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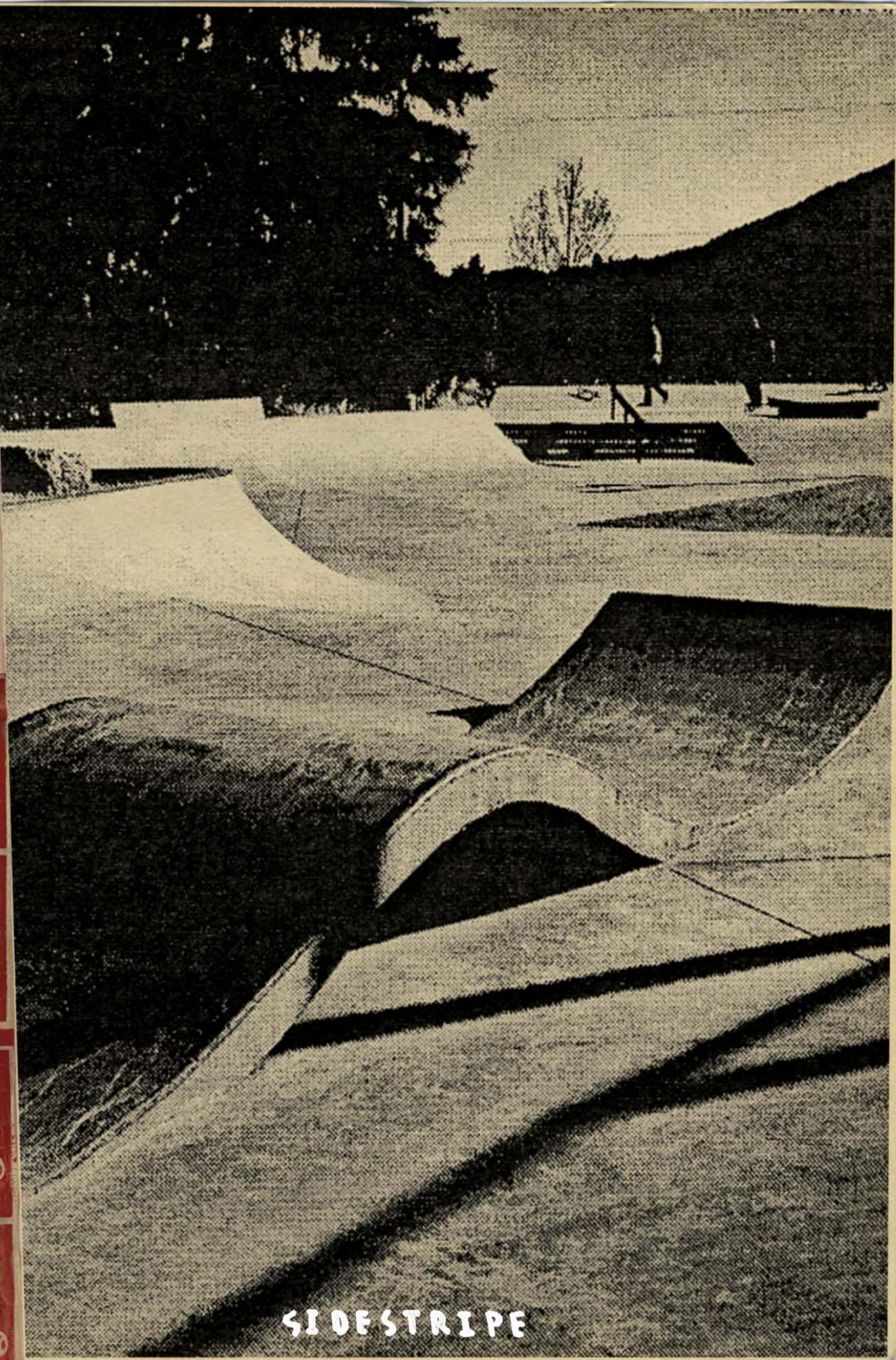
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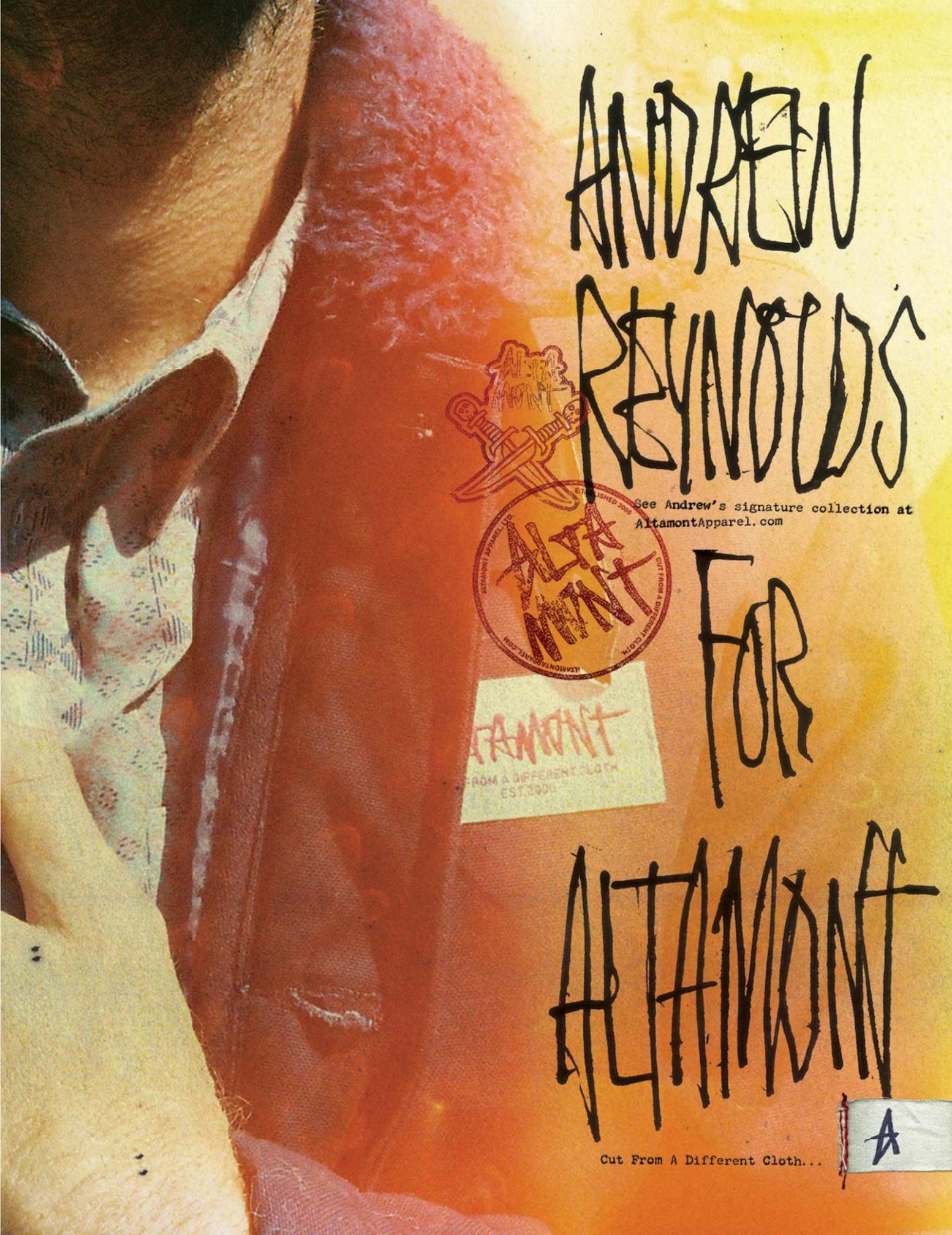
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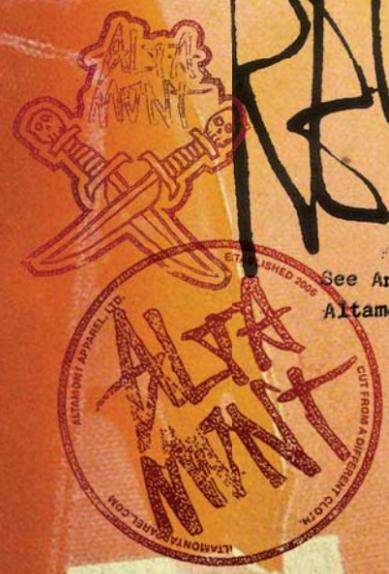
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BAL BLANC, Soirée de clôture Monumenta 2012 - Daniel Buren, Paris, Daniel Buren, « Excentrique(s), travail in situ », 2012, 380 000 m3. Detail. © Daniel Buren, ADAGP, Paris. Photo: Pierre Emmanuel Bastoin

Bal Blanc - Grand Palais, Paris | June 21, 2012

The Creators Project and WeLoveArt brought together **Caribou**, **Four Tet**, **Jamie xx**, and **1024architecture** for an epic performance alongside Daniel Buren's *Excentrique(s)* installation.

Watch the video at <http://www.thecreatorsproject.com/balblanc>.

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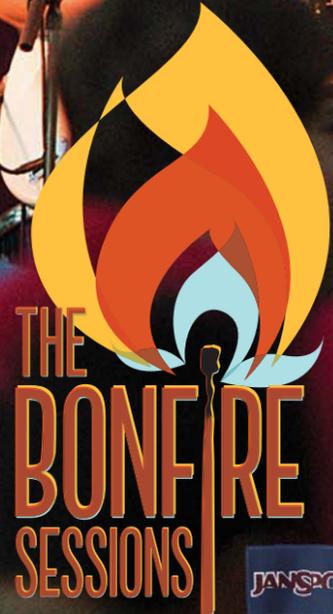
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Ahmed Salem, standing next to his Crocodile Morocco sculpture, is a commander of the Polisario Front, a rebel movement fighting for Western Sahara's independence from Morocco. When he's not patrolling the desert or hunting down al Qaeda members, Ahmed enjoys making political art from the debris of explosives. Photo by Karlos Zurutuza

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Cover by Jim Mangan

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Ahmed is also the author of several murals across Western Sahara, like this one (the graffiti translates to "Welcome to the fifth region" and "The homeland of the martyrs"). Like many in the former Spanish territory of Western Sahara, he studied in Cuba and speaks Spanish like a proper "Cubaraui." Photo by Karlos Zurutuza

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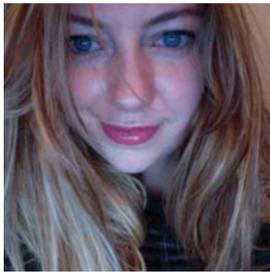
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EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



KATE CARRAWAY

Kate Carraway writes the weekly Girl News column for VICE.com, and we think it's so great that we're giving her another, completely separate monthly column in the magazine: Li'l Thinks. Kate also writes a column for Canada's *National Post*, a weekly column for the *Grid* in Toronto, and endless freelance stuff. She likes dogs, twist cones, money, lemons, maximal minimalism, outer space-themed anything, manners, private tattoos, errands, freedom, milk glass, EXTREME REALNESS, boyfriends, middle names ("Andrea"), boats, stoner comedies, hotels, positive stress, CANDY, literalism, long hair, salt, rage, mint, SWIMMING, ugly guys, apologies, French stuff, cozy anything, cunty heels, and working.

See LI'L THINKS, page 126



ROB FISCHER

Rob Fischer was raised in New Hampshire and spent time flitting about the big cities of the West Coast, Latin America, and Europe before (at least for now) settling down in Brooklyn. His stories for publications like *GQ* and the *American Prospect* have covered an exotic smorgasbord of crucial topics that affect all of us, including the Guantanamo Bay detention center, food stamp fraud, and internet piracy. He also once embarked on a crusade to eliminate the adjective *Kafkaesque* altogether because he hates that word with all of his being. For this issue he investigated the horrors of the bath salts epidemic that has gripped hold of Roanoke, Virginia.

See BATH SALTS IN THE WOUND, page 116



SIMONE LUECK

The aesthetic of Los Angeles-based photographer Simone Lueck largely relies on spelunking the cavernous void of old Hollywood, cultural iconography, and faded glamour. Her first book, *Cuba TV* (released last year by Mark Batty), is entirely made up of photographs of television sets in Havana living rooms. For her latest project, *The Once and Future Queens*, Simone shot movie-star portraits of mature but foxy ladies who answered a Craigslist ad she posted. After seeing her work, which at this point has been exhibited at galleries all over the world, we knew there was no one better suited to shoot the Nailympics competition held in Long Beach, California, in late June.

See NAILED IT, page 52



MATHEUS CHIARATTI

Matheus Chiaratti wound up working at our Brazil office after sending multiple emails in which he basically begged for a job. This never works and if you want a job here, please don't send us any of these pathetic emails... unless you're exactly like Matheus, which is like a one in a million chance that he already fulfilled. Even though he's since moved on to another day job, we like him so much we call him up occasionally asking things like, "Hey, want to photograph women who got their scalps torn off by propellers?" and "Can you accompany an American writer to a factory in the middle of the Amazon where they make premium fetish latex?" He always says yes. What a guy.

See SCALPS AHOY, page 42, and TUCK IT ALL IN THERE, page 108



GLYNIS SELINA ARBAN

Glynis Selina Arban loves two things: style (her grandmother was a fashion model in 1940s New York) and medieval literature (which she holds a degree in). Even though tons of bozo critics and shmuckface photographers frequently misuse these descriptors, in Glynis's case it is totally appropriate to say that her obsessions inform the whimsical and romantic nature of her work. She puts her talents to good use while shooting for magazines like *Vogue* and *Nylon*, and so we finally got with the program and gave her free reign on a fashion shoot in which we blasted models with a shitload of sparkly metal paper. At the end of the shoot, the studio looked the the morning after a Pride parade.

See GLITTER BOMBED, page 70



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STRENGTH IN COLORS.

Models shown include: DW6900CB-4, DW6900NB-7, DW6900CS-1, G8900A-1, G8900A-7, GA110GB-1A, GA100B-4A, GA150A-2A, GA110SN-3A.

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SOME SERIOUS THOUGHT WAS PUT INTO THIS RETARDED DOLL

In May, a very special doll began showing up in stores in Gothenburg, Sweden. According to the package, it was supposed to have cerebral palsy. "The retard doll GIL. Treat her like a real retard!" the label read, while the Facebook page for the doll added, "She doesn't swear, have sex, drink booze, or poop. So much better than a real retard."



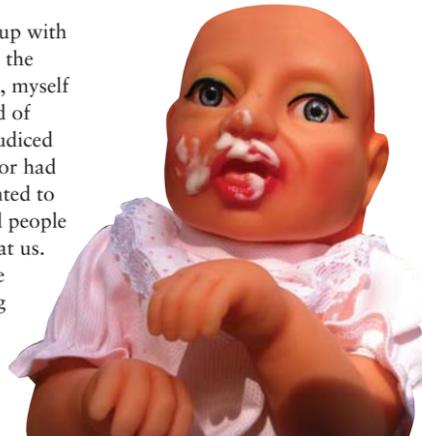
BY MILÈNE LARSSON

Images of the doll went viral in Sweden, and the media wondered: Was it some kind of horribly misguided joke by a Swedish shock comic? An openly anti-handicapped-person campaign?

Turns out the doll was created by the Gothenburg Cooperative for Independent Living (GIL), a group that provides assistance to disabled people as a way to draw attention to... um, well, I'm still not quite sure. But in an attempt to clear things up, we called GIL spokesman Anders Westgerd (who happens to be wheelchair-bound himself). PS: We have no idea why GIL decided to send us this particular photo, but we promise that white creamy stuff on the doll's face is just ice cream, not cum. Thank fucking God...

VICE: OK, why do this? Why make this doll? I want answers.

Anders Westgerd: We came up with the concept for GIL because the members of our cooperative, myself included, were sick and tired of people treating us with prejudiced niceness, as if we were kids or had an inferior intellect. We wanted to do something that provoked people to think about how they treat us. I am sick and tired of people talking over my head, saying stuff like, "Should he really be drinking when he's in a wheelchair?"



Are you happy with how the doll has been received? Hasn't it caused some confusion?

I've been interviewed by most mainstream media in Sweden and even by the BBC, which is brilliant. We wanted to cause a stir, that's why we made the retard doll.

Are people pissed off with you for making jokes about the handicapped?

I don't consider the GIL doll a joke at all. It is a campaign to raise awareness about how wheelchair-bound people wish to be treated like everyone else, to start a discussion.

How many dolls have you sold?

I don't have exact numbers but we've made 300 of them and the interest is so big we might have to make more. If you want to buy one you can just email us.



ART DURING WARTIME



BY JENNY GUSTAFSSON

Photo by Karim Mostafa

On the waterfront in central Benghazi, Libya, sits one of the city's grandest houses—a sprawling structure first owned by the Italian colonialists, then King Idris, then Muammar Gaddafi, and now, unofficially, the former rebels who currently occupy it. But the old house is nothing compared to the dozens of sculptures in front of it: rusty configurations, large enough to climb upon, resembling humans, animals, and insects, constructed from leftover wreckage from last year's revolution.

The sculptor, Ali al-Wakwak, a Benghazi native, started creating his debris sculptures only a few months into the revolution. "I began in May," he said, "when things were very intense. There was a need for expression. And plenty of material everywhere." Ali gathered what he could find from the battlefield: chunks of iron, tossed weapons, old military vehicles. He then moved his studio to the mansion in Benghazi, where he began creating sculptures that told the story of the former regime and the struggle that toppled it.

"There's a big dinosaur at the entrance which represents Gaddafi," he said. "Just like the dinosaurs, he's now extinct." He proudly showed me a figure with a skirt made up of hundreds of empty bullet shells. "She signifies the strength of Libyan women. They played a huge role in the revolution, that's why I made her so tall." In the distance stood a giant ant, made from rifles and a corroded military jeep. "It's a symbol of the Libyan people," he said. "Gaddafi called us insects, so I said: 'OK, we're ants—but we're ants!'"

Gardening, Bulgaria Style



BY BLAGOVEST BLAGOEV



On September 27, 2005, Zdravko Donev, a contractor from Bourgas, Bulgaria, woke up to discover seven pickaxes stuck in his Audi. It could have been the work of some local drunken degenerates, or the many people who complained that Zdravko had defrauded them, or the drug lord whose wife Zdravko was reportedly fucking on the side. Whatever the case, the incident was the first recorded case of a trend now sweeping the nation:

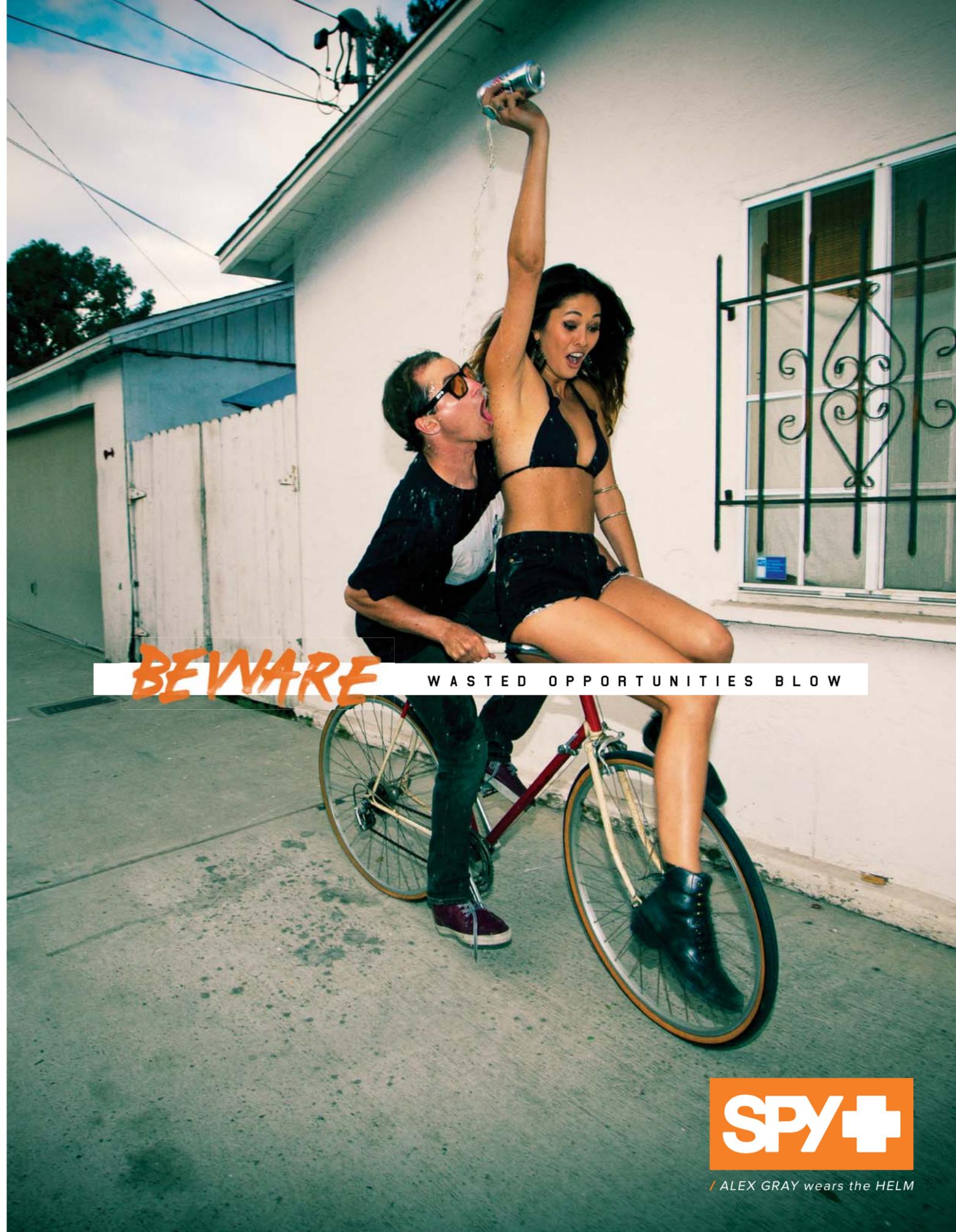
People puncturing cars with heavy-duty hardware.

Forty of the 50 cases of tool-on-car crime have occurred in Bourgas, but the phenomenon has also spread to Sliven, where in 2009 some goons swung some hoes into their rivals' rides, and Varna, where on June 10 a Mercedes burst into flames after a

pair of pickaxes were shoved into the hood and caused a circuit to short. Most of the victims have pissed off organized crime in some way, such as Nedko Nedev, a bureaucrat who found an ax stuck in the roof of his car after informing prosecutors about cases of illegal logging.

Criminologists claim that the number and type of the tools used are symbolic. For example, when the purpose is to threaten someone who owes money, the number of tools lodged into a vehicle often represents the amount of cash he owes, and whether the instruments are old or new represents the recentness of the debt. Sometimes, if a target dares to dislodge the tools, they are replaced with new ones. The owner of a Mercedes in Gabravo that was attacked removed the tools stuck in his front and back hoods, only to have a fresh batch of axes stuck in his car the next morning. Talk about ax-idents (rimshot).

Doll photo courtesy of the Gothenburg Cooperative for Independent Living; car photo courtesy of the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior



BEWARE WASTED OPPORTUNITIES BLOW

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/ ALEX GRAY wears the HELM

THIS MACHINE MAKES ORGASMS

Women who suffer from anorgasmia are victims of the most terrible non-life-threatening condition imaginable: They are unable to achieve orgasm. Ever. Not even with a vibrator, a bottle of wine, and a DVD of The Notebook. Fortunately, Prague's Alternative Science Research Group has been working to solve this problem for the past seven years and they might have come up with a way to thaw even the most frigid of loins.



BY PAVEL ČEJKA
Photo by Petr Kopal



Their device, the Multistim, looks complicated and vaguely threatening, but if you hook your vibrator up to it, it transforms into a super vibrator that has the potential to make women with anorgasmia quiver like Mexican jumping beans being held by an epileptic. We asked Tomas Suchan, one of the minds behind the Multistim, to explain how his invention works.

VICE: So, let's say I'm a lady who wants to use the Multistim to have some mind-melting orgasms. How do I operate it?

Tomas Suchan: Well, you can connect a few appendages to it, including the standard vibrator, and the device will create vibrations specifically designed for your body. Based on our calculations and experiments we determined

the ideal vibrations that affect each person. So you can set the unit to, for example, a mode where you will bring a woman to the brink of an orgasm three times, turn off the stimulation, and then make her come five times in a row.

Whoa. I know different women like different sensations though. Can you customize the vibrations?

A person can create their own profile and record the progress of their past stimulations. Let's say that you record five parts of the stimulation you like; based on that, the unit can generate a sixth one tailored to you.

What else can it do?

The unit supports Bluetooth. There is also a special client developed for computers, so yes, you can control the unit over the internet from 1,200 miles away and stimulate your partner. You can even take the unit outdoors. It has a battery life of about 40 hours. You can also charge it through a solar panel.

Holy shit. How much does it cost?

The unit is going to be sold for something like 1,000 euros. And from the profits we want to gain more funds for anorgasmia research.

Dear Mexican Cartels: Don't Fuck with the Angels



BY BERNARDO LOYOLA
Photo by Luis Hinojos

Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, has become known as the "murder capital of the world" thanks to the seemingly endless string of drug-cartel-related killings, and the law-abiding portion of the population is ready to try almost anything to stop the violence. For the past two and a half years, a group of teenagers calling themselves the "Messenger Angels" have been taking to the streets covered in silver paint and glitter, wearing thick white robes and huge feathered wings, and holding hand-painted signs that address the cops, the cartels, and the worst of the capos. "Zetas, ask forgiveness," one sign read. "Cop-killers. Enough! Sincerely, Jesus Christ," read another.

The Messengers belong to a small

Christian church called Psalm 100 and are led by Carlos Mayorga, who is both a pastor and a correspondent for Milenio TV. They stand out for their fearlessness—not many people have the balls to call out the Zetas in public—and for their stark, eerie appearance.

I met the Messengers at a protest on a hot summer day outside a municipal police headquarters. One of them, named Luis, was holding a sign asking the notorious drug lord Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán to repent. He told me that some of the angels were people who were going down the "wrong path" but have become good people. Can a person who has committed as many sins as El Chapo be forgiven and find a place in heaven? "Yes, if he wanted

to repent from all his evil, he could reach forgiveness," Luis replied. "Perhaps he would not receive forgiveness on earth, but he could receive God's forgiveness. And that is what's most important."

I asked Carlos, who also attended the protest, if they were afraid of retribution for decrying powerful figures in public. "We have decided to speak to them in a direct way, and we are perfectly aware of the risk," he said. "We have been victims of some aggression by the police. I have been detained. On one occasion, when we went to protest at the municipal prison, they would not let us out of the parking lot. We're afraid, but we trust God and we believe we are making a difference with what we are doing."



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VINCENT SKOGLUND
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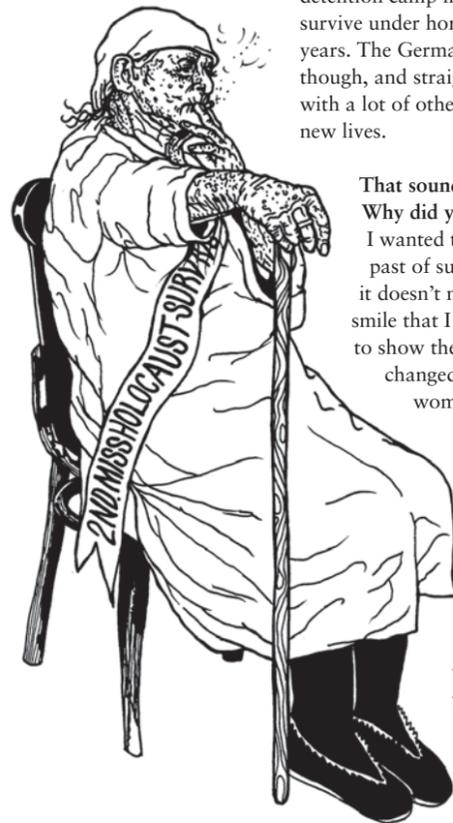
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HERE SHE IS, MISS HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR 2012

Everyone loves Holocaust survivors and beauty pageants, so why hasn't someone combined the two? That was the exact thought of Israeli charity Yad Ezer L'Haver ("Helping Hand"), which in late June held a competition in Haifa to crown a Miss Holocaust Survivor 2012. Organizers cheerily hailed the event as a celebration of life; just about everyone else denounced it as offensive, misguided, and downright creepy.



BY JAMIE CLIFTON
Illustration by Daniel David Freeman



That said, out of the 300 women who applied, the 14 finalists who made the cut all looked ecstatic in their sashes and tiaras. This year's Holocaust Queen was 79-year-old Hava Hershkovitz, whom I spoke with a couple days after her big win.

VICE: Hi, Hava. Congratulations on being crowned Miss Holocaust Survivor 2012!
Hava Hershkovitz: Thank you, my dear. I'm still very excited and happy about it—it's such a good feeling.

How did the judges determine the winner?
We had to walk around on stage, and we got points for things like how we presented ourselves, our smiles, and the feelings we conveyed while we walked around in our dresses. We also had to tell our personal story: where we were born, where we were during the war, and what had happened to our families.

What's your story?
I was born in Romania in 1933, banished from my home in 1941, and sent to a Soviet Union detention camp in Transnistria, where I had to survive under horrendous conditions for three years. The Germans closed the camp in 1944, though, and straight after that I moved to Israel with a lot of other young people to start our new lives.

That sounds like a winning story to me. Why did you enter?

I wanted to show that I've put that past of suffering behind me, and that it doesn't need to affect my future. The smile that I smiled was for the Germans, to show the world that things have changed. I hope that all men and women will now start to look at Holocaust survivors in a new light, and see that we are happy people.

What do you have to say to people who thought the pageant was offensive?

I don't think that anybody who wasn't there has the right to say negative things. All the other survivors and I have suffered enough, and it's not anyone else's business to remark on it.

How to Punch Out a Paparazzo



BY BRIAN MOYLAN
Illustration by Nick Gazin

On June 19, Hollywood bloviator Alec Baldwin was the latest in the long line of celebrity dicks to punch a paparazzo when he socked a New York *Daily News* photographer in front of City Hall after getting his marriage license (getting married makes Baldwin angry, I guess). Anyway, point is that socking a pap isn't that hard. You too can be immortalized for punching some guy trying to take a photo of you, just like Sean Penn, Kanye West, Quentin Tarantino, and Chris Martin, by following these five easy steps:

GET FAMOUS

First, you need photographers to follow you around. Sure you could go out there and get an acting or music career, or start wearing silly getups like Lady Gaga, but that will take years! The easier option is to become infamous by committing a few awful crimes. Think about the swarms around Charles Manson or Bernie Madoff. But it's hard to punch when your hands are cuffed, so this method only works for those who can run very fast and hide very well.

YELL A LOT

Now that you're famous, you're like the one girl in a bukkake video, and the photographers are a bunch of dicks competing to spray the money shot on your face. If you're gonna punch one out, make sure they all know it's coming by screaming and cussing. Gather a crowd. It doesn't count if no one takes a picture.

PUNCH

Do we really have to teach you how to do this, you fucking pansy? You know all about making a nice tight fist, don't you? Just send it in the general vicinity of someone's face at a relatively high speed, and you're set. Also, throw your body weight into it if you want to break a nose.

DON'T HURT THE CAMERA

You're supposed to be pissed at the paparazzi, not the AV equipment! Go ahead and break some guy's ocular cavity, but don't wreck a pricey Nikon. That's just wasteful. If anything, steal it and pawn it for drugs because famous people usually take a lot of them. Also, he could sue you for lost wages if you take away his moneymaker, which is bad news on many levels.

CAN THE INDIGNATION

Here is where the celebs get into trouble, by railing against the indignity and injustice of the photo-clicking borg who follows them around. Guess what? The general public loves paparazzi pictures. If they didn't they wouldn't buy gossip rags and click on "articles" that are just photos of Angelina taking out the trash. Would you say you're so sick of Christmas that you KO'd Santa?

No. Don't try to make your punch into some great statement about media and privacy, just say, "Yeah, he pissed me off and I punched him because he's a fuckface." Not only is it true, it's pretty badass. Baldwin isn't quite as badass, and denied he punched the photographer. Dude, it's OK. You like hitting guys. Own it.



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Mark Welsh photo.

SCALPS AHOY

Shoddy Amazon Boats Will Pull Your Face Off

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY MATHEUS CHIARATTI



Dangerous, poorly constructed motorboats are one of the most popular modes of transportation along the waterways of the poverty-stricken Brazilian Amazon. Locals piece them together with whatever mechanical and structural crap is readily available, sacrificing safety for convenience. If someone with long hair mistakenly sits too close to these uncovered propellers, they can mangle or even kill the unlucky passenger in an instant.

If the victim manages to survive the incident, he or she will most likely suffer life-changing deformities, such as the loss of ears, eyebrows, scalp, and large swaths of skin. Most of these accidents happen to women traveling through the countryside, where treatment is not an option unless they get to an urban center before keeling over. Many scalped women cannot find jobs because of their horrific injuries, and some are ostracized or mistreated by their husbands, family members, and neighbors.

Propeller-inflicted deaths and injuries have become such a serious public health issue in the region that local activists established the *Associação de Mulheres Ribeirinhas e Vítimas de Escalpelamento da Amazônia* (Amazonian Riparian Women Scalping Victims; AMRVEA) to provide aid to scalped women and to educate the public about how important it is to cover engines.

On the weekend of May 11, AMRVEA got together with the local government and the Brazilian Society of Plastic Surgeons to give 87 scalping victims free surgery in Macapá, the capital city of the Amazonian state of Amapá. We went there to talk to the victims and learn their stories.

Maria Trindade Gomes, 43, founder of AMRVEA, fell victim to a propeller when she was seven years old: “My dad transported flour in Pará, and once I went along with him. When I was getting off the boat, I slipped and fell on a board that was covering the engine. My parents abandoned me after one month and 15 days at a hospital in Portel, Pará. A lady took me to the military police hospital in Belém. I was hospitalized for six years because I didn’t have anywhere to go. When I came back to Portel, my father wouldn’t take me back and a Frenchman adopted me. I moved out when I was 18. Now I share my experience in lectures promoted by the association, and I’m very respected everywhere I go. We’ve learned how to make our own wigs. I make a lot of them and wear them according to my mood—one day, I’m wearing a red wig, the next, it’s a blond one, then a black one, a curly one... I really care about my appearance. It takes me about two days to make a wig once the hair is ready. We use human hair that comes from donations because we don’t have money to buy it. Every woman we give a wig to has to bring two heads of hair for us to make them for other victims so that we don’t run out of raw material.”



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Maria do Socorro Damasceno, 30, was also scalped when she was seven: “When you’re a kid, you don’t even know what’s going on. It’s when you grow into a woman that you realize how big the accident was. I saw rejection, prejudice... I moved away from where I lived in the countryside because of that. I thought, *Will I ever date someone with such a deformed face?* Now I have four kids. Everybody’s excited about the surgery.”



Rosinete Rodrigues Serrão, 35, was scalped 15 years ago and now helps other victims regain their self-esteem: “I felt like a monster. I had a boyfriend, and after the accident he grew apart from me. I fell into depression for a year and a half and tried to commit suicide, but then I went back to school and that brought me back to life. Now I’ve found a very special person and I’m seven months pregnant. He’s also the victim of a motor accident.”



Franciane da Silva Campos, 33, was scalped 26 years ago: “I was traveling with my father, sitting between his legs, and I dropped a spoon. When I leaned forward to get it, the left side of my hair just pulled off. I was hospitalized for a year and 40 days. I suffered a lot of discrimination, people staring, trying to bring me down—I don’t accept that. I have a husband, daughter, and even a granddaughter. I’m so excited; I want to kiss this look goodbye. The first thing I’m going to do is find a job, because I still haven’t got one.”



Marcilene Mendes Rodrigues, 24, was ten years old when she was injured while bailing out of a moving boat: “My hair was everything to me. When I looked in the mirror and saw another figure, I would freak out. The doctors will give me eyebrow implants, and if the scalp extension doesn’t cover the whole head, I can at least wear hair extensions. My family, thank God, has never abandoned me. My father sold everything he had to help me.”



Francidalva da Silva Dias, 27, has an eight-year-old daughter, Patrícia (above), who fell off her lap on a boat while harvesting acai berries in 2009: “I felt such a huge amount of desperation. I’ve never seen anything like that in my life. At the ER, Patrícia asked me if I was going to put her hair back, and I said no, so she said it was my fault, that I let her fall on the motor. She gets upset about prejudice in school. The other day a boy pulled her wig off and she came home crying. I hope her ear can be reconstructed. She wants to rebuild her life. She’ll feel happier, and so will I.”



Jaqueline Dias Magalhães, 17, was scalped in 2005: “I was harvesting *taperebá* [a kind of fruit] and moved to the stern. The motor was not covered and my hair got stuck. It ripped absolutely everything off. At the beginning I didn’t feel anything, but then the pain got stronger, I felt dizzy; my head—everything—went numb. I want to graduate from medical school. It’s hard, but I’ll do it.” *VCE*

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Kurdish fans came out in full force to support the home team.

WHO NEEDS FIFA?

International Soccer Outcasts Face Off in Kurdistan

BY MIGUEL PAZCABRALES

PHOTOS BY SAFIN HAMID/METROGRAPHY

This summer most of the developed world excitedly watched Euro 2012 and qualifying matches for the World Cup in the comfort of air conditioning, guzzling pints and releasing beer farts into couch cushions. But in Darfur, Sri Lanka, Zanzibar, Western Sahara, Northern Cyprus, the Provence region of France, and a handful of other places, all eyes were on Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, where the fifth VIVA World Cup was held in June.

The event is a biennial soccer tournament organized by the Non-FIFA board (better known as the NF Board) and the top competition for teams not recognized by the international soccer establishment. Twenty-seven of the NF Board's members hail from autonomous countries, but the majority represent stateless nations.

The VIVA Cup, like many international tournaments, is ostensibly about unity, peace, and goodwill, but the athletes are also enormously proud to represent their micronations and regions. And while everyone can agree that good feelings are nice, winning is much better.

Impressively, Darfur's team of refugees qualified to compete in the tournament (and though they lost their first two games by a combined score of 33-0, they did score a goal against Western Sahara). In the final, Kurdistan beat Northern Cyprus 2-1.

A month after the games concluded, I spoke with Muhammed Askari, a die-hard Kurdish fan, and Mark Hodson, the head coach of Darfur United, to see how they felt about the games, soccer, and national pride.

Muhammed Askari is a 26-year-old journalist from south Kurdistan.

VICE: Were you excited when Kurdistan was named cup host?

Muhammed Askari: Of course! I think every Kurd was psyched to host the cup and to welcome the visiting nations. There were nine teams this year, more than ever before. Most were from Europe, but since word went out that we'd be hosting, we knew we had to win, especially since we lost to Padania in 2010.

What was the atmosphere like at the games?

All the Kurds went wild. To hear our own team sing our anthem, wear our uniform with the flag on it and everything... it's every Kurd's dream. I personally don't



A player for Kurdistan shoots against Darfur United.

identify myself as an Iraqi and I think a lot of Kurds abroad—we're in four countries in the Middle East—feel the same thing. It's kind of a bummer.

Do you think this is the beginning of a more internationally recognized Kurdistan?

It's the beginning of something big for Kurdistan and for the soccer team. Myself, I'd like to think FIFA will take this as a chance to welcome Kurdistan into international play, in the same way Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland have been.

That seems totally reasonable.

Yeah, Kurdistan is different from Iraq. It's trees, rocks, nature; Iraq's all desert. We're happy to have hosted the tournament—we love visitors and tourists. Kurdistan has been a self-sufficient region for a couple decades now; we've got our own government and security forces. Unlike our Muslim neighbors, we don't have a specific religion. We're very open.

The way politics work out on the field is kind of odd—some players on the Kurdish team also play for Iraq, right?

Well, Halgurd Mulla Mohammed, who I think was the best player in the tournament, also played for the Iraqi national team. It's the same with Khalid Mushir. But I feel like they're more psyched to represent Kurdistan than Iraq, and the same goes for the rest of the team. They played with passion, since

they knew they wouldn't have another chance to represent their country at home. They made the home fans happy.

Kurdistan, 2012 VIVA World Cup champions. Nice ring to it, huh?

Thank you, thank you. It was unreal. We weren't paying attention to the Euro and World Cup qualifying matches going on at the same time, just these finals. Honestly, going in, most Kurds were convinced that we'd beat Northern Cyprus. But it was closer than we thought. Still, we had the biggest balls, and won it all.

What's next?

I think we're ready to take on bigger teams, like Mexico and shit. We have guys in Europe on some junior teams in Sweden and the Netherlands. I think FIFA has to step up and let Kurdistan join as an independent team out of Iraq. Though, to be honest, a lot depends on the soccer federation in Iraq and on the politics of the international soccer community.

Mark Hodson is a British soccer coach living in California who coached the Darfur United team.

How'd you end up with this gig?

Mark Hodson: I grew up in England, near Manchester, so I've always been into soccer. I was in California on a coach-exchange



A traditional Kurdish dance served as the opening-ceremony entertainment.

program with the MLS and met Gabriel Stauring. He's a cofounder of i-ACT, the NGO in charge of the whole project. I train his kids at my soccer school, and, long story short, that's how I got the Darfur coaching gig.

Did you think twice about taking the job?

At first I was really excited at the thought of traveling all over, but I did eventually get to thinking about the danger there—Darfur, Iraq, refugee camps, you know? I was a bit scared, especially since I had a business in California and my family, who I'd be away from for a while. But in the end, I said yes and I don't regret it.

I'm guessing it was probably pretty tough getting to the refugee camp.

Yep. We went to Paris, then Chad, where we had to wait two weeks for our transit permits to be approved. After those two weeks it was another flight to the camp, Djabal, where we'd be working. It was in the middle of nowhere; the runway was dirt and the airport was this small hut.

What was your strategy for building the team?

It wasn't easy, that's the truth. Our plan was to bring in 60 players from the 12 camps east of Chad. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) helped fly in the five best guys from each camp, and they set them up with tents once they got to Djabal, too.

Were there problems getting everyone on the same page, soccerwise?

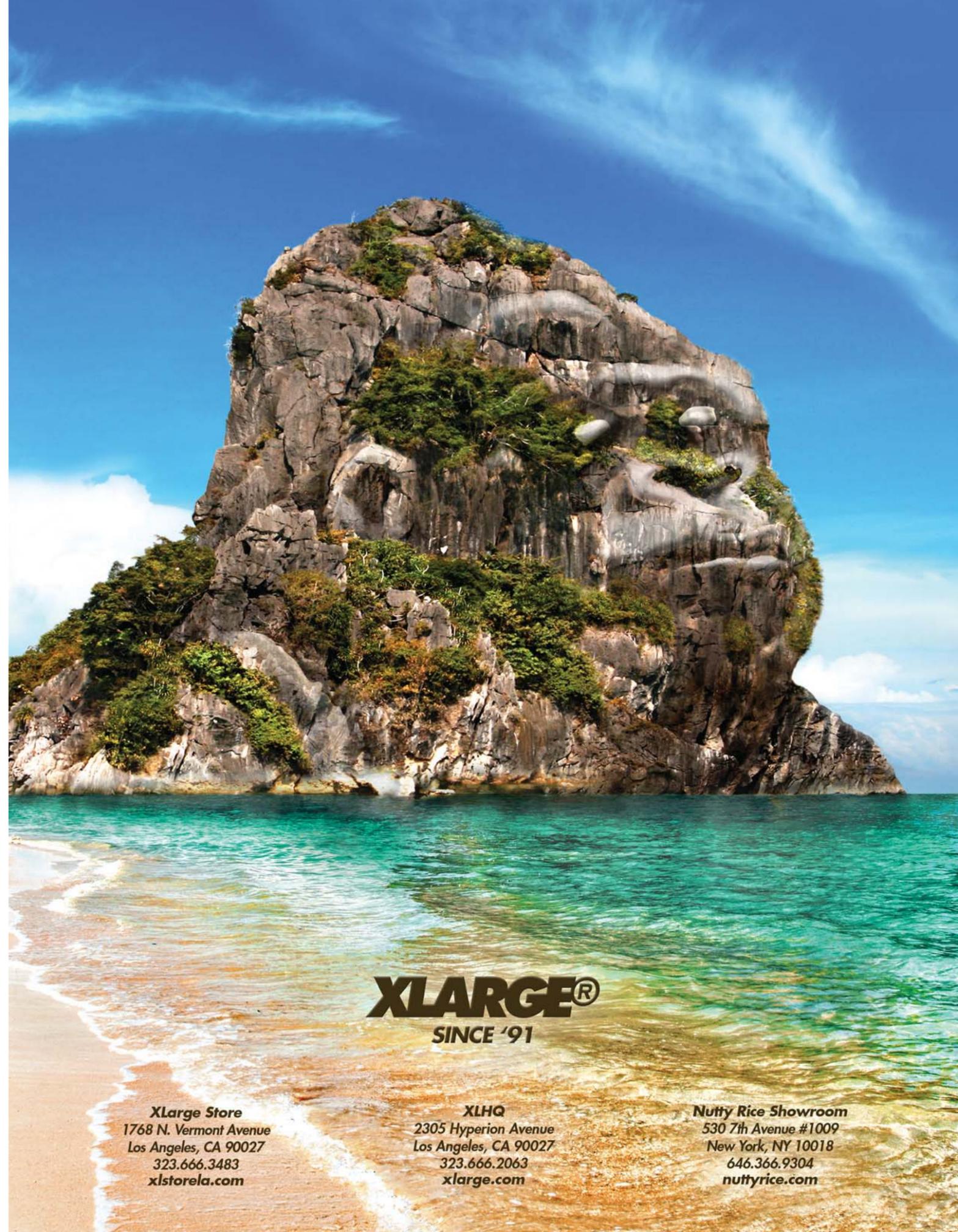
Well, think about how important just talking is in sports, and then consider that there were communication issues not only between the coaches and the players but between the players themselves. The refugees in Darfur are from a bunch of different tribes, and they don't all get along with each other.

How did you facilitate team bonding? How did you get them to work together?

The first night, the UNHCR and our staff had the idea to get everyone together and have them hang out in each other's tents. One of the camps didn't want to take part. We basically told them if they didn't get with the program, they wouldn't have the chance to play. It helped create some unity within the team, I think.

How did you whittle your selections down? I imagine it wasn't purely based on skill.

I'd tell the guys, "You're here for the team, not for yourselves." We began with 60 players and let them play for a couple days, but we also paid attention to how they interacted, how they got along on and off the pitch. But you know, when we picked the final 15, we chose one guy on the basis of his leadership, how he got along with everybody, how he inspired his teammates.



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A fan of the Tamil Eelam team holds up the flag of the Tamil Tigers, the Sri Lankan separatist group.

He was a real uniter—he wasn't even the best player or anything. We definitely didn't go off only soccer skills when we picked the team.

I can only imagine the joy among the guys who made the team and got to represent Darfur.

And to have these experiences! For many of these guys, it wasn't just the first time they played soccer on grass—a lot of them hadn't even worn shoes before. We had to teach them the rules; since most Africans don't have regulated fields, the ball never goes out of bounds, and play doesn't stop. So it was a huge experience for them, to play internationally and to learn the international game.

Were fans able to follow the games closely?

Well, it's tough. There's no internet in Darfur, or there's not a very good connection. We'd tell some political and community leaders whether we'd won or not, and they'd spread the word. But it's amazing, it didn't really matter whether we won or not; it was more that guys from the camps were playing soccer internationally and representing Darfur as a nation.

I'm sure it did wonders for national unity.

On a massive scale. We had thousands of people watching us practice, from day one when we were making our first cuts until

we flew out to Kurdistan. Early in the morning, I'm talking 5 AM, kids surrounded the field, women would be there dressed up, looking all colorful and pretty for the players. It united Darfur, definitely.

A major milestone for sure. What's next?

I'm going back, and we're continuing on what we've done. The 15 guys who made up the team are now back at their refugee camps to train kids between five and 12. We're also working with the Muslim authorities to develop women's soccer in Darfur. We don't have too many resources, but soccer doesn't really need a lot. It's the perfect tool for fostering teamwork and unity, hard work, and motivation. And making guys feel proud, whether they play or not.

How was your operation funded?

That's all i-Act and Gabriel Stauring, its president and cofounder, out of LA. We don't have any big sponsors or corporate sponsors, just friends, family, and nice folks who believe in what we're doing.

It seems like soccer can build some real connections.

Yep. It's a global language. You know, I think about having been in Africa, with 60 unknown players, everyone speaking a different language, and it only took a ball to bring everyone together. *CCB*

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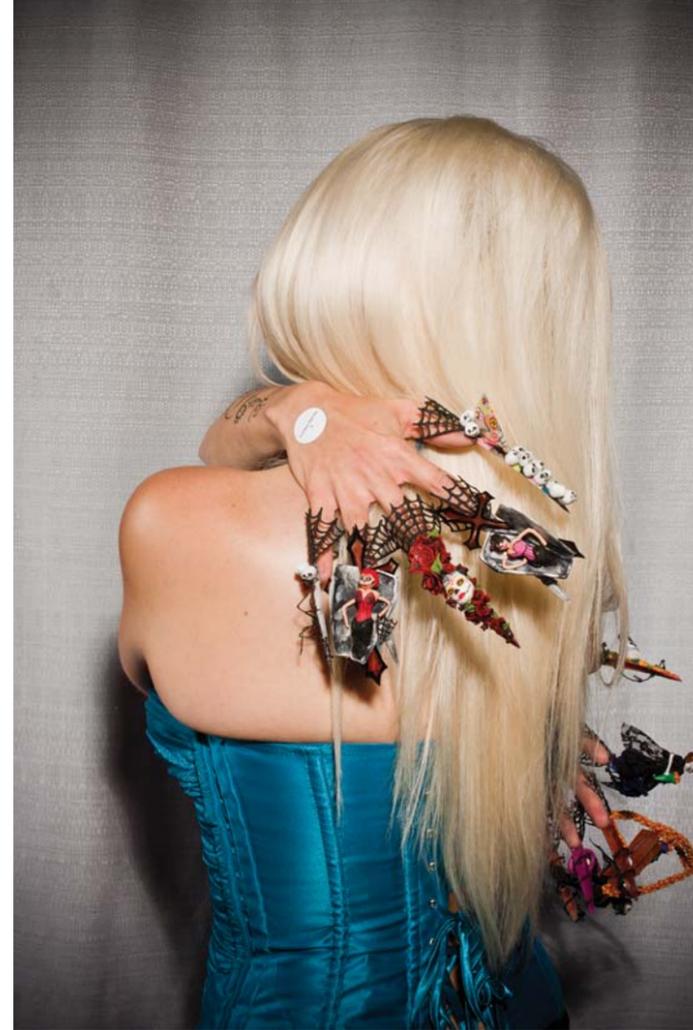
NAILED IT

The Nailympics Turns Cuticles into Beautificles

PHOTOS BY
SIMONE LUECK

Getting your nails done normally involves wasting 30 minutes in front of a hunched-over Asian woman while all of your senses are simultaneously raped by neon lights, noxious chemicals, and boring conversations. But the Nailympics is actually something we would pay to attend. The 11-year-old organization holds competitions in the US and the UK and, in late June, had its most recent event over two days in Long Beach, California.

Judges measured the Nailympians on nail structure, shaping, application, surface smoothness, product control, cuticles, and a bunch of stuff it's probably hopeless for laymen to understand. The results are impractical, beautiful, and a little terrifying. We sent photographer Simone Lueck to check out the competition. And now the only question we have is: How do the models wipe? *VICE*





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Zaire's president, Mobutu Sese Seko (on the right) and Robert Wiener pose for a souvenir photo in Gbadolite, June 1993.

MY LIFE WITH BIG MEN

A Weird Holiday at Mobutu's Jungle Hideaway

BY ROBERT WIENER

Photos courtesy of Robert Wiener

The world has seen tyrants more evil than Zaire's ruler Mobutu Sese Seko, even among Africa's legion of Big Men who snatched power and held it when Europe relinquished its colonial chokehold on the continent. But no despot was quite as colorful. A case could be made for Jean-Bédél Bokassa of the Central African Republic who proclaimed himself emperor in 1977 and enjoyed feasting on the flesh of his enemies. The closest Mobutu ever came to cannibalism was simply downing the occasional beaker of human blood.

Mobutu managed to control Zaire (now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo) for 32 years before being deposed in 1997, and during that time he bled the country dry while enjoying a lifestyle a real emperor might have envied. Once, after flying with Mobutu on his private DC-8 from France to Zaire, I watched with astonishment as he sent the jet immediately back to the Riviera to retrieve a fashion magazine *Madame Mobutu* had forgotten.

In June 1993, CNN's Africa correspondent Gary Striker wanted to interview "Le Maréchal" about what amounted to a civil war in the southeastern part of the country while his army, unpaid for months, pillaged Kinshasa, its capital. I was Gary's producer, but sensing we'd never get the truth from "The Helmsman" (Mobutu had a laundry list of unofficial titles), I had a secret agenda. I wanted Mobutu's hat: that trademark jaunty leopard-skin number he sported everywhere.

As the military began ransacking Kinshasa, Mobutu literally headed for the hills to his native village of Gbadolite, where he'd erected a lavish presidential palace for himself in the heart of the equatorial forest. Of course, getting there—as well as convincing Mobutu to grant an interview—posed herculean challenges, even for Africa.

I'd been in contact with Mobutu's advisors for weeks while we covered other news in Gabon: the second African/African-American Summit in Libreville, the capital, as well as Albert Schweitzer's famed leper colony in Lambaréné. The hospital was still functioning, along with a small museum containing the doctor's fabled organ (with Bach sheet music) and other personal items that belonged to the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Suzanne, the museum's guide, was only a child when Schweitzer ran the place and said Big Al, who believed promptness to be a virtue, savagely beat both girls and boys if they were late for school—a juicy historical tidbit the Nobel Committee obviously overlooked. "Oh, yes," Suzanne insisted, "he slap us VERY hard across zee FACES."

Back in Libreville, I finally received confirmation that Mobutu would be sending a plane to shuttle us to his jungle outpost. We were instructed to be at the airport early the next morning where we waited about 14 hours for a flight

that never arrived. It was yet another WAWA¹ moment. Two days and \$600 in telephone charges later, we were back at the airport... still waiting. After standing around for another 12 hours with our dicks in our hands, a white 727 with Zaire's distinctive red-and-gold torch livery on its tail landed and rolled up the tarmac. Finally, less than ten minutes later, we were airborne.

The luxurious jet was previously owned by Jordan's King Hussein. It had a two-man crew and a stunning Zairian hostess. We were the only passengers. I snuck a peek inside Mobutu's private bedroom and bath but the hostess explained it was "off limits." It was clearly not off limits to her, especially when "le patron" was onboard. Without much prompting she admitted she was proud to service—in every way—the leader of her country.

Steam wafted off the red-clay earth as we landed in Gbadolite. You could actually *smell* Africa, a sensation that never fails to delight me. It was a short drive to Mobutu's jungle palace, where we were quickly ushered into an immense "salon" that seemed more suitable to a European head of state than the leader of an authoritarian African regime. The room was awash with Louis XVI furnishings, Gobelins tapestries, paintings by Renoir and Monet, and, at the far end, a magnificent mahogany bar stocked with fine cognacs, calvados, and assorted spirits. Each bottle was about the size of a Balthazar of champagne. Zaire is renowned for its exceptional sculpture, but nothing in the place resembled anything even remotely African.

I've seen my share of dictators' digs but this one was over the top. There was something very twisted about Mobutu's taste. Nothing he owned even hinted at his African heritage. For all his bluster about the continent's rich history, having thrown off forever the yoke of colonialism, Mobutu made his hometown haven into a simple reflection of his greed. He was the Gordon Gekko of Africa and his bizarre proclivities confirmed it.

A white-gloved butler served drinks while two presidential toadies ran through the program: We would dine later with a visiting minister and some of the Mobutu clan but not with "Le Chef" himself. The interview was scheduled the following day at 10 AM. "His Excellency is at his best in the morning," one of his staff said. "Surely we must understand his fatigue after working all day to solve regrettable problems."

My contact and point man, Monsieur Bruno, jumped in as I rolled my eyes. "Robert, please trust me," he implored, sensing my discomfort. "The interview *will* happen. You have my assurance." I wasn't worried about Bruno's sincerity; he was a standup guy. But I'd been down this road before, held hostage to the whims of other despots who had little use for the concept of time. My mind raced as I anticipated another round of logistical nightmares. I explained

¹ WAWA: West Africa Wins Again. Anyone who has covered Africa will tell you that 90 percent of your time is spent waiting: for visas, transport, permission, appointments, and so on. Reporting is relegated to the other 10 percent.

it was imperative that we return to Gabon by mid-afternoon to make the last flight out to Abidjan. All the president's men insisted there would be no problem—in other words, shut up and enjoy the ride.

Before dinner we watched the evening news, which opened as usual with a musical tribute to “The Guide.” Mobutu's likeness appeared on the screen, his head floating effortlessly through the clouds. Of course, there was no mention of the violence wracking the country. Bruno and the others seemed more interested in the latest soccer results, prompting spirited speculation about Zaire's chances in the upcoming African Cup.

Dinner was served, which made me think of my pal and former CNN correspondent Richard Blystone. He and I once toyed with the idea of writing a handy phrase book for journalists abroad, each expression phonetically translated into numerous languages and dialects. At the top of the list was, “Huum... Tastes like chicken!” It was a phrase I repeated several times that night as mounds of stews and local “delicacies” were ladled onto my plate of gilded-edge presidential porcelain. Gary—who at the time had more experience covering Africa—cunningly informed the butlers he was a “strict vegetarian” and picked away at a small portion of steamed tomatoes and corn while only eating the inside of his tiny baguette. More than once he shot me a look that implied, “Enjoy the rest of your night on the toilet!”

Everything he said with the exception of “I am Mobutu” was total bullshit.

Less than 30 minutes later, I could feel my bowels loosen. Knowing I'd never make it to dessert, I pulled Bruno aside and went outside for a smoke. “There's something I'd like you to do for me,” I whispered. “You said the president is the most generous man you know.” Bruno nodded eagerly. “So... do you think you could get me his hat?”

“His what?” Bruno asked, thinking he'd misunderstood.

“You know, his leopard toque.” Bruno considered this request, one I'm certain he'd never received before, much less from a visiting journalist.

“I'm sure he has more than one and it would mean a lot to me. Whaddaya think?”

“This would be a gift for you?”

“Of course. I'd wear it proudly.”

“OK,” Bruno said. “Let me see. You know he has already sent a present to your bedroom.”

A present? *What could it be*, I wondered. During the Ali-Frazier “Rumble in the Jungle,” Mobutu had dispatched a bevy of Zairian beauties to entertain selected reporters who were covering the fight. But the last thing I wanted was an African hooker. “No... no, it's not that,” Bruno laughed, as if reading my mind. “Something else. But *very* special.”

A while later I retired to my bedroom, which was illuminated by a lamp in the form of a golden palm tree that almost reached the ceiling. It was decorated with cheap, imitation baroque and rococo furnishings, in a style best described as Louis-Farouk. My suitcase had been placed at the foot of the bed. After taking care of business and a quick shower, I donned my *kikoy* and tried to relax. It had been a long day.

The air conditioner hummed softly as I fixed myself a nightcap and grabbed a final smoke. It was then I noticed a videotape atop the TV. The tape didn't have a corresponding box and was labeled by hand with the letters YHBW. I popped it into the

machine and moments later, when the title, *Young, Hot, Black, and Wet!*, appeared on the screen, I realized it was Mobutu's gift to me. In the interest of discretion and good breeding I will forego further details.

As usual I was up at dawn and in need of coffee. (This was long before I traveled with a portable espresso machine.²) After my morning ablutions, I joined Gary and our sound tech, David, at breakfast. Gary, I soon learned, had not been provided with in-room entertainment. David, on the other hand, confessed that he'd stayed up all night watching *YHBW* over and over again until he ran out of Kleenex and toilet paper.

At ten sharp, Bruno appeared to say there would be a brief delay. I reiterated my concerns about making our connecting flight to Abidjan. As usual, Bruno took my consternation in stride and assured me we could count on the president's plane to ferry us onwards. Then, changing the subject, he coyly inquired if I'd enjoyed the film. From the tone of his salacious critique, he considered it a classic!

Knowing there was no such thing as a “brief” delay, I suggested to Bruno that we make use of our downtime by shooting some exteriors of the palace. It was a pretty remarkable piece of engineering, this fortress carved out of the jungle. The spectacular views from the multitiered terraces and fountains dotting the grounds made it easy to envision the estate as sort of a Congolese Camp David where “Le Roi de Zaire” could swim, kick back, and commune with six caged leopards, the pride and joy of his private zoo. A man who clearly abhorred the slightest inconvenience, Mobutu's private airstrip was long enough to handle the supersonic Concorde, which he often chartered for long flights to North America and Asia.

For all its luxury, Gbadolite was also a sanctuary, as remote as Mars from the chaos of Kinshasa. It was not surprising Le Maréchal preferred to use the retreat as his headquarters even during periods of relative stability. And because this was his native village, Mobutu bestowed special favors on the locals, giving them menial jobs as groundskeepers and custodians who maintained the palace and guest quarters. It was common for Mobutu to roll through town in his red Land Cruiser, dispensing wads of newly minted cash to the populace who eagerly cheered his every appearance. Unlike everywhere else in this vast country, Mobutu was viewed as a benevolent savoir. Meanwhile, back in the capital, soldiers, unpaid for months, were on a rampage.

A little past 11 we were back in the “salon” where the change in atmosphere was palpable. Two aides hurriedly appeared, breathlessly announcing, “He's coming.” A moment later Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga (“the all-powerful warrior, who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, goes from conquest to conquest leaving fire in his wake”³) strode into the room. He was dressed casually but smartly in a colorful silk shirt, black trousers, and well-shined shoes... but he was bareheaded. *Shit*, I thought. No goddamn hat!

Le Chef seemed to look through me from behind his large black-framed spectacles as he offered me his beefy hand. While I fastened the microphone to his shirt, Bruno explained this “exclusive” would be seen on CNN around the globe. But Mobutu couldn't give a shit where it was seen or who might be seeing it, dismissing Bruno's obsequious explanation with a

² I recommend the traditional Italian Bialetti Electric (110–230V).

³ The official interpretation of Mobutu's full name has always been debated. Most agree, however, that the conquests referred to were purely sexual.



flick of the wrist that indicated he simply wanted to get down to business. The interview lasted about 35 minutes, and despite Gary's persistence, Mobutu didn't offer any real news. The news was simply getting him.

Mobutu said reports of heavy fighting in the southeast were exaggerated and dismissed the pillaging in Kinshasa as a temporary and unfortunate setback. And while he acknowledged “some” soldiers hadn't been paid for a while, he claimed it was a clerical error that would soon be righted. Several times he reiterated that he had the situation under control and no one need worry because, after all, “Je suis Mobutu!” When Gary pressed him on his nation's abhorrent human rights record, he spouted the usual pap about addressing *all* of Zaire's problems and then lectured us on the geopolitical challenges of running a country larger than Western Europe. Finally, he assured us of his commitment to multiparty democracy and holding free elections as soon as possible.

As expected, Le Maréchal lived up to his reputation. He was charming, witty, and articulate. Anyone unfamiliar with the politics of Zaire could've been forgiven for being impressed by his confident *tour d'horizon*. Of course, everything he said, with the exception of “I am Mobutu,” was total bullshit. It was easy to picture him visiting Capitol Hill, as he did over the years, hoodwinking naive legislators and their appropriation committees. The guy was as smooth as shit through a goose.

Following our sit-down, we headed outside to shoot some B-roll of Mobutu surveying his domain while Bruno conferred

with his colleagues about our return flight. As David packed up the gear, Mobutu explained he was a simple man at heart and it “pained” him to know most of his country was struggling to survive. Little did he realize with the Cold War over his days were numbered. He would no longer be needed by the West to counteract Soviet influence in Africa. Moments later he was gone, retreating to some luxurious nook to take a call on his personal satellite phone, which was always close at hand, carried by an aide.

Bruno asked if I was happy with the interview. I said it was fine but asked about the hat. He shot me a sly smile just as the Big Man returned, accompanied by a butler carrying a silver tray. Upon it rested the Holy Grail.

“I am told you wanted a special souvenir,” Le Maréchal said, grinning like a cat that had swallowed an aviary full of canaries. “With my compliments.” And with that he gave me the leopard toque—one of six he owned, tailored in Deauville.

Later that evening at the bar in Abidjan, happy as clams and fueled by Stoli, Gary and I reviewed our latest adventure and agreed on the valuable lesson it reaffirmed: In journalism, persistence is everything. What's more, if you don't ask, you don't get. *☺*

Robert Wiener has been a journalist more than 40 years, covering virtually every war and revolution on four continents since Vietnam. He is the author of *Live From Baghdad* and coscreenwriter of the eponymous HBO film. Wiener retired as CNN's senior executive producer in December 2001. This, his first contribution to VICE, is also the first installment of his new column, *My Life with Big Men*, which will be appearing monthly on VICE.com.

Robert checks in with headquarters to report “Mission Accomplished!”



The key thing to think about when you're deciding whether to spend your 20s in the city or the sticks is if you'd rather make every night an insane drunken adventure you'll never forget or make everything in your yard an insane drunken art project you'll never actually finish.



Nothing like a couple of heart-attack blasts before you hit the town for Cheap Drink Tuesdays.



Next time some *Adbusters* prat says something like: "Hey, hipster! I've got some news for you... You're not *individual!*" You should say, "Neither were the Wright brothers and they invented the fucking plane."



People (white people) often say that other people (also white) are into throwback looks like flattops and high fades and Living Color jeans because it harkens back to a safer, more naive time in hip-hop before gangsta rap took over. Which is kind of hilarious cause that was the fucking middle of the Crack Wars.



Pawn shops: Where people of all colors, creeds, shapes, and sizes meld together in an inspirational melting pot of hopelessness and despair.

FYF PRESENTS



A SUMMER SERIES OF SHOWS - LIVE FROM THE HOUSE OF VANS BROOKLYN, NY

THE RAPTURE TANLINES 7 SECONDS H2O
KING KHAN & THE SHRINES NICKY DA B BARONESS
WASHED OUT CURSIVE TURBONEGRO TITUS ANDRONICUS



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DON'Ts



I get the same look in my eyes when it's Guinness number one on day four of being hungover for a whole week for the second time in a month.



Bright colors are a great way to draw attention to the parts of your physique you're most proud of and away from things like 40 years of treating the rest of your body like a walking landfill.



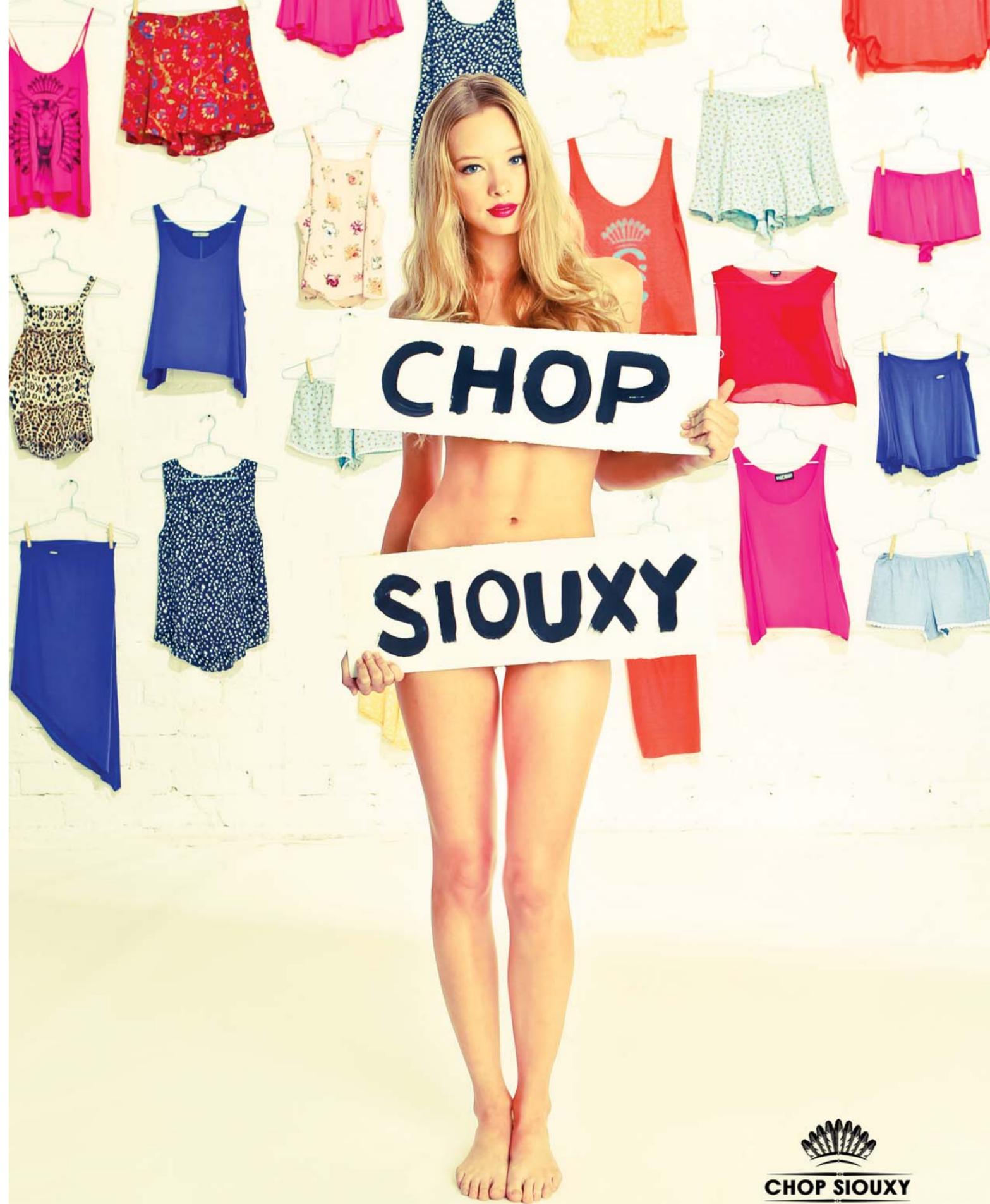
Question for old folks: Did cops always look like your friend's shitty older brother Scott?



SSSTTSSSTGGGGGGGGMMWWMMEEERRREEERRR
QQQQQBABBBBLESLLLEESS



Next time you're moaning about the Boar's Head in your sandwich, spare a thought for the lunchmeat situation in central Siberia.



shop chopsiouxy.com



VISIT US AT POOL



Three of the most important lessons to learn for adulthood are 1) people without guns can't get you in trouble, 2) everybody's become too much of a pussy to confront anyone about anything short of rape, and 3) never fly anywhere in less than a complete, pill-tinged blackout drunk. You can pick up most of this from old episodes of *Ab Fab*.



"What are you doing today, Biff?" "Well, it's so beautiful out, I thought it would be nice to go and whale on some pussies at a national park."



Not sure there was an actual time when most DJs were like this (pregnant multi-gender spacegrapes with extremely obscure freakbeat collections) but we should still go back to that time.



Thing you can't ever pitch to us ever again #123: Guitar music from an unlikely place. #124: Asia so kwazy.



Wait, wait, wait... A nerdy white guy, wearing a pimply black-man coat?! Man, this VICE website cracks me up.

CHASING THE ORDINARY

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POOL TRADESHOW
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DON'Ts



Wow. The Eastern Europe version of *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* is even more depressing than I expected.



At the very least, we should all be trying to steer clear of becoming Cautionary Tale Uncle—the guy who marks every major holiday by asking your dad for money.



I'm about 96% sure this guy is just-joking on the beard front, but the Kramer hair and rectangular starter-glasses still spell C.h.r.i.s.t.i.a.n. i.m.p.r.o.v. c.o.m.i.c.



Could be a Tim & Eric-level comedic supergenius who's pulling it off with a million times more subtlety than the previous guy, could be your run-of-the-mill Greek-American clubgoer who couldn't find his chin protractor in time for Frisky Fridays. Honestly, too scared to say.



I was going to say something like, "Great job with raising Hitler 2021" then I remembered that guy actually got a lot of shit done.

NO,
YOU'RE
WEIRD!



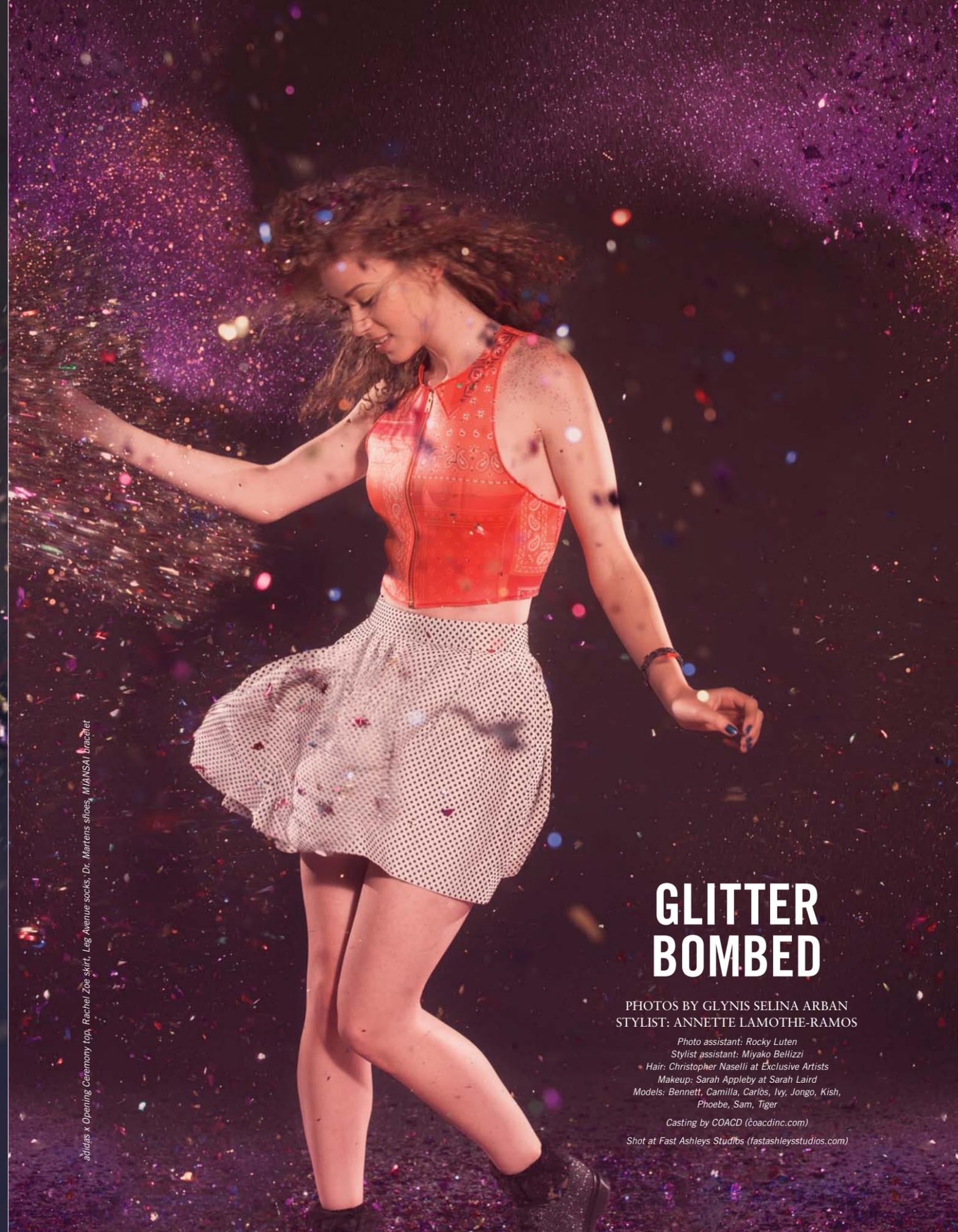
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CALGARY MONTRÉAL TORONTO VANCOUVER QUÉBEC BOSTON CHICAGO LOS ANGELES NEW YORK PORTLAND SAN FRANCISCO SEATTLE WASHINGTON DC
FLUEVOG.COM



Mark McNairy shirt, Miyako Bellizzi necklace



adidas x Opening Ceremony top, Rachel Zoe skirt, Leg Avenue socks, Dr. Martens shoes, MANSAL bracelet

GLITTER BOMBED

PHOTOS BY GLYNIS SELINA ARBAN
STYLIST: ANNETTE LAMOTHE-RAMOS

Photo assistant: Rocky Lutten
Stylist assistant: Miyako Bellizzi
Hair: Christopher Naselli at Exclusive Artists
Makeup: Sarah Appleby at Sarah Laird
Models: Bennett, Camilla, Carlos, Ivy, Jongo, Kish, Phoebe, Sam, Tiger

Casting by COACD (coacdinc.com)
Shot at Fast Ashley's Studios (fastashleysstudios.com)



Original Penguin sweater and shirt, Allamont pants, adidas x Opening Ceremony shoes



adidas Originals jacket, Keds dress



adidas Originals x Jeremy Scott jacket, Zimmermann dress,
Calvin Klein tights, ASOS shoes, Casia G-Shock watch



Christopher Raeburn dress, vintage necklace



Ogilvy & Mather jacket, Calvin Klein tank top, Carhartt WIP pants, ASOS shoes, Miyako Bellizzi necklace, Ray-Ban sunglasses



adidas x Opening Ceremony jacket and shorts, Allamont t-shirt, Nike socks and sneakers



ASOS dress

GHOSTS OF THE JUNGLE

Burma's KNLA Freedom Fighters Burn Down Meth Labs and Kill Genocidal Assholes

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY BRYAN DICKIE

Over the last 63 years, Burma has been carrying out a methodical ethnic cleansing program against the country's minorities, relying on terrifying tactics such as state-sponsored rape and the mass slaughter of civilians. At the eastern edge of the country, along the Thai border, this genocide has turned into a protracted, never-ending battle between the Burmese government and the Karen ethnic group.

After decades of fighting, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) has become the most feared opponent of the Burmese army; some cite it as the most effective guerrilla fighting force active today. It's also one of the few insurgent groups that isn't considered a terrorist organization by the US, possibly because the KNLA is 100 percent antidrug and exceptionally talented at blowing up government-run meth labs in the middle of the jungle (you know, the ones that supply the majority of Asia's methamphetamine).

They usually don't take too kindly to outsiders, especially those with cameras, but somehow I—a curious Canadian photographer—managed to embed with the KNLA's Special Forces division.

It took a lot of work (including the help of a shady mercenary) to arrange an introduction with one of the KNLA's top officers, Colonel Ner Dah Mya. After a tense meeting, the colonel granted me access to the rebel-held territory known as Kawthoolei.

Entering the region is especially nerve-racking because it's an active jungle battlefield littered with mines. According to the Thai Royal Army, over 70 percent of the 1,268-mile border has been seeded with antipersonnel explosives. Realizing that every step you take could be your last is a total mindfuck, but when you're flanked by guys who kill everything that moves for a living and are known as "jungle ghosts," you quickly learn to mimic them and act unfazed.

The cultural suppression of the Karen (among other things, their language isn't taught in government-run schools) angers the KNLA so much that they're willing to take drastic action to protect their way of life. They spend years in malarial jungles far away from their families and face death every day. Despite their extreme and dedicated lifestyle, when they weren't out garroting Burmese death squads, they actually were fun guys to hang out with. In the 14 days I spent with the KNLA, between happy-water (alcohol) binges, jungle offensives, and epic treks, I realized they aren't your stereotypical hedonistic, village-burning, amoral modern guerrilla army. They are something more human. For instance, See Tu is not only an explosives expert but also the resident musical entertainer and historian. He almost shit his pants with excitement when he realized that I was from the same country as his favorite pop star of all time—Shania Twain. *WCS*

OPPOSITE PAGE:
One of the youngest soldiers in the KNLA. An No knows his way around an AK just fine.



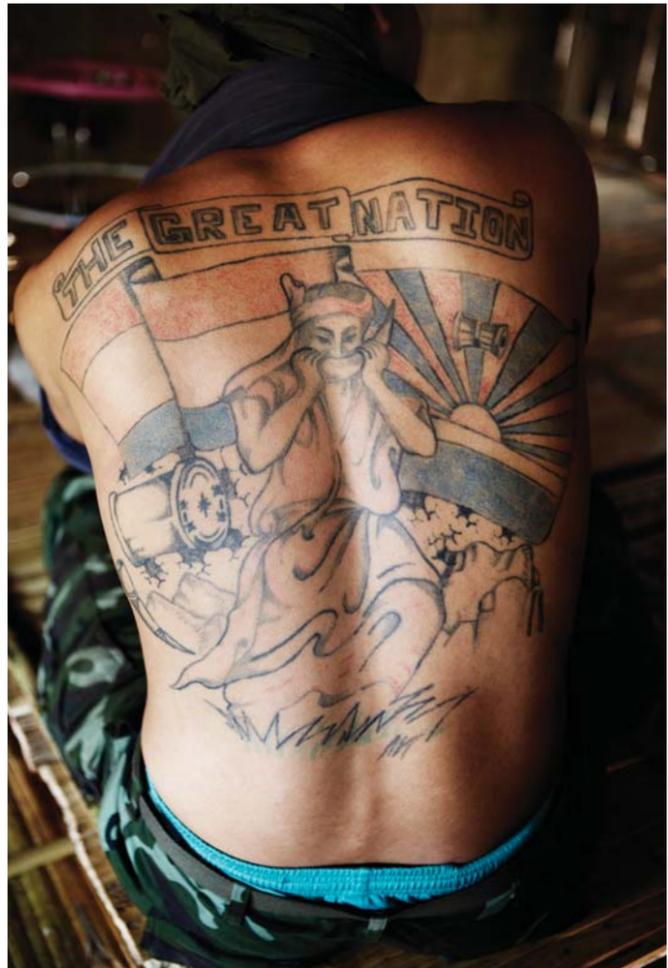
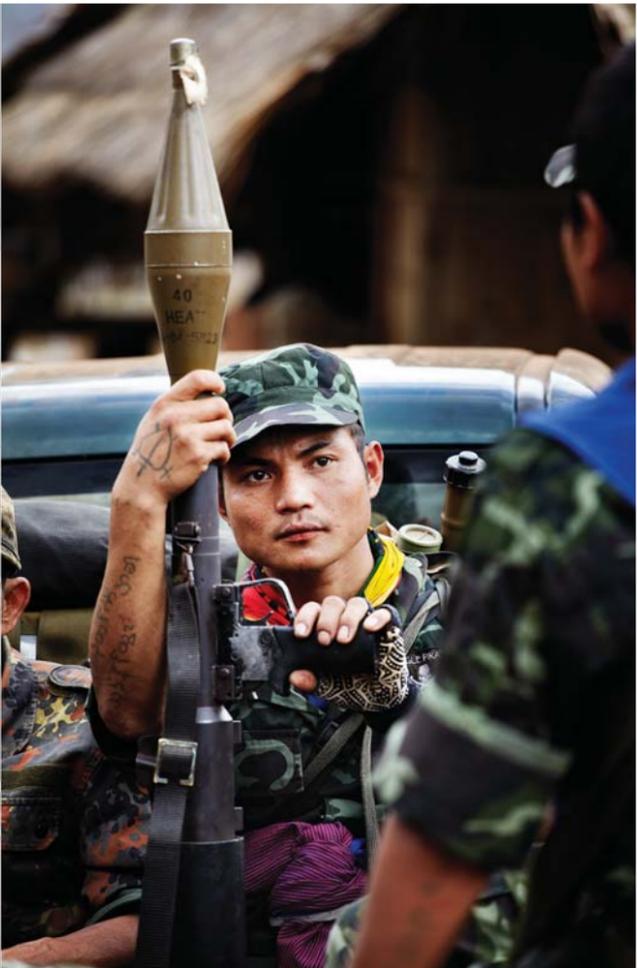
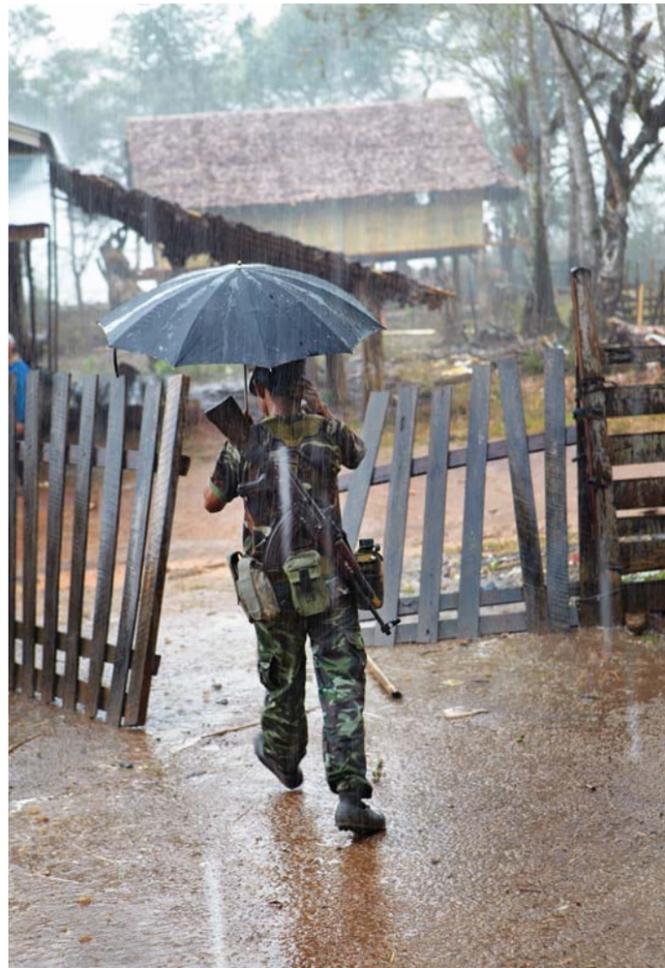


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

Just after entering Karen-held territory, the soldiers cluster together in the bed of a pickup to do a weapons check.

Two young soldiers hang out while waiting for orders to come down the chain of command.

A soldier walks through a downpour as he arrives in the village of Maw Kee.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

A soldier takes a smoke break on a trek to a waterfall that only eight foreigners have seen according to Colonel Ner Dah Mya. Yes, he was that specific.

Lucky, one of the KNLA ghosts, showing off his back piece.

When asked about his bandana, Nah Na said he had no idea who Bob Marley was.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

Two years ago, at the age of 63, Thoo Goo decided to go and fight for his people's freedom.

See Tu and two other ghosts ride on a Land Cruiser during patrol.

Pe Yat, Bryan's personal bodyguard, carries a grenade launcher at all times.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Nah Na sports a set of homemade good-luck Karen face tats.





Herald Porter McElwee, the late *Real Deal* writer, stands above Lawrence Hubbard, the magazine's co-creator and illustrator, while fittingly brandishing a handgun.

THE WILL TO KILL

'Real Deal Magazine' Is the Greatest and Most Violent Comic Book You've Never Seen

BY WILBERT L. COOPER

Archival images courtesy of Lawrence Hubbard

People speak about their discovery of *Real Deal Magazine* in revelatory terms. This is mostly because it contains scenes of black characters perpetrating such extreme violence and political incorrectness that it is capable of searing a new wrinkle into your brain. Only six issues were published from 1989 to 2001, but they were enough to leave an impression in the minds of a certain cross section of artists and readers who prefer unrepentant brutality to superheroes and schlock.

Underneath *Real Deal's* over-the-top tales of “urban terror” lies a painfully raw nerve. In a way, the comic’s seemingly exaggerated violence was a peek inside the illogical lobster-tank psyche of ghetto life and its resulting insanity. A world in which its inhabitants can’t help but pull one another down, which, come to think of it, is a lot like this awful place we call reality.

Real Deal's creators, illustrator Lawrence Hubbard and writer Herald Porter McElwee (H.P.), were drawn

together through a shared frustration with their lives as black men in early-80s LA, where Rodney King-style beatings were as common as the sunset. Fittingly, they met in 1979 while working a minimum-wage stocking and unloading job in the bowels of California Federal Bank. They soon commiserated over their grievances: the pigs, their grim career opportunities, and, most of all, that they grew up a couple of bastards after their fathers walked out on their families.

“That was our bond,” Lawrence said. “We’d sit around and talk about how we wished we’d had a dad in the house. We shared that feeling—that rage and anger. It’s like going through a war. Unless you’ve experienced it, you don’t know what it feels like.”

In 1985, they were still slaving away at California Federal and, through their friendship, found an unexpected channel for their anger. Like many good ideas, *Real Deal* began as a doodle on some scrap paper during a break from their shitty job.

“One day I come down to the basement for lunch and H.P. is drawing stick figures,” Lawrence said. “He had this crazy story with this guy selling oranges on the median and this other guy named G.C. driving down the street. G.C. takes the car and runs right over the guy on the median. Then G.C.’s old lady says, ‘G.C., you sure fucked him up.’ And he turns to her and says, ‘That could be you too, bitch, if you fuck up.’”

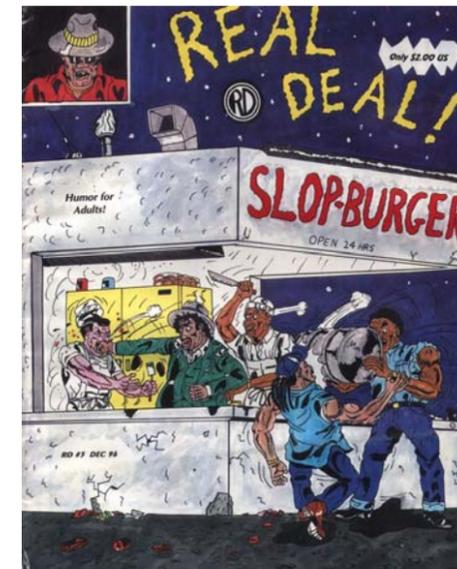
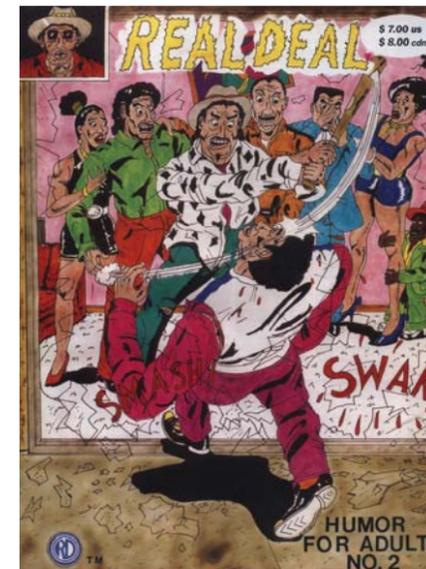
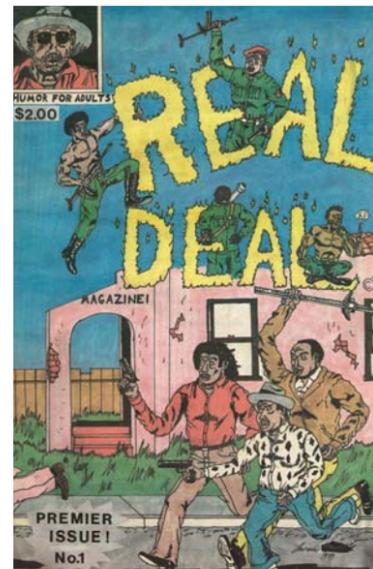
Lawrence burst into bellowing laughter when he described it to me, as I’m sure he did the first time he read H.P.’s story. From then on he took H.P.’s crude sketches and turned them into full-blown comics, defining *Real Deal's* signature look with his bold black ink and perspective angles that are reminiscent of Raymond Pettibon and Gary Panter, even though at the time Lawrence was unaware of their work. He began drawing at three years old, a by-product of finding cheap ways to keep himself busy as the poorest kid in his middle-class neighborhood of Mid-City. When Lawrence was ten, his father abandoned his family. His single mother was unable to afford supplies, so he made do with broken pencils and scraps of paper, sometimes attempting to redraw the militant cartoons he saw in Black Panther literature from the early 70s.

By the time Lawrence was working at California Federal, he’d all but given up on art. It wasn’t until he saw H.P.’s merciless stick figures that Lawrence’s compulsion to draw returned, practically overnight and in full force.

For his part, H.P. was fueled by an equally intense compulsion to write up these intensely absurd and homicidal doodle-stories starring G.C., becoming even more prolific once he realized Lawrence could turn them into technically impressive comics. It’s always tempting to psychoanalyze artists, but in H.P.’s case, it’s especially easy to draw a straight line from his escapist stories to the suffocating realities of his home life.

“Herald’s family was very dysfunctional,” said Kitme Hardin, a sculptor based in LA who was one of H.P.’s closest friends from the age of nine. “He had a brother who was in and out of jail all the time. His father was an alcoholic who abandoned him. And his mother was flaky. So Herald had to bear the mantle of family leader... But he freed himself from that through his stories.”

Of all the characters H.P. would create for the *Real Deal* universe, the antihero G.C. was the most essential, probably because he came from a dark and vengeful place that H.P. usually kept hidden from others.



“G.C. was like Herald’s alter ego,” Lawrence said. “In real life, H.P. was a nice guy, he always worked a job and took care of business. But G.C. did what he wanted to do and didn’t give a shit. If G.C. wanted to shoot somebody, he’d just shoot them.”

Still, *Real Deal* wasn’t just loose-cannon vigilante wish fulfillment. It represented a very specific reality, albeit a slightly twisted version of it. Some of the real-life stories relayed to me by Lawrence and Kitme were undoubtedly the basis for what can be found in *Real Deal*, only in the comic they end in bloodbaths instead of reminiscing laughter for times gone by.

“The characters of *Real Deal* were always in a state of rage, and that’s how a lot of black men were at the time,” Lawrence said. “We weren’t going to back down or take any more shit. And that’s what happened in the LA Riots.”

At first Herald and Lawrence tried to get *Real Deal* published through traditional channels, but no one bit. Unfortunately, Americans were and still are big, boring pussies and wouldn’t allow a comic book about rage-filled, homicidal black dudes slapping bitches and stomping pigs to be sold next to *Spider-Man* and *Archie*. So Lawrence and H.P. did the only reasonable thing left to do and self-published the first issue of *Real Deal* in 1989. The oversized comic book sold for two bucks a pop, its cover featuring G.C. brandishing a hand cannon while chasing some poor, soon-to-be-dead sucker. But even though the physical object had actually been printed and was now in their hands, the pair ran into distribution problems.

Kitme remembers trying to get local shops to carry it: “A lot of it was racially based fear. At the beginning, people would push the thing back in my face. Like all great ideas, *Real Deal* was ahead of its time.”

As the years went on and issues were eked out, H.P. and Lawrence were barely able to fund or even continue to create their beloved comic in their free hours. “There was a year or two between each issue because of money and time,” Lawrence said. “Days you’re working you don’t feel like drawing. You’re exhausted. And self-publishing ain’t cheap. We could’ve done ten issues a year if it wasn’t for our issues with money.”

Despite *Real Deal's* limited distribution and infrequency, it is considered an untainted paradigm for many comics artists. Benjamin Marra, *VICE* contributor and creator of the ultraviolent *Gangsta Rap Posse* series, is still in awe: “I get depressed when I come across a comic like that because I feel I can’t achieve that level of success. Those comics are so awesome that I have trouble even looking at them. It’s some of the most inspiring stuff I’ve ever seen.”

Johnny Ryan, a comic artist who once drew a story for *VICE* about a mystical janitor who feeds a prepubescent boy “dog syrup” and later takes the boy to canine heaven and feeds him to dogs, went even further with his praise of *Real Deal*: “It’s like a unicorn. It was an odd thing to find black artists making alternative nonsuperhero comics at that time, or any time. To have that voice was great, and it hasn’t been duplicated. It’s one of the best comics of the 90s.”

The last issue of *Real Deal* appeared in 2001, and the reasons for its decade-long delay are tragic: In 1998, at the age of 43, H.P. suffered a stroke at the wheel of his car and died. To this day, Lawrence feels H.P.’s body’s breakdown was the result of the burden he bore for his family.

“The last year of his life, the stress of his family really got to him,” Lawrence said. “He started aging rapidly, and his hair turned gray. I remember this one time his brother had been thrown in jail, and his family was trying to pawn all of H.P.’s personal stuff to get him out, even though his brother had been in and out of jail since he was 14. Stuff like that happened constantly, and it was too much for H.P.”

The palpable sense of rage and indignation that informed *Real Deal* still exists in a big way, and one could make the argument that it has spilled over into all races and creeds who feel disenfranchised or cheated. Just imagine the sorts of gory joy Lawrence and H.P. could have inserting G.C. and his crew into an Occupy rally. Unfortunately, it’s questionable whether the comic will return. Lawrence is now 51 and works as a security guard in LA, without a family who might support his more creative endeavors. Still, Lawrence continues to promise a seventh issue to me, fans, and himself. It could potentially inspire an entire generation to disregard political correctness or diplomacy and just throw hot coffee in cops’ faces. It could be just what we need. 

Real Deal covers for issues 1, 2, and 5—all featuring the book’s gangster-ass franchise character G.C. in the midst of creating hilarious, merciless mayhem.



SEASON FINALE

BY LYNN COADY
PHOTOS BY FRANCESCO NAZARDO

*It took a while for the Canadian literary establishment to accept Lynn Coady—her unpleasant gritty realism, profanity, and fucked-up sex scenes didn't go down too easily with the silk-stocking crowd. It wasn't until her 2011 novel *The Antagonist*—a first-person narrative about a washed-up hockey player with a penchant for alcohol and self-hatred—was shortlisted for the ultra-prestigious Giller Prize that everyone sat up and went, “Whoa, she's one of the best writers we've got.” We're honored to feature her new short story “Season Finale” in this issue, and we've paired it with a couple photos by Francesco Nazardo. Francesco is an Italian photographer based in New York whose work was featured in an exhibition titled *The Future of Photography*, which we think was a great call on the curator's part.*

Lorelei would come home from school and watch TV. At three o'clock was *Desperation Row*, but she never got back in time to see the whole thing. She could have watched it later, online, but streaming it ruined the ritual—running home to catch the last ten minutes, which were all you really needed anyway—the minor victory. Then at four was *Lakeside*, and that was part of the ritual too—the larger victory. You'd think, *Crap, I missed DR*, but cheer yourself up the next instant, pretending to have only just remembered—*Yay!*—that *Lakeside* was on next.

The story of *Lakeside* only ever took place in the summer, which made it ideal school year viewing. It had to do with people vacationing in big expensive cottages around a lake, hosting sun-dappled barbecues and beach picnics and drinking cold drinks and enjoying gauzy affairs with one another. If viewers wished to purchase a cottage, or the appliances within the cottages, or anything else they happened to spot on *Lakeside*, there was always a number they could call or a site they could visit, noted at the end of every segment. Lorelei visited the site every now and again. “Pick your cottage!” the website extolled her. And she did, she picked her favorite one; it never changed, the one where the most beautiful woman on the show resided, the one with the fountain. She even filled out all the personal information the site required, closing the browser only when she arrived at the Financial Profile section.

The reality shows came on after supper. Her favorite was *Do Me All Over*, during which a TV crew scoured the worst neighborhoods in the worst cities and dug up the worst prostitutes imaginable. The audience went out of its mind imagining that people would pay money to have sex with such shoddy prostitutes.

First, the hookers were interviewed, and made to talk about their lives. They were interrogated about the kind of clients they had serviced and the kind of things the clients liked to do. This part was usually very funny and gross. But then sometimes the prostitutes would talk about the horrible ways in which they had been beaten or otherwise abused, and the mood in the studio would turn sympathetic and somber.

One time the host interviewed a girl named Evvie. She had missing teeth and scabs from scratching herself raw when she was high and when she felt what she called the “wriggly-jiggles” moving beneath her skin. The prerecorded audience chuckled because of the childishness of the phrase. It sounded like school-yard lingo. Imagine Evvie small, in the school yard; as someone's child! It made for a humanizing moment, which was not an easy feat to achieve so early in the show's established arc.

They never tried to clean up the prostitutes for their initial interviews. Evvie's wet scabs glistened under the studio lighting; they hadn't washed her hair. There was a lingering



close-up on her teeth. Lorelei saw that Evvie's mouth was somewhat deformed, as if it had been mangled, caught in some kind of machinery.

The host was saying, "Now Evvie, you've had some hard times on the streets, haven't you?" This was the audience's cue to stop giggling at "wriggly-jiggles" and prepare themselves for some sad and serious details.

"Yeah," said Evvie through her mangled mouth.

"You were beaten quite badly by one of your 'tricks' at one point, weren't you?"

"He said he just wanted lunch," said Evvie, and the audience couldn't stop themselves from tittering because they

knew from previous shows what *lunch* was. The host glowered, briefly, to quiet them down.

"But he wanted more than that, didn't he Evvie."

"Yeah," said Evvie.

Almost none of the subjects they had on the show, Lorelei thought to herself, were very good talkers at the beginning. It always had to be dragged out of them. But that worked well. It built suspense. The host played up to it, drawing things out. Lorelei understood television very well at that point, she understood all its tricks and didn't begrudge or resent them. She simply noted how successful they were, and kept on being entertained.

"His van," Evvie said.

"What did he have in his van, Evvie?"

"He had ropes. And hooks. And sticks and things."

"But there was something else about the van, wasn't there, Evvie? Something you only noticed later. What was that, Evvie?"

"There was plastic."

"Plastic, Evvie?"

"Plastic sheets of plastic. Taped up all over the inside of the van."

"So you mean."

"For blood," said Evvie. "For my blood."

The audience sounded a dark collective moan. Close-ups of some of their expressions flashed on the screen. They glanced at each other, eyes wide, muttering horror.

"Well, Evvie," the host concluded after she had finished her harrowing tale, which had ended with a group of men, having heard her screams and thumps, running up to the van and shaking it back and forth until she was released ("Did they ever catch your attacker?") "No they ain't," said Evvie). "We're here to make sure this kind of thing never happens to you again."

And the audience's applause at this point was raucous, relieved. Evvie had come through night, and was only just beginning to claw her way toward the dawn—thanks to *Do Me All Over*. She was so awful and disgusting now. Soon all that would be eradicated, would fall away like healed scabs, and at the end of the season she would return to their stage a heroine, someone everybody could be inspired by.

The rest of the season would be devoted to, in this order: her drug and alcohol detoxification, her diet, her exercise, her orthodontics, her personal grooming, her wardrobe, whatever remaining familial relationships might be salvageable for added drama, and, finally, her surgical augmentation. On the very last episode of the season they would showcase Evvie transformed alongside a photograph of the original item, and Lorelei, along with every single other viewer under the sun, would trickle tears of joy because the world was a place of beauty and hope despite all the evidence to the contrary. And possibility. That was the most important thing of all. Nothing was fixed. Everything could change. You just needed to know the right people. *CCB*



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THE BASEBALL SLUGGER

PAINTINGS BY HIRO KURATA

Born in 1980, Hiro Kurata was raised in both Japan and the US. His back-and-forth upbringing caused him to develop an affinity for the countries' shared pastime of baseball, which he claims has helped him communicate across both cultures. His obsession with the sport gave birth to a character he calls the "Baseball Slugger," the hero and center of his surreal scenes. His paintings, from the color palette to each brush stroke, are chaotic, confusing, and twisted—an obvious reflection on the world's current condition. But there is one important difference between our reality and Hiro's depiction of it: The latter doesn't make us want to commit suicide via autoerotic asphyxiation while slitting our wrists, and in that sense we'd say he's a definite success.



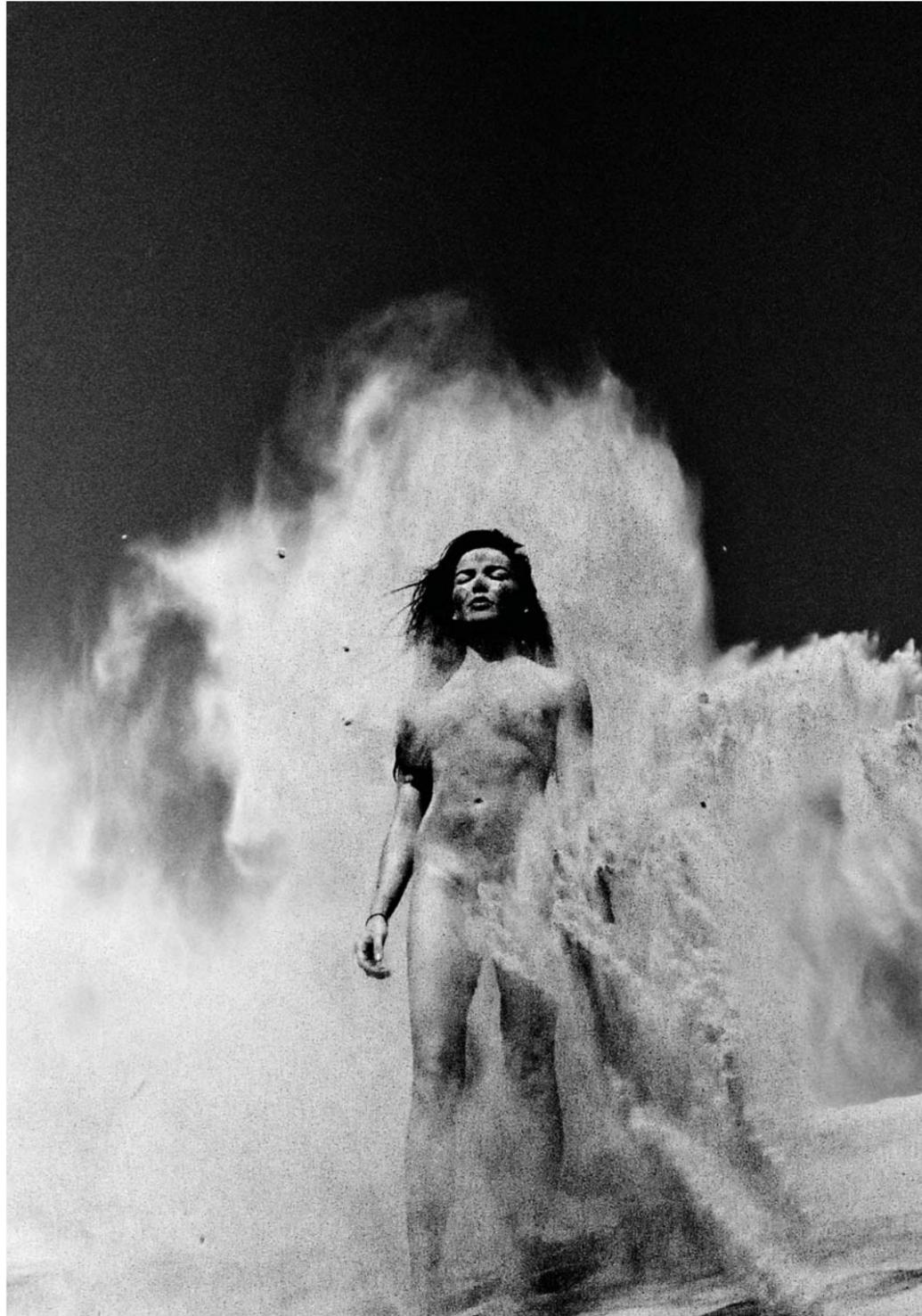


BEDU

PHOTOS BY JIM MANGAN

Models: Celine Boucher, Spencer Davis, Chris Van Dine, Alex Graves, Jenny Hong, Vlada Kleynburg, Corigan Kushma, Peter Sutherland













TUCK IT ALL IN THERE

*Fetishizing the Latex Dream
in the Brazilian Rainforest*

BY JENNI AVINS
PHOTOS BY MATHEUS CHIARATTI

Jenni tries on Fetisso's best-selling gloves in the factory's stockroom.



THIS PAGE: Latex drips into a collection pail at a plantation in Pernambuco, Brazil. Moments before, a tapper dragged the tip of his knife down the bark; the red stuff is a chemical that helps the tree heal.

OPPOSITE PAGE: René at his desk.

Sometime in the mid-1960s, near the small Swiss town of Vordemwald, little Willi Graber was playing by himself on his grandparents' farm. He wandered into the kitchen, where something in a basket of old clothes caught his eye: a pair of yellow latex kitchen gloves. He put them on. They made him feel funny. Immediately sensing their power, he walked outside and grabbed a piece of cow manure. It was a strange feeling—squeezing cow shit between his fingers and knowing it couldn't touch him.

With these gloves, young Willi realized he could get away with all sorts of forbidden deeds, unscathed. He touched poisonous plants and stinging ants, plunged his arm into the creek and pulled out blood-sucking leeches. Drunk on his newfound power, he even inserted a latex finger into the asshole of one unfortunate bovine. It was absolutely sensational. Of course, a few years later he started masturbating while wearing the gloves. Like any good Swiss boy, he'd been taught masturbation was wrong. But with the gloves on, it was different; it was OK. He felt protected. The gloves became his magic talisman that shielded him from God's judgment. Slowly and strangely he realized that gloves and other garments made from other materials like leather or vinyl didn't hold the same allure. Latex was it for him, and it became apparent that Willi had a fetish. Still, he had no way of knowing that decades later he would use his secret shame to his advantage by establishing a lucrative fantasy fetish-wear company in a paradisiacal stretch of Brazilian rainforest.

By no means was Willi the first person possessed by the power of latex, the milky white sap that drips from the scored trunks of rubber trees. During the Industrial Revolution, rubber was as important a resource as oil is today. Like oil, it was the impetus

for mind-boggling exploration, exploitation, and violence in the service of empire. Rubber tappers who failed to meet their quotas in King Leopold's Congo Free State had their hands cut off. To leverage the vast reserves of rubber trees in the Amazon, South American barons drove the natives into indentured servitude as *seringueiros*. These miserable workers were forced to scale towering Amazonian trees and gather their sap. In 1876, British explorer Henry Wickham smuggled 70,000 rubber seeds out of the Brazilian Amazon—an astounding act of botanical piracy and the beginning of the British Empire's plantations in Asia. Henry Ford later purchased a piece of the Amazon as big as Delaware and Rhode Island combined to grow rubber trees and hired thousands of Brazilian workers to run Fordlandia, a failed Detroit-style processing plant and suburb in the middle of the Amazon.

Karl Marx wrote in *Capital* that capitalists are basically fetishists, worshipping mystical powers that workers impart to the goods they create (sounds like Prada to me). Before latex, fetishists had made do with what they had—fur, silk, and tight-laced corsets. That was until 1823, when Scottish chemist Charles Macintosh concocted the rubberized fabric that laid the foundations for future BDSM fantasy. Though his Mackintosh coats were smelly, sticky, and sometimes melted on hot days, they were also hugely popular. Valerie Steele, author of *Fetish: Fashion, Sex, & Power*, identifies England's Mackintosh Society as one of the modern era's first fetishist organizations. During her research, she found a 1920s fetish magazine titled *London Life* that detailed "the thrill of macking." Today you can buy a snappy Mackintosh raincoat for \$800 from J.Crew.

When Willi was a horny teenager he happened to peek in a trash can and find a porno mag filled entirely with photos of



women wearing latex. It was then he realized that he wasn't alone; there were others in this world who shared his obsession with the material. Willi began seeking out more information about his peculiar proclivity. He read books like *Fetishes and Rituals in Modern Industrial Societies* to learn more about fetishism, the etymology of which originates with the word *feitiço*—Portuguese for objects Africans worshipped and believed to be bewitched or possessed by fairies.

For fetishists, clothing elevates their preferred material from mere commodity into an object of hypersexualized worship. Fetishes and sexual identity are personal mysteries, so while it's easy to see patterns emerge, there's no single historical trajectory. After World War II, fetishists became enamored of protective items like gas masks. Some fetishists use latex to feel safe, dangerous, or both. Others just love the feeling of a constrictive, shiny second skin. In the 40s and 50s, *Bizarre* magazine published illustrations and photos of latex-clad ladies in all sorts of kinky scenarios. By the 70s, punk designers such as Vivienne Westwood had brought fetishism into the world of fashion. Warhol muse Dianne Brill stepped out sheathed in white-fringed latex and was crowned *People's* "First Citizen of Manhattan nightlife." A decade later, writer Candace Bushnell was suited up in rubber dresses for *Vogue*, which resulted in three dates, a marriage proposal, and a meeting with a TV producer. (Her HBO series, *Sex and the City*, debuted two years later.) Lady Gaga wore latex to meet Queen Elizabeth. Anne Hathaway said she would never be the same after donning her latex Catwoman suit for *The Dark Knight Rises*. She told *Allure*, "The suit, thoughts of my suit... It dominated my year."

Willi continued his journey of self-discovery through the 70s, wandering around India and into San Francisco, struggling to

[Willi] looked around the Brazilian jungle and saw money growing on trees.

find himself. Eventually, his voyages took him into Brazil and the city of Recife, where he looked for a home among the sugarcane plantations and tropical beaches of the country's arid northeast. There he found the kind of place he had only imagined, a hill above the small coastal village of Japaratinga, shaded by coconut trees and right by the beach. He had been reading philosophy books about utopian ideals and imagining a simple life overlooking the ocean, surrounded by nature, art, friends, and family. He bought the land and convinced Fritz Liechti, a fellow expat, to join him. They built a five-bedroom commune and schemed about how to make a living outside the city. They saw little economic opportunity in the coconuts and sugarcane of the poverty-stricken region, but there was another resource there—rubber. Punk fashion was in full swing, and Willi's fetish didn't seem so freaky anymore. He looked around the Brazilian jungle and saw money growing on trees.

And so, Fetisso Latex was born. Today, the company makes 50 varieties of artisanal latex fetish wear and exports their products to sex shops in Europe, North America, Japan, and Australia. Fetisso has a loyal following, crafting gear that falls somewhere between cheap single-use latex and the couture pieces beloved by aficionados. While fetishists aren't necessarily the most eco-minded clientele, it's worth noting that in Brazil rubber trees provide valuable shade for low-lying flora and fauna and suck harmful greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere.



THIS PAGE:
Freshly molded thigh-highs dripping with liquid latex.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM:
Molds off-duty; Fritz among the jungle vines; reinforcing a pair of shorts' vital nooks with a spray gun full of latex; Willi on his patio (the dry erase board is for German and math classes for workers' kids.)

For the fetish world, Fetisso represents high-end entry-level latex. But for the locals of Japaratinga, the Fetisso factory has provided an opportunity, an alternative to the sugarcane fields and refineries. The town is a pretty simple place, where the most visible establishments are churches and a couple of inns and convenience stores. I thought area evangelists would be at odds with the presence of this expat kink palace up on the hill, but residents seemed mostly satisfied with Fetisso. This year, a local paper ran a story boasting that the factory is the only one of its kind in Brazil.

The vast majority of Fetisso's clients reside in Europe, but US sales are growing. Porn star Paris Kennedy discovered Fetisso two years ago, when she tried on a pair of leggings at a fetish convention. Now they're her favorite piece of latex fetish wear. She can slip them on sans lube—apparently rare for second-skin-style clothing—and they fit, well, like a glove.

"When you're wearing latex everything is sucked in and tight," Paris told me. "You're like a super-you. I think that's why it's popular with dominatrices. It really makes you feel powerful."

This was not my experience the first time I tried on a piece of latex clothing. Although I was surprised at how easy it was to pull on, I felt like a large sausage squeezed into a small casing. But I'm certainly a person who can fetishize fashion. I have a pair of Prada wedges that make me feel grounded, sexy, and strong. There's also the sheer white cotton shirt with coconut-shell buttons that grazes my thighs, practically begging to be pulled off and tossed aside. So, yes, I can relate.

I wanted to get closer to latex's special type of power, so I followed it to its source. Japaratinga is in a remote corner of Brazil's northeastern state of Alagoas, not at all easy to get to. It took me three planes, four hours in a car, one ferry, and a brief encounter with the military police to make it there. On my way, I passed

donkey carts, mountains of dried coconut shells, several short stucco villages, kids selling mangoes, and old ladies who gave directions like "*Vai embora sempre*" ("Keep going, forever"). So I did, into undulating valleys of vibrant green sugarcane. After a few hours, the road flattened out beside the ocean, and I made a hairpin turn. The car climbed up into a forest, growing suddenly dark as a bamboo tunnel towered overhead. When I arrived at a large wooden gate, I slowly swung it open and approached a house. "Oi?" I called quietly, following a porch that wrapped around at the jungle's edge. "Alo?"

Fritz, Fetisso's head of sales, rose from a picnic table covered in papers. Barefoot and broad shouldered in long gray carpenter shorts and a t-shirt that said VIBRATIONS, he looked like a sweet old surfer. He took me up a well-manicured jungle path, past tree houses and statues of goddesses and dragons, to a low-lying bunker on the precipice of a hill. A shirtless man with a frizzy beard appeared in one of the bunker's formidable front doorways: Willi.

He seemed a little stunned to see me—perhaps Fetisso didn't receive many visitors. He and Fritz murmured a few words in what sounded like German, and then Willi escorted me to my quarters: a shiny-floored suite that looked like Whitesnake's pleasure lair. The ceiling and pillars were covered in white peaked plaster that looked like shaving cream.

My room contained two hammocks in addition to the bed. One hung in front of a floor-to-ceiling picture window that opened directly onto the jungle and, beyond, the turquoise ocean. That night, just before bed, I noticed a large hook protruding from one of the pillars in my room. Perhaps the guest quarters doubled as a dungeon. Visions of latex and whips eventually subsided and I fell asleep. When I opened my eyes

shortly before sunrise, the sky was a dark rainbow. I rolled over and realized that the hook was harmless, just an anchor to hang a hammock from.

The architect of the compound was Fetisso partner René Savoy. His masterpiece was the 7,500-square-foot fetish-wear factory. From the outside, it looked like a small stone fortress, or a dungeon, and smelled mildly of chemicals. Inside, I was met by a stocky, shirtless man with a mullet and a round belly protruding over the top of his jean shorts.

René took me up to his office. A stone penis sat on a shelf above his desk, acting as a paperweight. Speaking fast and grinning excitedly like a mad scientist, René explained he had spent years studying anatomy to ensure that Fetisso's fetish products fit like a second skin. At night, he dreams of people he loves wearing his clothing. Then, he wakes up, sketches the designs, and devises molds to be dipped in latex. Despite his seeming elation, René wasn't really that much of a latex guy before he got involved with Fetisso. But he loves the lifestyle it affords him. "This keeps us young," he said. "We're a bunch of crazies. I feel like I'm 15. That's the deal here: to be free. I do what I want. One day I'm gonna die anyway. So today I'm going to make latex."

I felt like a large sausage squeezed into a small casing.

In René's workshop, life-size flat gray torsos with molded boners hung from a rack in the corner. An eerie-looking anatomically correct arm dangled from the ceiling. René typically makes molds out of wood and clay, but for "intimate parts like a penis, a foot, a hand, boobs, or butts," he hand shapes fiberglass to be dipped in liquid latex. Condoms are made using the same technique, but René's molds make Fetisso's clothes more artisanal than industrial—even if they are rubber tank tops with nipple holes, bike shorts with penis sleeves, and masks that look like something an executioner would wear.

I spotted a burly Brazilian man, Tecio "Junior" Machado da Silva, leaning over the work table while he smoothed plaster onto the thigh of an extra-large male jumpsuit mold. Fetisso is organized as a pseudocooperative, and I learned that Junior is a partner who sits in on business meetings and receives a cut of the profits at the end of the year. He has been employed there for 14 years, and his wife Monica works there, too.

Later I met Jose "Nissinho" Edmilson, the factory's general manager, who guided me through the rest of the production process. We started in the dipping room, a tile chamber where molds resembling a horse's forelegs hung upside down over a tank of milky liquid latex (these gloves, shaped like hooves instead of hands, meet the demands of those who like being ridden, equestrian-style). I swiped a finger across the bottom of a hoof. The latex felt like a blend between thick paint and rubber cement. Nissinho told me that dipping was one of the best jobs at the factory, aside from the ammonia smell. But, keeping in line with the company's egalitarian nature, everyone worked on a rotating schedule and no one got to dip every day.

From there, we went on to the reinforcement chamber. A man blasted liquid latex from a spray gun, reinforcing the edges and crotches of predipped shorts with built-in boner sleeves. Once they were dry, another worker flipped the shorts over a bin of white powder, which he used to help peel them off the molds. After that, they are baked in an oven and rinsed in chemicals so they can be worn without lubricant.

All the women at Fetisso seemed to work upstairs in the finishing department, a breezy room where a poster on the wall





[Fetisso's] latex was somehow naturally connected with sexual power.

René's precision design tools and Fetisso's catalog. (Look at the shine on those socks!)

denoted employees' birthdays. The women laughed and chatted as they worked, trimming black latex briefs and shining up underwear with silicone spray. Monica Maria, Junior's wife, assembled the porny packaging of Fetisso's products. The particular box she was holding featured a naked woman holding a gloved arm crossed over her breasts. I asked Monica if she had ever worn any of the clothing she helps make. She told me that she had the shorts and the thong and wore them every once in a while. I asked her if they made her feel like she was in power or had control. "Not really," she said.

Nissinho said he had tried on a shirt for Carnaval once, but it was too hot and sweaty. I asked him what his favorite part of his job was. "When I get paid," he said. I guess not everyone at the company shares Willi and Fritz's enthusiasm for latex.

In the section of *Capital* entitled "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof," Marx wrote about wood being turned into tables: "It is changed into something transcendent... It stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than 'table-turning' ever was." I was almost certain the workers at Fetisso weren't purposely bewitching their products, but perhaps something mystical happens in the alchemical process of rubber being transformed into fetish wear.

The next day, I visited a Brazilian rubber plantation. A seringueiro, who collects latex the same way it has been done for centuries, lent me his knife and showed me how to score

a tree myself. Watching the milky sap run down the tree's raw, pale trunk made me feel like there might be something to this. That latex was somehow naturally connected with sexual power and maybe Fetisso had tapped into that. Willi had harnessed his secret shame to build the life of his dreams. He had retired at 54, surrounded by friends and the objects of his sexual desire, not to mention the Brazilian beach and breezy tree houses. Needless to say, I am still looking for my version of latex—something that fulfills and excites me in the same way.

Several weeks later, back in New York City, I found myself walking to Gothic Renaissance, a fantasy store near Union Square. The well-lit boutique was filled with neon corsets, spike-encrusted leather, and a plethora of platform boots.

"I'm interested in latex," I told the voluptuous blond counter girl. She raised her eyebrows at me.

"What exactly are you looking for?" It seemed like a trick question, but she explained that many people who asked for latex actually wanted vinyl—latex's less expensive fabric-backed imitator and, seemingly, an easier sell.

I told her I was looking for proper latex. The real deal.

"You should know what you're getting into," she confided. "It's thicker, shinier, more sexual than vinyl." It might not be time to mold to my body, she said. "But once you figure it out, it's waaaaaay worth it."

Hanging on the pegs below the cash register were Fetisso's little black boxes: gloves for men and women, an asymmetrical dress, leggings, and a top. I asked which product was the most popular.

"The gloves," she said. "People love the gloves." *VICE*



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BATH SALTS IN THE

WOUND

*How a Plague of Ladybug Attractant
Ravaged Roanoke, Virginia*

BY ROB FISCHER
PHOTOS BY TRAVIS DOVE

*A view of Roanoke from the
Roanoke Star. Federal agents
swept through the area and
surrounding towns to clear
Amped and other synthetic
drugs from the shelves, weeks
before their sale was to become
illegal in Virginia.*

When a legal synthetic drug called Amped first shipped in October 2011, fans of recreational narcotics went crazy for it. Marketed as “ladybug attractant” and “exuberance powder,” Amped was developed by a trained biochemist, a rarity in the otherwise fly-by-night industry. But by the end of February something had changed.

Comments from Amped users started appearing on blogs, claiming that unlike the initial batches of the fine high-octane stimulant powder that “made ladybugs scatter,” recent shipments were the color and texture of soggy piecrust. The stuff smelled like piss. For those willing to snort this congealed paste, however, it still provided a decent high.

Bath Salt Guru, the de facto synthetics industry blog, offered an obscure explanation for the change: Wicked Herbals, the company responsible for Amped, had fallen out with its chemist due to an argument over a change to the formula. A post warned readers that the product had been seriously compromised. Dozens of commenters pleaded for more details, and almost as soon as they posted their inquiries, other Amped users voiced satisfaction with their most recent shipments. After a few incoherently despondent responses, the anonymous blogger signed off: FTWWALD—Fuck the World with a Long Dick.

Bath salts are more than just an upper. Users found Amped, and other brands, to be more potent than cocaine. One user described it this way: “On coke, you might see a group of girls and decide, ‘I’m the man,’ and go talk to them. On Amped you’d think, ‘Hey, I should work my dick up and go show it to

them.’” He recalled taking a leisurely stroll one evening, snorting bumps of Amped along the way. At dawn he was swinging on a rope swing in a stranger’s yard, wearing nothing but his underwear, holding his semierect dick out to girls driving past, hoping he’d get lucky.

Few places were as primed for the plague of bath salts as the Southeast neighborhood of Roanoke, Virginia. Built on a foothill in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Southeast is a hodgepodge of vinyl-sided homes and weed-infested lots strewn with old cars and discarded furniture. A variety of drug epidemics mark past decades like geological strata; opiate and alcohol abuse are realities of everyday life. One resident recounted hitting rock bottom of a heroin addiction after being hospitalized for shooting Drano. Another recalled watching his neighbors roar down the broken asphalt outside his house with crack pipes clutched between their teeth. But drugs haven’t destroyed neighborly camaraderie. For instance, when the local roadhouse recently held a fundraiser for a developmentally disabled infant, the entire community showed up to give their support, including over 100 members of the local motorcycle gang.

Amped and other bath salts brands began appearing in Roanoke-area smoke shops in March, after their manufacturers sent out glossy neon postcards to tobacco stores, promising huge retail profits. Like some sort of farce of the crack epidemic, the proprietors of Southeast’s main tobacco shop, D.K. Tobacco, offered the first round of bath salts at discount. Employees even (allegedly) donned Amped T-shirts to hype the product. Across town, another tobacco store hired a man to hold a sign advertising bath salts. Before long, buyers swarmed.

“At the busiest times, especially after dark, it was like a Walmart parking lot out there,” said a neighboring business owner who requested to remain anonymous. Some customers reportedly showed up five or six times a day. Locals said it looked like a line outside a food bank. From his next-door tattoo parlor, Charlie Barham watched D.K. Tobacco’s business swell following local news coverage. “Suddenly we saw more than just your average tweaker pulling into D.K.,” he said. “Construction workers driving up in city trucks. Everyone including your grandmother heard about this stuff, and decided it was worth giving a shot.”

In a matter of weeks, signs of wreckage appeared in the neighborhood. Violent face-offs with suspected users became increasingly common, overwhelming police officers and emergency room personnel. In May alone Roanoke city police responded to 34 bath salts-related calls. “It was more than just a serious problem. It was an epidemic. And it came on so suddenly,” said Roanoke city police chief Chris Perkins. By this point the predicament was no longer restricted to city limits; Amped was ravaging the entire county. “We had an officer fight a kid for nine minutes,” said Roanoke County police chief Chuck Mason. “Most of our scuffles are less than a minute. The kid came charging at him out of the house stark naked.” An emergency room physician interviewed by the local news station said that if cocaine and methamphetamines were tropical storms, the bath salts situation was a hurricane.

Another adjacent business owner recounted shaky, glassy-eyed fiends lingering around the neighboring pizza shop and tattoo parlor, asking if the surrounding shops sold ladybug attractant. A few were leaning against lampposts in the parking lot to steady

themselves while vomiting. The owners of the bakery next door said that their shop was broken into one night in what they believe was an attempt by the burglars to gain access to the tobacco store.

Angela Marie Crabb, a 31-year-old mother of two, lived two blocks from D.K. Tobacco. She had already struggled with alcohol, heroin, and crack addictions when a friend introduced her to Amped last March. A couple of days after Angela first used the drug, Lorrie Jones, her mother, found her naked and leaning precariously off the second-floor balcony of her building. “It was like watching something in a science fiction movie,” Lorrie said. “The way she contorted her body, her speech, everything was so strange.” Over the course of a few weeks, Angela withered away to 80 pounds, her face ghoulishly swollen. She showed up unannounced at her mother’s house one evening, attempting to bust the windows out in a rage. “It wasn’t her. It was the Amped. It literally looked demonic,” Lorrie said. The next night Angela suffered a heart attack. She spent the next six days on life support before passing away on April 25.

Hours after her daughter died, Lorrie met a young woman outside the hospital who had to have her arm amputated after injecting too much Amped. Two days later, another young mother, Tina Elaine Mullins Crockett, died of a heart attack at least partially caused by Amped. “It was like a cloud opened up over the Roanoke Valley and dumped a band of demons on us,” Lorrie said. “It was like a tornado had gone through. It sucked a lot of people up with it. And my daughter was one of them.”

Smoke shop owners shrugged off concerns that they were destroying their community. After all, bath salts weren’t illegal, and they were very profitable. Stores bought Amped units

OPPOSITE PAGE: Salem police chief Jeff Dudley holds up a unit of Amped that one of his officers purchased from a tobacco store.

THIS PAGE: When the Amped craze was at its peak, the parking lot outside of D.K. Tobacco was reportedly filled with cars all day, with some users lingering there late into the night.



wholesale for \$5 and sold them for \$25. Your run-of-the-mill small-time drug dealer might make \$50 flipping an ounce of weed or double his investment with a pound of cocaine. Tobacco-store owners moving a conservative 30 packets a day could easily net over \$200,000 a year.

The owners of D.K. Tobacco are Sudanese refugees, and many in the neighborhood regarded the sale of bath salts as an act of national ingratitude. The resentment only grew as store owners flaunted their profits. One rolled up in a new Nissan, which he said he had bought in cash. On another occasion, he flashed a cashier's check worth the full amount of a new house. "I can't believe that they didn't know what they were doing," said a neighboring business owner who asked not to be named. "Avarice took over. And it was legal."

Roanoke-area law enforcement learned about bath salts at a monthly summit in March, when Amped first arrived in stores. Vice squad units bought samples of bath salts for testing, but the results came back negative; they contained no illegal substances. A forensic chemist was summoned to explain how these drugs skirted the law. "The message was that there wasn't any particular consistency in the chemical makeup of the stuff," Chief Mason said. "It was being manufactured overseas in China, India, and Russia, and they were successful in staying ahead of the law by adjusting the formula."

In May, bath salts gained national attention as the purported reason for Miami resident Rudy Eugene freaking out and gnawing the flesh off a homeless man's face. Later, blood test results revealed that there was no trace of bath salts in his system—just

marijuana. But bath salts have become increasingly popular among adventurous drug users in the US for at least the past three years. National poison-control centers fielded 6,138 bath salts-related calls in 2011, up from 300 the previous year.

Active ingredients in bath salts tend to be "substituted cathinones," synthetic variations of the natural stimulant found in khat, a plant popular in Africa and the Middle East and akin to coca leaves in Bolivia. At the end of last year, the DEA announced an emergency ban on the two most popular active compounds in bath salts—MDPV and mephedrone—which only served to flood the market with dozens of other substituted cathinones.

Immediately before the springtime zombie scare, a coalition of local and federal law enforcement held a press conference in Roanoke to inform the community of the dangers of bath salts. Standing beside a poster board pinned with various brands—Amped, White Water Rapids, Go Fast, and Snowman to name a few—authorities explained that bath salts were similar to methamphetamines or cocaine and were illegal under the Federal Analog Act. Under the law, an analog is any substance that mimics the effects of illegal drugs; producers try to dodge the law by marking packages NOT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION. The DEA and the US Attorney's office told police that they could not enforce the law on the street, but they could help police confiscate bath salts from stores before a Virginia-wide ban went into effect.

In June, local police and the DEA served letters from federal prosecutors to seven tobacco stores, demanding that they relinquish their bath salts supplies. By and large the stores complied, though one owner told me if authorities returned he'd snap their necks.

Amped's manufacturer, Wicked Herbals, is based in Tempe, Arizona, and serves as the sales hub for a number of other bath salts labels produced in the area. Eight Ballz, Bullet, Blow, White Water Rapid, Bliss, and Snowman are all available for sale on the company's website and are based on very similar formulas. On a recent visit to Tempe, I found bath salts to be a booming industry for producers and retailers alike. One long-time Phoenix-area smoke shop owner estimated that in the past three years over 200 businesses have opened in the area with a singular mission. "They don't sell anything else. They only sell this," he said, pointing to his glass case filled with colorful packets of bath salts. A competitive market benefits the customer. In his store in Arizona, a half gram of Amped is \$12.99.

The bath salts business relies on an international network of ingredient suppliers. Largely based in China, they market their products under the guise of "research chemicals." Compared to legitimate chemical companies in the US, China's gray market distributors sell active ingredients in much larger quantities for a fraction of the price. These bootleg substances are correspondingly poor, and often not even those synthesizing them are fully aware what goes in and what comes out. Substituted cathinones are created by adding or subtracting a few molecules. Sales teams keep stateside distributors abreast of the nearly endless options available for purchase. Most bath salts end up containing three elements: a substituted cathinone, a bulking agent, and a topical anesthetic.

Wicked Herbals' original formula contained a relatively weak substituted cathinone called α -PPP. The product was consistent,

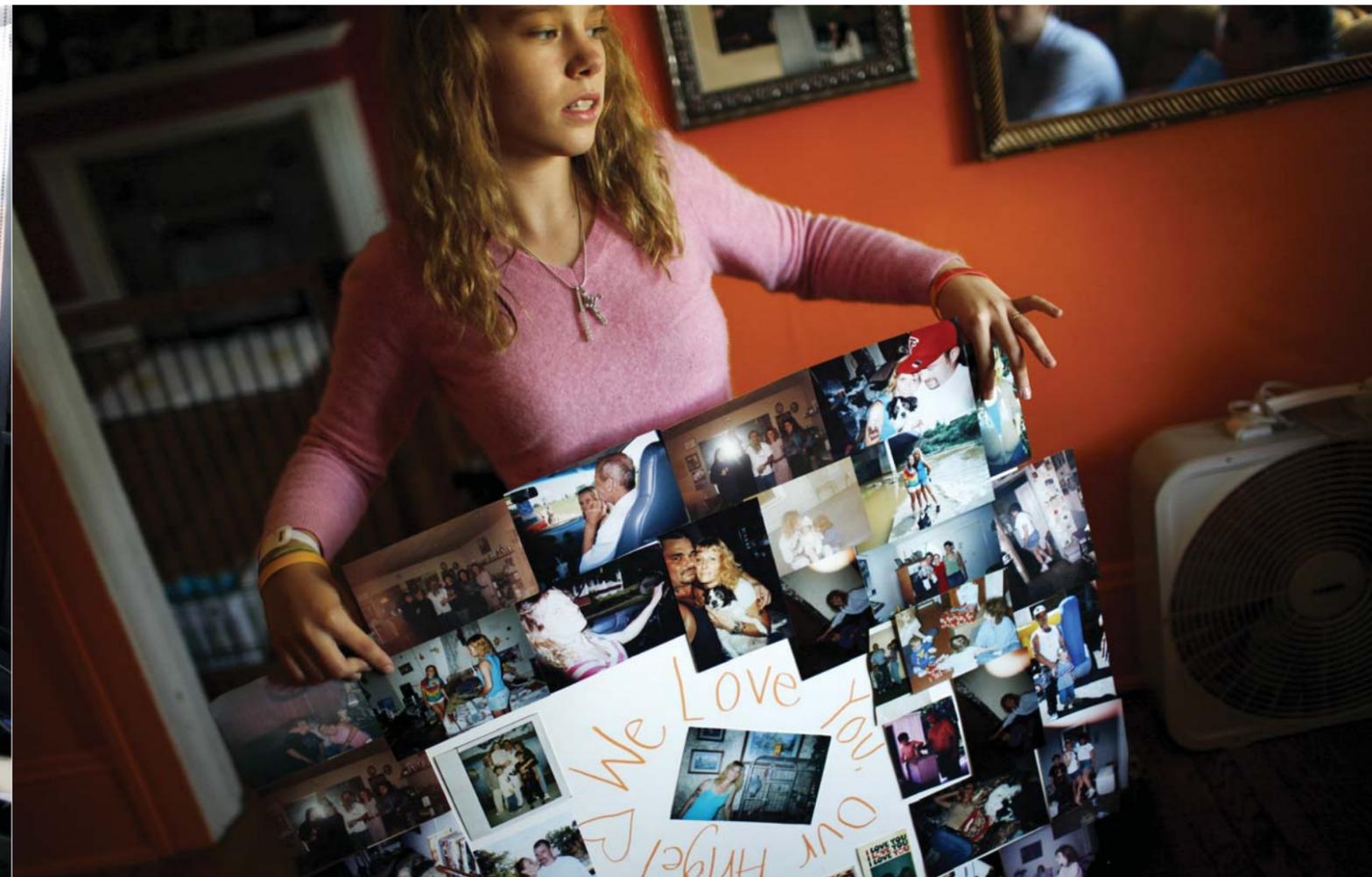
but many users found its effectiveness diminished after a couple uses. Looking for a more intense compound, developers decided to use α -PVP as the active ingredient in Amped. An online forum containing an exhaustive catalog of synthetic drugs initially reviewed α -PVP positively—"very, very fun"—but included an addendum: "Edit: After a few months of having this in my town, I'm convinced it's pure evil. A lot of people start smoking it every-day out of nowhere and became complete assholes and started stealing things. This shit is fucked, and not all that much better than MDPV. Surely neurotoxic." Regardless, α -PVP became the industry standard for most of the Arizona-based labels.

So long as new active ingredients continue to be developed, new forms of bath salts will be perfectly legal.

Over the last year and a half, state legislatures have scrambled to add α -PVP to an ever-expanding list of controlled substances. As of July 1, more than 41 states had banned almost 90 known varieties of substituted cathinones. Everyone on the supply chain is monitoring the shifting legal landscape, but almost no one—not producers, retailers, police officers, nor public officials—believes the situation will be resolved anytime soon. There's too much money involved, and, so long as new active ingredients continue to be developed, new forms of bath salts will be perfectly legal.

THIS PAGE: Salem police chief Jeff Dudley relayed the catastrophic effects that Amped and other drugs have had on Roanoke and the surrounding communities.

OPPOSITE PAGE: When Brittany Cross's mother, Tina Crockett, died during an Amped binge in April, Brittany was left to make funeral arrangements by herself as her father and stepfather both continued using the drug.



The Roanoke Star is western Virginia's answer to the Hollywood sign. Erected in 1949, it is perched atop a ridge south of the city, blasting 17,500 watts of neon out over the mountainous region. I traveled to Roanoke three days after tobacco stores pulled bath salts from the shelves. The glow of the star shimmered above the duplex rooftops of Southeast Roanoke, a pristine light illuminating the area's uniform neglect. People sat on teetering porches smoking cigarettes, drinking cans of beer, laughing, and shouting with passersby on the streets.

In Roanoke's tobacco-store parking lots, a semblance of normalcy had returned. "The last few days [after the bath salts ban] customers were peeling out of the parking lot all pissed and disappointed," Barham said. At all the tobacco shops, people said the same thing. The cops confiscated it. All gone. After the seizures, TV-news crews were nosing around the shops. Store owners sensed the coming vilification, and they were skittish. Outside D.K. Tobacco, a guy who looked like Kevin Smith but who wished to remain anonymous said he would tell me the whole story of Amped, for a price. "I injected it into people's arms. Shit destroyed them," he said.

After searching high and low for a sample of Amped and turning up empty-handed, I ended up at About Time tattoo shop around 10 PM. Out front, a crowd hanging out by a pair of parked cars gave off a malevolent vibe. Inside the atmosphere was lively. The owner, Randall "Hooter" Horton, said he had been tattooing in Roanoke for 27 years. When his patrons overheard that I was there to research a story about bath salts, they shouted over each other to share their grisly

tales: a cell mate throwing his mother down the stairs; a family friend hospitalized for jumping off his roof; a girl biting her mom. Hooter said that he had once watched a friend shoot Amped in his bathroom. "I was like, really? You plunge the stuff?" His friend said it was legal, and assured Hooter he had it under control. But Hooter couldn't imagine himself injecting the contents of those cartoonish little packets. "Never would have occurred to me it could take someone down like that," he said.

The next day, while walking through the Southeast, I met a couple in their late 40s—Mike Williamson and Debra Sue Hoffman. They suspected bath salts were behind the bizarre behavior of one of their neighbors who they recently spotted out in his front yard, pounding his chest like a gorilla and hollering that he was going to kill somebody. At another house I visited, a pretty blond 18-year-old named Jessica said, "Most people thought of it as a fake drug, and never expected it to hurt anyone." Her cousin who used Amped developed a blood clot in his brain. Another guy who was young enough for acne to still be a problem said that two weeks earlier his cousin flipped out on Snowman and ended up in jail after launching himself through a window.

A kid named Michael in a Mets hat with SATAN scrawled in black underneath offered to walk me downtown, which is the Southeast's euphemism for the Rescue Mission, a nearby homeless shelter. The Salvation Army, which is next to the mission, came into view with its neon-lit JESUS SAVES cross. Half a dozen small groups milled about in front of the shelter. Two doughy guys, maybe in their mid-20s and wearing trendy

mall gear, were standing around. I introduced myself to one of them, who said he had tried Amped, but it wasn't as terrible as its reputation would lead one to believe. A car pulled up and his friend tapped him on the shoulder. They had to go. "That's the D-boy," Michael whispered.

"The D-boy?"

"The drug dealer," he said.

I continued on to a gas station down the street where crackheads often hung out. It was early evening, but the sun was still beating down on the modest office buildings of downtown. A small group was tooling around on a vacant stretch of asphalt. I asked a man who looked like an unwrapped mummy about Amped. He said he had done it, and liked it, because he could snort it, smoke it, or shoot it. His friend, a shrunken fellow with bloodshot eyes, jostled up and told him not to talk to me. He ignored his buddy's request, which made him more agitated and prompted him to grab a box cutter from the dirt and thumb the release mechanism. "Ah! It ain't got no blade in it!" he moaned, throwing it back onto the ground before the pair walked away.

The next day, I met a guy named Tweeker who lives on top of a hill in the Southeast. Tweeker said he only tried Amped once. He and his friends didn't have any weed, so they bought a half gram and roamed around the neighborhood all night. "It was too heavy for me," he said. "I thought I was going to die." I asked him what made Amped different from other hard drugs. "You don't expect that change from something from a store."

A 2011 study found bath salts induced serotonin and dopamine levels on par with ecstasy and crystal meth. Both drugs

were legally available before they ignited national epidemics. And while bath salts seem particularly insidious now, some evidence supports that they are worse than their forebears. Compared to MDMA and methamphetamine, bath salts require more frequent dosing to maintain the high. At the same time, substituted cathinones cause more powerful adrenaline rushes, so the fight-or-flight mechanism kicks in earlier and stronger than other stimulants. But these technical distinctions overshadow the question about drugs in general: Why are certain people, of all ages, so desperate to take them?

A pretty blond 18-year-old named Jessica said, "Most people thought of it as a fake drug, and never expected it to hurt anyone."

The next day I found myself at Tweeker's house, along with Michael. Tweeker's younger brother had gotten a remote control helicopter caught in a tree and Tweeker climbed up to retrieve it. Michael assisted by tossing a sneaker up to try to dislodge it, but he quickly gave up and lit a cigarette on the stoop.

The sun set over the mountains, infusing the sky with orange and pink while straight ahead the Roanoke Star loomed over the city. I asked Michael why he thought so many people tried Amped. "I guess when you live in this kind of economy, everybody is fiending for every little thing they can get their hands on," he said, and took a drag of his cigarette. *CEB*

THIS PAGE:
Hooter (left)
and PeeWee
outside the
About Time
tattoo shop
in Southeast
Roanoke.

**OPPOSITE
PAGE:**
Michael (left)
with Tweeker
outside his
home in
Southeast
Roanoke.



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BY BOB ODEKIRK, SPECIAL THANKS: MIKE ROWE, PHOTOS COURTESY AP

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LI'L THINKS: WITNESS THE WHITENESS

BY KATE CARRAWAY, ILLUSTRATION BY PENELOPE GAZIN



Li'l Thinks is Kate Carraway's new monthly print column for VICE. You should also read her VICE.com column *Girl News* if you know what's good for ya.

Some imperative sociocultural maneuvering was missed when *Girls* debuted; instead, a really embarrassing junior-kindergarten level of communal reinforcement led to the collective conclusion that Lena Dunham's show is racist (and, yeah, that communally reinforced idea was right, because that show is racist to the point of making Brooklyn look like a sundown town). It is still being missed, which is cute because of how everyone I know—the “communal” in the “reinforcement”—is sure about race and especially about *whiteness*.

Following the retrospective social insight of five or ten years, Lena's trial by ordeal will probably seem painfully, entirely, wholeheartedly retarded. There is, of course, everything right with calling something that is racist what it is, but often, something that is all milky white is criticized simply and specifically for its milky, cummy whiteness and not criticized specifically—and more crucially—for its values, assumptions, casting choices (the first season of *Girls* skewed *very* Magical Negro), and antiverisimilitude. (No affluent white girl in urban North America is without rich Asian and Indian friends. She's just not.) So while the story within the criticism was all “La-la-la-la-la Lena!” whiteness and white culture snuck by unexamined.

Ignoring whiteness as its own thing to be considered is the easy way out, yeah, but it's also a dangerous re-re-establishment of a bad precedent, in which whiteness generally is positioned and congratulated as being *the* dominant culture. And since whiteness holds fast to the most capital of every variety of culture except “cool” and remains very few generations (fucking *one!* one generation!) removed from institutionalized and mandated racism, it's left as the cultural standard to which everything else responds. Which, as everybody knows, is racist.

Two important contextual items, here: America isn't so white. If you didn't know or live somewhere stupid, more black, Hispanic, and mixed-race babies were born last year than white ones—and since you and I have been conscious, the internet has (correctly) negated the social, economic, gendered, whatever boundaries of once-discrete subcultures. Sooo, that's good. But because the collective consciousness moves as fast and elegantly as you do jogging in a hot tub following diazepam and margaritas, whiteness remains understood as this abstract, almost-imaginary but deeply embedded dominant paradigm.

If, though, whiteness and expressions of whiteness meant something more definitive—and, therefore, could no longer serve as a fake front for a behemoth paradigm that is in reality about gnarly socioeconomic systems and not lineage snaking back to Western Europe—and ceased to encapsulate everything that has some money and dances badly and is irritated by the World Cup, it would make for a realer, better way of contending with what things mean, and why. Like, maybe Lena Dunham's sense of girls in New York would be specifically understood because of her specific privilege, and specific context, not because she's just a white bitch, which doesn't mean anything on its own. Because it doesn't!

Which threads of whiteness should occupy narrower versions of itself? I dunno. My vote is for that Wes Anderson, Miranda July, hopey-feely, mannered-sentimental effete stuff, for which the descriptor *twee* never really worked, anyway; it's the least self-righteous, the most imbued with the lonely anxieties of the Protestant work ethic. (There's already WASP for the insiders-only blue-chip stuff.)

New Whiteness is whatever it is that finally jettisons passive-aggressive colloquial garbage like “white girl problems,” which is a gross way for privileged women to both understand and undermine their position and also to smugly, self-satisfactorily announce and better occupy it. As long as it doesn't presume—as long as *we* don't presume—that proximity to power maintains sociocultural cachet. And, look, a lot of what's available is awesome: sailing, pathological entrepreneurialism. Whit Stillman's newish movie, *Damsels in Distress*, (which has a more racially diverse cast than *Girls*, by the way) or preppie blogs that feature J. Press on under-21 black guys—they're the New Whiteness.

Rendering whiteness a subculture among subcultures, a thing among things instead of *the* thing (a communism of subcultures, right?), makes it a Playskool version of its former self but also endlessly realer. It's not to suggest—it never could, it never would—that the tenets of whiteness have been paradeless and overlooked. Like, ha. But making whiteness specific bucks its unchecked cultural dominance. I mean, maybe. It would at the very least make real and even make disgusting some remaining wild classisms and racisms; it would make apparent the common and destructive pretensions that hold up a straw daddy of whiteness, even while we say over and over that we're through with it.



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COMBOVER: JARBLE JERBLE

BY BRETT GELMAN, PHOTOS BY JANICZA BRAVO

Featuring Iain Morris



Oy vey, I forgot! Another meeting!

Iain Morris: He's the hot new Brit comedic auteur in town. You can't go anywhere without hearing his name. He just finished coming off this hit British TV series, *The Middlers*, which he then made into a smashola movie. Soon as I saw both I bought him a one-way plane ticket from the rain to the sun. Now he's writing a new comedy for me. My idea: *Young Wolfman*. It's all about the grandson of the Wolfman. The premise is simple. Young Wolfman doesn't want to be a Wolfman, but realizes that his fate is to be a Wolfman, and if your destiny tells you to be a Wolfman, you better be a Wolfman. Even if it means being a Wolfman, and you don't want to be a Wolfman. See?! You're laughing already! It's gonna be hysterical. But the schlemiel still hasn't signed his contract. I don't know how they do it in England, but in America contracts must be signed on the bottom line, bottom line.

I get to his house, and he greets me with a kiss to the cheek. I'm not one to shy away from a man-to-man cheek kiss. In fact, I'm all for it, but I didn't think that was the British way. Plus there's booze all over his breath. Drunks make me nervous. Especially British drunks. You know what they say about British drunks. "They're as good as sober Frenchmen." And we all know what the sober Frenchman did. He rolled out the red carpet for the man with the funny little moustache, and I'm not talking about Charlie Chaplin, whom, by the way, I love, and who ironically was also a Brit, but not a drunk one.

He gives me a tour of the house. I'll admit, it's gorgeous. Staircases leading to other staircases. Ten bathrooms! Then he takes me to the backyard, also gorgeous, but once we get there he seems to be all over *my* backyard. He's right behind me putting his hands on my thighs like they're a slab of corned beef. I feel all nervous. No one has been this aggressive with me for a long time. Usually, I'm the aggressive one.

We sit down by the pool, and the schmuck starts trying to unbutton my buttons. But it's more like he's pushing my buttons. And these buttons ain't for pushing. They can be for unbuttoning, but not by him. I can't say anything, though. I don't want to make him mad. This contract's gotta get signed. It's terrible needing things from people. They always see how far they can push it. "It" being my buttons, in case you forgot.

He starts talking to me about something, and I suddenly realize I can't understand a goddamn word that's coming out of his mouth.

"Iain baby. I don't mean to be rude. But I don't really understand what you're saying?"

He speaks a little slower, while his gray hands move a little faster up and down my half-fat body.

"Iain I'm sorry, but you might as well be speaking Swahilese." (That's Swahili mixed with Chinese.)

What is it with this guy? I get why he wants to shtup me. Most people do. But if that were the case you'd think he'd spend a little more time making sure he pronounced his words clearly. It's all *jarble jerble* with an accent.

He starts to really fume. He goes inside and pulls out a copy of our contract. By now he's screaming, but the volume only makes his mush mouth more mushy.

"Iain, I'm really sorry. I wish I could say this was all a joke, and mean it, but I can't. Because it's not a joke. And I know good jokes. Did you know that I learn a new joke every day? I got this book and it's got every—"

WHAM!

The ganef has the chutzpah to belt me in the face. He lays me back in my stunned state and tries to shove the pool net up my tukhus. I tighten my hole like it's holding onto a hundred-dollar bill. Now he's dragging me to the edge of the pool, and the next words he says happen to come out very clearly:

"If you don't fuck me then you will fuck water, Jew!"

He dunks my head in. I'm sucking water into my lungs like it's a chocolate egg cream. Everything goes dark. Guess that means I'm kaput.

At least he better hope I am. Because if I ever come to I'm going to fucking kill him. I will roast him alive. I will rip off his skin and send it to my uncle (he's a tailor) and have him make me a shirt. I'll carve out his eyes. I'll slice off his British man tits and send them to my other uncle (also a tailor) and make earmuffs out of them that I'll never use because it never gets that cold here. I will fucking kill him!

But for now it's dark. Very dark.

This is the fifth chapter of Combover, Brett Gelman's new novel about Hollywood, the beauty of the Jewish tradition, baldness, and murder. We will be serializing it throughout the rest of the year. Read the previous installments at VICE.com.



THE CUTE SHOW PAGE!

BY ELLIS JONES, PHOTO BY DANILO PARRA



Dog Circus

You too can die watching this new episode of The Cute Show! now on VICE.com.

Japan—the country responsible for cat cafés and impossibly adorable big-eyed cartoon characters—is also home to the Super Wan Wan Dog Circus in Tsukuba City. For more than 50 years, owner Hiroaki Uchida has been rescuing abandoned dogs and training them to perform an assortment of tricks, including balancing on huge plastic balls and walking in a conga line with their front paws on each other's backs. The canines are so talented they hold three Guinness World Records, including one for jumping rope. And I thought jump rope fucking sucked until I watched the happiest-looking pooches I've ever seen doing it in unison, and now it's the only thing I want to watch until I die.





PANTY POPS

Dir: Kevin Moore
Rating: 10

Pantypops.com/Evilangel.com

Can you believe that *Panty Pops* #6 was just released? It's only been about two years since the first *Panty Pops* came out. That is a level of efficiency Hollywood could learn from. Who needs \$100 million budgets and three years of production for superhero movies? Let's treat them like pornos, since they basically have the same formula.

In porn, it's blowjob/pussy lick/missionary/doggy/reverse cowgirl (or any of three varied positions)/cum shot. In superhero films, it's hero origin/villain intro/love interest/love interest kidnapped by villain/fight/hero triumphs. That said, I could make *Spider-Man* on a shoestring budget and keep it under five minutes long: roll credits, show Peter Parker being bitten by a spider, then a scene of him climbing on walls, have the Lizard wave at the camera, then the Lizard kidnaps Gwen Stacy, epic battle scene (this is where all our budget will go—big explosions), *Spider-Man* swings into the sunset with Gwen in his arms, fade to black, roll credits. Five minutes max, just like the amount of time needed to dispose of the dead babies blocking up your main line. I could make a half-dozen *Spider-Man* movies a year, maybe more. Tell Christopher Nolan or whoever to holler at me.

Spoiler alert! The point of this *Panty Pops* series is—you're never going to guess—to have the pop shot land on panties. It's brilliant writing because your brain is telling you, "There's no way this Kevin Moore gives away the entire plot in the title," and you're waiting for things

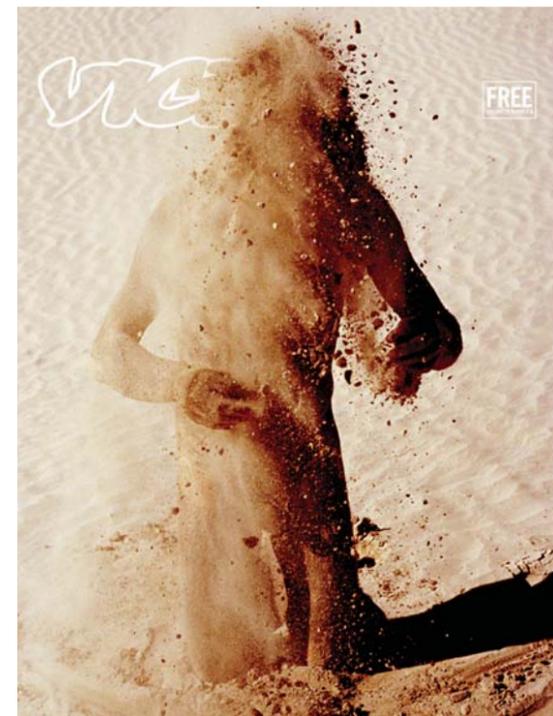
to get all *Sixth Sense*, and when it doesn't you're all, "HOLY SHIT! He totally got me! I was so anticipating getting got that I got got before I even got started. I GOT MYSELF!" Genius. Absolutely genius.

But even more genius than the tricky not-trick ending is the social commentary that Moore addresses on the changing of sexual desire that occurs with age and the mortality that we all must face. In their youth, men cannot rip off a woman's clothes fast enough. And yet as we age and begin to understand what's under those garments, and that the power it possesses can bring a man to his knees, we do our best to extend the experience, to shield ourselves from what lies just beneath that cotton facade. Granted, Moore never flat out says what we're all thinking: We're all going to die some day, and if we can just hold this boner for another five minutes maybe we'll live forever. Yet he implies it, somewhere between the pussy licking and the first fuck position. I don't know a whole lot about religion—aside from the fact that Easter candy is delicious and I thank God for it every April—but I imagine that the feeling that watching *Panty Pops* gives you, where the subject is so heavy that you just need to take a nap afterward, is what people mean when they say they've had a "religious experience." It's the only way I can describe it. It's like if Zeus gave you a handjob.

More stupid can be found at Chrisnieratko.com and twitter.com/Nieratko. You should also watch the Skinema video series on VICE.com.



WE KNOW YOU'RE LAZY, SO JUST SUBSCRIBE ALREADY



It used to be that VICE was relatively easy to find if you lived in New York or LA or another major city that isn't run by simpletons. Nowadays, things are different. We aren't accusing employees of stores that carry our magazine of swiping entire boxes of issues for their friends or anything like that. We are, however, saying that we have absolutely no control over such activities if and when they happen. And to be honest, it doesn't matter much to us either way. The magazine is still being read by an ever-increasing number of people, regardless of whether you manage to nab a copy. But what are we supposed to say? "Fuck you"? We tried that, and no one cared. Then we suggested making buds with someone who works at a place that distributes VICE. And while this is still sound advice, it's also a total pain in the ass (and a bit tacky). So, if you want to sidestep all the bullshit, we implore you: Subscribe and never look back.

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DEAD CAN STILL DANCE

Brendan Perry Tells Us

BY KELLY
McCLURE

Photo courtesy
of Dead Can
Dance

Dead Can Dance is one of those bands dearly beloved by many goths but does not technically fall under the jurisdiction of black lipstick and thigh-high latex platform boots. Cofounded by Australians Brendan Perry and Lisa Gerrard in 1981, the band relocated to London shortly thereafter. They continued to release albums and tour for the next two decades, give or take, until dissolving into a puddle of mascara-filled tears on an IHOP countertop.

A few years back, Dead Can Dance launched a reunion tour, and this month marks the release of *Anastasis*, their eighth studio album, following a 16-year recording hiatus. I spoke with Brendan from the tiny fart of a booth where we make our important phone calls while picturing him tiptoeing around an Irish recording studio, doing things like drinking tea and worrying about how he was going to mic all sorts of weird instruments following our conversation. But before any of this happened I had to

convince his publicist that I wasn't a total asshole. And I'm not, I swear.

VICE: I had a funny conversation with your publicist prior to setting up our talk. She called to make sure that this interview wasn't going to be volatile.
Brendan Perry: [silence]

OK, let's go! Perusing all the stuff that's been written about you, I found that your music is often described as "Gaelic folk," "Middle Eastern mantras," and "art-rock," but never "goth," which is what I've always considered it to be. Did you guys ever associate yourselves with that subculture? Am I crazy?

Well to be honest, we never really involved ourselves in it in any shape or form. Depending on where we played, there was often a large contingent of people who dressed like goths, but we didn't have much to do with anything. We're quite reclusive and just kept to ourselves. We found it all quite amusing. It seemed

to be a generational fashion thing, rather than something that had any sort of cultural depth.

When you're recording an album and in that bubble of creativity, does it make things like going to the grocery store and just living everyday common life seem intolerable? Yeah. It's awful. You need a pint of milk for your tea, and you have to stop in the middle of that second movement and jump in the car, and then you're there with all the other shoppers, and yeah, it can be a bit of a shock.

How did you and Lisa come to form the band? It must be hard to meet someone who's like, "Oh yeah, I like droney chanting too. Let's do some."

We came from two very different musical paths and happened to meet at the crossroads where our interests overlapped. My background was punk, and Lisa's was more left-field cabaret-type music. Initially it was a three piece. I was dating Lisa at the time, and we needed some extra percussion and she performed. And then that went on to backing vocals, and then, before you knew it, she was in the band.

So she Yoko'd you?
[laughs]

And now you've got this new album, 16 years after your last. What took so long? It's been on the back burner for a long while.

Have you found that the way things are done with labels and publishing has considerably changed since the last time you guys went through all this?

Yes. It's become shallower and more statistics driven. Seems like the banks are making most of the decisions. It's a bit of a sad affair. The brighter side is that the technology is available to everyone now, so it's exciting for people who want to just make their own albums. It's a bit of a double-edged sword.

Do you think shows like *Game of Thrones* and modern-day Renaissance fairs have bastardized the ornate lifestyle you guys represent into something nerdy and weird enjoyed by terrible people?

I think I went to a Renaissance fair in California. The thing where they play music and do crafts? Yeah. The American take on the Renaissance is a bit historically inept at times. But it's all with the best intentions, isn't it. *VICE*

Anastasis by Dead Can Dance is out this month on PIAS. See deadcandance.com for tour dates.



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**BEST ALBUM OF THE MONTH:
SWANS**



ADMIRAL CRUMPLE
Dark Sentences
Cataphonic Productions

I think this may be some sort of new blend of rap music that we are lucky enough to get the jump on. This album, which was clearly made at home, opens with horrifying movie dialogue and then launches into warnings about how having babies when you don't make at LEAST \$50,000 a year is completely unacceptable for society. Admiral Crumple's mandate is 100 percent correct, but, really, who wants to hear morally sound people rapping. Even my dad doesn't give a shit about that. It's kind of a bummer all around. Sorry.
FISHER SLICKS

BROTHER ALI
Mourning in America and Dreaming in Color
Rhymesayers

Listen to this while eating a sandwich and see what happens. Bite that bread with feeling, bitch. Mop up that mayo with a strong back, son. Power to the pickle! Brother Ali is a big deal. I bet he owns a nice-ass bathrobe and shit; you can just hear it in his voice.
WANDA WALLACE

IMIUSWI ABORIGINE
Uprising
Lion's Breath Unlimited

There's a style of hip-hop that crosses this subtle line in the sand and steers away from something that sounds good and into spoken-wordish territory. It's not OK. Something about this album reminds me of this voodoo-incense store that I have to walk by

every day on my way home from work. I always make this face as I pass the door to the shop that suggests I am in some way offended by the smell of its wares. I don't know. Seemed funny at the time.
WALT CLITMAN



DAN DEACON
America
Domino

I think I can speak for the rest of the world when I say that we are tired of "partying" and want to just sit here for a while and think about stuff while staring at the wall. Fuck all this jumping up and down and constant racket. I have a headache. Let's just settle down. Shhhhhhh. Shhhhhh. That's nice. Shhhhhh.
LUCY GOOSEY

YEASAYER
Fragrant World
Secretly Canadian

I can't read or hear the word "fragrant" without thinking of musky pubic hairs, and that's basically what this album amounts to: a hot, moist clump of stinky pubis tuft that prevents you from dancing in a cool way because they're all jammed up in your underwear, getting caught in the fibers and hurting you.
BRUISE NEASY

NIKI & THE DOVE
Instinct
Sub Pop

There isn't a second of this album that sounds like anything other than Kate Bush. It's the

combined efforts of a band with the financial backing and studio time needed to recreate all of the Kate Bush songs they wish she had written and recorded but never did. They've taken Kate Bush to a whole new level. This is the BEST cover band I've ever heard. Really. I know this isn't coming across as being sincere, but it is.
FOOFER TINKS

NGUZUNGUZU
Warm Pulse
Red Bull Music Academy

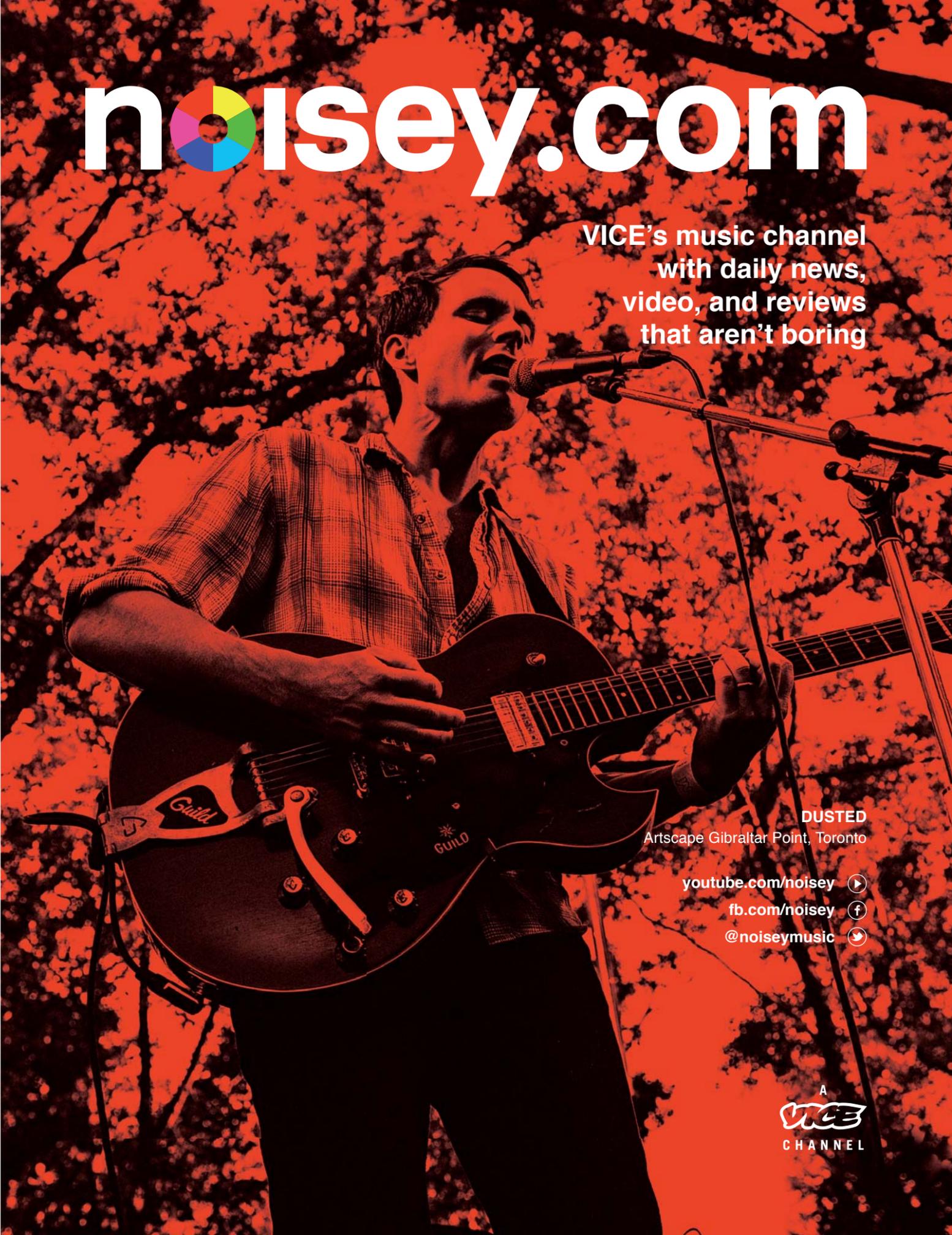
Imagine yourself taking a midafternoon nap on top of a down comforter in a cool, clean room. You're dreaming, and in this dream you're attempting to run through soft green grass, but the blades don't move as you pass through them. They stay clumped together and almost fight to keep you away. Eventually you tire and lie down on top of the grass and sleep. Then you realize you're sleeping within your sleep, and dreaming within your dream. You wake up in the refrigerator with a large pickle in your mouth and find that you've peed your pajamas.
HOUSE MOUSE

JOHN MAUS
A Collection of Rarities and Previously Unreleased Material
Ribbon Music

Lube is a really weird thing for lesbians because you don't really need it (unless you're doing butt stuff), but it just always feels like you should use it for some reason. It adds to the filth factor, or something. One time I bought this peach-flavored lube and could NOT wait to use it on my GF. But something weird was in it and, after getting a glob of it on my lips, I had an allergic reaction; they were all sensitive and puffy for a week. Moral of the story: Lesbians don't need lube, and NO ONE needs this shit-sock of a record.
FRUMUNDA CHEEZE

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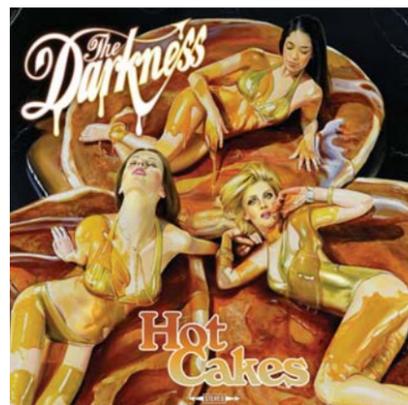
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**WORST ALBUM OF THE MONTH:
THE DARKNESS**



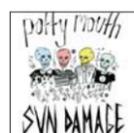
PARQUET COURTS
Light Up Gold
Dull Tools

Boys have it so easy. Walking around with their short hair, dirty T-shirts, and knee-length shorts. Must be so easy breezy, aside from that whole “I have a shrub’s worth of hair growing out of my asshole” thing. **KELLY McCLURE**



SWANS
The Seer
Young God

As I was listening to this epic two-hour-long thing of dark, loud beauty, I watched a medium-size pill bug crawl from the floor to halfway up the wall and then pause dramatically before falling directly into my garbage can. The scenario would have only been made more perfect if I had then fished him out and set him on fire, but I was too busy tossing my head around and thinking about death. **HOT GYNO**



POTTY MOUTH
Sun Damage
Ride the Snake/Feeble Minds/
Puzzle Pieces

Usually when bands send in their albums with a friendly note saying how much the record means to them and how much they like us and thanking us for listening, it’s a scary affair because then we have to come up with the least hateful way to tell them we don’t love them back. In the case of Potty Mouth, we don’t have to do that because they rule. Remember Babes in Toyland and L7? These guys are like that, but something tells me that they don’t smell like crotch rot. **TOONEY FEESH**



NU SENSAE
Sundowning
Suicide Squeeze

I’m not sure what people who live in Canada have to scream about, but those maple-smelling fucks sure are good at it. Not exactly the sort of thing you’d wanna listen to with headphones on, but it’s nice to have on in the background while you’re engaged in some sort of angry activity. Like fucking a goth. **BUFFY SLUMMERS**



FERGUS & GERONIMO
Funky Was the State of Affairs
Hardly Art

Sometimes when I’m bored at home, I’ll just take some scissors into the bathroom and cut my bangs completely off. It makes me feel so free, like a bird. **LISA BONET’S DIVA CUP**



THE FRESH & ONLYS
Long Slow Dance
Mexican Summer

If the next new “look” stolen from what’s worn by actual people with trades and jobs switches from lumberjack to cowboy on the gentle range, this will be the widely embraced soundtrack of their ways and their people as they clip clop along on no horse to nowhere. **CANO BEANS**



THE CAST OF CHEERS
Family
School Boy Error/Cooperative Music

A good lady friend of mine recently said something about a guy she slept with having a “beautiful penis,” and I was like, “What does that mean?” She broke it down: Some peens are really

skinny, or bendy, or don’t stay hard, but a beautiful penis is thick and strong and not too veiny, and will get in there and fill shit up with attitude. This album is not a hideous penis, but it didn’t really hit dem walls. **HOT GYNO**



THE DARKNESS
Hot Cakes
Wind-Up

This review could be a million words long and still not come close to accurately describing the utter terribleness of this album. What is this? Who would want this? You know what this sounds like? No, never mind, I don’t even want to get into it. The only way to unhear this garbage is to slit your wrists with the jewel case it came in. And that shit is tricky; I know because I tried it. **RYAN GOSLING**



CALL OF THE WILD
Leave Your Leather On
Kemado

I liked this intensely until the lead vocalist started singing. The last thing this world needs is an inchworm with an ego who sings like he’s trying to make every song sound like a cover of Electric Six’s “Gay Bar.” I listened to this in its entirety to make certain my assessment was correct, and it’s a fact that every song rules until he starts blabbing away. How embarrassing for you, random handsome man. **NUCLEAR WAR**



BLOC PARTY
Four
Frenchkiss

Wasn’t there some sort of weird controversy about this band not too long ago where the lead singer got booted but didn’t know it? Or like he got kicked

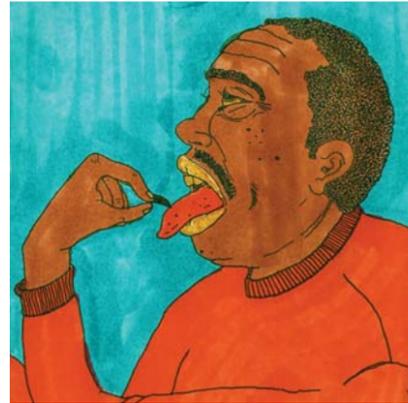


THE RAVEONETTES
OBSERVATOR

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www.theraveonettes.com



**BEST COVER OF THE MONTH:
FERGUS & GERONIMO**

out and learned about it on Wikipedia? Did I dream this? Well, I'm glad that he's still in the band if that WAS the case because, and hopefully by now the rest of the band has realized this, he's really the only thing they've got going for them.
DADDY PANTEES



THE MOTEL LIFE
Those Bruises
Self-released

Have you ever been driving down a stretch of highway in rural Illinois, on the way back home to the city after spending the day with your parents, and a really embarrassing Fall Out Boy or Dashboard Confessional song comes on the radio at that perfect moment when there isn't another car in sight, and it felt so good to be speeding, so you crank it up, roll down the window, and scream-sing along while smoking cigarettes and high-fiving the cornfields all the way home? (I'm literally crying right now.) The moral of my story is that your 20s end, eventually. But for the guys in Motel Life, their rubbery skin and rock-hard boners make them feel like it'll last forever. And that just sounds so nice sometimes.

KAREEM O'SUM YUNG DUDEZ



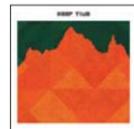
AGALLOCH
Faustian Echoes
Self-released

What would people in bands like this do if there were no devil? What would they have to bellow about? What would they put on their shirts? So many questions. What I do know is that the singer of this band sounds like he's choking on his own spit at all times, which is pretty hard to do while howling and playing guitar at the same time. Maybe the ability to handle your own bodily fluids while performing music is the new gauge for talent. Or maybe the lead singer is just a super talented stroke victim?

DUMB WHOORE



DEEP TIME
S/T
Hardly Art



LIGHTNING LOVE
Blonde Album
Quite Scientific



POOR MOON
S/T
Sub Pop

When the hell is someone going to come up with a foolproof way to determine whether or not apples from the store are bullshit or not? You know? You can't tell by where they were grown, how much shine they have, OR how free of bruises they are. You can stand there with an apple right up in your face for an hour and think you made the right choice, then nope, you get that bitch home, take a bite, and it tastes like a clump of dandruff. Fuck fruit!

FECAL NATURE



BILL FAY
Life Is People
Dead Oceans

Have you ever thought that your life would be so much better if you decided to stay in the shitty town where you grew up instead of getting a too cool 'tude and making a run for the city? Think about it: You could be warming up the pickup truck right now with fuck all to do for the rest of the day except buying some sweet corn at the little wood shack on the corner of Wonderful and Clean.

HEY SALLY



KOKO BEWARE
Something About the Summer
Self-released

How many of these Best Coast, Dum Dum, Vivian Broads bands are there gonna be? This is an honest question, how many? (Also, have you noticed that we've had like four reviews in a row that begin with questions? I just did.) How 'bout this: Why don't you get in

your little deuce coupe and drive it off a cliff? I'm sick of sunshine and being happy. Stop it! Just stop!

FRANKY PEPPERS



I can't think of what this reminds me of, but whatever it is it makes me want to tap dance on a piano.

EVITA CHEETO



When those dark weekend nights roll around and you find yourself drunk on cheap beer, going through page after page of OkCupid profiles and giving everyone who doesn't remind you of a Wes Anderson movie a one-star rating, it's comforting to know that someone out there, somewhere, listens to ONLY Simon & Garfunkel albums and that's, like, her "thing." Even if you never meet her, you know she's out there in some beat-up brown leather shoes, maybe smelling like old paper a little bit. Isn't that nice?

HEY SALLY



CHASE KING
South Tropical Trail
Wonderland Archives



The first lyrics sung on this album are "I want you so bad/ So let me down easy/ This time around." Hate to get all Robert Christgau on you, but Chase King is an exceptionally honest man and that shit resonates. Like, "Hey, cunt, how about not being so cunt for once? Or you could just leave me alone, please, instead of breaking my heart all the time." (Or, if you're afraid of the c-word, replace it with *asshole*. They're right next to each other,

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REVIEWS



after all.) This and piles of other tastefully curated laments hover across a soft-focus recording of strummy, megalayered instrumentation, nonannoying whistling, loops that anyone who doesn't know they're loops thinks are like five additional band members, and botfly melodies that bore into your brain. It's the perfect accompaniment to summer crushes, sweaty crotches, and cheap beer, all coated with a few bottles of Kraft barbecue sauce.

OROTSAC OCCOR



CONVEYOR S/T Paper Garden

If you ever went to a religious school for any amount of time, you may have been subjected to a band called something like Kool Krosses or Holy Dudes that would play good ol' American rock and roll loaded up with tons of scripture and moral messages. I bought a cassette tape by one of these types of bands when I was ten years old because they did this one song about peas that just blew my mind.

BEA NYSE



SFUMATO These Things Between Learn to Love

Here is a prime example of how you can't judge a book by its cover. This was a rogue submission and the press release for it literally says: "I am essentially a drummer who decided to record an album of songs, which I sing with my voice. It's been quite a journey." That makes him sound autistic, and whether or not he is, once this thing started playing I immediately began to feel like one of those scabby whores Jesus would hang with and wash the feet of, all like, "It's cool, we've all made mistakes." Basically it's all of the good "hush now, baby, don't you cry" parts of Pink Floyd songs, complete with some of the most shimmering guitar you've ever heard.

JESUS WEPT

WORST COVER OF THE MONTH: YEASAYER



DELICATE CUTTERS Ring Skybucket

The publicist for this band sent this with attention to "current music editor." I wrote back asking if he ever read mail he received at home addressed to "current tenant" and explained that emails are the same. He wrote back and was basically like, "Oh, well, I've never heard from your publication in six years. Sooooo, will you be reviewing this album?" You know what? I think we will.

KUNTY KRABTREE



DEAD CAN DANCE Anastasis [PIAS] America

This is DCD's first album in 16 years and they're still as smooth and creepy as ever. You can't listen to this and not think about casting spells or burning sage, which is awesome. If you don't think that reading books and having lingering thoughts about bogs and dragons are cool, then this isn't for you. Go eat a microwave burrito and get out of my face, you common piece of trash.

KAYLE MAQLUE



WILLIAM CODY WATSON Bill Murray Bathetic

More and more it's getting to where the less lyrics there are in an album, the more I'll like it. At a certain point you just want everyone to shut the fuck up for a minute, you know? This is an 11-movement instrumental piece dedicated to Bill Murray, which in and of itself is probably the coolest thing to enter my life all year.

By the way, Bill, if you're reading this, we want to do an issue dedicated to you. Call us.

PETER VENKMAN



JANKA NABAY & THE BUBU GANG En Yay Sah Luaka Bop

Well, if the only way to make people stop calling you a "hipster racist" on their blogs is to become a world music enthusiast, then I guess that's what I'll have to do. Look for me in my grass hut that I've built in the middle of my brownstone, shaking all sorts of ass to these diverse jams. HOLLER!

RYAN GOSLING



VARIOUS ARTISTS Just Tell Me That You Want Me: A Tribute to Fleetwood Mac Concord Music Group

It's gotta be awkward when albums like this come out and the band that they're paying tribute to is still very much alive and kicking ass. I hope Stevie Nicks listened to this while snorting coke off a ball sack and then dried her hair with a dream catcher while laughing with the kind of pure joy that can only come from being unfuckable with.

STEVIE PRICKS



GUANO PADANO 2 Ipecac

If you are still obsessed with the *Kill Bill* movies or carry around a suitcase full of guns, not to use them, but because you like the way it makes you feel, then this is for you. What we have here is song after song of weirdo instrumentals that bounce back and forth from desperado (complete with whistling) to washed-out surf. And the best part? The name of the band has SHIT right in it.

TOKYO SLINGSHOT

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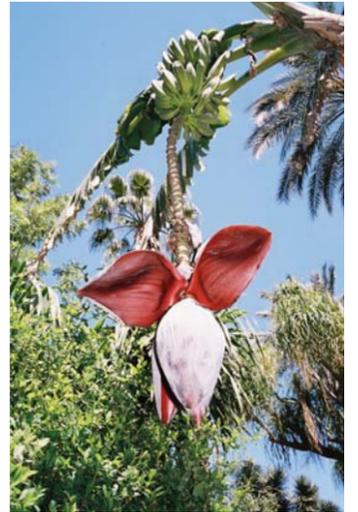
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