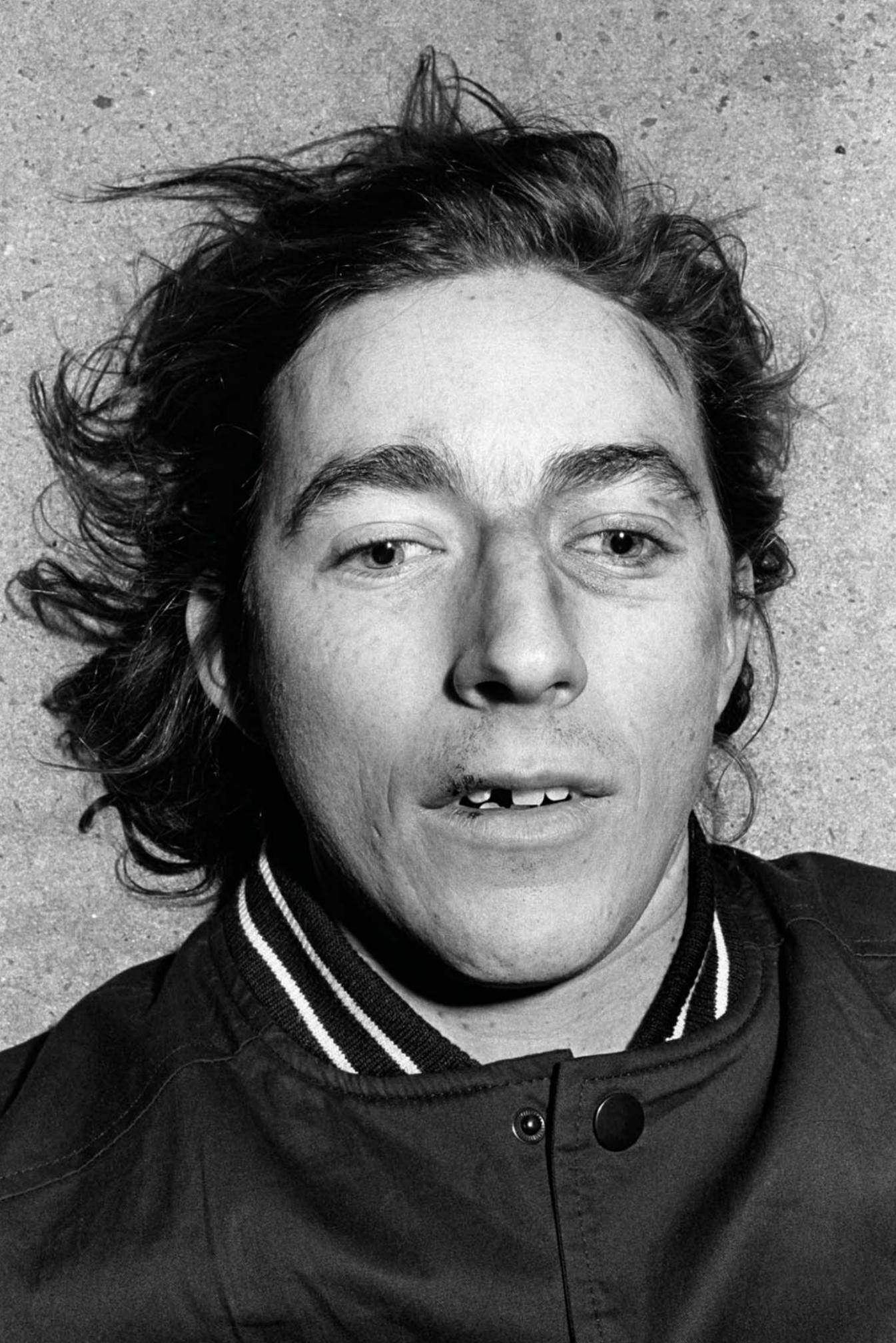
American Apparel swimsuit, vintage necklace, American Apparel swimsuit, Petit Lapin sunglasses, vintage bracelet

# IN BROAD DAYLIGHT

PHOTOS BY BRUCE GILDEN  
STYLIST: ANNETTE LAMOTHE-RAMOS

Photo assistant: Greg Morris  
Stylist assistant: Miyako Bellizzi  
Hair: James Mooney at Art Department  
Makeup: Ruthie Weems at Beauty Exchange NYC  
Set designer: Jessie Voris  
Hair assistant: Chiala Marvici  
Production assistants: Davide Bernardis, Brian Menegus  
Models: Annette, Jonathan Walsh and Wilton Stewart at JVB,  
Kasimira at Muse, Miyako, Victor Pagan  
Special thanks to Adolfo's Auto Body Center





INC jacket

Alexandre Herchcovitch dress, American Apparel tights, Melissa shoes, vintage jacket





JACK USAGE  
CAUTION

INSTRUCTIONS

FRONT REAR

BEAD TIGHTENING

FOR SPACE-SAVER TIRE

FOR SPACE-SAVER TIRE

Levi's dress, American Apparel tights,  
Betsy Johnson shoes



*Christian Lacroix jacket, vintage shirt, Hanes tank top, Penny Stock pants*

*Mango jacket*

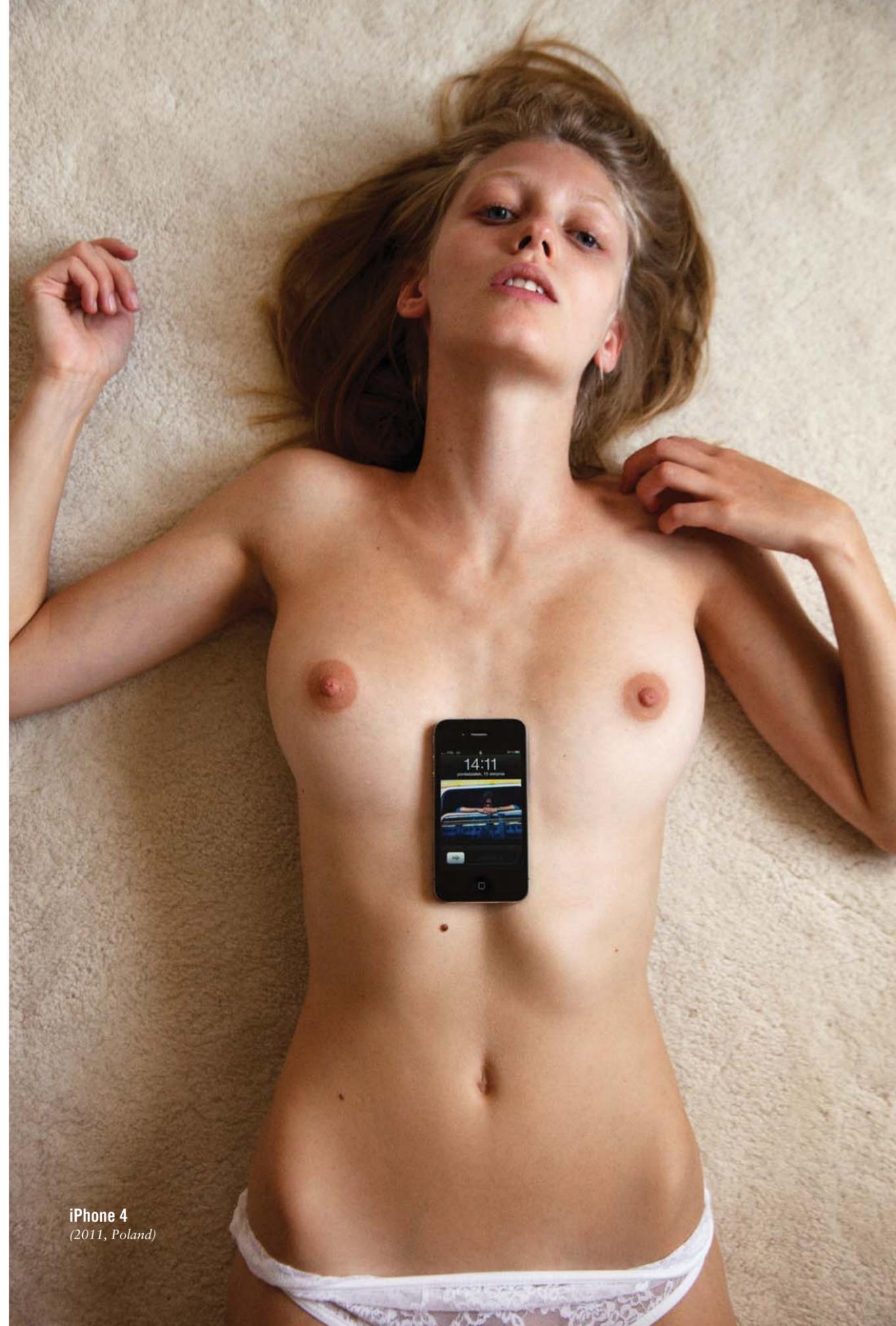




# TITS & PHONES

PHOTOS BY  
RICHARD KERN

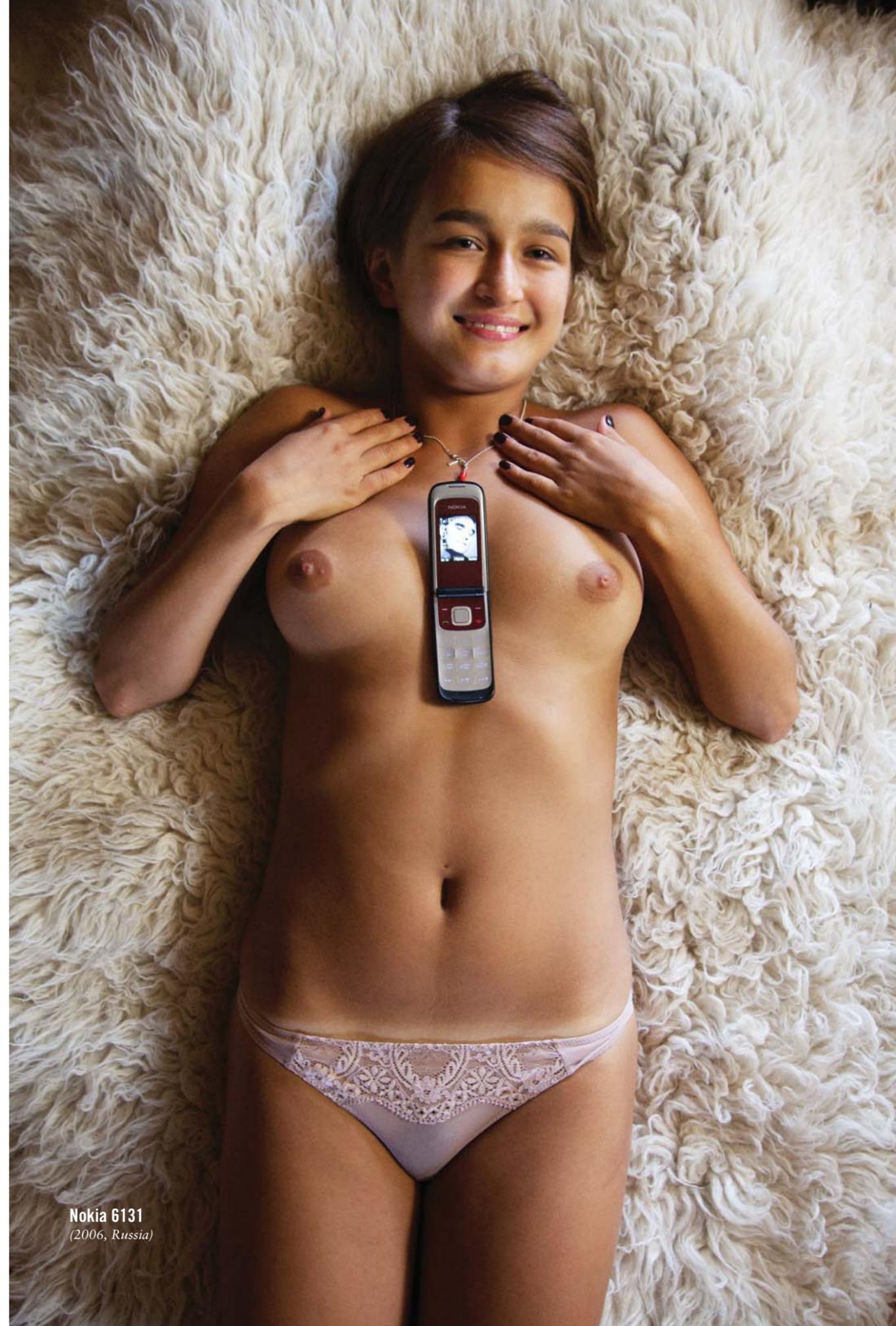
**Samsung Genio Touch**  
(2009, Russia)



**iPhone 4**  
(2011, Poland)



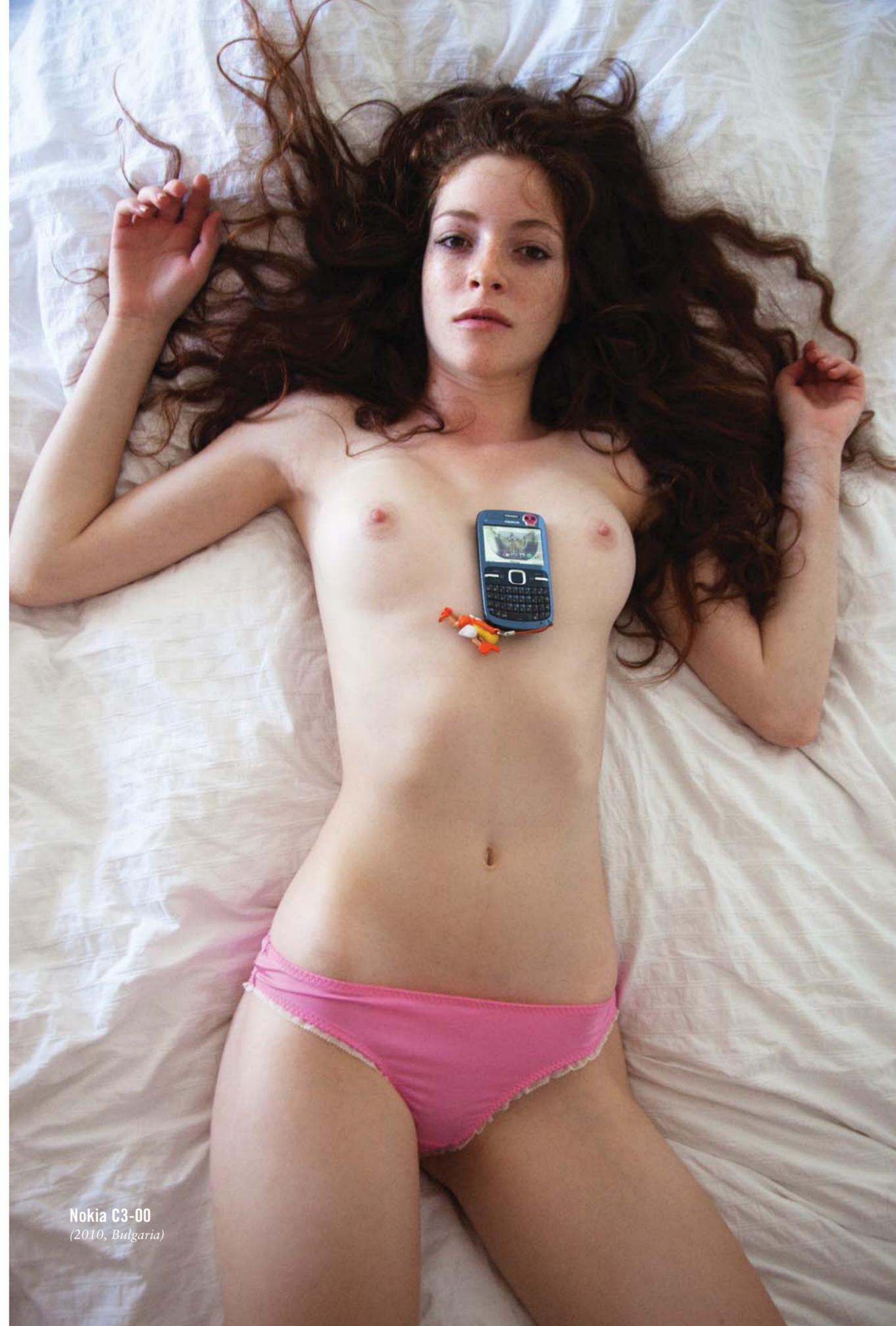
**Nokia 6600 Slide**  
(2008, Russia)



**Nokia 6131**  
(2006, Russia)



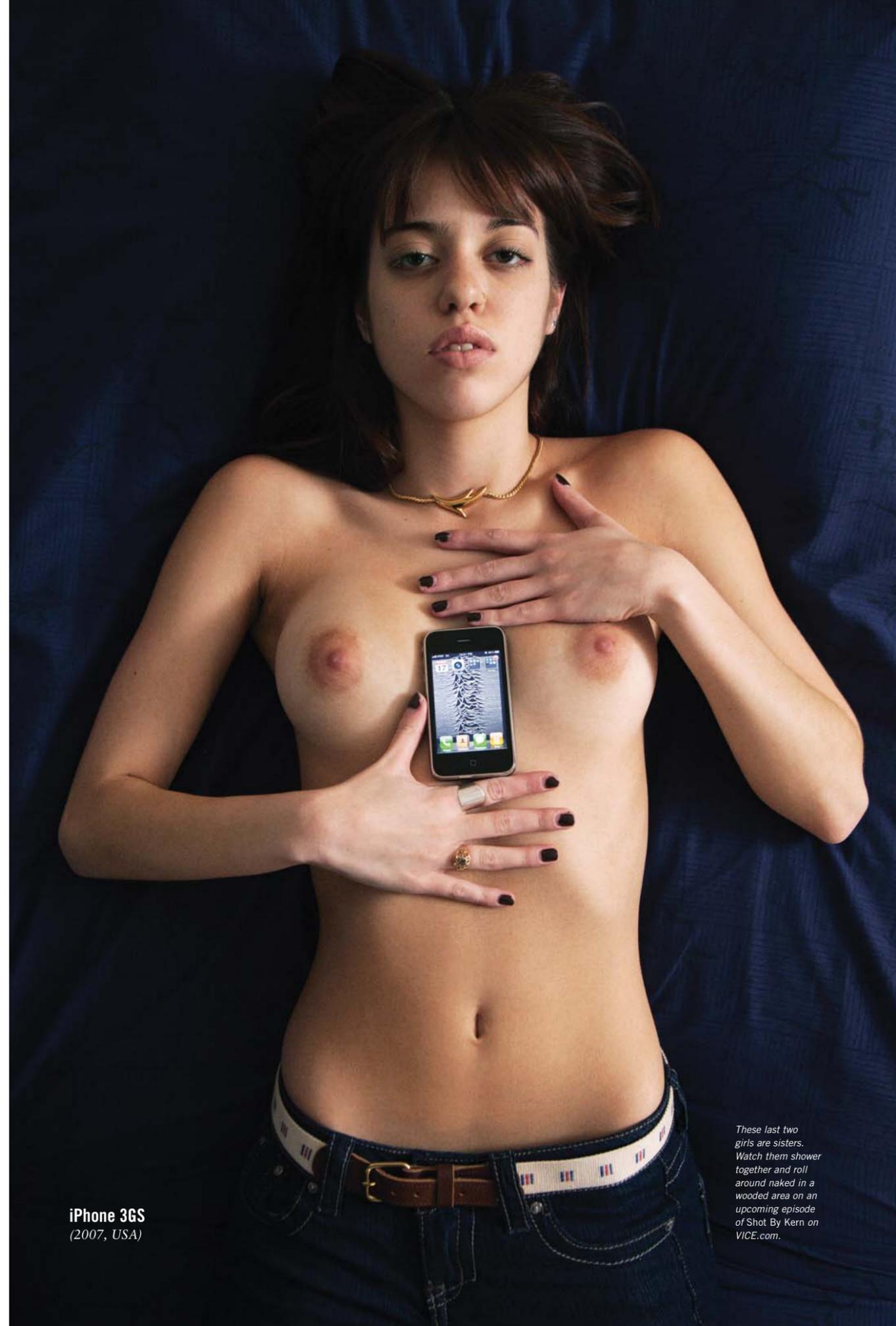
**BlackBerry Montana**  
(2011, USA)



**Nokia C3-00**  
(2010, Bulgaria)



**Samsung SGH-A177**  
(2011, USA)



**iPhone 3GS**  
(2007, USA)

*These last two girls are sisters. Watch them shower together and roll around naked in a wooded area on an upcoming episode of Shot By Kern on VICE.com.*

A pig's head is the central focus, lying on a blue and pink floral patterned surface. The pig's skin is a natural pinkish-orange hue. One of its eyes has been replaced with a human eye, which has a striking blue iris and dark, thick eyelashes. The pig's snout is large and pink, with a small hole in the center. To the right of the pig's head, a large, realistic-looking prosthetic penis is visible, resting on the same floral surface. The background is a solid black color.

# A FEW PIECES OF TOILET PAPER

BY MAURIZIO CATTELAN AND PIERPAOLO FERRARI

*Styling: Sarah Grittini; Hair and makeup: Lorenzo Zavatta; Photographer's assistant: Alberto Zanetti; Set design: Charlotte Mello Teggia*

*For a few years now, Maurizio Cattelan (who just exhibited a retrospective at the Guggenheim that marked his "retirement" from the art world) and world-class photographer Pierpaolo Ferrari have been putting out a biannual magazine called Toilet Paper. In short, it's a collection of the most deviant, funny, absurd, and stimulating images to grace the pages of any publication, ever. A while back we reached out to them, asking*

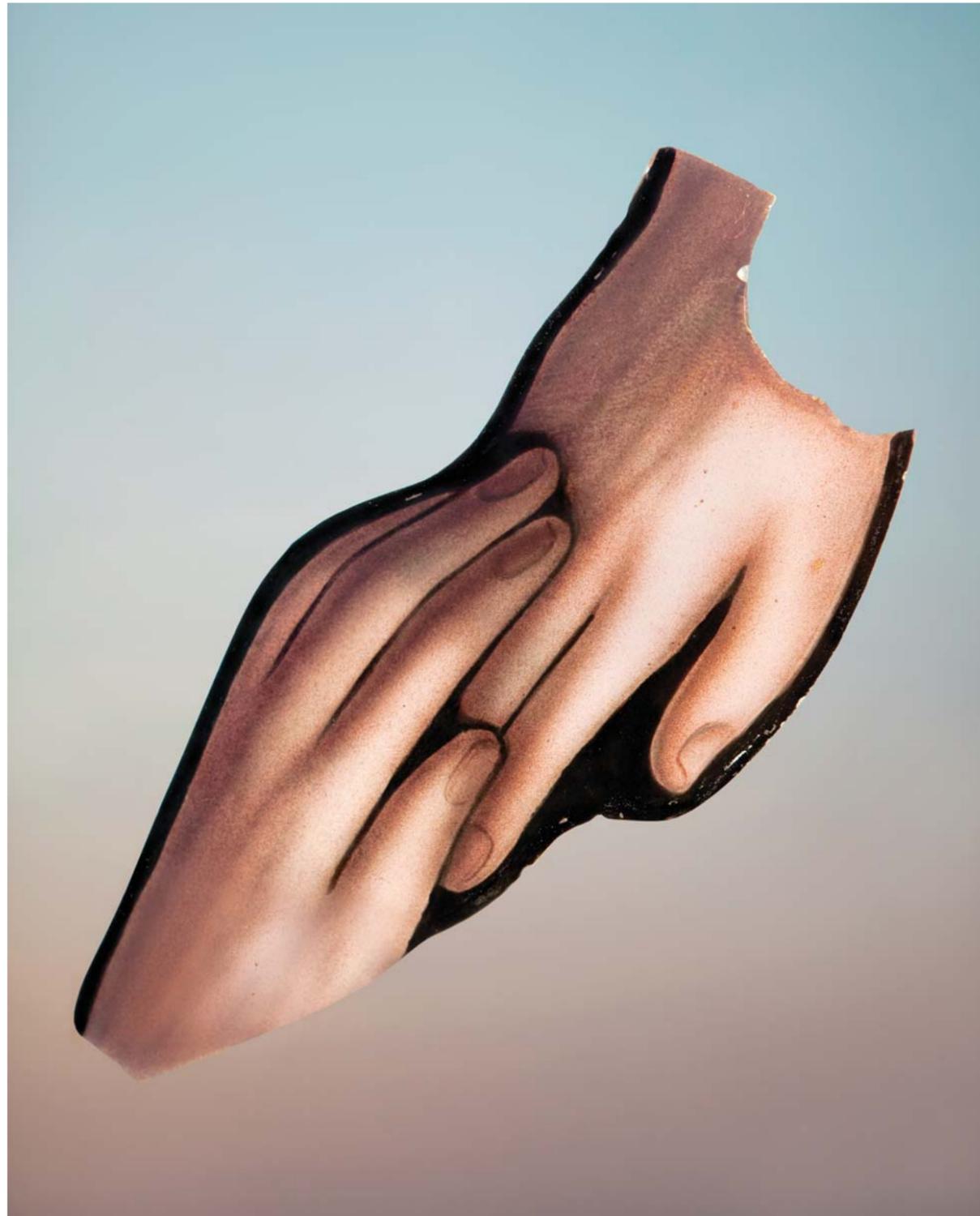
*whether they would be interested in doing a shoot for VICE. They said yes, we peed our pants, and a few months later they sent back seven images, one of which depicts a very realistic fake penis and graces the cover of this issue. The remaining six are a mix of photos exclusive to VICE and a couple that serve as sneak previews of what the world can expect to see in the next issue of Toilet Paper. Bel lavoro, ragazzi.*











Church Hands, 2010

# THE GENESIS OF 'THE SUGAR FROSTED NUTSACK'

BY MARK LEYNER  
PHOTOS BY BREA SOUDERS



Mark Leyner is probably best known for cowriting *Why Do Men Have Nipples?*, a 2005 New York Times best seller that provides answers to odd medical inquiries. But he's also the author of various screenplays (including 2008's *War, Inc.*), magazine columns, and some of the most surreal, obscene, and funny fiction we've ever read. His latest novel, *The Sugar Frosted Nutsack*, is out March 26 from Little, Brown and sticks out like an infected, throbbing appendage compared with the seemingly endless crop of mopey, self-important, "serious" novels crowding the shelves of bookstores these days. *Nutsack* is the tragic story of Ike Karton, an unemployed butcher living in New Jersey. Ike is constantly tormented and sexually harassed by a pantheon of Gods with names like Fast-Cooking Ali, XOXO, and La Felina; they love partying, smoking a hallucinogenic borscht known as Gravy, and, above all else, having hardcore sex with mortals. The epic is even stranger than it sounds, and we belly-laughed throughout the weekend it took to devour it. We've excerpted the opening section here (which explains how the pantheon of Gods—and the universe—came to be) and paired it with art by Brea Souders, whose work makes us feel celestial in an entirely different but equally fulfilling way.

More of Brea Souders's work can be seen at [www.breasouders.com](http://www.breasouders.com) and at the Center for Photography at Woodstock, NY, from May 5 to June 24.

There was never *nothing*. But before the debut of the Gods, about 14 billion years ago, things happened without any discernable context. There were no recognizable patterns. It was all incoherent. Isolated, disjointed events would take place, only to be engulfed by an opaque black void, their relative meaning, their *significance*, annulled by the eons of entropic silence that estranged one from the next. A terrarium containing three tiny teenage girls mouthing a lot of high-pitched gibberish (like Mothra's fairies, except for their wasted pallors, acne, big tits, and t-shirts that read "I Don't Do White Guys") would inexplicably materialize, and then, just as inexplicably, disappear. And then millions and millions of years would pass, until, seemingly out of nowhere, there'd be, fleetingly... the smell of fresh rolls. Then several more billion years of inert monotony... and then... a houndstooth pattern EVERYWHERE for approximately  $10^{-37}$  seconds... followed by, again, the fade to immutable blackness and another eternal interstice... and then, suddenly, what might be cicadas or the chafing sound of some obese jogger's nylon track pants... and then the sepia-tinged photograph from a 1933 *Encyclopædia Britannica* of a man with elephantiasis of the testicles... robots roasting freshly gutted fish at a river's edge... the strobelike fulgurations of ultraviolet emission nebulae... the unmistakable sound of a koto being plucked... and then a toilet flushing. And this last enigmatic event—the flushing of a toilet—was followed by the most inconceivably long hiatus of them all, a sepulchral interregnum of several trillion years. And, as time went on, it began to seem less and less likely that another event would ever occur. Finally, nothing was taking place but the place. There was a definite room tone—that hum, that hymn to pure ontology—but that was all. And in this interminable void, in this black hyperborean stillness, deep in the farthest-flung recesses of empty space, at that vanishing point in the infinite distance where parallel lines ultimately converge... two headlights appeared. And there was the sound, barely audible, of something akin to the *Mister Softee* jingle. Now, of course, it wasn't the *Mister Softee* truck whose headlights, like stars light-years in the distance, were barely visible. And it wasn't the *Mister Softee* jingle per se. It was the beginning of something—a few recursive, foretoking measures of music that were curiously familiar, though unidentifiable, and addictively catchy—something akin to the beginning of "Surry with the Fringe on Top" or "Under My Thumb" or "Tears of a Clown" or "White Wedding." And it repeated ad infinitum as those tiny twinkling headlights became imperceptibly larger and drew incrementally closer over the course of the million trillion years that it took for the Gods to finally arrive.

These drunken Gods had been driven by bus to a place they did not recognize. (It's almost as if they'd been on some sort of "Spring Break," as if they'd "gone wild.")

At first, they were like frozen aphids. They were so out of it, as if in a state of suspended animation. It took them several more million years just to come to, to sort of "thaw out." The first God to emerge, momentarily, from the bus was called *El Brazo* ("The Arm"). Also known as *Das Unheimlichste des Unheimlichen* ("The Strangest of the Strange"), he was bare-chested and wore white/Columbia-blue polyester dazzle basketball shorts. He would soon be worshipped as the God of Virility, the God of Urology, the God of Pornography, etc. *El Brazo* leaned out of the bus and struck a *contrapposto* pose, his head turned away from the torso, an image endlessly reproduced in paintings, sculptures, temple carvings, coins, maritime flags, postage stamps, movie-studio logos, souvenir snow globes, take-out coffee cups, playing cards, cigarette packs, condom wrappers, etc. His pomaded hair swept back into a frothy nape of curls like the wake of a speedboat, he reconnoitered the void with an impassive, take-it-or-leave-it gaze, then scowled dyspeptically, immediately turned around, and returned to the bus, where he sullenly ensconced himself, along with the rest of the Gods, for another 1.6 million years. It's extraordinary that, among these sulking, hungover deities who chose to forever doze and fidget in a bus, there were several with enough joie de vivre to continue beat-boxing that hypnotic riff for an eternity—that music that's been so persistently likened to a dance mix of the *Mister Softee* jingle. Perhaps it was a fragment of their alma mater's fight song. They did act, after all, like classmates, as if they'd grown up together in the same small town.

One of the first things the Gods did, once they sobered up and finally vacated that bus, was basically put things in order, make them comprehensible, provide context, institute recognizable patterns. (The Gods imposed coherence and meaning, one suspects, as an act of postbender penance.) And that spot in space where they'd fatefully decamped became consecrated forevermore as the celestial *downtown*, the capital of a very hip, but unforgiving, meritocracy. It was very much the Manhattan Project meets Warhol's Factory. And there was that chilly vibe of militant exclusivity, that cordon sanitaire, that velvet rope which segregated the Gods from everyone and everything else. From the outset, it was clear that these Gods had very rigid opinions about who *could* and who *couldn't* be part of their exclusive little clique. No socialites. No dilettantes. No one who was merely "famous for being famous." Just Gods. But their affect was so labile that, depending on your angle, they'd appear completely different from one instant to the next. It was like those lenticular greeting cards. There they'd be, ostensibly a group of elegantly accoutered 18th-century aristocrats, straight out of Watteau's rococo *Fête galante* paintings, amorously cavorting in some sylvan glade with the lutes and the translucent parasols and the flying cupids... but if you shifted your vantage point ever so slightly, they'd

look exactly like the members of some Japanese noise band smoking cigarettes backstage at All Tomorrow's Parties at Kutsher's Hotel in Monticello, New York. One minute they'd have assumed the guise of a bunch of tan, well-heeled, ostentatiously casual CEOs chitchatting at the annual Allen & Company Sun Valley media conference... but then you'd tilt your head a bit, and they'd have metamorphosed into a little army of street urchins with matted hair and yellow eyes scavenging for food in garbage dumps, sucking on bags of glue. And because they were omniscient and so tight-knit, they could be very adolescent and pretentious in the way they flaunted their superiority. It wouldn't be unusual for a God to use Ningdu Chinese, Etruscan, Ket (a moribund language spoken by just 500 people in central Siberia), Mexican Mafia prison code, Klingon, dolphin echolocation clicks, ant pheromones, and honeybee dance steps—all in one sentence. It's the kind of thing where you'd be like, was that *really* necessary?

Everything we are and know comes from the Gods. From their most phantasmagoric dreams and lurid hallucinations, we derive our mathematics and physics. Even their most offhanded mannerisms and nonchalant, lackadaisical gestures could determine the fundamental physical and temporal structures of our world. There was once a birthday party for the God of Money, *Doc Hickory*, who was also known as *El Mas Gordo* ("The Fattest One"). Exhausted from feasting, *El Mas Gordo* fell asleep on his stomach across his bed. Lady Rukia (the Goddess of Scrabble, Jellied Candies, and Harness Racing), who'd been lusting after *El Mas Gordo* the entire night, crept stealthily into his bedroom, rubbed a squeaking balloon across the bosom of her cashmere sweater, and then waved it back and forth over his hairy back. The way the static electricity reconfigured the hair on his back would become the template for the drift of continental landmasses on earth. Another great example would be, of course, the God Rikidozen, also known as *Santo Malandro* ("Holy Thug"). Rikidozen was once absently tapping a Sharpie on the lip of a coffee mug, and the unvarying cadence of that tap-tap-tap became the basis for the standard 124 beats per minute in house music. The Gods were the original (and ultimate) *bricoleurs*. They created almost everything from their own bodies. From their intestinal gas—their flatus—we get nitrous oxide, which we use today as a dental anesthetic and in our whipped-cream aerosol cans (our "whippits"). From the silver-white secretions that crystallize in the corners of their eyes after a night's sleep, we obtain lithium, which we use to make rechargeable batteries for our cell phones and laptops. Once the God named *Koji Mizokami* had a small teratoma—a tumor with hair and teeth—removed from one of his testicles. He took it home and fashioned it into the composer Béla Bartók. He went outside in order to fling him into the future. But he wasn't sure into whose uterus (and into what epoch and milieu) he wanted to jettison the musical genius. Several Gods happened to be strolling by at that moment. They were the ones known as *The Pince-Nez 44s* or *Los Vatos Locos* ("The Crazy Guys"). Frequently,

they had completely off-the-wall suggestions, but sometimes these actually turned out to be pretty decent ideas. "Why don't you have him born to a family of racist Mormons?" one of them suggested. Mizokami looked down at the wriggling, larval Bartók in the palm of his hand. "I'm not at all sure about that," he said, in his languid drawl. And then someone else said, "Maybe it would be funnier if he were Joel Madden and Nicole Richie's son? Or make him a Taliban baby." (Eventually, of course, Mizokami-san decided to hurl Béla Bartók into the womb of a woman in Nagyszentmiklós, Austria-Hungary, in the 1880s.)



Generally, the proprietary realms of the Gods were organized and assigned in a very conscientious, collegial manner. There'd usually be some taxonomic category that would ensure a high degree of structural and/or functional relatedness among the various domains that fell under a particular God's purview. But occasionally, the link between jurisdictions was so tenuous and slapdash that it smacked of reckless endangerment or criminal negligence. For instance, the giantess C46, the Goddess of Clear Thinking (i.e., *lucidity*) was, for a brief period, also the Goddess of Clear Skin! It's said that at the end of a long, grueling day, *Shanice* (the very cute, unfailingly effervescent Goddess who functioned as a sort of traffic manager at meetings) noticed that no one had claimed Clear Skin, and she was like, "C46, since you

Spider Universe, 2011

already do Clear Thinking, how about taking this one?" And everyone was so fried at that point that they all just shrugged and acquiesced. On the first Wednesday of the next month, though, everyone realized that Clear Skin should have obviously gone to the God of Dermatology, José Fleischman (who was sometimes called *The Jew from Peru*). And, without objection, C46 courteously relinquished the realm to the Jew from Peru (who was also known as *The Valiant One* and *He Who Never Shrinks from Anything Pus-Filled*). The point here is that even these kinds of remedial decisions were almost always made by consensus. But sometimes there were disagreements over turf that would escalate into savage internecine conflicts among the Gods, intractable conflicts with ever-widening ramifications.

*El Burbuja*, the God of Bubbles—a stubby, pock-marked, severely astigmatic deity—originally just ruled over the realm of inflated globules. At first, everyone assumed he'd be satisfied as a kind of geeky "party God" whose dominion would be limited to basically balloons and champagne. And no one paid much attention when he published an almost impenetrably technical paper in some obscure peer-reviewed journal in which he claimed sovereignty over Anything Enveloping Something Else. He then named himself, in rapid succession, God of Ravioli, God of Kishkes, God of Piñatas, God of Enema Bags, God of Chanel Diamond Forever Bags, God of Balloon Angioplasty, and then God of Balloon Swallowers (the drug smugglers who swallow condoms full of drugs). This then enabled him to proclaim himself God of the Movie *Maria Full of Grace*, which gave him entrée not only into the movie industry but—by simply parsing words in that title—into the music business. He immediately became God of the Song "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?" and then claimed the entire Rodgers and Hammerstein music catalogue as his own. This all happened, of course, millions of years before these songs were even written. A shrewd, uncannily prescient, and relentlessly enterprising businessman, *El Burbuja* quietly parlayed a series of discreet lateral "acquisitions"—kielbasa, snow globes, inflatable bounce houses, boba balls (the tapioca balls used in bubble tea), and soft-gel encapsulation—into a vast empire of interlocking realms that included Asian magnesium smelting, automated slot machines, first-person-shooter games, social-networking websites, and iTunes—again, eons before any of these things existed. If ever there were a God destined to appear on the cover of *Cigar Aficionado* magazine, it would be *El Burbuja*. Probably the most stunning example of how *El Burbuja* tirelessly maneuvered under the radar to expand his empire is when he proclaimed himself God of Those Blue *New York Times* Bags People Use to Pick Up Their Dogs' Shit. The other Gods' initial reaction to this was, predictably, one of complete befuddlement. Who'd want *that*? But *El Burbuja* was playing many moves ahead of the others.

He quickly assumed the mantle of God of Dogs, God of New York, and God of Shit. Again, this is before there was ever such a thing as "New York" or "dogs" or even "shit." (The Gods' excrement is called "loot drops." It's a slurry of coltan—the metallic ore used today in many cell phones and laptop computers.) No one seemed to even notice or particularly care when he took the next logical step and made himself God of Times, because all that really entailed was track-and-field records and multiplex showtimes (e.g., 11:50 AM, 2:15 PM, 4:45 PM, 7:20 PM, 9:45 PM, 12:15 AM). But then *El Burbuja*, on a late Friday afternoon before a long holiday weekend—and as he'd been planning to do all along—lopped the "s" off "Times" and became the God of Time. It was a characteristically ingenious, some might say cynical, even unscrupulous, ploy, but once everyone realized that what had appeared to be a proofreading correction was actually a coup of epic proportions, it was too late—they were presented with a fait accompli and had no other choice than to acquiesce. And that is how this unprepossessing, chubby God with the bad skin and the weak eyes parlayed jurisdiction over bags of warm crap into irrefutable control over one of the fundamental dimensions in the universe, thereby making himself one of the most formidable Gods in the whole fucking pantheon! But even though *El Burbuja* had clearly finagled for himself the vast Realm of Time, the other Gods continued to indulge the astigmatic "Mogul Magoo" (as he came to be called) basically because he was *so* homely and *such* an obsessive workaholic, and they just found his insatiable acquisitiveness sort of... *cute*. They'd say, "Oh, that's just how little Mogul Magoo rolls" or "Oh, that's just Mogul Magoo being Mogul Magoo." (And they knew, of course, that he was destined to become the tutelary divinity of plutocrats and rich, pampered celebrities.) Granted, sometimes the other Gods were like, "Magoo, what the fuck? Relax." But no one ever really felt like begrudging him the fruits of his monomaniacal labor. It was something relatively mundane that caused Magoo to run afoul of the irascible *El Brazo*, who sometimes referred to Magoo as *Fräulein Luftblase* ("Miss Bubble")—a taunting homophobic slur. Without any fanfare, one day, Magoo had asserted himself as the God of the Breast Implant and God of the Nutsack. He dutifully submitted his boilerplate rationale: Anything Enveloping Something Else. Just as a bubble is a globule of water that contains air, the scrotum is a pouch of skin and muscle that contains the testicles, and the breast implant is an elastomer-coated sac containing a thick silicone gel. Ergo, it's perfectly logical and reasonable to conclude that both spheres fall within my purview. This completely infuriated *El Brazo*, who, as the God of Urology and the God of Pornography, considered the nutsack and the breast implant his inviolable domains. The antipathy that developed between these two Gods (and, subsequently, between Magoo and the Goddess *La*



Rosie, 2012

*Felina*) would have significant consequences throughout the ages. *El Brazo* began to routinely, and very publicly, threaten Magoo and his cohorts with liquidation in a sort of Night of the Long Knives. And Magoo began traveling around with a posse of *Pistoleras*—half a dozen divine, ax-wielding mercenary vixens who were total fitness freaks with rock-hard bodies. Each of them had a venomous black mamba snake growing out of the back of her head, which she'd pull through the size-adjustment cutout on the back of her baseball cap. And this is the origin of today's fashion in which women gather their hair into a ponytail or a braid and allow it to hang through the hole in the backs of their caps.

The Gods used a drug called "Gravy," also known as *Pozole* ("Stew"). Their drug use was heavy and appeared to be both ritualistic and recreational. At one time, it was considered to be what actually made the Gods deities, and there was speculation that consumption by human beings might bestow certain divine qualities on them. Gravy was originally thought to be a smokable version of the Vedic drug Soma and assumed to be hallucinogenic and derived from psilocybin mushrooms or *Amanita muscaria* (psychoactive basidiomycete fungus). Some have speculated that Gravy is a form of hallucinogenic borscht—a theory endorsed by such scholars

as Mircea Eliade, Georges Dumézil, and University of Chicago Professor of the History of Religions Wendy Doniger. Today, though, many experts believe that Gravy is a solvent similar to what's found in glue, paint thinner, and felt-tip markers. This theory has gained considerable support among a wide range of prominent people, including TMZ's Harvey Levin, forensic pathologist Cyril Wecht, criminal defense attorney Mark Geragos, and professional beach-volleyball player Misty May-Treanor. Before the imbibing of Gravy, ritual protocol required the recitation of a sacred oath, and then the guest would clink his golden chalice against that of his divine host and solemnly ask, "You gonna shoot that or sip it?" There are about 14 Weight Watchers Points in a half-cup serving of the rich hallucinogenic beverage. Smokable Gravy—made by heating liquid Gravy and baking soda until small pinkish-white precipitates ("rocks") form—is more quickly absorbed into the bloodstream, reaching the brain in about eight seconds. (Side effects can include: Progeria, Necrotizing Fasciitis, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, Craniopagus Twins, Elephantiasis of the Testicles, Projectile Anal Hemorrhaging, and Gangrene of the Eyeballs.)

Excerpted from *The Sugar Frosted Nutsack: A Novel*, published by Little, Brown and Company. © 2012 by Mark Leyner.

# THE LONELIEST COWBOY IN THE WORLD

*Plumbing the Isolated Depths of Chilean Patagonia*

BY JOHN MARTIN  
PHOTOS BY PETER SUTHERLAND

**F**austino Barrientos has spent the greater part of his 81 years in complete solitude and isolation. Since 1965 he's worked as a gaucho—the horse-riding ranchers and shepherds of the harsh southern swath of Chile and Argentina known as Patagonia. For most of his life, Faustino's sole human contact has occurred once every two years, when he herds his cattle to the nearest town to sell.

The gaucho lifestyle, which essentially consists of hunting and herding, has remained constant since the colonial era. To say these guys are lonesome is an understatement—this isn't like moving to the country and starting a blog about local varieties of heirloom carrots. But Faustino wasn't always alone. He was raised on the shores of Lake O'Higgins in a place known as Once Hermanos, which is named after his family of 11 brothers and sisters. Over the years, the siblings moved away one by one. Then their parents died, their houses were burned down by vengeful neighbors, and the land was sold. Faustino moved to Argentina, traveling the country and honing the skills that would allow him to eventually return to Lake O'Higgins and live off the land for the next 46 years.

While Argentinean Patagonia can be barren and almost desert-like, Chilean Patagonia is rugged in the classical sense. It's peppered with craggy, gothic mountains, dense forests, and sparse pockets of civilization. Lake O'Higgins is located in the Aysén region, one of the remotest areas of Patagonia. It's the least-populated region in Chile, and one of the most sparsely-populated places in the world outside Antarctica. The closest thing to an urban center is a place called Coihaique, in which more than half of the region's 100,000 residents reside, and the smallest towns are frontier settlements of fewer than 500 people, such as Villa O'Higgins, where Faustino sells his livestock.

Like most of the developing world, Faustino's land is rapidly changing. The transformation's roots date to the mid-1970s, when Chile and Argentina became involved in what came to be known as the Beagle Conflict, a territorial dispute over the nearby Picton, Lennox, and Nueva islands. This kerfuffle served as the main reason for Chile's support of the UK during the Falklands War, another convoluted and somewhat silly

conflict over a few chains of islands off the coast of Argentina that the British had long claimed as their own. At the time, Chile's dapper general-turned-dictator Augusto Pinochet was in command and decided that Chile needed a highway to make its far-flung regions more accessible to the military.

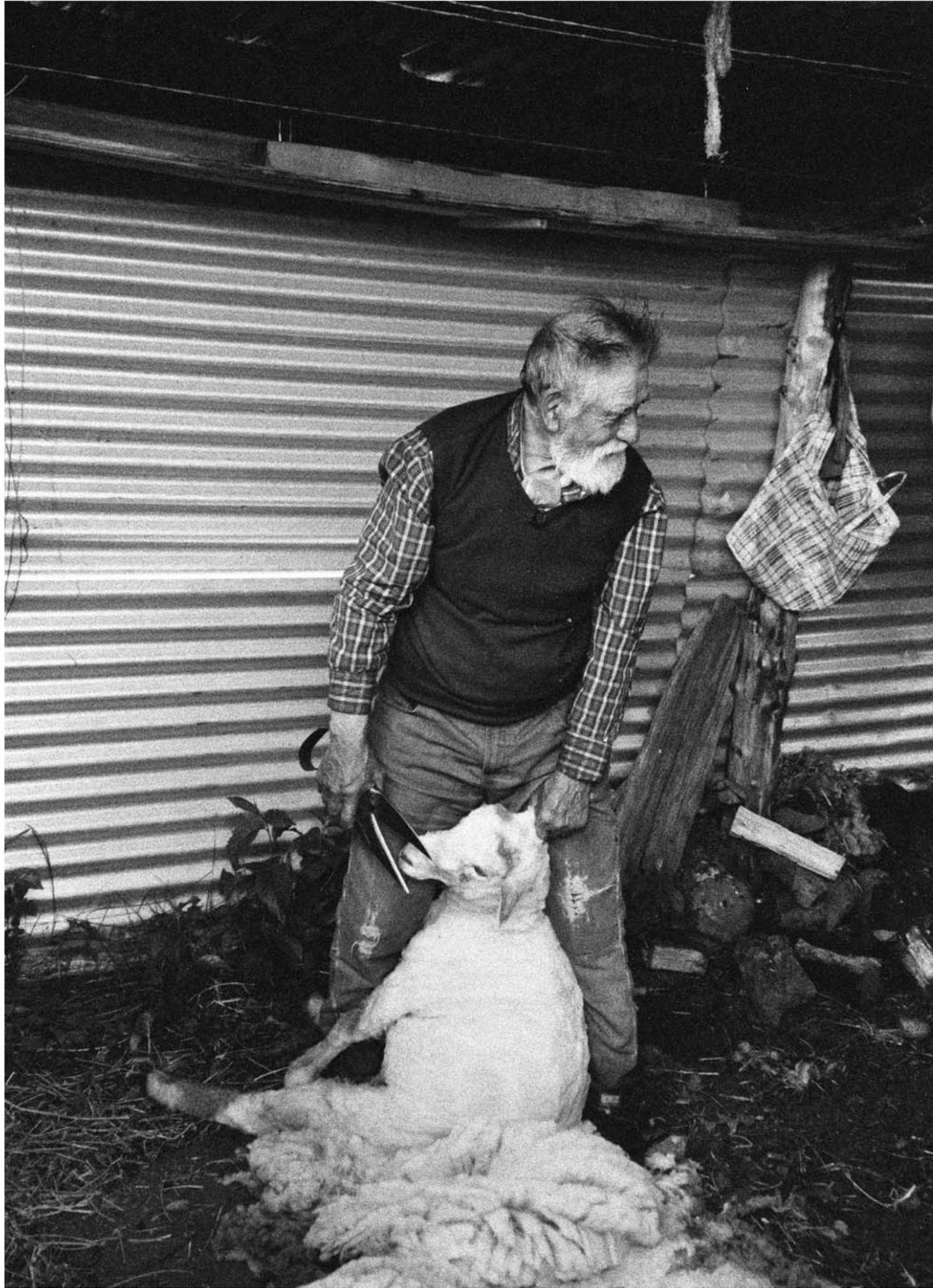
So, in 1976, the Chilean Army Engineering Command began construction on the Carretera Austral, forever changing Patagonia and its residents. By 1986, a mostly unpaved road connected remote communities throughout the country, and the Chilean military finally had easy access to the south. Thanks to the extended road, the area developed a nascent yet thriving adventure-tourism industry based out of towns like Coihaique up north and Torres del Paine and Punta Arenas in the south.

Villa O'Higgins, however, has remained somewhat isolated despite all of the recent developments. It was only accessible by plane until 2000, when the final 62 miles of the 770-mile road finally linked the remote village to the rest of the highway (via an hour-long ferry ride to Puerto Yungay). Faustino lives 20 or so miles from Villa O'Higgins, but those miles are of the Chilean Patagonia variety. It takes him several days to make his biennial trip, wrangling his cattle up precarious switchbacks, along the sides of ravines, through rapid mountain rivers, and, eventually, to town. He lived like this, without really seeing another soul outside his trips into town, for about 35 years, until the boats came. First, about a decade ago, a government ship began cruising the lake weekly for whatever reasons the government had deemed important. Then came the semiweekly tourist ship that would take sightseers to the O'Higgins Glacier—a favorite among the global-warming picture-taking set.

At 81 years old, Faustino is still spry and still doesn't go to town very often, but he has somewhat adapted to the changes surrounding him. Now he retrieves his supplies from the boat and generates electricity via a solar panel, and he even recently got a new neighbor. The world is catching up to him, but it's a safe bet that whatever time Faustino has left will be spent staying as far away from civilization as he can manage. 

*Watch Far Out: Faustino's Patagonian Retreat, one of the loneliest documentaries we've ever made, on VICE.com.*









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# PAINTBALLING

# WITH HEZBOLLAH

*Is the Path Straight to Their Hearts*

BY MITCHELL PROTHERO  
PHOTOS BY BRYAN DENTON

*Hezbollah members getting in position right before a match starts. It's almost like they've done this before or something.*

**W**e figured they'd cheat; they were Hezbollah, after all. But none of us—a team of four Western journalists—thought we'd be dodging military-grade flash bangs when we initiated this “friendly” paintball match.

The battle takes place underground in a grungy, bunker-like basement underneath a Beirut strip mall. When the grenades go off it's like being caught out in a ferocious thunderstorm: blinding flashes of hot white light, blasts of sound that reverberate deep inside my ears.

As my eyesight returns and readjusts to the dim arena light, I poke out from my position behind a low cinder-block wall. Two large men in green jumpsuits are bearing down on me. I have them right in my sights, but they seem unfazed—even as I open fire from close range, peppering each with several clear, obvious hits. I expect them to freeze, maybe even acknowledge that this softie American journalist handily overcame their flash-bang trickery and knocked them out of the game. Perhaps they'll even smile and pat me on the back as they walk off the playing field in a display of good sportsmanship (after cheating, of course).

Instead, they shoot me three times, point-blank, right in the groin.

From this distance (well within the 15-foot “safety zone”), paintballs feel like bee stings. I raise my hands in pain and confusion, signaling to the referee that I'm leaving the game. But the bigger one—a tall, muscular farm boy from the deep south of Lebanon who tonight is going by the name Khodor—isn't finished with me yet: He wraps his giant hands around my body

and tries to throw me over his shoulder with the kind of deftness that only comes from practice. I'm quick enough to break free and flee, but my teammate Ben isn't so lucky. Khodor and his partner move past me in perfect military formation, plunging deeper into our defenses. Soon they apprehend Ben, pushing him ahead of them, human shield-style.

**Y**es, I remind myself, this is really happening: Four Western journalists (two of whom alternated in and out of our rounds of four-on-four), plus one former Army Ranger-turned-counterinsurgency expert, are playing paintball with members of the Shiite militant group frequently described by US national security experts as the “A-Team of terrorism.” It took nearly a full year to pull together this game, and all along I'd been convinced that things would fall apart at the last minute. Fraternalizing with Westerners is not the sort of thing Hezbollah top brass allows, so to arrange the match I'd relied on a man we'll call Ali, one of my lower-level contacts within the group.

Ali had sworn that he'd deliver honest-to-God trained fighters for an evening of paintball, but when the four-man Hezbollah team first walked into the building, I was dubious. In the Dahiyah, the southern suburbs of Beirut controlled by Hezbollah, every macho teenager and his little brother consider themselves essential members of “the Resistance.” And one of the fighters—a tall, lanky, 20-something with a scruffy beard and the spiked-and-gelled hairdo favored by secular Beirut kids—seems like a wannabe. Especially after he introduces himself as Coco.

“Ali, what the fuck?” I ask out of earshot of the men he brought. “This guy is named *Coco*?”

“No, of course not,” he answers. “Nobody is giving their real names, man.”

“Is he, umm, in the Resistance? If he's not, that's fine; the other guys look legit. But I need to know if he's real for the story.”

“Oh, they're *all* real, bro,” Ali says in a high-pitched voice he uses whenever I challenge the veracity of his information. “Wait and see.”

Then he leans in as if sharing a closely guarded secret: “Since the 2006 war [with Israel], Hezbollah has relaxed on their dress code. The new guys can keep their hair the way they want it.”

Now, after the flash-banging during our second match of the night (the first began and ended in a flurry of paintballs; everyone was instantly either out of ammo or eliminated), I've little doubt that all of the fighters are the genuine article. As one Israeli counterterrorism official once remarked to me over coffee and a bagel, things would be easier if Hezbollah were crazy like Al-Qaeda—it would make his job significantly less stressful. “They're not,” he'd sighed. “They're just ruthless professionals.” They are proving this tonight: The quick but precise movements, the way they support one another with covering fire when shifting positions, the leaps from eight-foot walls that effortlessly segue into perfect tuck-and-rolls (as Coco did during game 4).

With me out of the game, another teammate eliminated, and a third being held hostage, that leaves only one remaining member of Team *Sahafi* (Arabic for “journalists”): Andrew Exum, a former Army Ranger captain who retired after three tours in Iraq

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** *Just before hostilities begin, Team Sahafi lines up for a group shot. From left: Andrew Exum, Mitch Prothero, Nicolas Blanford, Ben Gilbert. Bryan Denton, who also played, is not pictured because he was behind the camera.*

**THIS PAGE:** *The Hezbollah paintball team, looking a wee bit more intimidating than the team of journalists.*



and Afghanistan and has since become a noted counterinsurgency expert. When he's not playing paintball in the basement of a Beirut strip mall, Exum is flying to Kabul to advise the US military or writing papers with phrases like "population-centric" in their titles. He also heads up abumuqawama.com, a blog revered by War on Terror geeks. The main thrust of Exum's strategy is to separate insurgents from the broader population. Tonight, however, as two Hezbollah fighters drag and push his comrade-turned-hostage toward him, Ranger Exum makes little effort to separate good guy from bad and shoots all three of them repeatedly. This delights our opponents, who appear to appreciate the lack of emotion shown by the American warrior. Finally, they relent—no one can doubt they have been "killed"—and forfeit the game.

We all convene back in the arena's cantina, where there are snacks and weird murals suggesting that paintball is the best way to deal with one's inner aggression. If the initial introductions between the two sides had been slightly tense—the fighters seemed nervous about being identified, and we were anxious about them backing out—the realization that they had just attempted to use a hostage as a human shield during a *paintball fight* loosened things up. The Hezbollah guys all laugh when Exum jokes that he killed Ben to keep him off some Al Jazeera reel. And they respond—pointing at me—that after the next game "the Germans will have to negotiate for this one." It's a somewhat sick inside joke: German diplomats are usually tasked with negotiating Hezbollah-Israeli prisoner and body swaps.

## The realization that they had just attempted to use a hostage as a human shield during a paintball fight loosened things up.

Soha—my Lebanese girlfriend, who agreed to serve as a translator/liaison—decides that Team Hezbollah's use of actual military hardware, their hostage-taking tactics, and, most of all, their refusal to leave the game when hit means that the rules need clarifying. She has a few words with the arena's confused manager, who five seconds into the first match quickly realized he was hosting a very peculiar party tonight and who, for the first two games, was too intimidated to remind the four guerrillas to adhere to the posted rules. So it's up to Soha to badger both him and the Hezbollah boys so that they quit it with the cheating. In setting up the ground rules for the game, the Hezbollah team members sent word that "no Lebanese" could be present, concerned that someone would recognize them and tell their bosses they were breaking some serious rules. But Soha charmed them within a few minutes, and her presence slowly became welcome.

Quickly, Soha brokers a deal: Everyone agrees that, for the rest of the game, only head shots will count as kills. Also, "outside equipment" is officially banned. During the first two games, it was clear that Team Hezbollah had little fear of nonlethal paintball fire; they'd all been hit multiple times and stubbornly stayed in the game. But they seem to respect the notion that when someone is shot in the head, he's done. Plus, it'll be more fun if everyone's harder to kill. We decide to call the first two games down the middle: one win for them, the other for us.

This gets Coco's attention. "Really?" he asks. "But Hezbollah *always* wins."

While setting up the game, it occurred to me that such an arrangement may fall afoul of US sanctions. (Attn: Treasury Department readers in the Office of Financial Asset Control: No money changed hands.) No matter how I justified my intentions, something about enjoying some faux-street-combat fun with members of an organization described by some as the "cat's paw" of Iran—a group responsible for decades of attacks on Israel, countless kidnappings, and the 1983 bombing of an American military barracks in Beirut that killed 241 soldiers—just seemed plain *wrong*.

One of Hezbollah's main goals is the annihilation of Israel. While that stance has softened somewhat since the radical days of the 1980s, partially due to Israel's pulling the majority of its troops out of Lebanese lands in 2000, the border has remained as tense as ever. And every once in a while, it still explodes into all-out war (as it did in 2006). But for all the attacks targeting Israelis, it bears mention that their sometimes brutal occupation of South Lebanon helped create the monster that came to be known as Hezbollah. In just a few short years of occupation, many Lebanese Shiites went from supporting Israel's removal of the Palestinian militants from Lebanon to joining Hezbollah in droves.

When you live in Beirut, as I do, you're always surrounded by Hezbollah, albeit a mostly anonymous variant. They control entire neighborhoods, and they've become one of the fastest-rising political movements in Lebanon. Since they last claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing (against Israeli military targets in South Lebanon in 1995), Hezbollah's ultrasecretive military wing, the Islamic Resistance of Lebanon, has developed into an expansive public institution that provides social services and assistance to poor communities. By Hezbollah's own admission, however, these projects exist only to support their militaristic operations.

My motivation for brokering the match was largely driven by the simple journalistic need to better understand the group. Hezbollah's highly professional press office is quite friendly toward Western journalists—eagerly taking meetings and repeating the same bland propaganda spewed by their official outlets. Requests for access to its foot soldiers, however, are always ignored. Even the idea of such a meeting happening is taboo. Partly, it's an institutional thing. Top Hezbollah boss Hasan Nasrallah likes to joke about how taciturn his fighters can be, once explaining that when the 2006 war broke out, his security detail moved him to a location so secret he didn't know where he was for 34 days.

After more than five years in Beirut, I'd never once found a way to interact closely with Hezbollah fighters. So I wondered: What might I learn if I could get them out of their tightly disciplined environment, into a place where they might relax a little and trust me enough to reveal even a fleeting truth or insight? The rest of Team Sahafi is composed of similarly minded foreign correspondents.

Our roster includes Ben Gilbert, a radio and print reporter who moved to Lebanon in 2006 after a year reporting from Iraq; Nicholas Blanford, who has been reporting on Lebanon and Hezbollah for 17 years and who just put out *Warriors of God*, an exhaustive military history of the group; the impossibly tall and baby-faced *New York Times* photographer Bryan Denton, who has been in Beirut for the past five years, covering various outbreaks of violence and the 2006 war with Israel, before deciding to cover the revolution in Libya; and Exum, our secret weapon. Our only nonjournalist, Exum was the key both to getting the fighters to show up and to our having any real chance at winning. He left the army before his 30th birthday



Two Hezbollah fighters wait for a new match to start.

and is now wrapping up a PhD in “insurgency studies.” His take on the situation was that it’d serve as an indispensable bit of field research.

Our collective reasoning for the game was simple: bragging rights. Hezbollah’s military wing is widely considered the most competent group of “nonstate actors”—or, depending where you sit, “terrorists”—in the world. I’d seen pretty much all of their closest competition in action: Al-Qaeda, Hamas, the Taliban, and almost any other militant group you can name in the region. Famed for their combat prowess and careful tactical calibration, Hezbollah’s few thousand professional fighters have repeatedly taken on the toughest armies in the world (Israel, France, the United States, and even, briefly, Syria) and come out on top every time. Over the decades, they’ve grown in skill and competence to the point where, during the 2006 war with Israel, they’d done something few insurgencies have ever accomplished: morph from guerrillas into a semi-conventional force. If I could get them into a paintball game, I could witness their battlefield tactics firsthand. And if our team could beat them, we could walk around calling *ourselves* “the most dangerous nonstate actors on the planet.”

In the days leading up to the match, Exum and I developed our strategy. We (correctly) assumed that our opponents would be well versed in small-unit tactics, and we would exploit a strategy easily executed with a paintball gun but impossible with a real weapon that kicks back when fired: providing a

near-constant stream of accurate covering fire. Nick and either Ben or Bryan would stay in defensive positions regardless of what developed, aiming down set lanes of fire to keep the enemy from taking direct approaches. Exum would occupy the perch in the far back corner of the arena, killing anyone who tried maneuvering around his teammates. The goal was to force them to spend time and energy trying to break through our defenses, and then I’d mount a counterattack once they’d been weakened.

For the first three games, Exum’s strategy works perfectly, so much so that it begins to visibly piss off Team Hezbollah. Coco especially hates that we just sit back and camp. “They won’t change their plan or move,” he tells Soha. “They just play defense. It’s too predictable.” She relays this to us, and we all laugh.

“I’m not here to entertain them,” Exum replies. “I’m here to fucking beat them.”

Coco turns out to be the most talkative of the bunch, especially when he’s chatting up Soha. “This is the best war I’ve ever been in,” he says after his team loses its third match. “There’s water. And girls.”

“Have you guys ever played paintball before?” Soha asks. The fighters laugh.

“We’ve played in the mountains, we’ve played in the south, and we’ve played in Beirut—just not with paintballs,” Coco replies.

Eventually the other fighters warm up to us a bit, too. Andil (“lantern” in Arabic) is extroverted, funny, and a stone-cold

fighter; despite being slightly chubby, he’s far from soft, and during the games he’s lightning quick and aggressive as hell. I’m later told that he’s a member of the famed special forces, which, beyond the years of vetting, religious instruction, and military drilling all fighters undergo, also means a full year of specialized training in Iran.

Khodor, the huge one who tried to kidnap me during the second game, is shy and deeply religious. He hails from a tiny village in the south, and at first, the scene makes him a little uncomfortable, as if enjoying himself in this company is somehow sinful (compounded by the fact that it’s currently Ramadan). He closes his eyes every time a photograph is taken of him, even though he never removes his game mask, just in case someone manages to recognize him through the dirty visor. I later find out his Hezbollah duties include commanding a team tasked with shooting a barrage of rockets into northern Israel if war breaks out again.

Then there’s “the Boss.” Dark-haired with piercing black eyes and an angular face, he entered the arena after the others and scanned the room intensely, just as we were about to begin. He’s wearing a black leather jacket, jeans, and trainers, and at first glance looks just like an ordinary 30-something guy from Beirut. Up close his muscular build becomes apparent, as does his confidence, which far exceeds that of Andil and Khodor and is confirmed by his chilling self-introduction: “I am the Boss.”

For the first few matches, the Boss observed stoically from the sidelines, watching his team fail against a bunch of doughy foreigners. Before the third match, he called for a huddle. They instantly got better, dominating the next round as they knocked out Nick and Bryan immediately before cornering Exum. Still, they ended up losing because they were so excited, they overlooked the fact that I was still alive. As they approached Exum, I popped out of nowhere, and we mowed them down in seconds, prompting Andil to rip off his mask and grab me in an excited embrace. His thick arms crushed my chest as he shouted, “Nice! Nice!” in Arabic and kissed me on the cheek.

The honeymoon is soon over, and Soha picks up on a little whisper campaign about me. She tells me Coco and Andil want to know why she’s hanging out with us foreigners: “So how do you know these guys? How are you friends with them?” A secular Muslim, Soha knows we’re entering territory loaded with cultural land mines. And although the fighters seem to have taken a peculiar liking to me, the fact that I’m dating a local Muslim girl is counterbalancing that impression; I’m also the one who challenged them to the game they’re now losing. There is pride at stake, and to my surprise, they suddenly seem more intent on shooting me than Exum, our US Army representative, and up until now their most prized target.

I’m immediately eliminated from the next game when Andil, at a dead run, shoots me in the face from 30 meters away. But we wind up winning that game, the fourth, the overall score now 3-1. It becomes evident that the Boss has had enough, and he announces that he’ll suit up for a few rounds of five-on-five.

“He’s come to save his boys,” says Nick, as the referees announce a new game. Each team will select a captain (me, the Boss) and defend their respective towers on opposite sides of the arena. Only a captain can enter the other team’s tower, and when he does, his team wins. Hit the opposing captain in the head, game over; the shooter’s team wins.

In our first five-on-five match with the Boss, Exum designs an elaborate strategy that takes five times as long to describe as it does for the Boss to sprint the length of the field in a flurry of paintballs, amid the screams of his fellow guerrilla fighters. He reaches our tower untouched; the game is over before I can

even break into a stride. It’s now 3-2, and Team Hezbollah erupts like a volcano of insults and boasts. Even Khodor, the quietest of the bunch, joins the boys in chanting, “20 seconds! 20 seconds!”

The next round is even shorter. The horn blares, and the Boss sprints into our tower. Done. But this time I notice that while he’s pretty fast, he’s not *that* fast. I might even be faster than him. He’s not even engaging the field at all, but simply holds his gun alongside his head for cover while sprinting in a straight line. I can do that.

After our two-game, 30-second ass whipping at the hands of the Boss, things are all tied up. There’s talk of changing the rules once again to ensure the tiebreaker is a more drawn-out battle, but it’s after 11 PM and Khodor needs to be at the mosque by midnight for Ramadan prayers. His teammates, all of whom also celebrate Ramadan, pressure him to hold off long enough for the grand finale, and while he clearly wants to keep at it, he has got to pray. There’s only time for one more round of shoot-the-captain.

## It’s now 3-2, and Team Hezbollah erupts like a volcano of insults and boasts.

We decide to appropriate the Boss’s strategy: I’ll head straight for the tower, with my gun protecting my head, while Bryan is “volun-told” by Exum to run alongside me and eat paintballs. As the horn blows, I ignore our opponents and stare only at the stairs to the tower, about 50 meters away. The race is on. Bryan immediately gets tangled in his giant legs, felled like Gulliver by a swarm of Team Hezbollah bullets. Andil fires at me the entire time but can’t connect with my head. Seconds later I hit the tower half a stride ahead of the Boss on the other side of the room. We win: 4-3.

In some Arab cultures there is a custom known as *baroud*: the moment at a wedding, funeral, or other cultural event where the men shoot guns into the air in a display of emotion. A few years back, Hezbollah officially banned the practice, but tonight, with everyone still holding a full clip of 200 paintballs, the Boss and Co. join us in the center of the arena to celebrate the night’s fun by joyfully shooting into the air. Language barriers are overcome to rehash moments from the night, or to gently talk trash, while shaking hands and hugging in recognition of having together pulled off something, if not special, then notably unique.

At the very end of the evening, things take a chilling turn. The Boss walks over and takes Ben’s gun away from him while criticizing his marksmanship. In an exemplary display, the Boss takes careful aim at a rope hanging on the other side of the arena and fires shot after shot, squarely hitting the rope each time while chanting *Yaboud* (“Jew”) on each pull of the trigger. He seems to think it’s funny, but no one else laughs.

Almost a month after the game, I am driving in an unmarked SUV along the heavily guarded Lebanese-Israeli border, where Hezbollah, Israeli, and Lebanese Army patrols are joined by 12,000 UN peacekeepers. The Boss is at the wheel. In the weeks following the paintball match, we’ve developed something of a rapport. So he humors my earnest curiosity as I ask questions about the specifics of the group’s battlefield tactics. He is fully aware that I am asking these questions because I will be writing about him and his comrades. My impression is that although he knows that this sort of thing is strictly banned, he figures I’m harmless enough

A Hezbollah fighter throws a percussion grenade, which isn’t normally allowed in paintball matches, but who was going to tell him that?



to drive me to some abandoned positions, or explain, from his point of view, how an ambush of Israeli officers in 1994 went down. After removing the batteries from our mobile phones to avoid eavesdropping and tracking devices, we set off southbound on a rainy winter's day.

As we pass through a Lebanese military checkpoint intended to keep foreigners from sniffing around one of the world's tensest borders, he talks tactics, first insulting both sides' strategies in the paintball game—a lack of discipline and unwillingness to modify plans, the antithesis of the Hezbollah way. As an example, he points to a bend in the road just inside the former Security Zone, which Israel had occupied for more than 20 years.

“That’s where an Israeli tank almost ran me over,” he says, describing a patient ambush he’d set in the late 90s. “But we couldn’t move or make a sound, because the tank wasn’t our target.” Then he points to another bend in a road a few hundred meters away: the site of the action.

As we approach the border, on the other side of the fence we encounter an Israeli military patrol milling around with their Humvees in the distance. The Boss rolls down his window.

“Helllllooooo there,” the Boss shouts in English to the startled soldiers, who whip around in surprise. He follows this with a hearty “Fuck you!” and we speed off. Once we’re far enough away that I stop worrying about getting shot, I ask him what he really thinks—personally—about his Israeli enemies.

“They are well trained and tough,” he says. “They fight hard and defend their land and people. I respect them as enemies.

They work with their hands, they fight for themselves, and they take care of their own people, so they’re much better than the Saudis.” He goes on: “Saudis are the worst people alive. They claim to be the most religious Muslims and were given the greatest gift of any nation by God himself. Do they protect Muslims with this money? Do they feed the poor? Build a culture? No, they spend it all on cars and whores. I hate them.”

This is coming from a guy who, during our paintball match, answered Soha’s question about military tactics by muttering, “Sometimes when you hold the gun in your hands, it shows you things.” Clearly, we’re making some progress; he’s much less menacing today. As we continue our tour of the border, he tells me how to properly execute an ambush (stay hidden and let five chances to attack pass before you take action) and about Hezbollah’s first rule for its fighters: “We’re taught not to get killed,” he says. “They teach us our lives and training are too valuable to waste.”

He shows me rocket-launching sites so well concealed that I can’t see them until we’re standing on top of them and describes how, during battle, the rocket teams travel by bicycle to avoid detection. It’s exactly the kind of detailed tactical description from a legitimate military source I’d hoped to obtain by setting up the paintball battle.

Still, as the tour goes on, I probe for a deeper understanding of how the Boss feels about his adversaries. His shooting-the-rope “Yahoud” joke was offensive from just about any perspective, but in a normal Lebanese context, it wasn’t a total anomaly. By and

large, folks in this part of the world tend to conduct themselves with a gleeful lack of political correctness. The IDF recently had to deal with revelations that a sniper team who had participated in the assault on the Gaza Strip in 2008 had also made t-shirts featuring a visibly pregnant Muslim woman surrounded by crosshairs. ONE SHOT, TWO KILLS was emblazoned underneath.

Regardless, one side’s bad behavior doesn’t excuse the other’s, and I’m still curious as to whether there’s any delineation between resistance and racism in the minds of fighters like the Boss. So I push him on the *real* goal of Hezbollah. Liberate and protect Lebanese land, or keep the fight going until all the Israelis are gone? I ask him to consider a scenario in which the Palestinians have cut a two-state deal, and the Israelis withdraw from the tiny parcels of land claimed by some factions as Lebanese. Would he feel obligated to continue fighting despite all that (likely impossible) progress in the region?

“If all those things become true, then the Resistance stops being a national obligation and turns into a religious question,” he answers. “As Muslims, we feel a religious duty to liberate Jerusalem. But these sorts of questions can be addressed in many ways, while occupation can only be addressed with resistance.”

He then says that Israelis have yet to learn that they can’t win a war in Lebanon because they’re fighting people with a homeland. In his view, having actual land to defend is critical. And for all his bravado about Hezbollah’s abilities, he points in the direction of Israel and eloquently summarizes a subject few Middle Eastern militants would dare address.

“If the war is fought 500 meters that way, the resistance could never win,” he says. “We couldn’t beat the Israelis there, not on their land, by their homes.” I’ve never heard an Islamic militant ever admit that Israel is Israeli land. He continues by pointing out that in 1982, 50,000 trained and well-equipped Palestinian troops couldn’t keep the Israelis out of Beirut for a week. But by his count, less than 1,000 Hezbollah fighters did the job alone for 34 days in 2006. “Palestinians can’t fight because they have no homes to defend. There would already be a Palestine if it weren’t for the Palestinians.”

## “Palestinians can’t fight because they have no homes to defend,” the Boss says.

In light of this revelation, I press him on what he thinks could stop this cycle of violence in the south. What if the Israelis left Lebanese lands, made peace with the Palestinians, and never threatened Lebanon again?

“Some guys would consider violence the solution to the religious questions, like liberating Jerusalem. But doing so would mean the end of the Resistance,” he says.

“So, peace?” I ask.

He thinks for a second. “Sure,” he replies, without much conviction in his voice. ☹️

**THIS PAGE:**  
A Hezbollah fighter relaxes during a break in the paintball action.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:**  
Protective masks sit on the counter moments before they’ll get splattered with paint.



# TOUPEE: THE GRAND FINALE

BY BRETT GELMAN, PHOTOS BY JANICZA BRAVO

Featuring: Anna Rose Hopkins, Austin Irving, Jason Lew, Alex Moyer, Adam Pally, Jenna Roadman, and Janet



I can hear their screams. I love it.

I love that I can hear their screams before they scream. Before they know what is going to happen to them. They have no idea. I'm the only one who is in the know. That almost feels better than it'll feel to actually take these fuckers out. That's really like you're God. That knowledge. But killing isn't a God-like thing at all. It's just being an animal, doing what animals do. And I know that's all I am. Nobody needs to pull the blinders off me. I know that, if there is a God, I'm less like him than a fucking bag of Doritos.

Speaking of Doritos, I'm eating some right now. Haven't had one since before I got locked up. Forgot how fucking good they taste. They're killing me slowly, though. But that's life in general. Life kills you slowly. If we could be alive without having to deal with life, we'd live forever. Think about that. Yeah, I guess I can be pretty smart sometimes. But I'm ready to get stupid. Ready to get stupid with some fucking murder.

## FIRST STOP: FRED DICK

Fred Dick. Dead Dick's brother. If anyone knows where Dead Dick is, it's Fred. Don't know why he named himself that. Well, I do know why. It's because he's fucking stupid. He's the kind of guy who would laugh like crazy if he ever heard "dog" and "frog" used together in the same sentence. Jesus, he's a fucking idiot. Actually the only good thing about Dead Dick was how brutally he'd make fun of his brother. Whenever we got high and Fred was around, he'd just launch into him.

"THE ONLY THING YOU'RE GOOD FOR IS ADDING TURDS TO THE SEWER SO THE OTHER TURDS DON'T GET LONELY!"

So funny. Not really a way to treat your brother, but they're not real brothers anyway. Dead Dick was adopted. Forgot to mention, Dead Dick is about as Asian as a carton of lo mein on Bruce Lee's grave. What's funny, though, is that Fred didn't think

it was so funny. Don't think he'll find what's about to happen too funny, either. But I never was one for making people laugh.

Janet and me go around to the backyard. Fred's always in the backyard. He likes to stare at his lemon tree. He loves his lemon tree.

I knock on the gate, and he opens it. He always just opens it. Never cautious. Always dressed like a fucking idiot too. Little fact about Fred: Guy's been wearing an American flag as a cape for the past eight years. This is gonna be rough.

"TOUPEE?! What the are you doing here?!"

"I'm here for your brother, Fred."

"My brother? My brother's dead, you stupid piece of shit! You drove his body off a cliff."

"How about that? Fred knows the story, the old story of how I got fucked over. Who's telling you stories at night, Fred? Who's tucking you in, child-brain?"

Fred makes a run for it. We do a couple laps around the lemon tree, but he doesn't get far. I kick him in the back of the knee and grab his American flag.

We play a little game of patriotic tug-of-war. I give him a sweet punch to the booger box. He matches it. Shit! Now I'm really pissed! I spin him around, knock him to the lawn, and wrap the flag around his meaty throat.

"Where's your fucking brother?!"

"He's dead!"

"He's not fucking dead, but you're gonna be!"

"Please don't hurt me anymore. Please stop!"

Shit. Now I feel bad. He's just trying to look out for his brother. What else is he gonna do? Who else does he have?

"Just tell me where he is, Freddy, and there won't be any more pain."

"I can't!"

"Tell me, and no more hurting, Fred! Tell me!"

"He's at the Gata's!"

"What?!"

"He's at Gata Blanca's!"

Not good news. Not good for me. Not good for Fred.

CRACK!

Shit. I went and broke his neck. Janet's asking me *why* with her eyes. Had to, girl. Dead Dick's at Gata Blanca's, so I had to. Poor Fred. A real nothing of a life. Wonder how long it'll be till somebody finds him. Wonder if anyone will care. Wonder if anyone will care once they find me.

Little backstory about Gata Blanca: She runs everything. She knows everything. She is the desert. We all work for Gata, and most of us don't even know it. That's why I killed Fred. Couldn't take the chance of him letting her know something she most likely already knows. She's waiting for me. She's got Dead Dick, and she is waiting.

I guess I should say my good-byes, just in case.

## NEXT STOP: CANDY AND FLOWERS

Don't have much family. Mom and Dad split up and shipped out early on. No need for kids. We apparently ruined their stupid fucking marriage, so naturally their sociopathic asses assumed that we'd just keep on ruining their nonlives. "We" being me and my sisters. Candy and Flowers. Flowers and Candy. Professional dancers. They take their clothes off, sure, but they're not strippers. Don't even think about calling them strippers. Strippers are hookers before they realize that they're hookers. Strippers want it all and give nothing back. Nothing real, anyway. That's not my girls. They give everything. They take nothing. They're what all dancers should be. They're what all people should be.

Sometimes I wish I wasn't their brother. They're just so perfect in every way; I'm jealous of the men who have experienced them. Not that I want to fuck them. But they are perfect, and it must be nice to lie with such perfection. Real nice.

Candy and Flowers. Flowers and Candy. The two prettiest girls I know who I've never fucked. My blood. My blood before more blood.

We immediately start in, laughing our asses off. Doesn't matter what kind of trouble any of us are up against. Or how much our shitty lives aged us that week, month, or year. When we see each other, we're little fucking kids again.

We start playing all our favorite games: Ass Flash, Dance Dance, Push-Ups, Running Through a Shirt. All of the classics that have been wowin' and zowin' since I had hair on my head, and then no hair on my head.

"What brings you over, Toupee?"

"Too much, Candy."

"Too much?"

"Too much, Flowers."

"Are you OK?"

"Yeah."

Feels bad to lie to those you love. Those who'd never lie to you. But I don't want to worry them. I don't want them to know that this is probably the last time they'll ever see me. Better to just find out a few days from now. Better to just find out.

"Is your favorite food still Kraft Macaroni & Cheese, Toupee?"

"You know it, Candy. That'll never change."

"You promise?"

"Of course."

That I can promise. I love that Kraft shit so much. I can't even stand it. Not one bit. I can't stand this, either. I don't want to die.

"Is your favorite TV show still *Small Wonder*?"

"Until my dying day, Flowers."

Which will be soon. My eyes are already starting to feel tired. It's like they're ready to be closed forever. Not yet, eyes. If it's coming I wanna see it.

"When will we see you again, Toups?"

"I'm not sure, girls."

"You sure you're OK, Toups?"

I'm not sure about anything. I never have been. I leave Janet in their care. They'll look after her. Bye-bye, babies.

## TOUPEE: THE GRAND FINALE



### NEXT STOP: LOVE

My last stop before the last stop. Love's. Love is my love. Well, the closest thing to love that I can love. Not sure if I love. If I do love, I love Love.

Love sits me down. She strokes my toupee like it's real. I tell her everything. I always have. Love is there. Love has been there. I take in her face. How can I describe her beauty? I fold into her. How can I truly communicate her embrace? Love fills me with sense. Senses of things. Senses of my senses. I never want to leave. Especially now. But that's never been the arrangement. Especially now. Love plays her game, even now. Why wouldn't she? If she didn't, it would all just feel worse. Keep it same. Love's right. Feel good for now and keep it same. She looks at me less the longer I'm there. I understand. I'd look at me less, too. We've never known and we shouldn't know now. Keep it same.

"I..."  
"Yes?"  
"I..."  
"What?"

Love is simple. Love is short. Love is love.

### LAST STOP?: GATA BLANCA

What am I doing here? What am I thinking? I should just leave town. Should hightail it the fuck out of here and never look back. Should stay alive.

But I'm at death's door. And the door's wide open.

I walk in. Didn't even bother to bring a gun. That's expecting this to be too simple. And a gun would do no good, anyway. Gata can feel a piece from a million miles away, and if I insulted her like that, she'd kill me instantly. I'm not going to pretend I'm any sort of match for her. In a situation like this you gotta be honest with yourself. That humility is your only chance, if you have a chance at all.

"Out here!"

Her voice. I remember how that voice would make me feel. I'd hear it, and it would be like I was losing my virginity for the first time. Here's a little thing you should know about Gata Blanca and me. We used to fuck. Was it something more than that? Must have been, because we stopped. You don't stop if it's not something more to someone.

I walk out to her porch, and she's sitting there. So is Dead Dick, and he's alive.

I join them. Some butcher knives are laid out on the patio table. And some tea. That's nice, I guess. At least she made tea. Ever the perfect hostess.

"Good afternoon, Toupee," she says with a big smile. The wider the smile, the more murderous the eyes.

"Hola, Gata."

Don't know why I said that. Gata ain't Spanish. She's whiter than a cloud made of blow. But her body is pretty Spanish. Jalapeño hellfire.

"I believe you know Dead Dick."

"Hey, Toupee. Sorry for all the confusion."

I forgot how much I hate his whiny voice. Asian fuck.

"There's no confusion, guys. You fucked me over."

My hands can't resist. I make a grab for him. But then Gata picks up a knife. That's all she's gotta do. I simmer down.

"Would you like a tour of the house before we start, Toupee?"

"Sure, Gata. That'd be just peachy. What do you think, Dead Dick?"

"Let's get this done with. Let's get *you* done with."

I bury my rage. Save it, I tell myself. Save it for the stage.

"Gata, just in case I don't have the chance to ask you again: Why did you do this? Why did you fuck my life?"

She laughs.

"That's none of your business, darling. That's not for you to know."

Dead Dick laughs. "Yeah, it's none of your business."

"Please, Gata. For old times' sake, tell me why. Are you in love with me?"

She laughs again. Even uglier.

"In love with you? I can have any man I want, you dirty bird! I was bored. I was so, so terribly bored."

That hurts. It hurts bad.

"Well... the fun's over, assholes."

She leads us up the steps. Her backyard is beautiful. Almost as beautiful as her.

"I had my gardeners create a kind of forest/jungle motif. I wanted that sense of being in the woods and being in the jungle at the same time. All of these bricks, they were all gray at one point, believe it or not. I thought the gray ones had a better texture, so I had them dyed."

Dead Dick grabs me! Wraps his hands around my neck. I guess I'm not the only one who can't wait. Don't know why he's so pissed. What the fuck did I do to him? As I'm gasping for breath, though, I get a closer look at his eyes. He's high as shit. Good to know. That might give me a little advantage here. Gata smacks Dead Dick, and for some reason we grab her. It's a real clunk fest. She throws us off.

"There's plenty of time for that," she says. "Let's try to enjoy this time while we still have it."

I take a deep breath. I'm ready. I feel ready. I feel like a killer.

"The more plants, the better I breathe. Isn't it just so breathable back here?"

Very breathable. Last-breath breathable.

She leads us up to this stage-type room. Looks like the type of stage you'd do some shitty children's theater show on. I've been here before. We fucked up here once. Today one of us will die up here.

She smiles bigger than I've ever seen and holds up three plastic death masks. The kinds that look like faces but not at all like faces. Plastic dead faces. Her eyes are bright, malicious diamonds.

"Well, boys, let's get into it, shall we?" She hands us our knives.

We circle.

Slow.

We go.

Fast.

Dead Dick takes a swipe. Misses.

I jump.

I slice.

I touch.

Dead Dick's throat is open. Fuck you! Fuck you and die, Dick! Dead Dick is dead. And this time he is really dead. But there's no time to celebrate.

Gata goes for me. She sat it out for a second while me and Dead Dick went at it. Classy.

Gata misses. I'm as surprised as she is.

The second surprise: I manage to sink my knife into her side. It's not good for her. I've hit something important.

"I can't believe it! I cannot fucking believe it."

I get on one knee, like I'm about to propose. I ask her to die. My knife goes in again.

Her dying face is near mine. She licks me. Still loves me. What a fucking shame.

I stand over their bodies, wishing I felt some sort of closure. But closure ain't real, right? Closure is just a pit stop. Then you get back on the shitty highway of life and try not to get run off the road. I'm still on the road. I hope I stay on it. I like this road, even with all the bullshit. I can still get a nice buzz. Maybe even a nice piece of ass. That doesn't ever have to end. Until I do. And does it end? Who knows?

This is my pit stop. They're dead. I'm alive.

For now.

*This is the final installment of Toupee, a novel by Brett Gelman about disgusting depravity, murder, a dog named Janet, and baldness. Read the previous 11 chapters at VICE.com.*



Central Park Sheep Meadow Improvement Ballot Initiative 94B:  
**LET TRUMP SMLLC IMPROVE  
 THE CENTRAL PARK SHEEP MEADOW!**

Pros & cons of vote on Initiative 94B: Should Trump S-Meadow LLC be excluded from approval to develop the Central Park Sheep Meadow in a 110-year lease agreement with the City of New York?

WHAT IT MEANS: A "NO" VOTE ON INITIATIVE 94B, TRUMP CORP. EXPANDING THE USABILITY/ PROFITABILITY OF SHEEP MEADOW

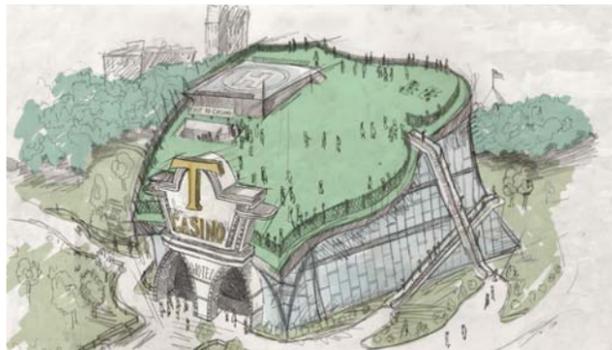
By voting NO on the initiative, plans can move forward, allowing for the clearing and development of the Central Park Sheep Meadow into a multiuse, public and private, green-sensitive indoor/outdoor hotel-casino.

**PROS**

- Initiative 94B will transform Central Park's historic, currently money-losing Sheep Meadow into a profitable, multiuse, recreational space (see architect's rendering below).
- Beauty of the lush lawn area will be preserved in its exact dimensions and improved by use of Evr-Green Artificial Turf® with subturf layer of Real Feel® rubber underturf by Monsanto.
- Exact border of current Sheep Meadow will be maintained by elevating Sheep Meadow; new construction will NOT encroach on other park areas but will be entirely concealed beneath raised Sheep Meadow (see architect's rendering).
- Will add helipad, making Sheep Meadow more accessible to community at large.
- Currently, Sheep Meadow lacks gaming opportunities; indoor casino will rectify this deficit.
- Legal ownership is rented to Trump S-Meadow LLC for a limited 110-year lease, reverting entirely back to the City of New York at the end of this limited time period.
- Addition of exclusive 33-bedroom luxury hotel rooms and bungalows on prime real estate will generate revenue for city, estimated at 300 times current revenue.
- Includes placement of hidden speakers and public-address system. Trump S-Meadow LLC will pipe in calming music and contemplative background sounds at no cost to public, improving the peacefulness of Sheep Meadow.
- Installation of green-smart Moon-Perfect® lighting will make raised Sheep Meadow usable at night when it is currently of no value to the city or public.

**CONS**

- No cons were submitted.



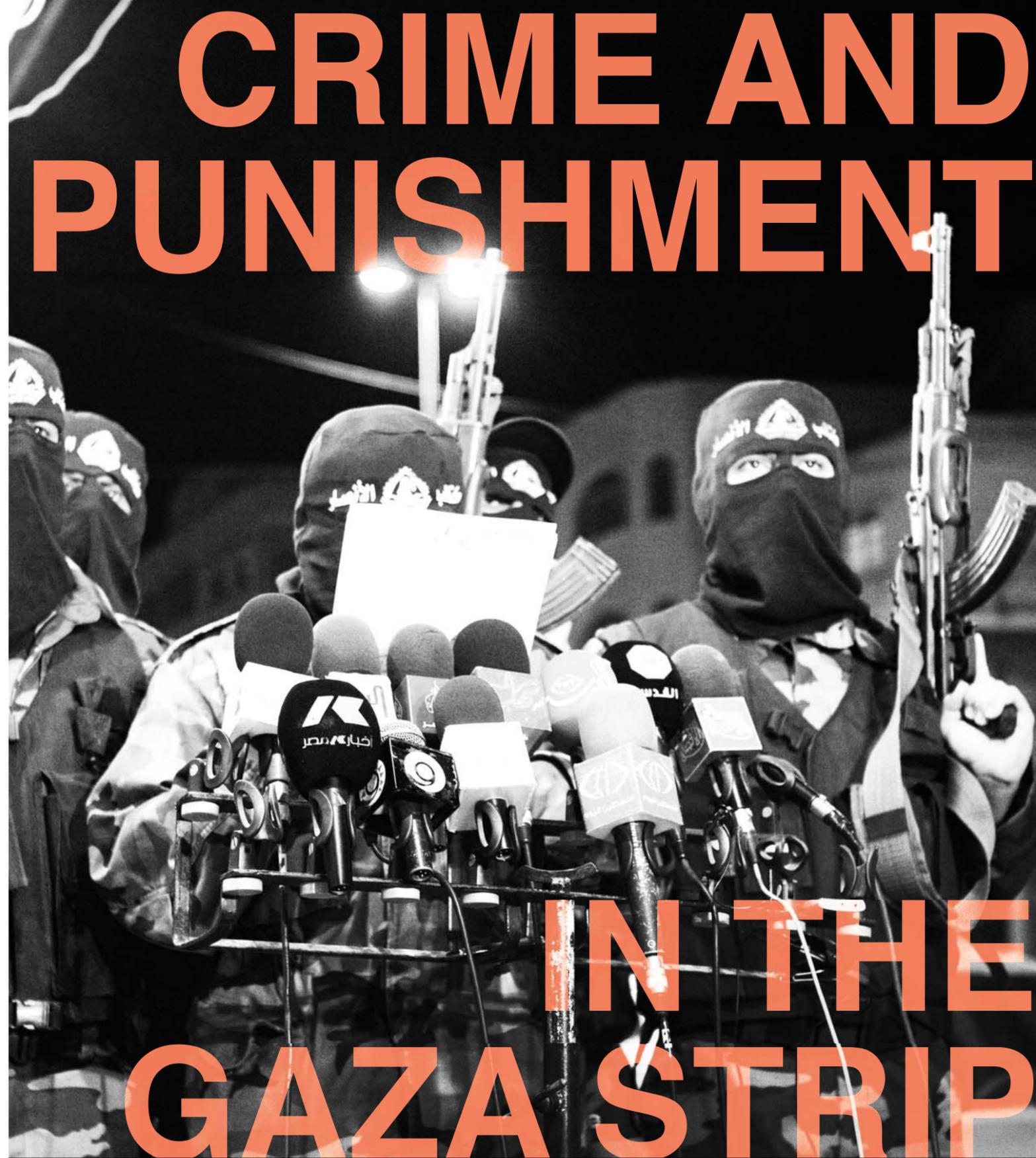
**THIRD-PARTY ENDORSEMENT**

"This redesign preserves everything great about this oasis of calm in our metropolis and adds opportunity for greater usage, beautification, and revenue enhancement, and it's got a casino in it."  
*Piper-Mendelgren Appraisals and Land Valuation Corp.*

**CLARIFICATION OF BALLOT INITIATIVE 94-B:** A vote of "YES" will NOT ALLOW Trump SMLLC to develop Sheep Meadow, so if you DO NOT want Sheep Meadow improved, then DO NOT vote "NO," thereby disallowing the restriction limiting Trump SMLLC from benefiting the community with this redesign (see architect's rendering). If you DO want Sheep Meadow preserved and developed, then a vote of NO is a vote of SUPPORT for the IMPROVEMENT proposed.

by Bob Odenkirk; Illustration by John Gagliano

# CRIME AND PUNISHMENT



# IN THE GAZA STRIP

NOW PLAYING ON VICE.COM



Photo by George Azar

## THE CUTE SHOW PAGE!

BY ELLIS JONES  
PHOTO BY MARTIN SINKGRAVEN

### Baby Camels

We admit, we're not huge fans of camels. At first glance, they look like disabled, lumpy horses (and horses are quite frightening to begin with, unless they're miniature). But when we recently visited the only camel dairy farm in Europe, we felt ashamed for being so judgmental. Baby camels are fucking *adorable* when they look up at you with their long, black eyelashes that serve no other purpose than to tug at your heartstrings (keeping sand out of their eyes is just a bonus). And it's especially fun to watch newborns try to walk with their long, wobbly, knobby-kneed legs.

*Watch a brand-new episode of The Cute Show! featuring these awkwardly cute, long-legged camels later this month on VICE.com.*

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A  
**VICE**  
CHANNEL

# SKINEMA

BY CHRIS NIERATKO



## CALIFORNIA ANAL GIRLS

Dir: Mike D  
Rating: 10

Evilangel.com

As a young child I remember being told all girls in Hollywood take it in the ass and not believing it. Then I moved there and confirmed it to be true. I don't think I had lived in Los Angeles for more than a week before I started realizing women there entered rooms backward, indicating that their ass was ripe for the taking. Initially I thought it was some acting-class exercise where they needed to walk, talk, and act backward, but nope. They just wanted butt sex.

Recently a very near-and-dear friend of mine from those early days in California passed away. He and I were known to pal around and find ourselves knee-deep in *the shit*. I remember we were banging these two roommates for a short while. The one I was messing with nearly died on me while I was plundering her ass. She started choking on her own vomit from excessive cocaine misuse. (Obviously, she did not know how to use cocaine...) I think it's one of the first stories in my VICE book, *Skinema*. At the time, this girl was dating some semi-famous rock star. I never bothered to find out his name or what band he was from. Seems I was supposed to, because when the book was released a half decade ago, it was the one piece of information that stopped me from promoting the book on *The Howard Stern Show*. They were interested in discussing the rock star who was outside the girl's window crying as I banged his

girlfriend. They thought I was withholding information, when in reality my drug-addled mind had no recall, if it ever knew at all. In later years I believe Johnny Knoxville did some investigating and found out who the guy was—not that it matters now.

There was this other time right around the turn of the century with these roommates and my late, great friend in the first Emerica mansion. Emerica had rented this palace in the Hollywood Hills for the riders to live in as they were filmed. After everyone moved out, there were a few months where my buddy and I had free rein of the place to use as our own sort of brothel/drug den, which I believe wasn't much different from how the team used it while they resided there. I remember the carpets being crunchy from semen, blood, booze, and bong water. Had the police ever used one of those UV lights to detect DNA at the mansion, the bulb would have shattered with a whimper. In our final days before the lease expired, we made certain that a memory had been made in each and every corner of the house. I remember opening a walk-in closet to find the rock star's girlfriend's roommate on top of my buddy with his small dog licking his balls and the girl's buttocks in a mad frenzy. Neither seemed fazed. We decided to go to a different room.

More stupid can be found at [chrisnieratko.com](http://chrisnieratko.com) or @nieratko on the Twitter.

CORIDA + GENESIS  
PRESENT :

# Justice LIVE!

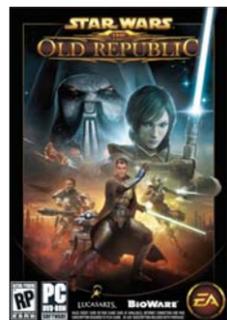
**NORTH AMERICA**

MAR. 16 **TERMINAL 5 - NEW YORK, NY**  
MAR. 17 **TERMINAL 5 - NEW YORK, NY**  
MAR. 19 **HOUSE OF BLUES - BOSTON, MA**  
MAR. 20 **ELECTRIC FACTORY - PHILADELPHIA, PA**  
MAR. 21 **9:30 CLUB - WASHINGTON, DC**  
MAR. 22 **THE TABERNACLE - ATLANTA, GA**  
APR. 17 **FOX THEATER - OAKLAND, CA**  
APR. 24 **ROSELAND THEATER - PORTLAND, OR**  
APR. 25 **PARAMOUNT THEATRE - SEATTLE, WA**  
APR. 26 **PNE FORUM - VANCOUVER, BC**

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## SHEPPARD'S VIDEO-GAME PIE

BY STEPHEN LEA SHEPPARD



### STAR WARS: THE OLD REPUBLIC

Platform:  
Windows PC

Publisher:  
Electronic Arts

For those unaware, this is the new Star Wars MMORPG. It's Electronic Arts' attempt at competing with *World of Warcraft*, a game I never got into but that everyone else on the planet seems to play. Set around 3,500 years before the events of the films, *The Old Republic* solidly adheres to the new Force-centric take on Star Wars media that's dominated the property since the prequels' release, as opposed to the more soldiers-and-criminals take on Star Wars the early tie-in media centered around, and which the first, now-defunct Star Wars MMO *Star Wars Galaxies* originally made its focus.

I'm not a Star Wars fan as such. When I was a kid, my parents rented the George Lucas movies about once a year, and I liked *those* just fine. But I can't say I ever spent any time thinking about them except when we actually had them in the house. Star Wars as an omnipresent fixture of geek culture, with a cartoon, a million novels and video games, and a full aisle dedicated to it at every toy store? That, I could stand to get away from. Unfortunately, "you can't get away from it" is what omnipresent means. By precedent, *Star Wars: The Old Republic* should fill me with an all-consuming mild irritation and the desire to go do something else, especially since that's exactly the feeling *World of Warcraft* inspires, and this game is very much *World of Warcraft* in space. But BioWare has done enough clever things with it to catch my interest.

In 2003, BioWare released *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*, a single-player RPG for the original Xbox, which Obsidian Entertainment followed up with the would-have-been-great-if-it-had-only-been-finished *Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords*. Fans of both games long wished for BioWare to make a single-player RPG cap to the series, and, um, now they have.

For an MMO, *SW:TOR* is a great single-player game. Each of the game's eight classes—four Republic, four Sith Empire—gets its own full-length fully voiced solo campaign, which lasts from character creation to max level. Unlike in *WoW*, where your shaman will do shaman-related things until he's out of the tutorial area and then the same stuff as everyone else until level 80, a *SW:TOR* bounty hunter will be hunting bounties

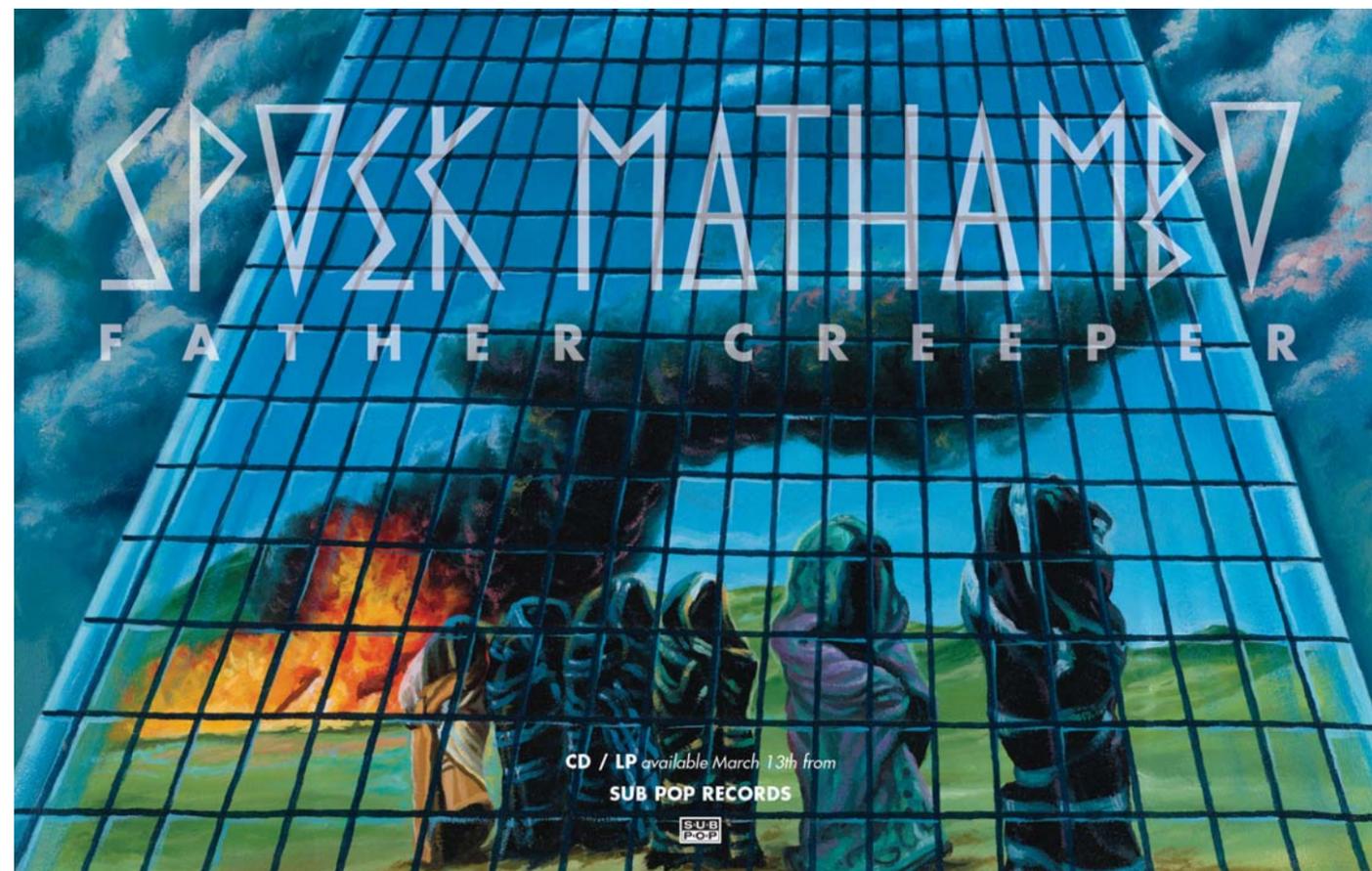
until the endgame. The game's dialogue is rarely bad and often entertainingly clever, and the stories offer more choice than you'd expect—you can play a Jedi who seeks the power of the Dark Side of the Force as a source of strength to help combat the Sith Empire, or a Sith loyalist who tries to remain ethically principled and adherent to the will of Force while protecting the culture she came from. Dialogue choices play out a bit like *Mass Effect*, with three options that give you the general gist of what your character will say but not the exact wording. To complete the single-player experience, the game gives you nonplayer party members you can bring into combat, with their own plots, dialogue, and romance options.

I appreciate the character customization. Almost any given piece of gear in the game is available in slotted form, where its appearance is fixed but its mechanics are based on mods you slot into it—if you really, really like that first set of armor you ever found, and the way your character looks in it, you can probably get slotted versions of all that gear and use mods to keep its traits competitive with the high-level stuff.

I also appreciate the way the game generally eschews "Bring me five spider eyes" quests, where any given spider has a 50 percent chance of dropping a spider eye, and instead just gives quests to go kill ten spiders.

At this point it's hard to say whether the game will last. MMOs depend on two things for success: 1) critical population mass, and 2) new content delivered post-launch. Everyone plays *WoW* because everyone else plays *WoW*—there's no use playing a massively multiplayer game if all your friends are playing a different one—and everyone keeps playing *WoW* because it's got six years' worth of content and polish. *SW:TOR*'s been around for a couple of months. It doesn't have either of those things yet. If people stick with it, it might eventually. But I can't predict whether they'll want to when *WoW* is right over there. While I don't think *Star Wars: The Old Republic* will ever displace *World of Warcraft*, I hope the two can coexist.

This review is based on a copy of *Star Wars: The Old Republic* purchased at retail.

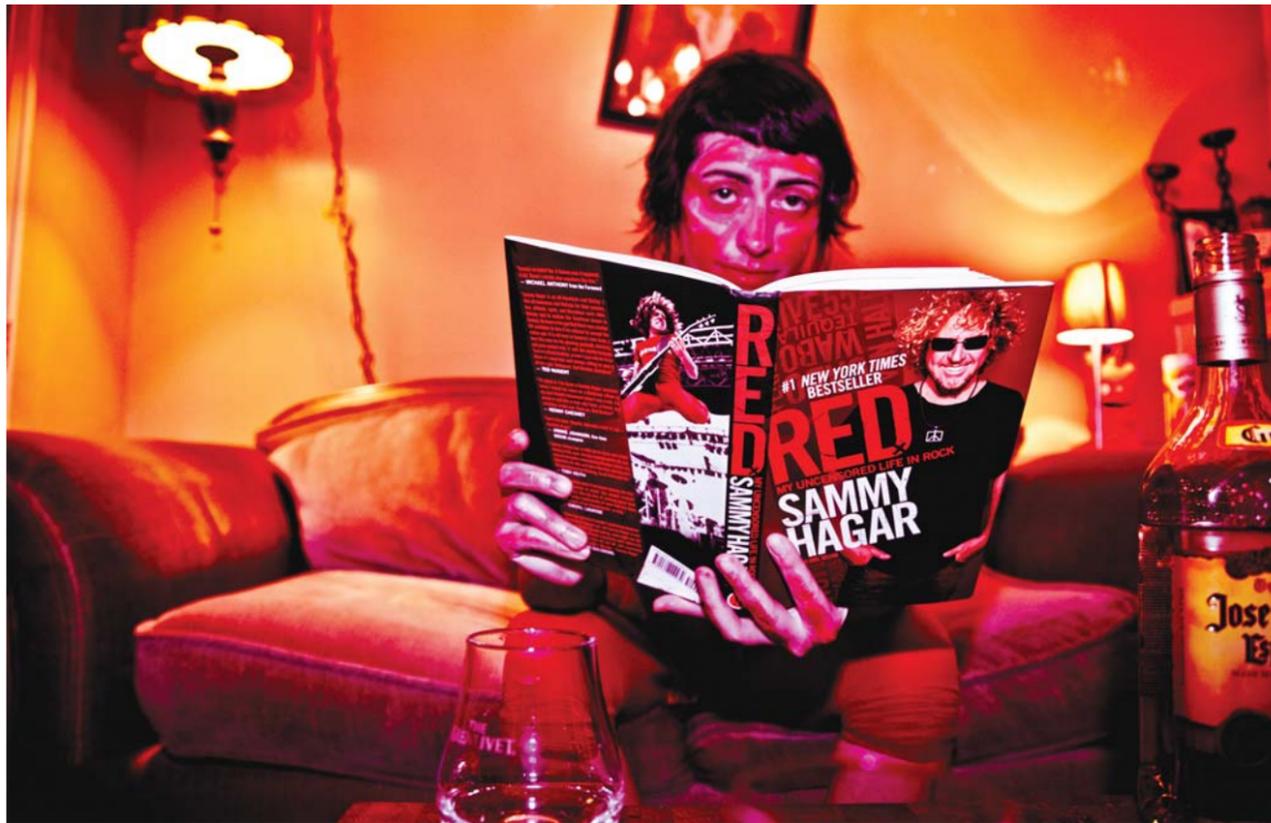


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## SUBMERGED IN SAMMY

*Floating Neck-Deep in the Juices of the Red Rocker*

BY A. WOLFE

PHOTOS BY  
CECILE ANNE INGA

Judging by the look of utter confusion on most people's faces when I make a Sammy Hagar joke, I'm fairly certain that most folks under the age of 30 don't know shit about the "Red Rocker." (Or I'm just not funny, but that's much less likely.) While I'm hesitant to say that the average fuckface in sweatpants *should* know anything about him, more people might get more of my jokes if this were the case, so I am going to do us all the favor of conducting a little tutorial on the man.

As luck would have it, March marks the one-year anniversary of the release of Sammy's autobiography, *Red: My Uncensored Life in Rock*, which took me 12 months to read because I only read around two-thirds of a page a day. (I didn't want to have a heart attack due to its overwhelming awesomeness.)

In order to make this Hagarticle a truly immersive experience, I decided the only way to really 100 percent motherfucking rock was to review my notes while drinking *más* tequila while listening to Sammy records and surrounding myself with Red Rocker-approved ephemera (basically every red thing I own). Bear with me, because I'll be getting wasted as this goes on, and if you can spot my sly references to Sammy's greatest hits, you get bonus points that you can spend at the Cabo Wabo store in Las Vegas (not really).

### A BASIC PRIMER

Did you know that Sammy Hagar's power color is RED, and his power number is nine, and the only place to get his trademarked Cabo Wabo in Los Angeles is at the West Hollywood BevMo!? And also that Cabo Wabo-brand tequila is the same price as a monthly car-insurance premium for a C-Class Mercedes Benz, and my credit card is maxed out from months of unemployment? I didn't! Lesson learned the hard way. So instead, I'm drinking Cuervo.

Outside of his tequila-based accomplishments, my man Sam is also a big fan of mountain bikes (he designed his own, which he named the Red Rocker, of course) and flannel shorts and incidentally had a long career as the front man for post-Diamond Dave Van Halen. You may remember his iconic music video for the Crystal Pepsi commercial "Right Now," and if you haven't seen it (it features a guy flying and a rhino), you should really dial it up on the ol' YouTube, because there's nothing more 90s than co-opting a pseudorevolutionary song to sell a translucent, caffeine-free soft drink. I'm not saying Sammy is the reason that this fine colorless soda was so short-lived, but there's a good chance he realized the potential of another clear liquid (one made from agave) and decided to cut his ties from all other beverage ventures. RIP Crystal Pepsi.

### I CAN'T DRIVE 55 AND/OR A REASONABLE AND PRUDENT SPEED, GIVEN ROAD CONDITIONS

Sammy Hagar wrote a song called "I Can't Drive 55" about his inability to follow the law, especially as it applies to burnin' rubber. Some time ago, a friend of mine was working as the head pastry chef at a

five-diamond resort in the middle of nowhere California, and in walked Sammy with his lady. When my friend introduced himself as the chef, Sammy pulled him close, put his mouth to my friend's ear, and said, "Your dessert is great, but you know what's better? Driving down a twisty highway at 150 miles per power in your '67 Sting Ray, with the top down. *Bon appétit.*"

### THE THREE LOCK BOX OF PEOPLE I MET IN HEAVEN, WHOM I ALSO TOLD OFF IN MY DREAMS

Usually, when people have stories about seeing someone in a dream shortly before finding out the person he or she saw passed away, there's some combination of a tearful reunion, truce, and solemn good-byes. In Sammy's life, several close friends and family members have drifted through his dreams on the eves of their deaths, and you know what he said to them? "Get the fuck out of my house, Dad!" Or something to that effect.

When Sammy Hagar is on his deathbed (which might never happen because he could be immortal), I hope he appears to me in a dream, so I can say something cryptic to him that might make up for the asshole he inflicted on his dream cadavers. He'll be like, "Please, tell my sons I—" and I'll be like, "No whammies, no whammies, STOP!" And then he'll be dead, I guess, which is a very depressing scenario.

### LOVE WALKS IN WHEN IT'S LOVE WHY CAN'T THIS BE LOVE

At one point in his book, Sammy lets us know that "Finish What Ya Started" is about unfulfilled sex, as opposed to "Good Enough," "Get Up," "Source of Infection," "Pleasure Dome," "In 'n' Out," "Man on a Mission," and "Poundcake," which concern fully fulfilled sex. A lot has been made of Hagar's "sex tents," which are rumored to be pitched under behemoth arena stages—all of them equipped with seven or eight girls who would do anything for a taste of some Red Rocker crotch. But nobody ever talks about his justification of adulterous behavior by enforcing the rule that blowjobs totally don't count. Nobody ever thinks about Sammy and what he wants, except for the tiny village in Mexico, which he pays to do exactly that.

### UNIDENTIFIED FUCKING OBJECTS

There are few people in the world who are chosen by aliens to study, but according to this book, Sammy Hagar is one of them. And boy am I glad, because I wouldn't want those aliens beaming down here to Earth, finding the biggest asshole on the planet, and thinking we were all egotistical pricks, so preoccupied by our tequila and relaxation ambitions that we were unable to properly care for our mentally ill wives, and just deciding to obliterate us from the galaxy because of our selfishness. Thank GOD they chose Sammy Hagar.

### CHICKENFOOT

Sammy Hagar's *other* current band is called Chickenfoot. It's a "rock supergroup" that also includes Joe Satriani, Michael Anthony, and the drummer from the Red Hot Chili Peppers. And just to be clear, this is not a joke. In the book, Sammy mentions that he had wanted to name a band Chickenfoot for almost his whole life, and now he's finally fulfilled his lifelong dream. Actually, most of this autobiography reads like a list of the best band names you could ever imagine, but we're lucky he chose Chickenfoot and not the runner-up: Sammy Wild and the Dust Cloud. By the way, he's only five years younger than my grandma. Sort of looks like her too.

### HAGAR QUOTHE

OK, so six months in I got to the point where I was furiously underlining and circling all of the craziest stuff, i.e., 75 percent

of the book. Looking back at a few chapters I had already read, I realized I had drawn a heavily lined square around the words "Juicy Lucy" at least eight times. Why did I want to remember that? Anyway, I thought it prudent to relay a few choice quotes. Of course, they're completely out of context, but so is life so we'll all just have to deal with it. My notes are in brackets.

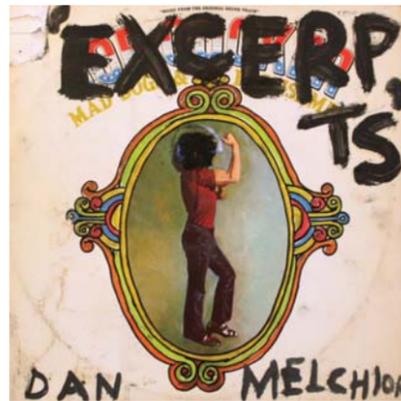
1. "... all of us, having brutal [??] sex while Eddie was out there doing his thing."
2. "Betsy wasn't hugely overweight, but, like any woman who's had a couple of kids, she had to struggle with her weight." [Had to?]
3. "Poundcake."
4. "It all went down shortly after I had bought this airplane... and started spending a lot of time in Mexico." [Same here, buddy.]
5. "Kingdom Come" [Christian?]
6. "We were the mountain bike kings." [WTFWTFWTF!!!]
7. "Back Street Crawlers" [Why?]



### I'M TOO DRUNK TO WRITE ANYMORE

In the end, after pages and pages of talking about rare Ferraris he bought simply because Ronnie James Dio previously owned them and the Cabo Cantina he built in Mexico *and* the private plane he pilots on a whim, Sammy says he doesn't see a rock star when he looks in the mirror. Honestly, when I look at him, I don't see one either. At the very least, the guy does participate in charity stuff and says several times he doesn't believe in killing people, which is reassuring to hear, I guess.

My overall impression? What a read! Seriously! My mind is all over the place, lost in this conundrum of a curly-headed man, and now my face and hands are stained red with lipstick and cheap food dye. I wish I could say I feel more powerful having immersed myself so heavily in tequila and the color red, but I think this stuff really only works for Sammy Hagar. Because I just feel ill and think I'm breaking out into hives. Also, my hands are burning. Come to think of it, that's probably how I'd feel if I'd actually touched Sammy Hagar, so maybe it all worked out like it was supposed to. *CS*



**BEST ALBUM OF THE MONTH:  
DAN MELCHIOR**



**GABRIEL TEODROS**  
*Colored People's Time Machine*  
FCB/MADK

Back in like '99, I actually played the new Black Eyed Peas album and was like, well, this isn't Deltron 3030, but it's still accessible for white people, so I wonder what interesting things will happen for this hip-hop ensemble! Skip ahead a decade, and you've got Fergie pissing her pants and lots of fast cars in videos to make up for the fact that none of them can dance. Jesus, Black Eyed Peas, didn't you know you'd have to be able to dance when you started this whole creatively multicultural world-conscious hip-hop thing? Dear Gabriel Teodros, if Fergie knocks on your door, just fucking hide under the table. She'll make you a butt load of cash, but you'll never get the stink out of the tour van.  
A. WOLFE



**SPOEK MATHAMBO**  
*Father Creeper*  
Sub Pop

If you and your friend take 30 milligrams of Adderall the moment Robert De Niro's name appears in the opening credits of Neil Burger's 2011 cinematic gem, *Limitless*, and then push play on this Spøk Mathambo album, nothing will happen.  
BIG SAM



**DIE ANTWOORD**  
*TEN\$ION*  
Zef

After the apocalypse, these international scumbags need to head up the New World Order (*New World Order?*). Hopefully they'll militarize

disenfranchised peoples, including gays and intelligent tweakers, and send them out on two-stroke dirt bikes with orders to assassinate everyone, set up huge propaganda raves, and pillage whatever they want.  
CHODE RAINBOW



**MAGNETIC FIELDS**  
*Love at the Bottom of the Sea*  
Merge

*Love at the Bottom of the Sea* is so stereotypically Magnetic Fields it's infuriating. You know what I'm talking about, Casio-y diddies with "clever" lovey-dovey lyrics all under three minutes long. My boyfriend's ex would probably listen to this riding her bike on her way to the Brooklyn Flea to buy scarves, getting all dewy-eyed about that time they took ecstasy and had "loving anal" (actual words).  
EVAN RACHEL WOOD



**LILACS & CHAMPAGNE**  
*S/T*  
Mexican Summer

If pornos were produced by intelligent people, this album would make for a fantastic soundtrack. Creative white noise blended with seductive hip-hop beats, it's what fucking D'Angelo while Beats Antique played would sound like.  
ZOPHIE YOUNGTHING



**SFV ACID**  
*Grown*  
100% Silk

Not a whole lot of dance music gets released on vinyl these days, and a great portion of what does should have lived and died on Soundcloud.

Thankfully, this slice of acid funk made the cut. It's an absolutely ludicrous blend of tranny house and truck music that pushes the LA scene even further. I feel like there is a NY vs. LA house-music war brewing that'll eventually escalate into a bunch of catty shit-talking and possibly some drinks poured on drum machines at the pop-up club. The whole ordeal will most likely be settled with an epic vogue-off in Chicago. Perhaps.  
CLARA ELIZABETH GOLDBUM



**NITE JEWEL**  
*One Second of Love*  
Secretly Canadian

There's a YouTube of Nite Jewel called "Nite Jewel - Part 2/2 - L'KEG." live at the late L'Keg Gallery in LA where she's wearing sunglasses and playing for, like, nine people. Compare that with the recent video "Nite Jewel -- live at Echoplex (Echo Park CA, 30-July-2011) [Part 2]." How you qualitatively evaluate the difference between these videos for yourself pretty much determines your own Smiley or Barfy review for this record. I happen to prefer when the lady was in white denim and sunglasses, creating a world while giving slightly less of a shit.  
LITTLE LOCKY



**NO UFO'S**  
*Soft Coast*  
Spectrum Spools

I am so ready for this synth business to be over. If I hear one more arpeggiated MicroKorg I'll orchestrally stab someone. No more of this "vibe" business either. And while we're at it, can you pseudo New Agers please stop with all the cosmic this and that? Politics aside, this record is the real deal, the best electronic record of all time. The problem is that now that I've made a point of shitting on all the hippies, I can't in good conscience hijack their words like, "epic," "ethereal," "hypnotic," "pulsating," and such.  
SUE XANIBARS



**THE MARS VOLTA**  
*Noctourniquet*  
Warner Brothers



I'm not sure how I feel about these aggressively spacey concept albums made solely for the enjoyment of young men who smell like socks and some unidentified wax. This one, according to the internet, is about a character inspired by the Superman villain Solomon Grundy and the Greek myth of Hyacinthus. Wait. I figured out how I feel about this album now. I fucking love it, because I'm a huge faggoty dork too!  
A.H.F.D.T.



**THE TWILIGHT SAD**  
*No One Can Ever Know*  
Fat Cat

The first time I listened to this I thought that maybe the singer was trying to sound like Dracula, and then I realized he's just Irish or something. I gave this more than three chances, and even had "relations" to it, because it's moody and dark enough for that sort of thing, but yeah, my primary opinion is that it's corny. Oh, I should mention that at the end of the "relations," I told my girlfriend that I was giving it a barf face (the album, not her), and she was like, "We had sex to a barfy???"  
HOT GYNO



**BUILDINGS**  
*Melt, Cry, Sleep*  
Doubleplusgood/Cash Cow

Wouldn't it be nice if all the bros who listened to "hard" music were exposed to nice things? Things like this? Doesn't it make you LOL to think about all the blue-collar homophobes out there listening to the

**WORST ALBUM OF THE MONTH:  
BOWERBIRDS**



Kinks' "Lola" on classic-rock radio as if it's NOT about fucking a tranny? Gay people forever!  
CHODE RAINBOW



**THE GIMPS**  
*Bath Salts*  
Goodluck/Badluck

Not working for me. I wanted it to because Johnny, the guy from the band, is really nice. He sent a physical copy of the album to the office and everything. It came with a handwritten note that was super charming and sweet. I wouldn't be surprised if he tried to send a Dr. Pepper or two as well but I don't think you can just send shit like that through the mail, can you? Like, one or two loose DPs?  
DUSTY FLAGON



**JANGULA**  
*Strange Child*  
Self-released

My friend Kristen was supposed to review this album, but then she started doing PR for the band, so she asked me to do the write-up instead in an effort to preserve what's left of VICE's shoddy journalistic credibility. I guess everyone who hears Jangula becomes a believer, and I'm sold now too since each song reminds me of snorting Adderall and sipping Codeine at the same time. The tracks pummel you with jungle drums and angular guitars, then lull you with spacey synths and "oohh-aahh" vocals. It's pleasurable exhausting. Oh crap, wait. Now I'M doing PR for the band.  
WILBERT L. COOPER



**EARTH**  
*Angels of Darkness, Demons of Light II*  
Southern Lord

Oh, Earth. How oft I've gotten comically stoned and listened to thee. Over the years you've delivered some choice numbers to my dome piece and I've

always been super-grateful. These new jams sound like the type of shit Anton Chigurh was cooking up in his mama's basement before he left for West Texas A&M and started shooting people with a bolt pistol.  
BARREL O' LAUGHS



**DINOWALRUS**  
*Best Behavior*  
Kanine

Dinowalrus thanked me in the liner notes of their last record, and I gave them a bad review in VICE anyway. This drove the main guy CRAZY, and he told me he changed the members and sound of his band because of it. For some reason he kept the terrible name. Why not change it to Bad Behavior since you basically started over? Anyway, this new record is kinda like Duran Duran or Oasis or some other English disco-rock thing.  
NICHOLAS GAZIN



**FAG COP**  
*Whimpers from the Pantheon*  
Rank Toy

A lot of people seem to have downloaded Fag Cop's "I'm Fuckin' Dead" 7", but not much is known about them. The only video I could find online is of them performing a show outside in a literal hole in the ground. They've occasionally put out records and performed as Ex-Fag Cop and no one knows why they do that either. Anyway, this new record sounds like subway trains and breaking glass.  
NICHOLAS GAZIN AGAIN



**LOST SOUNDS**  
*S/T 7*  
Goner

Oh man, I've got most of Jay Reatard's creative output, but I've never heard the original Lost Sounds seven-inch before. This is wayyyy better than the more polished stuff he did. He's just screaming his fucking



head off and there's a nice amount of tape hiss. If you get excited by things that were recorded badly then this is your fucking jam. Also, I wish Jay Reatard was still alive.  
CHESTER DRAWERS



It's ugly and cold right now and I just took out the recycling, but it was 55 degrees and sunny the couple days in January I spent listening to this record for review. I rode my bike to the liquor store, then I called my girl to see what she was up to, and we went down, down, down, down to the park, and I told her I'd love her forever and that she's the only one.  
NEST ROAST



I have to start walking when somebody tells me that Pete Kember—who collects rare SS cagoules by the way—was the cool one in Spacemen 3. And they usually think that 'cause they haven't listened to a Spiritualized record since *Pure Phase*. Man, those guys.  
ANDY CAPPER

Slowness is right. My God, this album is waaaaaaay too droney. Also, I shit you not, one of the songs on this album is called "Slowboat," and it made me remember when I was on a boat to Catalina Island once and I got seasick so I

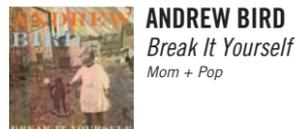


ate a bag of Lay's but that only made me want to barf even more and I was like, "CAN THIS BOAT GO ANY SLOWER?!" I usually like droney, shoegazey things, but why listen to Slowness when Slowdive is right above them on your iTunes?  
KRISTEN K.

**BEST COVER OF THE MONTH: DIE ANTWOORD**



It's funny how this band's whole shtick was built around the one guy playing his jangly guitar really fast, 'cause now that his wrists are too old to keep up pace with the drums it's sort of like, "Well... .. [tongue-smacking sound]..." So I guess not so much "funny" as "a problem."  
NIKKI LATER



Oh, you play the drums and the guitar and the harmonica and the trumpet and the violin, you say? And sometimes you play the violin like it's a little tiny awesome guitar? And you whistle like the patron goddamn saint of whistling (Cecilia)? This is a great album for lying back on a red velvet chaise lounge while a nymph lowers a bunch of Concord grapes into your mouth. STOP DOING ALL THE THINGS. We get it, showoff.  
ALEX HOLMES



This guy sure writes some ear-tickling, Joe Jackson-style skinny-tie pop for someone who looks like Ellen DeGeneres impersonating the Screeching Weasel logo.  
ELLIS JONES

a pretty lady singing a song with Frankenstein. The rest of the album sounds like something comforting your mom would sing to you if you were sick or on your period or got fired from a job. There's a song on here where Emily talks about spreading jam and butter, which is just, well, it's almost too much to handle.  
INDIAN BUMMER



For fans of farming as a hobby, Patagonia products, learning to knit, gender roles, vintage t-shirts, beards, traveling, old cardigans, soft female vocals, livin' off da grid, talking about social issues out of your asshole, tattoos of naturey things, vegan baked goods, and just letting your pubes go.  
CHODE RAINBOW

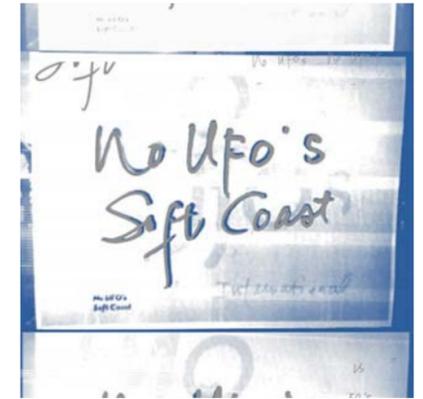


Is this what Paul Weller's been doing for the past 20 years? Marble-mouthed adult-contempo songs over mid-90s session drums? Half these melodies sound like when an ad agency can't get the rights to "Stuck in the Middle with You" so they ask some hired gun to rewrite it slightly worse. Oops. Didn't mean to write "half" back there.  
CRANDALL MASH



I want to say first that I LOVE WEEN. Listening to this album is like the creeping disappointment Grandma must feel after several years of sending birthday checks to little Billy, only to find Billy has taken all of her hard-earned money and invested it in a

**WORST COVER OF THE MONTH: NO UFO'S**



serious top-hat business, when for years, she thought he was way more into awesome novelty hats with large plastic penis tips. Technically the top-hat business is a sound investment because of proms and formals traffic, but it's just not a penis hat.  
A. WOLFE



The video for "Hi" from the new album *Always* finds singer Jamie Stewart sniveling about poking his eyes out, stitching his wrists, and having a hole in his head, then he sets his hand on fire. All I could think about while listening to this was Winona Ryder stabbing herself in the face with a nail file in *Black Swan*. Stewart also offers up a new jam to blast at your next Planned Parenthood rally with the synthy, pipe-clanging "I Luv Abortion." I spend way too much time thinking about how Xiu Xiu scares me.  
JENNIFER DARLING



Everything these guys do is good and will be good, forever and ever, amen.  
DENIALS LOVE TRIALS

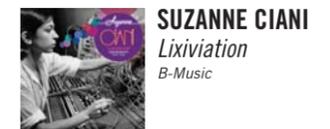


God, have you seen that fucking Heineken commercial that uses the song from the beginning of *Ghost World*? "Jaan Pechacky Whatever"? And it's basically just an uninspired, maskless re-creation of the same dance sequence but with white folks? Just wanted to put a "gross" out there on that. K.S. Chithra is like the living, sober Whitney Houston of Bollywood

playback singers (the folks who actually sing the songs the prettier actresses lip-sync to in the movies). So as you can guess, some of this sounds like the most maniacal Carnatic 80s dance pop you've ever heard in your life and the rest sounds like the Hungry Hungry Hindu Lunch Buffet at Haval's.  
T.M. MCGURCH



A lot of people are freaking out about this guy because he is a mystery and doesn't have a Twitter account or something. I feel like this is the type of thing you'd try to force yourself to be into in order to convince your friends that you're not racist. It reminds me of those creepy images of rotting fruit and random weird bugs that they show in the intro credits for *True Blood* and *An American Horror Story*. I am very, very uncomfortable.  
HOT GYNO



Ready to crush the fuck out? Suzanne Ciani was a synthesizer player in the late 60s and 70s, back when that still meant knowing how to modulate sine waves and sawtooth functions and so on, which in turn meant being a socially retarded math major with a gross Jim Henson beard. Before going New Age in the 80s, Suzanne used her Buchla (the thinking man's Moog) to make those gorgeous, synaesthetic outer-space sounds everyone like AT&T and Coke and Atari once used under their corporate logos. This is a little greatest-hits comp of her commercial work as well as a nice reminder that there was actually a time when giant companies cared about shit like that instead of just letting the Black Eyed Peas piss all over their brand identity.  
THE MARKETING DEPT.



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