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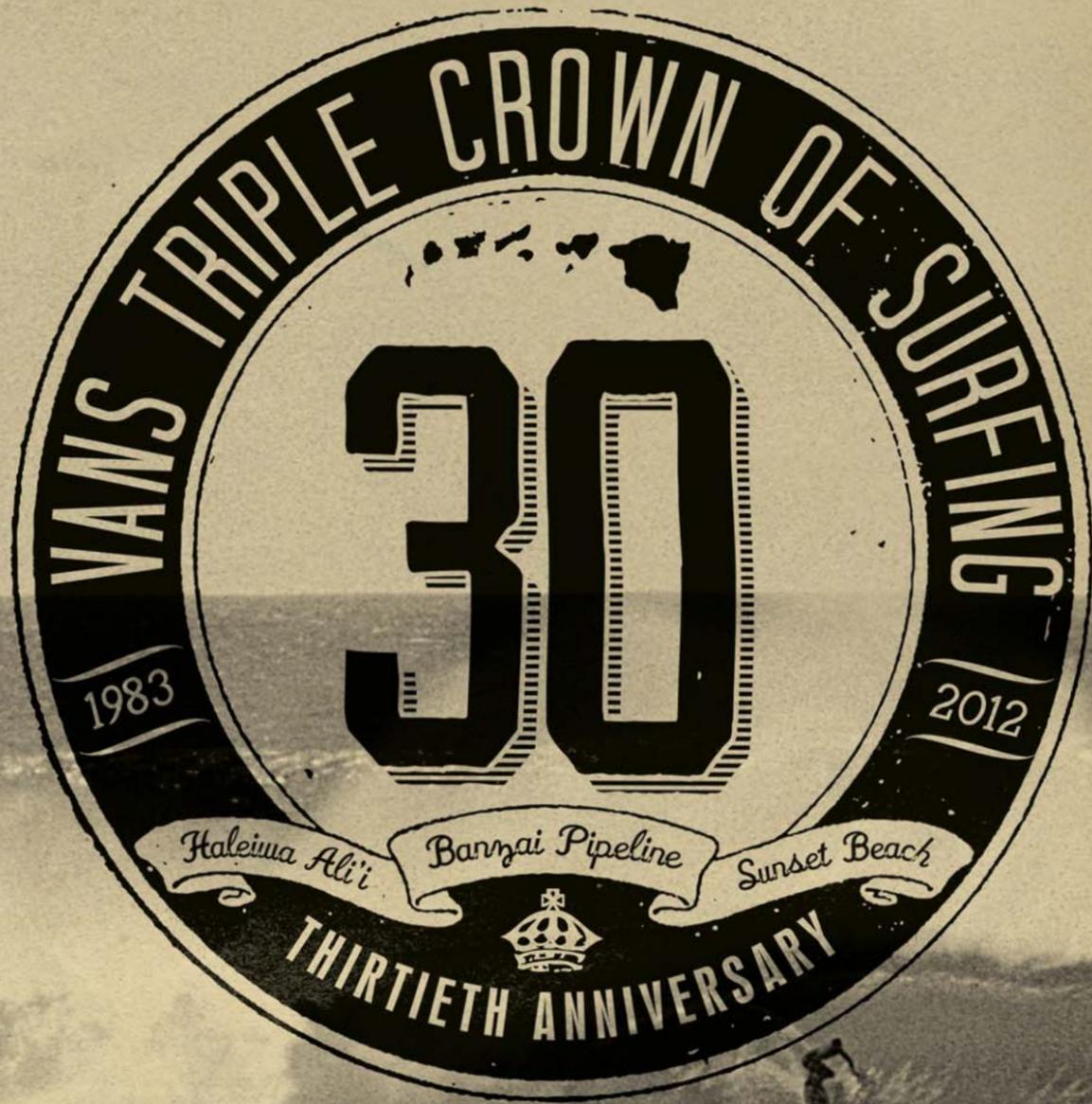
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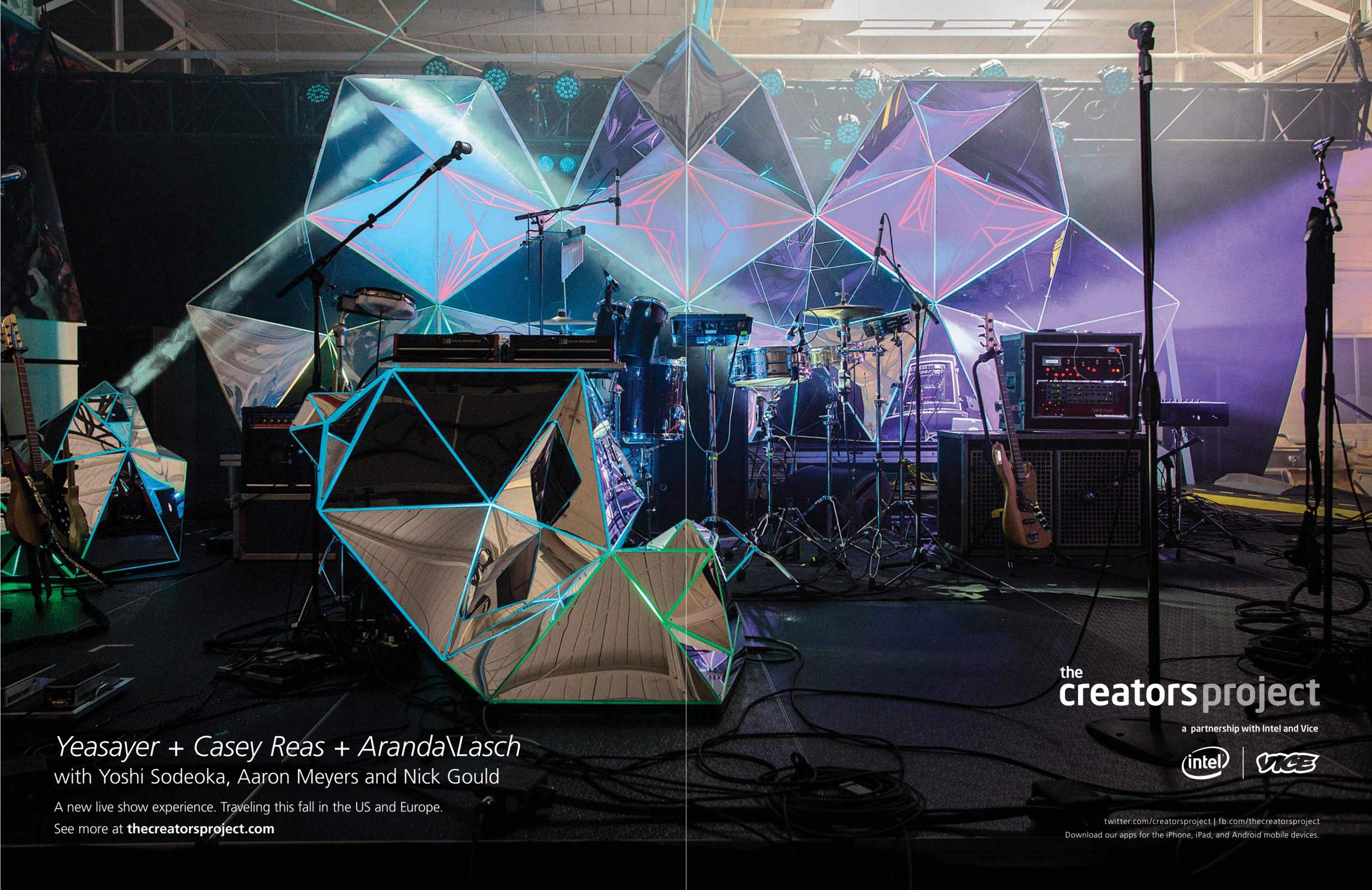
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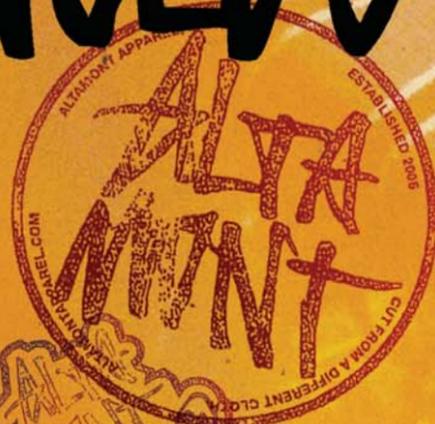
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TABLE OF CONTENTS



Carsten Höller's SOMA (2010), Hamburger Bahnhof-Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin. Photo by Attilio Maranzano

VOLUME 19 NUMBER 9

Cover by Philip Hood

LETTER FROM GUEST EDITOR HAMILTON MORRIS	32	TURTLE BOYS	90
DON'T EAT THOSE CARNITAS		A PUZZLE	96
Unless You Like Giving Your Friends Brain Worms	40	THE NOVELIZER	
WHOA, DUDE, ARE WE INSIDE A COMPUTER RIGHT NOW?		An Interview with Alan Dean Foster on the Art of	
This NASA Scientist Thinks We Could Be	44	Adapting Sci-Fi Movies into Books	100
THIS GUY BENDS HARD RODS WITH HIS MIND		CRIMINAL CHLORINATION	
Meet Jean-Pierre Girard, a Frenchman Who'll Teach You		An Interview with a Clandestine Chemist	104
About Psi Energy for Only \$295	46	PAGES FROM THE LAB NOTEBOOK	
THE CAT OFFERS ITSELF		OF ALEXANDER SHULGIN	
How Burroughs's Beloved Marigay Was Saved from		A Glance Through the History of Psychedelic Chemistry	110
Viral Feline Leukemia Using Ancient Ojibwa Herbs	52	EXCERPTS FROM 'THE PERIODIC TABLE OF ENERGY'	116
GREAT MEDICINAL CHEMISTS OF THE 20TH CENTURY		TEACHING DEBBIE HARRY ABOUT BATH SALTS	
An Homage in Crystal Cube	58	Was Fucking Amazing	134



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TABLE OF CONTENTS



Photo from Carsten Höller's Upside-Down Goggles project (1994–2011). Photo by Carsten Einfeld

Masthead	28	Li'l Thinks: Next Level	126
Employees	30	Combover: White Lie/Black Fly.....	128
Front of the Book.....	34	The Cute Show Page!	130
DOs & DON'Ts	66	Skinema	132
Fashion: Visions of L. Ron.....	74	Reviews.....	136
Fashion: Abducted.....	82	Stockists.....	144
Bob Odenkirk's Page.....	124	Johnny Ryan's Page.....	146

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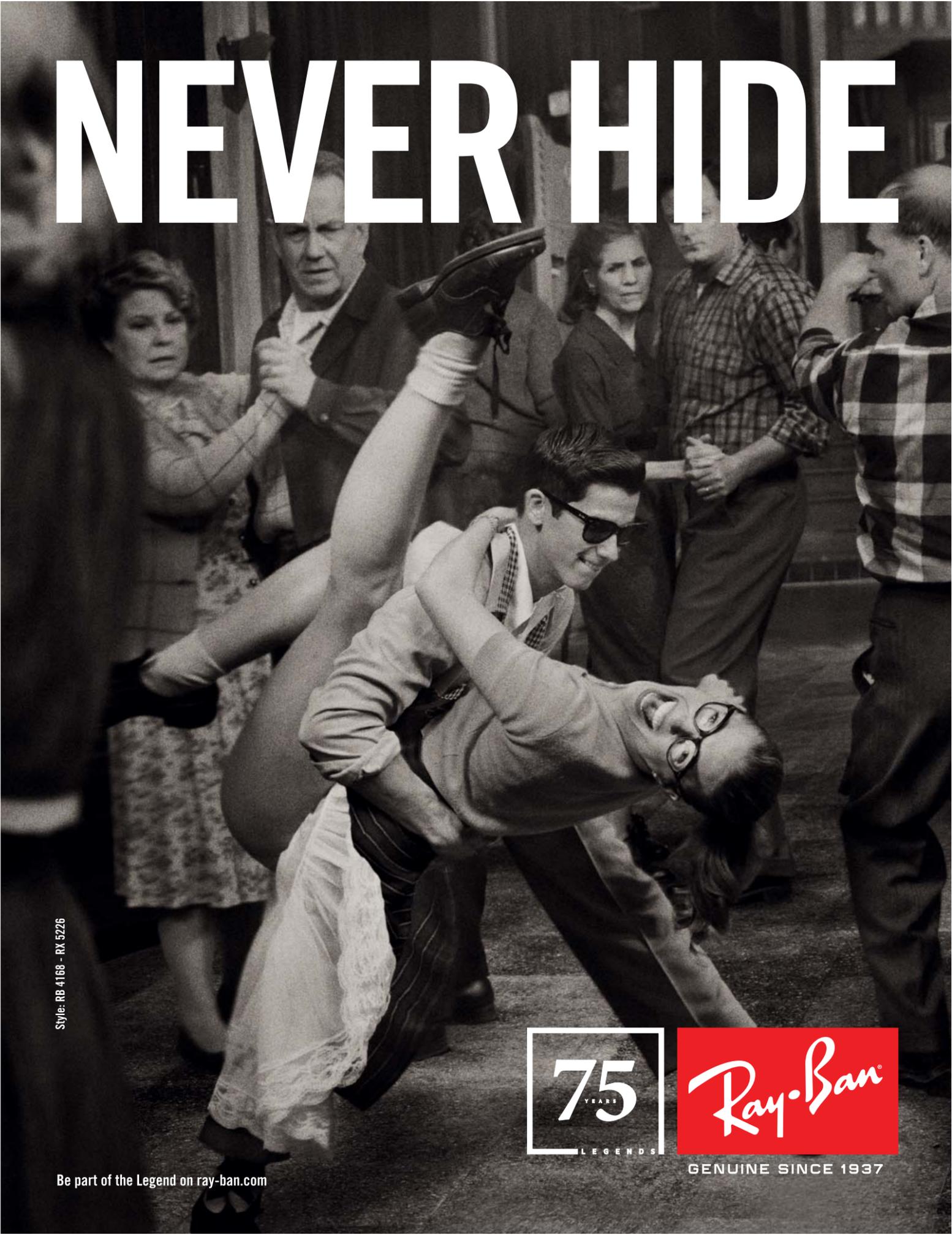
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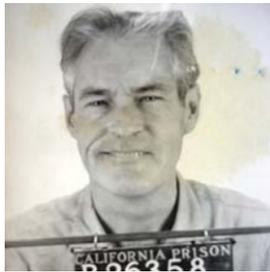
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TIMOTHY LEARY

We're not going to explain anything about who Timothy Leary is or what he did during his lifetime, because that would be redundant. Instead we'll just quote a passage from a manuscript he wrote in prison, which we have obtained exclusive and unpublished excerpts of for this issue: "At the present time the prescientific status of biology, psychology, [and] philosophy is similar to that of chemistry before Mendeleev [*sic*]. The life sciences and the human sciences have amassed an enormous collection of facts but there is no model for systematically inter-relating the facts. Some of the mechanisms of genetics have been discovered, but the overall strategy and direction of the evolutionary process is unknown."

See EXCERPTS FROM THE PERIODIC TABLE OF ENERGY, page 116



PENELOPE GAZIN

Helen Penelope Gazin grew up the middle girl in a demented Tenenbaum family where the mother was a highbrow Connecticutesean fine artist, the father a street magician and punk club owner, and her two brothers a Howard-Stern-fixated GI and the other VICE's comics editor. Unsurprisingly, she is good at both dealing with weirdos and making weird things of her own. Her main deal is doing meticulous stop-motion and "regular ol' drawing"-style animation (which she's done for a bunch of LA bands and *Robot Chicken*), but that's a little tricky to put in a magazine. So we asked her to draw us some portraits of the world's premier novelizer, Alan Dean Foster, and a pair of creepy brain children. Her fruit name is Melon Pineapple-y Raisin.

See THE NOVELIZER, page 100, and LI'L THINKS, page 126



E.T.'S FINGER

Have you ever been glow-fingerbanged by an alien? How about telekinetically masturbated in a way that brings you to orgasm within an inch of your life? Do you want to be? Well, too bad, because aliens hate our guts. They think we're feeble-minded, primordial creatures who operate with purely selfish goals in mind. And they're right. But if you want to get creative with your extraterrestrial fetish, just ask your partner to don this fabulous E.T. glove with a finger that actually lights up when you press it against something (like your prostate). We've been wearing the fucker for two weeks straight, sneaking up behind unsuspecting accountants and jamming it in their ears when they don't return our expense checks on time. Get one now. You'll have fun, we promise.

See YOUR ASSHOLE IMMEDIATELY AFTER READING THIS BIO



JASON MACDONALD

The second-to-last time we saw Jason MacDonald was Christmas morning, and he was belly-down on the stained wall-to-wall carpet that encompasses the living room of his friend's mom's single-family house in Buffalo, New York. He was trying to connect an ancient television to a dust-covered VCR in an effort to ensure we could watch an ass-fetish tape he had just picked up at the flea market. The last time we saw Jason, he peer-pressured us to break into an abandoned mobile home in the Southern California desert, where he took a dump in a five-gallon bucket he found and recorded the entire event. And while we're not sure how he knows so much about extraterrestrials, the alien fashion spread he shot for us is absolutely celestial.

See ABDUCTED, page 82

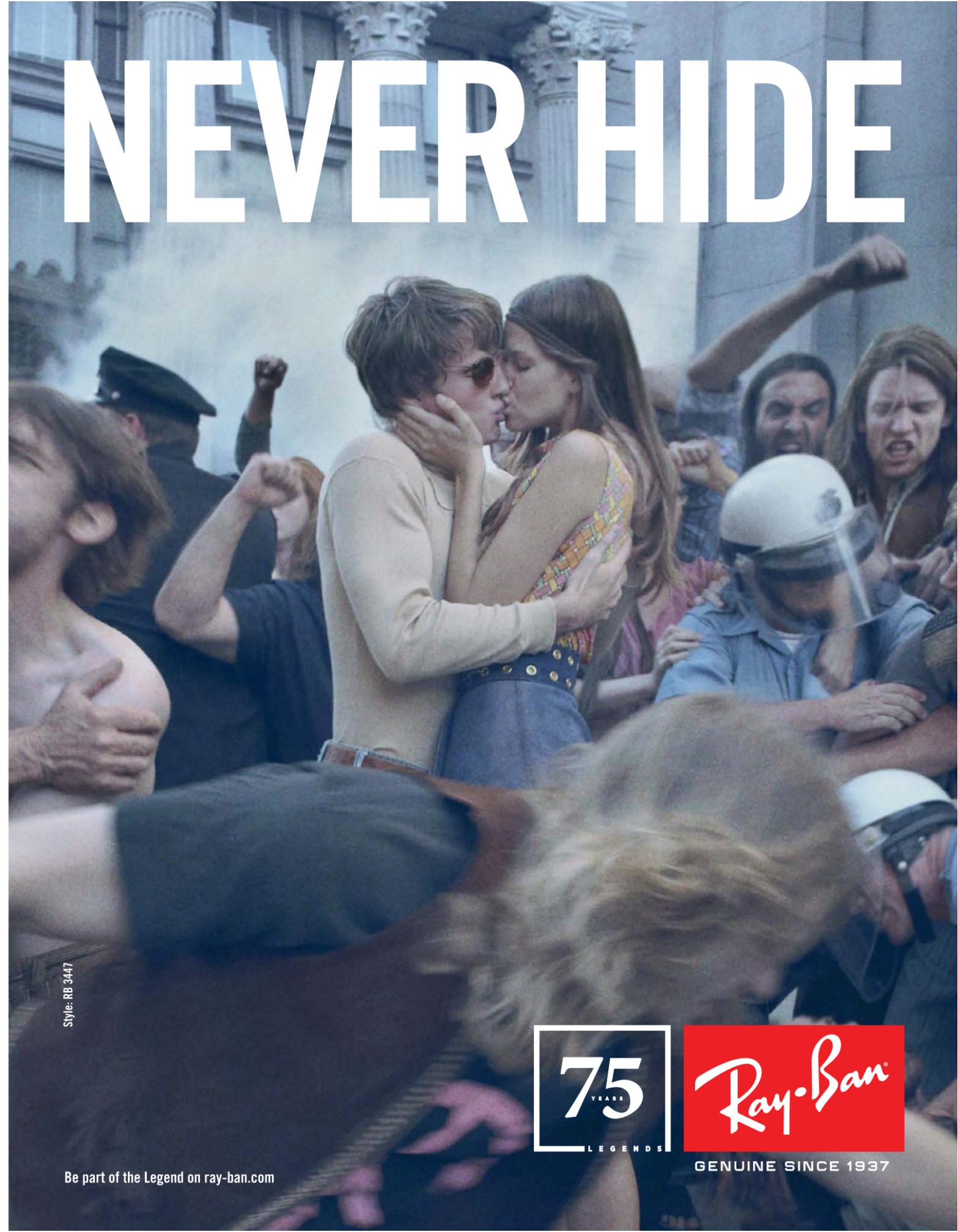


SYLLA SAINT-GUILY

Sylla is a 23-year-old science-journalism student from Paris who has been interning at VICE France for six months. In that time, he's convinced us that he's one of the Frenchiest people of all time—he might as well just sit around all day with his mustache and beret, drinking wine, smoking fancy cigarettes, and eating snails and frog legs. Fortunately, he doesn't conform to the "French people are lazy and always going on strike" stereotype, and for this issue he worked hard to develop his psychic powers with the help of noted psychokinetic metal-rod bender Jean-Pierre Girard, who may or may not be the most insane man we've ever featured in this publication.

See THIS GUY BENDS HARD RODS WITH HIS MIND, page 46

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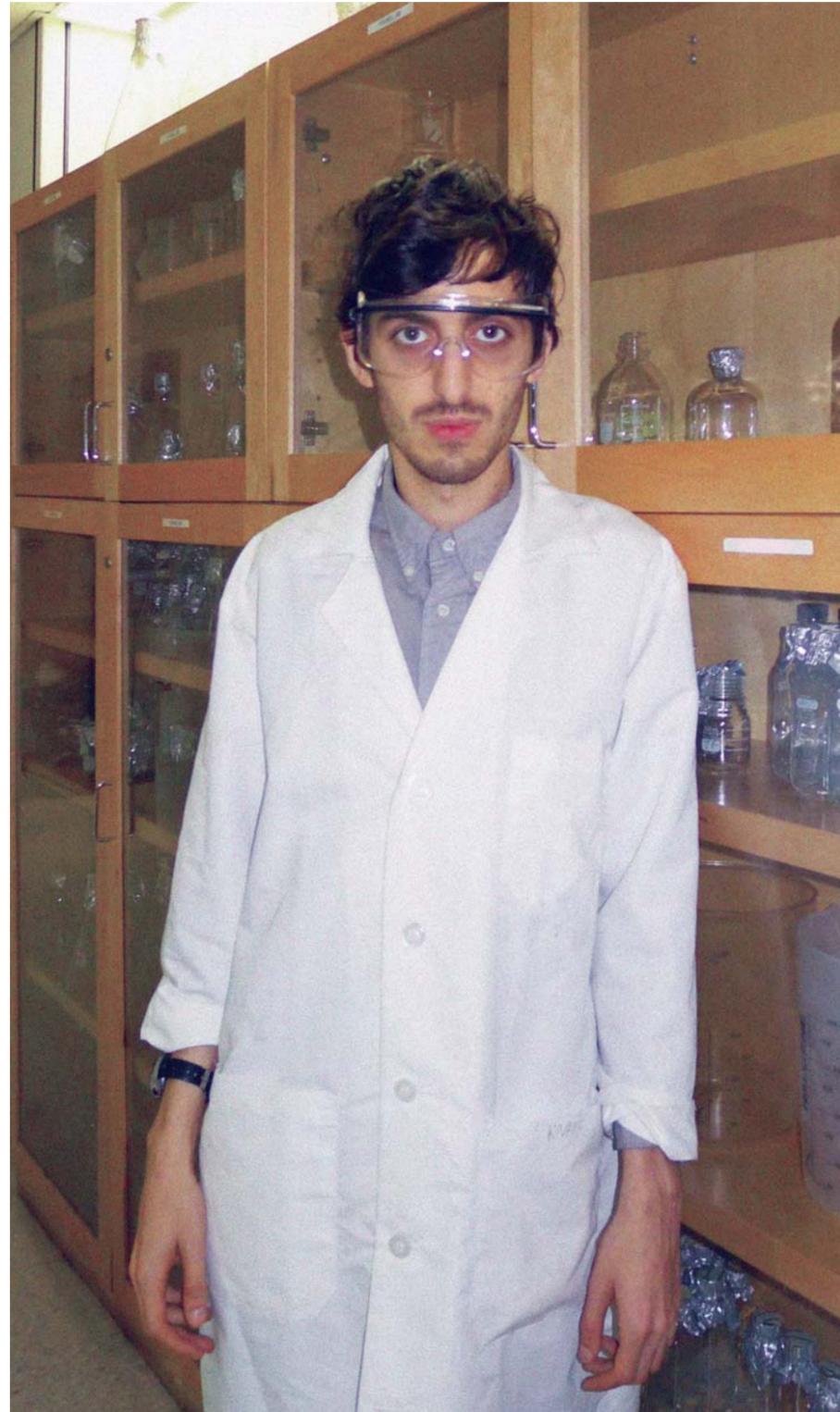


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LETTER FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

BY HAMILTON MORRIS

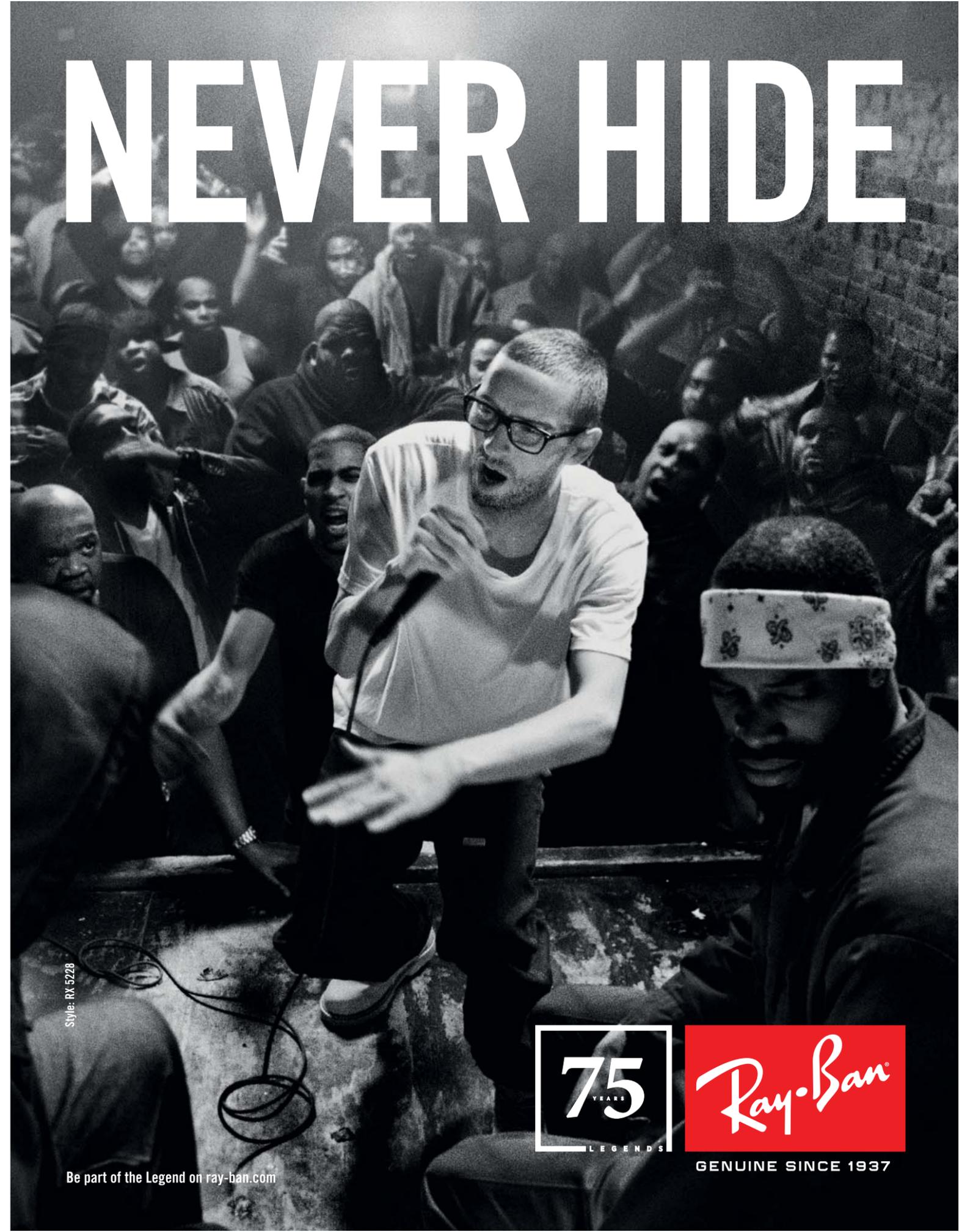


The days of the gentleman scientist have long since passed, the chemical-supply stores have shut their doors, and some states have made unlicensed Erlenmeyer-flask possession a criminal offense. Our collective mouths froth over evidence of an intangible boson while medicinal chemists found guilty of forbidden syntheses are locked in cages and forgotten. The promises of human cloning are squelched by a UN ban, leaving such investigations the sole province of UFO-worshipping sex cults. Science is confined to industry or university, where research is largely dictated by market demands or grant-writing abilities, and experimental freedom is a luxury some toil a lifetime to achieve. That is science—so what is weird science? I'm not talking about using Antarctic krill oil to decalcify your pineal or the guzzling of monoatomic gold. I'm talking about real science—that's a little bit weird. The syringe of chimpanzee semen plunged into a willing human female surrogate; Darwin investigating insectivorous plants with a cane topped by an emerald-eyed, ivory skull; radioreistant tardigrades and the use of cesium-accumulating mushrooms to decontaminate nuclear exclusion zones. Not mad science, not pseudoscience, weird science.

I was denied access to the unpublished pages of Philip K. Dick's *Exegesis* and declined by Ray Bradbury one month before his death. Harlan Ellison possessed not a single unpublished story, and chemists working in industry bridled at this publication's name, stubbornly refusing to acknowledge that a vice is simply a tool, invented by the Greek astronomer Archytas of Tarentum, a disciple of Pythagoras. So I looked deeper and found newer, better things that palpate the tender abdomen of what we call science with a cold, ungloved finger. I also threw in a dash of science fiction for good measure.

Inhale the alkyl nitrites of curiosity and penetrate the puckered sphincter of knowledge, scientia! 

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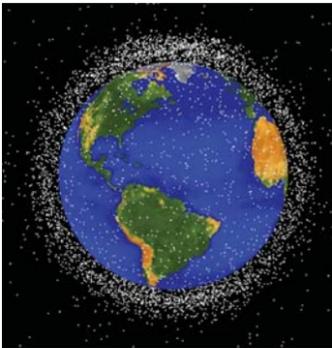
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SPACE GARBAGE MAY TRAP US ON EARTH FOREVER



Humanity has managed to clog up the land, sea, and air with our myriad disgusting waste, so one might think we'd be mindful of letting our junk turd up outer space. But nope—turns out the void that surrounds our planet is rapidly filling up with garbage and debris. If we continue hurling our crap into the great beyond at the current rate, it's going to cause massive problems in the future, namely not being able to launch space-ships through the cloud of dangerous detritus and making it much more difficult, if not impossible, to explore the galaxy. The prospect of humans being stuck on Earth forever terrifies me, but since it's probably going to happen anyway I spoke with NASA astrophysicist Don Kessler—who first proposed the idea that too much trash in Earth's orbit could have some ugly results—to find out exactly what's in store.



BY BRUNO BAYLEY
Image courtesy of NASA

VICE: Was there any forethought about space trash becoming an issue when we first started firing machines and satellites into orbit?
Don Kessler: No. In fact, most people back then believed in the "Big Sky Theory"—that you could launch as much stuff into space as you fancied. They thought that they were shooting things into interplanetary space, but in reality they were cramming them into low Earth orbit.

And the danger, as I understand it, is that the situation will possibly reach a point of no return, at which point space travel will become extremely difficult.

Yes, in the long term. We're not anywhere near the unmanageable stage yet. The physics of things colliding at high velocity is that each collision creates approximately 100 new fragments large enough to break up other satellites. And when a satellite breaks apart, it leads to a wide distribution of smaller fragments that can damage spacecraft.

How small are we talking here? Like the size of a nut or bolt?

Oh, even smaller. They had to replace a window on the STS-7 shuttle because a paint flake roughly a tenth of a millimeter in diameter hit it, puncturing a hole in the windshield about four or five millimeters across. That was enough to make it unsafe for a relaunch.

People have this image of space as a very placid place where objects are floating about peacefully. But these bits of debris are actually moving extremely fast, right?

Yes. Just to stay in orbit you have to be traveling at seven kilometers per second. The fact that all of this debris and crafts are circling in different directions means that collisions happen at speeds from zero to 14 kilometers per second. Take the Iridium 33 and Kosmos-2251 collision in 2009, where two satellites collided at near right angles, basically like cars crashing at an intersection. That got everyone's attention, but it was exactly the sort of thing I had been predicting since 1978.

So how do we prevent ourselves from getting to the point where we're trapped on this doomed planet? It's very similar to climate change; the longer you put off doing anything, the harder it will be to reverse. I would say that for probably 100 years we can continue to do what we are doing now, but after that it will become problematic. Basically, the time to worry about debris in low Earth orbit is now.

Did This Teenage Brainiac Cure Cancer?



BY ALLISON VAN SICLEN
Photo courtesy Jack Andraka

Earlier this year, 15-year-old Jack Andraka entered the prestigious Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, submitting an invention that he hoped would help diagnose cancer. While developing his project, Jack had emailed numerous professors at the Johns Hopkins University to ask if he could use their labs as a workspace. One hundred ninety-seven of them turned him down before Dr. Anirban Maitra agreed. It's a good thing Dr. Maitra did, too. If he hadn't we may have never known that Jack's creation is 160 times faster, 100 times less expensive, and 400 times more sensitive than previous cancer-testing procedures. Deservedly, it took first prize at Intel's competition in May, and more important, it has the potential to revolutionize the way we diagnose and treat the disease. These days Jack—who isn't even old enough to have a driver's license—is continuing to make the rest of the world's teenage population look like lazy jack-offs by furthering his research at Johns Hopkins and running marathons to fund cancer research. We asked him how he got so smart.



VICE: How did you first become interested in cancer research?

Jack Andraka: I first got interested in pancreatic cancer when my close family friend died because of it. I found this paper called the "Compendium of Biomarkers," which included 4,000 different biomarkers for pancreatic cancer. As I was going through it, I eventually found mesothelin on that list. You have really high levels of mesothelin if you have pancreatic, ovarian, or lung cancer, which are often fatal, but mesothelin can also be detected in these things called precursor lesions before the cancer is actually malignant.

So your device measures mesothelin levels. How does it work?

It uses a tiny black strip of paper called filter paper dipped into a solution of carbon nanotubes. You apply one-sixth of a drop of a patient's blood to the strip. And then you use this thing that I made, which kind of looks like an iPod, to measure the reading.

And you're working to distribute these strips all over the world?

I want it to be available at every doctor's office so your levels could be checked every week. I've already been contacted by several different companies who want to license it, and I'm also thinking about starting my own company.

ERIC HAZE, ARTIST / DESIGNER
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ALIENS DO IT BETTER

For decades men have been jerkin' it to fantasies of alien female characters in TV shows and movies who are basically just hot human women wearing uncomfortable costumes or painted some ridiculous color. Transferring this idea into real life has remained in the realm of fantasy for guys without very accommodating girlfriends, but that will soon change when brothel owner Dennis Hof finally opens his "Alien Cathouse," a sci-fi themed whorehouse just down the road from Area 51.



BY JAMIE CLIFTON
Photo courtesy of Dennis Hof



Its grand opening date is still to be determined, but when I called up Dennis—whose infamous flagship brothel, the Moonlite Bunny Ranch, was the setting of HBO's reality show *Cathouse*—he was more than eager to talk about all the cosplay options he's planning for his new venture, his personal alien fantasies, and what Carrie Fisher is like.

VICE: How did you come up with this alien whorehouse idea?

Dennis Hof: I was in the Beverly Hills Hotel with Heidi Fleiss, the famed Hollywood madam, and a client

came up to me and said, "Dennis, you know what I want? I want to see Cami Parker [a star of *Cathouse*] dressed up as Princess Leia." And I said, "Well, Carrie Fisher is a good friend. Maybe we can get a costume." We were just joking around, but when he walked away, Heidi said, "Dennis, open up an alien cathouse. There's an old brothel up by Area 51, that would be perfect."

Have you ever fantasized about doing it with an alien lady?

Oh yeah. I've always liked the Orion sex slaves from *Star Trek*. I'm over

the Princess Leia thing now, though, because I know Carrie Fisher personally. Oh, and I'm starting to really like the *Avatar* girls, too.

Which characters have made it into the brothel lineup?

Well, we have a wardrobe room, where the girls can dress up in any costume the clients want. We've got characters from *Avatar*, *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, and all of those kinds of things. We also bought a load of costumes for the guys, to complete the role-play aspect, if they want to get into that. They can be Captain Kirk, Han Solo, or Darth Vader.

Are there themed rooms?

Absolutely. So far, we've got a *Star Wars* room, an *Avatar* room, and a *Star Trek* room—the big three. We also have one room completely devoted to Princess Leia, for any guy who's ever had a sex fantasy about her. It'll have all the memorabilia in there. We're even going to have Carrie Fisher come down to the grand opening. No matter who you are, it's more than likely you've had a fantasy about banging Princess Leia. Now is your time. You want to be Captain Kirk in a harem of alien sex slaves? Great. You want Princess Leia to blow you? Absolutely, no problem.

Humanity's Beta Versions

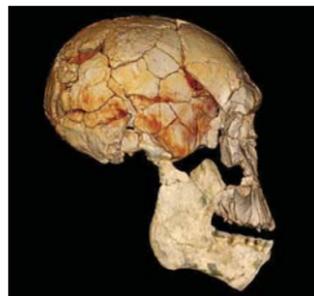


BY HARRY CHEADLE
Photo by Fred Spoor

People who aren't scientists tend to view evolution as a linear series of incremental improvements, like one of those illustrations of a fish climbing out of the water and growing legs, then walking upright, then holding a briefcase. The truth, however, is much messier.

We are the way we are today as a result of millions of years of random (and sometimes unhelpful) mutations. Humanity's rambling developmental path was reaffirmed last month when research published in *Nature* confirmed that around 2 million years ago there were multiple species of *Homo* existing in the same region of Africa simultaneously, and not just our direct ancestor *Homo erectus*. It was one giant *Homo* party, if you will.

The article provides an overview of several fossil fragments, including an important portion of a jawbone that provides proof, the authors say, that an upright monkey scientist had named *Homo rudolfensis* was definitely a separate species (one with



a distinctly flat face) from our *erectus* forebears. These two species lived alongside a third would-be human ancestor known as *Homo habilis* during a period of our evolution that we still don't adequately understand.

"The real gap is the period between 2 and 3 million years ago," said Fred Spoor, one of the paper's authors. "The areas where these ancestors of ours lived didn't have the right conditions to produce the fossils we're after."

This period of evolution is especially important—it's during this time that we transitioned from upright-walking chimps to the tool-using world-conquerors we are today.

Chances are we'll continue to discover new varieties of almost-humans for some time to come, as we did in 2003, when the remains of four-foot-tall humans called *Homo floresiensis* were found in Indonesia. The "Hobbits," as they're known, used tools flourished at some point in the past 100,000 years—a blink of the eye, archaeologically speaking. Spoor said they were another example of the unexpected turns evolution can take.

"Animals isolated on their own islands can have their own crazy development," Spoor said. "We say, 'Oh well, this isn't going to happen to human ancestors,' but it just shows that even relatively late, this [diversity] still happened in human evolution, too. We're increasingly finding out how this happens. It's just a matter of finding the fossils."

HAKEEM NICKS, NFL WIDE RECEIVER

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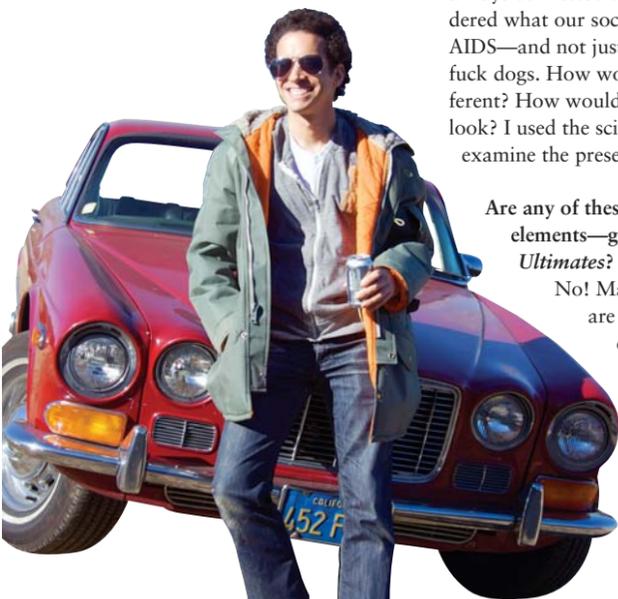


COMIC BOOK STAR SAM HUMPHRIES AND HIS POST-AIDS PANSEXUAL WONDERLAND

Back in February, Marvel Comics announced that they were installing Sam Humphries as the head writer of *The Ultimates*, the alternate-universe version of *The Avengers*. The notable thing about this was that Sam began his career with a self-published comic called *Our Love Is Real* that takes place in a future where people are having sex with dogs, vegetables, and even crystals. The unexpectedly tender story of a violent, dog-loving cop falling in love with a “mineral-sexual” hippie became a cult hit and seems to have launched a brilliant career. Pretty soon, he’ll have to deal with salivating fan-boy interviewers asking him all kinds of questions about the minutiae of what happens when Iron Man has to take a dump in the middle of a fight, but before he ascends to respectability I wanted to ask him a few questions about a topic near and dear to both of our hearts: bestiality.



BY MITCHELL SUNDERLAND
Photo courtesy Sam Humphries



VICE: What inspired you to write a story about a dog-fucking cop?
Sam Humphries: It came from a logical place. I used to read a blog called *dolphinsex.org*. It was written by a guy who claimed to have an ongoing love affair with a dolphin in the Gulf of Mexico. Two things struck me: a) How do you go about having sexual intercourse with a dolphin? and b) Was this a two-way street—a physical and emotional relationship between two intelligent mammals? This was a point of view that blew my mind and led to *Our Love Is Real*.

So where do you come down on the question? Is it OK to be in love with dogs or crystals?
It’s wrong to start a relationship with somebody that can’t talk back.

Does your character’s controversial sexual relationship with minerals serve as a commentary on how society views sexual minorities?
No. *Our Love is Real* is a story about love as a transformative force in our lives.

AIDS no longer exists in the world of *Our Love Is Real*. Why did you include this element in the story?

I came of age in an era where AIDS dominated the conversations about sexuality. As I grew older, I realized that it wasn’t always this way; in the late 60s and early 70s, sexuality wasn’t always connected to disease and death. I wondered what our society would be like without AIDS—and not just in a future where people fuck dogs. How would the 90s have been different? How would our society and culture look? I used the sci-fi genre as a crowbar to examine the present.

Are any of these—we’ll call them strange elements—going to manifest in *Ultimates*?

No! Marvel has characters who are literally worth a billion dollars. I’m not going to propose a 12-issue series where Captain America becomes a heroin addict.

That’s a shame because I’d definitely read it if you did.



Anti-Life Sciences



BY EDWARD PERELLO
Illustration via iStockphoto/daver2002ua

In February, London’s Royal Society released a report titled “Neuroscience, Conflict, and Security” that highlights how all those chemicals sloshing around in your brain can be manipulated for diabolical ends. The report was a particular point of interest in July among a group of scientists and security experts who convened in Geneva to discuss biological warfare, including the latest terrifying developments in neurological death-dealing.

Shortly after the meeting, I met with Professor Malcolm Dando from the University of Bradford, a biologist turned international security guru and one of the minds behind the Royal Society’s report. He said one of the main issues regarding chemical weapons is that it is permissible for law enforcement agencies to use them for “allowable peaceful purposes,” such as riot control. “Standard agents that affect peripheral sense organs are something that police forces think they need,” he said. “That’s fine, but what I don’t agree with is chemicals acting upon the central nervous system—they might have very dangerous effects.”

Take fentanyl, for instance, an opiate that acts on the central nervous system and causes unconsciousness. It’s supposedly ideal for riot control, but back in 2002, when Russian cops used it to end a hostage situation in a Moscow theater, fentanyl was responsible for the deaths of 117 civilians. “Thinking that you can safely use chemicals in those kinds of circumstances is nonsense at the present time,” Dando said. “You just can’t predict where the concentrations of the gas will be in a space and you can’t predict what the impact will be on any particular person.”

Dando imagined a number of other ways in which well-intentioned neuroscience research can be misused, including developing artificially intelligent remote-control drones. “At the moment we have people sitting thousands of miles away from Afghanistan guiding the operations of drones,” he said. “As it gets more and more difficult for people to understand the data that’s coming back from them, and to operate them, there would be a move to make them more autonomous.” Skynet, anyone?

I asked him if there’s any hope of avoiding a future in which sentient drones and mind-control viruses roam the air. “We are not slaves to our technology,” he replied. “What happens in the application of our technology depends on what we decide we want to happen, which is contingent on social processes. If we want to avoid these kinds of nasty, hostile applications of our science and technology, then it is up to us to stop it.”

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DON'T EAT THOSE CARNITAS

Unless You Like Giving Your Friends Brain Worms

BY KINSEY PAULSON

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
MARCO KLEFISCH

Gloria (name changed to protect the patient's identity) was afraid. The doctors told her she had worms in her brain.

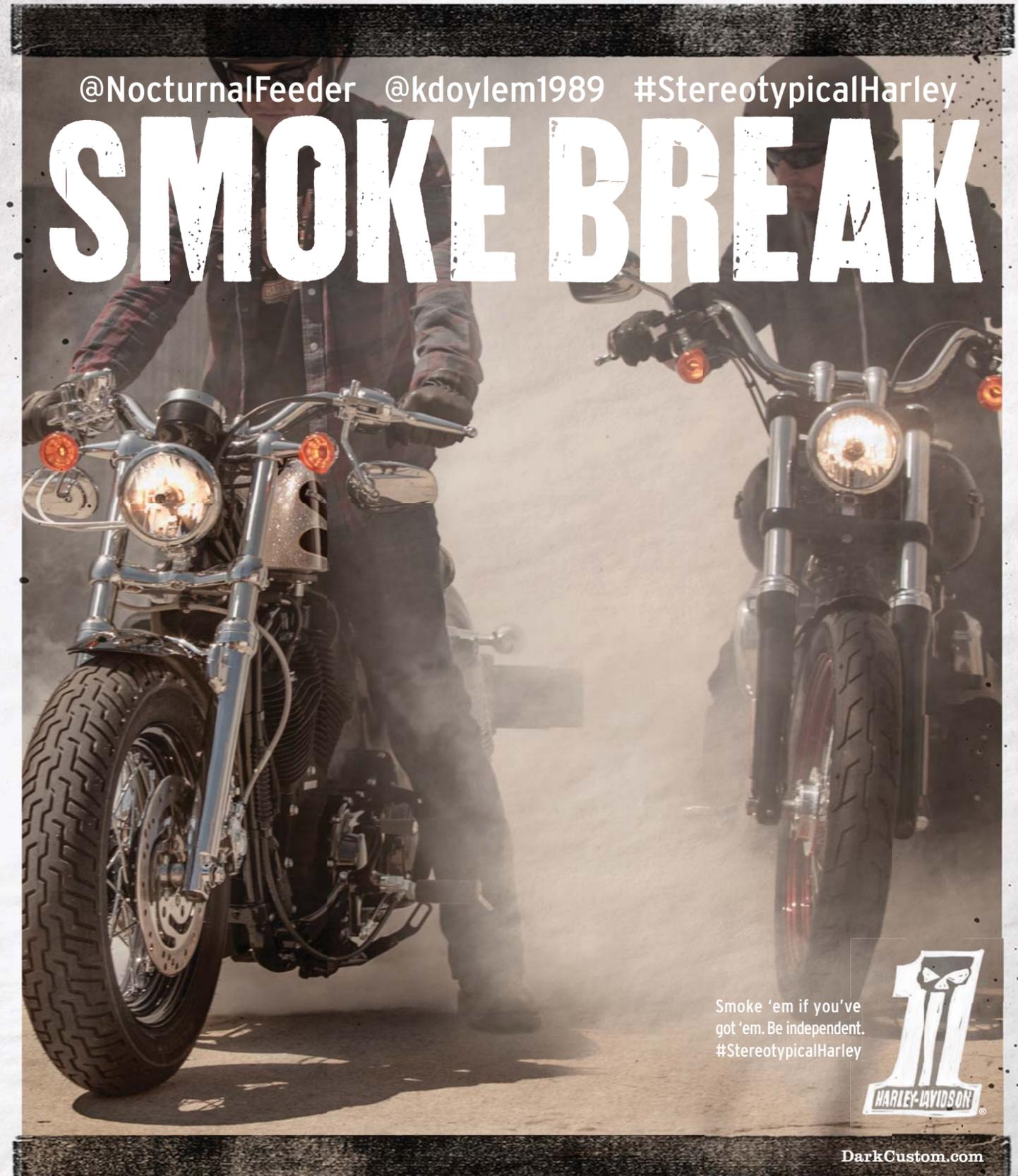
After years of debilitating headaches and a recent bout of paralysis that resulted in a flurry of misdiagnoses, in 2010 a CT scan revealed that parasites had infested Gloria's cerebral tissue. This meant she needed surgery—brain surgery.

Taenia solium, colloquially known as pork tapeworms, are terrifying parasites. These tiny nutrient-starved horrors use scythelike appendages to claw their way into the

brains of humans. Once there, they bore cysts through the gray matter in much the same way that a garden-variety worm tunnels through an apple.

Neurocysticercosis—the condition caused by pork tapeworms—is the leading cause of epilepsy and seizures worldwide. In third-world countries throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America, there are entire villages that display symptoms of the disease. You've probably never heard of it, and that's because it hasn't been a problem for the first world—until now.

According to a recent study by the Center for Disease Control, neurocysticercosis is a growing problem in the US, where 1,900 people are diagnosed with brain parasites every year. For whatever reason, the majority of cases in Southern California occur mostly among poor Latino immigrants.

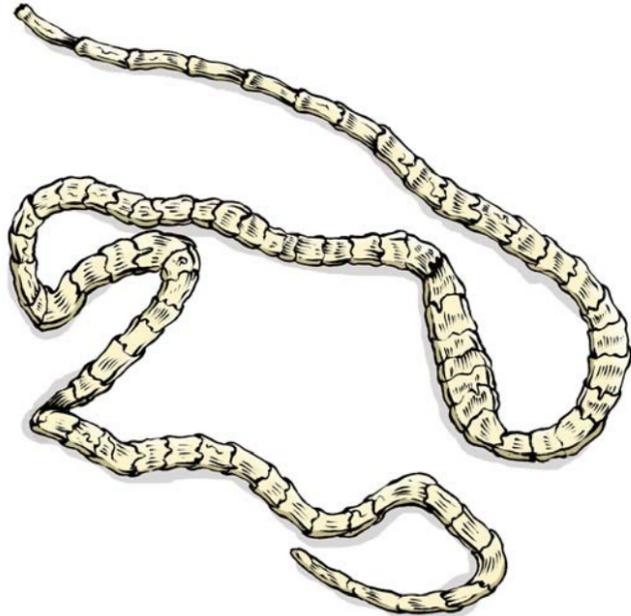


Harley-Davidson® Forty-Eight™ with Hard Candy Custom™ Black and Silver Flake paint. Right: the new Street Bob™ with custom red wheels.
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Burnouts look great on film but in the real world are hard on tires, wheels, and other mechanical parts.

DarkCustom.com

It works something like this: You grab drunk grub at a taco truck with your friend. He orders the nasty carnitas, which unfortunately happen to contain pork tapeworm larvae that soon take up residence in his intestine. At least one of these larvae has a good chance of growing into a horrifying 20-foot tapeworm monster. This tapeworm produces eggs, thousands of which pass through the host's anus every day.



Your buddy doesn't wash his hands after defecating, and the next time you see him, he facepalms you, as bros sometimes do, and in the process touches your lips. The eggs, which are much smaller than larvae, enter your mouth, hatch, and the baby tapeworms eventually make their way to your brain.

Congratulations! You've contracted brain parasites.

Often people moving across borders, such as migrant workers, are unwitting carriers for pork tapeworms, which are transported in their hosts' guts. It's difficult to diagnose tapeworm infestation, because most victims are unaware that parasites are wriggling around in their bodies, said Patricia Wilkins, a scientist with the CDC.

Tapeworms have developed a mysterious chemical mechanism to keep the human immune system from attacking them while they're living in your brain—scientists still don't fully understand how it works. Even more revolting, people who have contracted brain parasites can live for decades without any symptoms of neurocysticercosis. Unfortunately, it's when these squirmy little guys die that issues arise.

"While it's alive, it's a problem, but when it starts to die, it's a bigger problem," Dickson Despommier, a retired Columbia professor of microbiology, said. After the larvae perish in the brain, they calcify, and the

immune system starts its attack. If not treated, the calcified larvae can cause swelling in the brain, which often leads to epilepsy, among other symptoms.

The main symptoms of neurocysticercosis—debilitating headaches and chronic seizures—are regularly misdiagnosed. Gloria said that in the late 1980s, she complained to American doctors of migraines so agonizing they made her vomit and lose consciousness. They prescribed her Tylenol. She carried the tapeworm for another 20 years before learning of her symbiote's existence.

Gloria's story is typical when it comes to neurocysticercosis infections, said Darvin Scott Smith, chief infectious diseases doctor at Redwood City Kaiser Hospital.

Many physicians are unaware of neurocysticercosis or its symptoms, which means it frequently goes undiagnosed. The bright side is that, if caught early enough, the disease is manageable and even preventable, and treatments such as albendazole and certain steroids are relatively inexpensive. But if the worms remain unchecked until their death, costly and invasive brain surgery is the only way to remove their remnants.

The number of neurocysticercosis cases has remained relatively constant since 2001, when there were around 400 recorded hospitalizations in California. Wilkins said that even though it's undeniable that the disease is no longer confined to the third world, the state of California has remained unresponsive to the issue because there isn't enough funding to tackle every ailment that infiltrates a community. Health officials must pick and choose which diseases will require the most resources. And so far, despite its extremely contagious nature, neurocysticercosis has not been at the top of their list.

Only five states—New York, California, Texas, Oregon, and Illinois—track the disease, and even then the data is inconsistent. As a result, not much is known about tapeworm outbreaks in the US, or the parasites themselves. Scientists still consider much of their life cycle to be a mystery. In a 2000 proposal filed by the World Health Organization, doctors urged the international community to monitor neurocysticercosis. They argued that the disease could be eradicated, and that keeping accurate statistics was necessary to monitor its progression. The petition has not experienced much success.

In early January, Dr. Smith celebrated his birthday in the operating room of Kaiser Hospital, observing Gloria's brain surgery. Surgeons trimmed Gloria's hair, cut through a portion of her skull, and gingerly peeled away the hard, outer coating of the brain. Hours later, Smith watched as a neurosurgeon plucked the calcified tapeworm larvae from Gloria's head.

Like most patients, before she was diagnosed Gloria had never heard of brain worms. She still isn't sure who infected her with the eggs. It could have been a stranger or one of her loved ones. She'll never know. Her family refused testing. There's a good chance the host remains undiagnosed and contagious, spreading the disease to those they encounter—thousands of eggs at a time. *VICE*



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WHOA, DUDE, ARE WE INSIDE A COMPUTER RIGHT NOW?

This NASA Scientist Thinks We Could Be

BY BEN MAKUCH
ILLUSTRATION BY JULIAN GARCIA



Two years ago, Rich Terrile appeared on *Through the Wormhole*, the Science Channel's show about the mysteries of life and the universe. He was invited onto the program to discuss the theory that the human experience can be boiled down to something like an incredibly advanced, metaphysical version of *The Sims*.

It's an idea that every college student with a gravity bong and *The Matrix* on DVD has thought of before, but Rich is a well-regarded scientist, the director of the Center for Evolutionary Computation and Automated Design at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and is currently writing an as-yet-untitled book about the subject, so we're going to go ahead and take him seriously.

The essence of Rich's theory is that a "programmer" from the future designed our reality to simulate the course of what the programmer considers to be ancient history—for whatever reason, maybe because he's bored.

According to Moore's Law, which states that computing power doubles roughly every two years, all of this will be theoretically possible in the future. Sooner or later, we'll get to a place where simulating a few billion people—and making them believe they are sentient beings with the ability to control their own destinies—will be as easy as sending a stranger a picture of your genitals on your phone.

This hypothesis—versions of which have been kicked around for centuries—is becoming the trippy notion of the moment for philosophers, with people like Nick Bostrom, the director of Oxford University's Future of Humanity Institute, seriously considering the premise.

Until recently, the simulation argument hadn't really attracted traditional researchers. That's not to say he is the first scientist to predict our ability to run realistic simulations (among others, Ray Kurzweil did that in his 1999 book *The Age of Spiritual Machines*), but he is one of the first to argue we might already be living inside one. Rich has even gone one step further by attempting to prove his theories through physics, citing things like the observable pixelation of the tiniest matter and the eerie similarities between quantum mechanics, the mathematical rules that govern our universe, and the creation of video game environments.

Just think: Whenever you fuck up there could be the intergalactic version of an overweight 13-year-old Korean boy controlling you and screaming "Shit!" into an Xbox headset. It sort of takes the edge off things.

#43 from the series Natural Peace by Julian Garcia.

VICE: When did you first surmise that our reality could be a computer simulation?

Rich Terrile: Unless you believe there's something magical about consciousness—and I don't, I believe it's the product of a very sophisticated architecture within the human brain—then you have to assume that at some point it can be simulated by a computer, or in other words, replicated. There are two ways one might accomplish an artificial human brain in the future. One of them is to reverse-engineer it, but I think it would be far easier to evolve a circuit or architecture that could become conscious. Perhaps in the next ten to 30 years we'll be able to incorporate artificial consciousness into our machines.

We'll get there that fast?

Right now the fastest NASA supercomputers are cranking away at about double the speed of the human brain. If you make a simple calculation using Moore's Law, you'll find that these supercomputers, inside of a decade, will have the ability to compute an entire human lifetime of 80 years—including every thought ever conceived during that lifetime—in the span of a month.

That's depressing.

Now brace yourself: In 30 years we expect that a PlayStation—they come out with a new PlayStation every six to eight years, so this would be a PlayStation 7—will be able to compute about 10,000 human lifetimes simultaneously in real time, or about a human lifetime in an hour.

There's how many PlayStations worldwide? More than 100 million, certainly. So think of 100 million consoles, each one containing 10,000 humans. That means, by that time, conceptually, you could have more humans living in PlayStations than you have humans living on earth today.

So there's a possibility we're living in a super advanced game in some bloodshot-eyed goober's PlayStation right now?

Exactly. The supposition here is how do you know it's not 30 years in the future now and you're not one of these simulations? Let me go back a step here. As scientists, we put physical processes into mathematical frameworks, or into an equation. The universe behaves in a very peculiar way because it follows mathematics. Einstein said, "The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it's comprehensible." The universe does *not* have to work that way. It does not have to be so easy to abbreviate that I can basically write down a few pages of equations that contain enough information to simulate it.

The other interesting thing is that the natural world behaves exactly the same way as the environment of *Grand Theft Auto IV*. In the game, you can explore Liberty City seamlessly in phenomenal detail. I made a calculation of how big that city is, and it turns out it's a million times larger than my PlayStation 3. You see exactly what you need to see of Liberty City when you need to see it, abbreviating the entire game universe into the console. The universe behaves in the exact same way. In quantum mechanics, particles do not have a definite state unless they're being observed. Many theorists have spent a lot of time trying to figure out how you explain this. One explanation is that we're living within a simulation, seeing what we need to see when we need to see it.

Which would explain why there have been reports of scientists observing pixels in the tiniest of microscopic images.

Right. The universe is also pixelated—in time, space, volume, and energy. There exists a fundamental unit that you cannot break down into anything smaller, which means the universe is made of a finite number of these units. This also means there are a finite number of things the universe can be; it's not infinite, so it's computable. And if it only behaves in a finite way when it's being observed, then the question is: Is it being computed? Then there's a mathematical parallel. If two things are mathematically equivalent, they're the same. So the universe is mathematically equivalent to the simulation of the universe.

Do you play video games?

I do, actually, and I've played *The Sims* before, but coming up with this theory was the result of a combination of several things. I'm a planetary scientist, so I think a lot about the future of technology and where it might lead us. I also do a lot of work in evolutionary computation and artificial intelligence, where I'm dealing with the nature of consciousness. Plus, I began thinking about religion, or what you believe about the universe if you're an atheist, which means you have to believe there's an alternative origin story independent of a creator. And we have a pretty good one: the Big Bang. But you also have to think about engineering and if a creator could exist in our current universe. And if so, what are the requirements of said creator? After thinking about it, I realized that a creator of a universe is capable of changing the laws of physics and sculpting whatever this universe is, which I can do in a computer simulation. In fact, I'll maybe be able to do that soon with conscious beings.

Beings with whom you could interact?

Maybe, or maybe I'd just let them go. They'd be living out their lives in an incredibly short amount of time. Maybe I could change the physical laws. I could make them live in places both hospitable and inhospitable. I could make it so that they're completely alone—perhaps that's a boundary condition for us, and explains why there are no aliens.

You seem really at peace with this concept. When I first heard about your theory I was incredibly bummed but, obviously, intrigued.

I find great inspiration in it, and I'll tell you why: It tells me that we're at the threshold of being able to create a universe—a simulation—and that we in turn could be living inside a simulation, which could be in turn yet another simulation. And our simulated beings could also create simulations. What I find intriguing is, if there is a creator, and there will be a creator in the future and it will be us, this also means if there's a creator for our world, here, it's also us. This means we are both God and servants of God, and that we made it all. What I find inspiring is that, even if we are in a simulation or many orders of magnitude down in levels of simulation, somewhere along the line something escaped the primordial ooze to become us and to result in simulations that made us. And that's cool. *UCEB*



Jean-Pierre Girard in his teaching uniform, showing off his physique.

THIS GUY BENDS HARD RODS WITH HIS MIND

Meet Jean-Pierre Girard, a Frenchman Who'll Teach You About Psi Energy for Only \$295

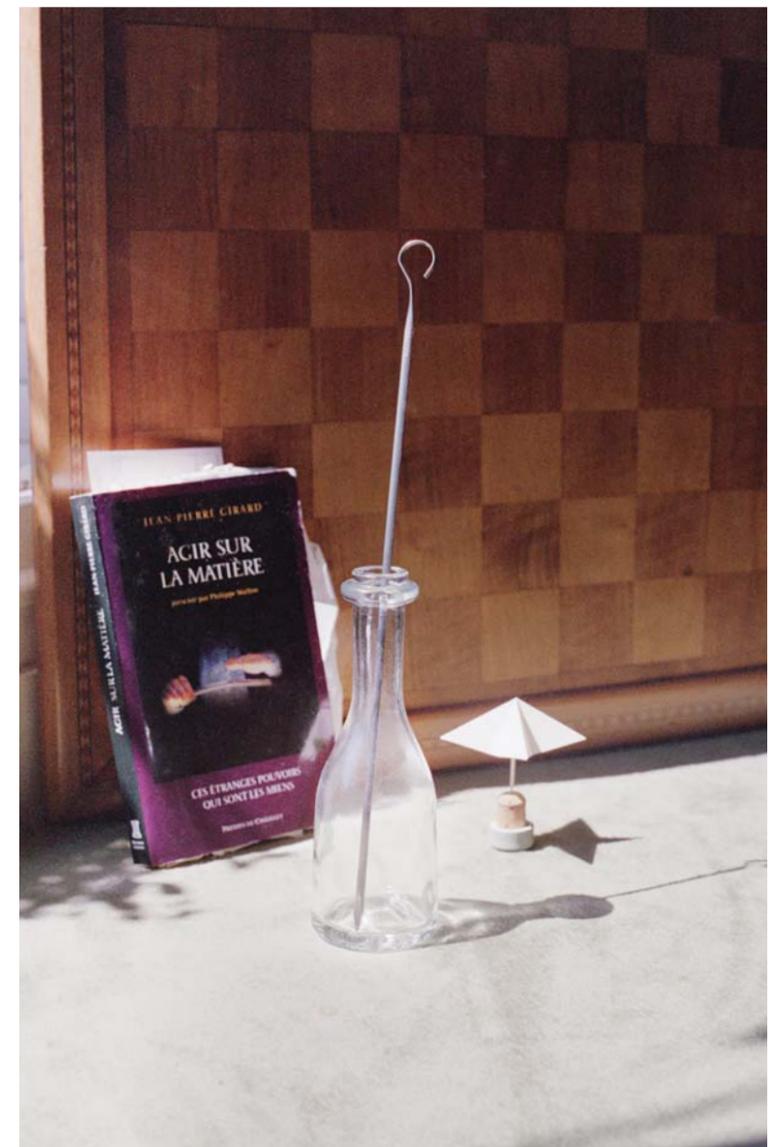
BY SYLLA SAINT-GUILY, PHOTOS BY HUGO DENIS-QUEINEC

Shit. I've been determinedly rubbing this metal skewer for more than 25 minutes and it still doesn't want to bend. I'm doing everything my metal-bending teacher, Jean-Pierre Girard, has instructed me to: I'm wearing green, stroking the rod tenderly, and focusing all my mental energy on making it curve. Yet no matter how hard I try, this piece of steel stubbornly clings to the laws of physics. I'm sitting at my grandparents' house the day after attending Jean-Pierre's two-day seminar, and I'm starting to regret the \$295 I paid him to discover the hidden telekinetic powers of my brain.

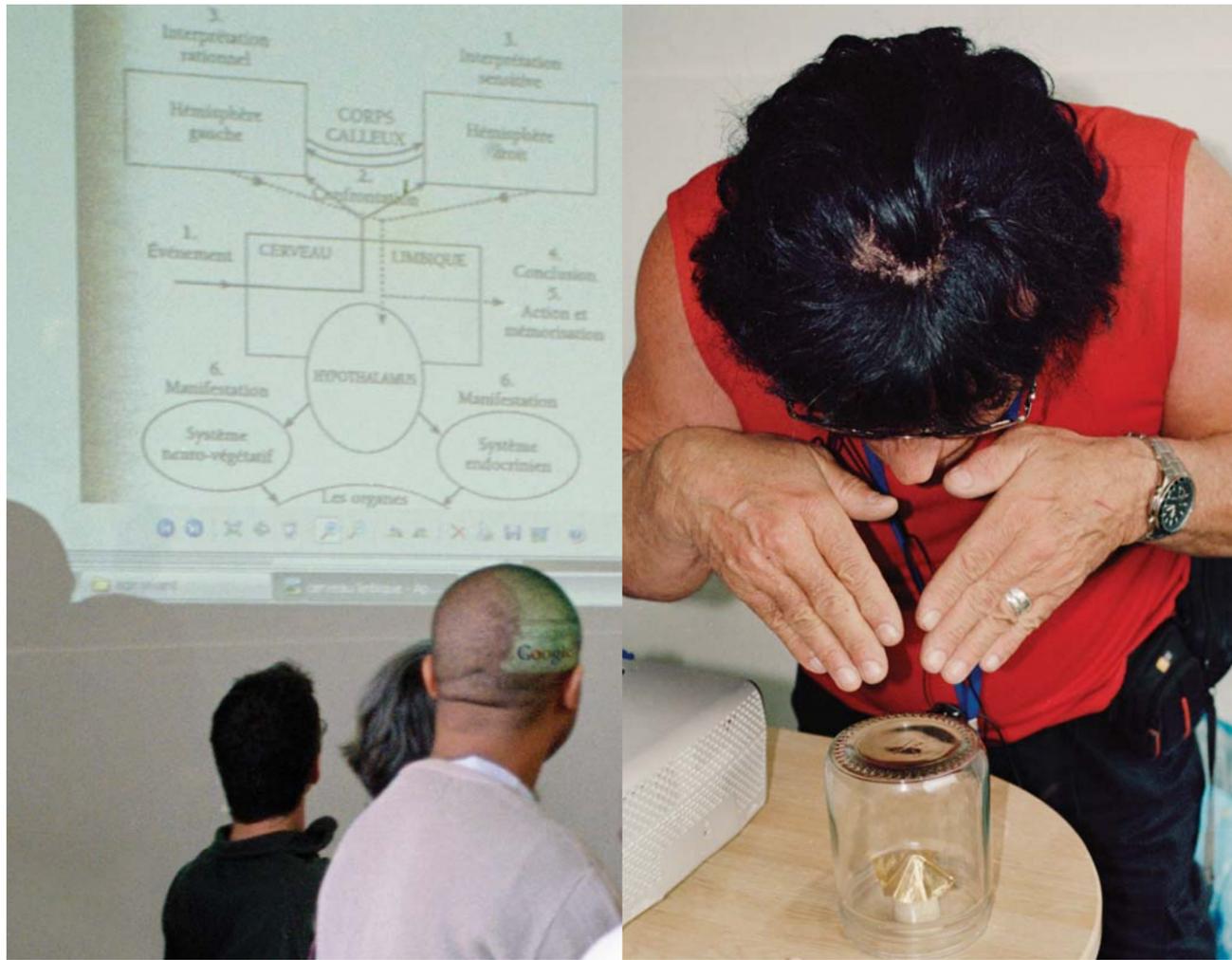
Since 1974, Jean-Pierre has hosted these psychokinetic seminars every other month or so. He calls himself a "psi subject," meaning he possesses extrasensory abilities that allow him to accomplish spectacular physical feats using only the power of his mind. In practice, most of his exercises involve bending metal rods, but in his autobiography, *Influencing Matter*, he wrote that psychokinesis can potentially "destroy a cruise missile in flight or cause arrhythmias from a distance." Jean-Pierre says that his powers manifested when he was seven years old after being struck by lightning while mushroom hunting. He also claims the CIA kidnapped him in 1979, back when the spooks were experimenting with how psychic phenomena could help them remotely spy on people and places.

According to Jean-Pierre, anyone can tap into and hone their inner supernatural powers. Or at least enough people to support his livelihood by continuing to pay the hefty price tag for his classes. I attended one of his fabled seminars in July, which was held in a Parisian magnetic healer's dispensary. Fellow attendees included a few requisite magick/paranormal nerds, a couple of metalheads, and a lot of yuppies who looked like they owned art galleries.

The session began promptly at 10 AM, and the class arrived to find Jean-Pierre waiting for us in a tight red sleeveless T-shirt that showed off his biceps, which were especially impressive given that he was 70 years old. He looked more like a personal trainer trying to sell juice machines than a psychic, making it easy to picture him at the height of his fame in the 70s, when he was frequently invited to showcase his powers on television.



The psychokineticist starter kit, which includes a metal rod, a psi wheel, and, of course, Jean-Pierre's autobiography.



LEFT: Jean-Pierre lectured on neurology in the mornings, but he quickly bored everyone.

RIGHT: Jean-Pierre demonstrating his psi superpowers.

Scientists and magicians quickly discredited most of the self-proclaimed psychokineticists from that era (and there were many), but no one has ever been able to figure out exactly how Jean-Pierre bent all those spoons on live TV. And until someone does discredit him, we have no other choice but to believe that he could have supernatural powers.

The first day of the seminar began with a presentation that served as an introduction to the functions of the brain and Jean-Pierre's colorful personal life; strangely enough this also included information about his romantic endeavors. During a PowerPoint slide show he expounded on the hemispheres of the brain and mentioned that he "really enjoyed Japanese girls." When the discussion turned to his time with the CIA, he said, "Those fuckers used me as a special agent for 11 years." OK, Jean-Pierre, I thought, Ooooo-K.

We got down to business around 11:30, when Jean-Pierre distributed metal rods to the 15 students before calmly instructing us to bend the bars with our minds. Luckily, he provided a few tips: Envision the rods as animals, softly rub them with your index and middle fingers, focus the right hemisphere of your brain by shutting your left nostril. But ten long minutes later, despite his guidance, the bars were as rigid as ever. Jean-Pierre then instructed us to think about the color green, which apparently has the ability to "stir up the molecules" and, thus, move objects.

No matter how hard I concentrated on shooting kinetic energy out of my brain, my rod remained unbent. Looking

around, the rest of my class wasn't doing any better. Some students didn't appear to be trying very hard, though—Bruno, a 25-year-old goateed martial-arts expert, spent the morning texting his girlfriend. His indifference prompted Jean-Pierre to snap, "You might as well go fuck yourself if you're not interested in how your brain works!" I couldn't have agreed more.

Not a single pupil managed to succeed at this first exercise, so we went on to another, supposedly easier, activity. The class was directed to spin a psi wheel, which is basically a folded-up piece of foil balanced on a needle. We placed our hands above the foil and attempted to gather energy in our palms. I closed my left nostril and thought about the greenest stuff I could imagine—freshly mowed lawns, marijuana, the rolling hills of Ireland—as I clutched the wheel in my hands.

The results were much more encouraging: After five minutes of extreme focus, my wheel started to spin! I was ecstatic until I noticed the breeze that had swept in through an open window. Nonetheless, I bragged to Jean-Pierre about my achievement, and he replied, "Not bad. Let's go eat."

After lunch, a new student named Jonathan joined us. He began rubbing his metal rod in a suggestive fashion, which I'm pretty sure distracted all of us from even attempting to unleash any sort of mental energy whatsoever. After half an hour of uninterrupted psychic stroking, he suddenly fell asleep. Ten minutes later, several other students had nodded off as well; apparently trying to move metal with one's mind is exhausting work. Either that or it's extremely boring.



Averna: Averna Italian Liqueur, 29% alc./vol. (58 proof). Imported by Romario Select Wine Estates, New York, NY



LEFT: Jonathan the radiokineticist taking an impromptu study break.

RIGHT: The author trying to bend a metal bar with his mind amid lots of green.

Jonathan finally awoke awhile later, and I struck up a conversation. He said he was 26 and a graphic designer, then referred to himself as a “radiokineticist,” explaining how he was able to interact with objects from a distance. This dovetailed into a long speech about how “psycho-particles” that originate from stars work (as he explained it, they are invisible molecules that go through our bodies). Like Jean-Pierre, Jonathan believes that anyone can develop his or her sixth sense; however, he takes it one further: “... and also their *seventh* sense, which we don’t even know about yet.”

Four o’clock rolled around and I was still trying to bend my metal rod by frowning at it. I was also about to barf after thinking about the color green for so long. Other students were also growing disenchanted. Some played games on their phones, while others had opted to use a few other senses to bend the rod with their hands.

Noticing the malaise, Jean-Pierre recounted some more stories from his CIA days in an attempt to lift our spirits. “I sold some missiles to Saddam Hussein’s stepbrother,” he said. “The Husseins know me quite well.” Presumably these transactions hadn’t bothered him because he was confident that if the Husseins did launch their bombs, he could dismantle them in midair with the sheer power of his mind.

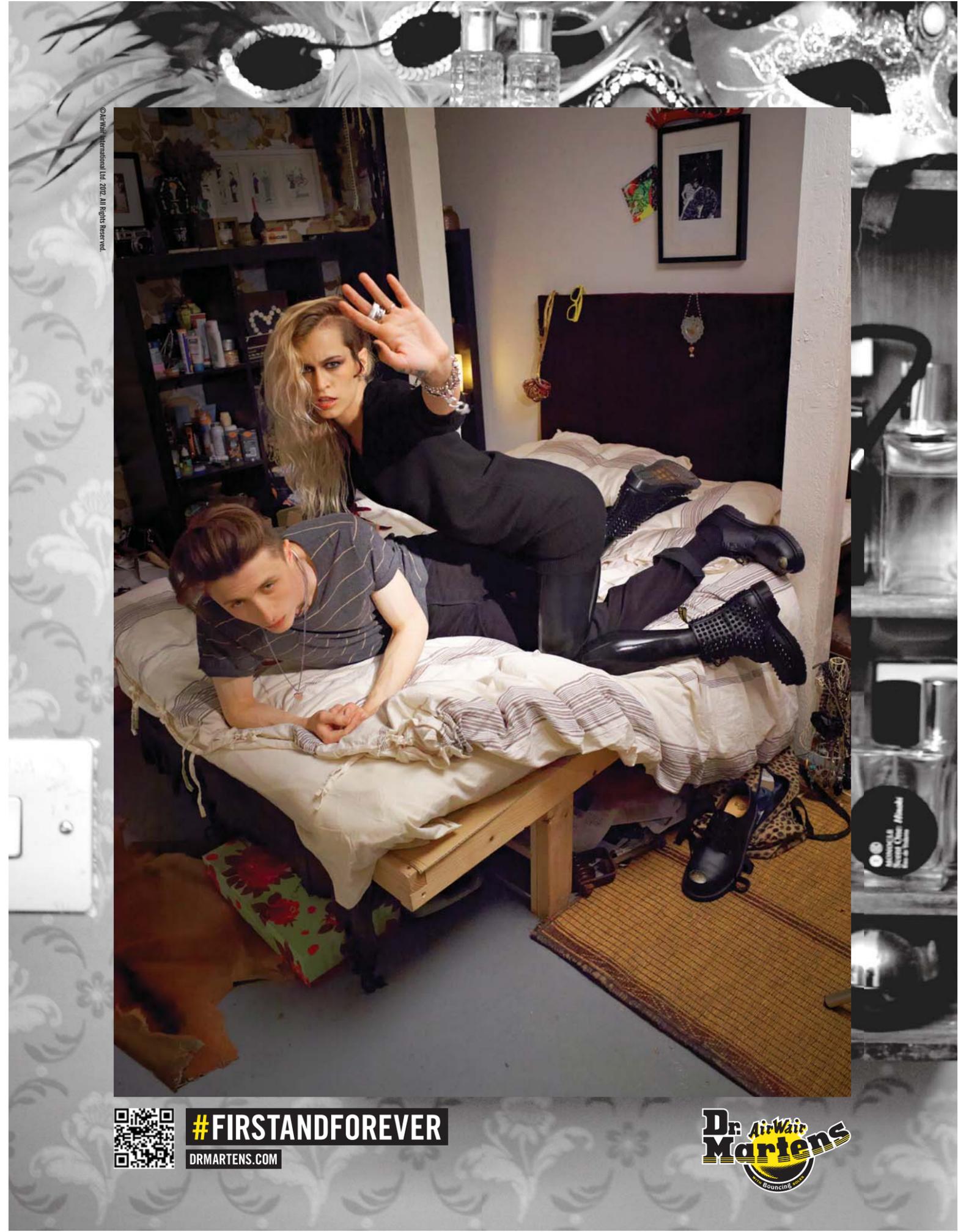
The seminar’s second and final day was less memorable. We tried a few more practical telepathic experiments, such as splitting into pairs to predict which symbols would appear on mystical-looking dice. I managed to help my partner foresee a

sequence of a cross, a sun, and an unidentifiable squiggle. It was the most fun we’d had the entire session.

Before we left, Jean-Pierre couldn’t help but show us how bending metal was *really* done. He asked us to wait while he went to the back room to prepare. On his reentrance he began staring at the rod while twitching and muttering gibberish. After four or five minutes, during which he had the class’s undivided attention for the first time during the seminar, the rod inexplicably bent at its center. The room erupted into applause; watching him perform was much more enjoyable than trying to do it ourselves.

Before wishing us au revoir, Jean-Pierre instructed us to practice all the exercises we had learned every day for the next two months, and the class left in good spirits, certain that the world of metal rods and foil would be at our feet in no time.

And here I am today, dressed in green, sitting in the dining room of an old Parisian apartment, twitching while I stare down my grandparents’ old metal skewer. I keep referring back to the notes I took during Jean-Pierre’s lectures, but as of yet the rod refuses to obey me. *Close left nostril*, I read. *J.P. loves the Asian ladies*. Maybe there’s something there? An Eastern secret? Probably not. Jean-Pierre obviously has a special talent, but it may lie in his storytelling rather than in anything involving psycho-particles. Still, I’m going to keep practicing on this skewer. Wouldn’t it be crazy if he were telling the truth? Until someone proves him wrong, it’s a possibility that we may just not understand. *VICE*



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William S. Burroughs holding his cat Ginger in the backyard of his home in Lawrence, Kansas.

THE CAT OFFERS ITSELF

How Burroughs's Beloved Marigay Was Saved from Viral Feline Leukemia Using Ancient Ojibwa Herbs

BY YONY LEYSER

Author William S. Burroughs made his love for all things feline known in his book *The Cat Inside*, in which he refers to cats as “psychic companions” and innate “enemies of the state.” In his final journal entry, written just before he died, Burroughs discusses love as the ultimate cure-all. I feature the quote in my documentary *William S. Burroughs: A Man Within* (burroughsthemovie.com). What I fail to mention in the film is that the specific love he is referring to is what he felt for his cats. The more complete journal entry reads:

Only thing can resolve conflict is love, like I felt for Fletch and Ruski, Spooner, and Calico. Pure love. What I feel for my cats present and past.
Love? What is it?
Most natural painkiller what there is.
LOVE.

Burroughs also subscribed to *Cat Fancy* for many years, saving hundreds of issues for his personal library. In May 2010, his manager, James Grauerholz, pitched a story to the pussy-friendly publication about the writer's unwavering love for his kitties. The editors of the magazine must have been startled by the pitch, which began:

While William S. Burroughs is increasingly regarded as one of the most important writers of the 20th century, his artistic genius is often overshadowed by tales of his outlaw lifestyle: founder of the Beat movement; his drug addictions and homosexuality; the accidental shooting of his wife in a drunken William Tell routine; and, later in life, his unofficial status as the godfather of the punk rock movement. Of all the wild stories in Burroughs's life, the best (and most secret), came last: That he did indeed find love and redemption before he died—through his cats.

The magazine's editors (foolishly) said they would pass, and that was that. It seems Burroughs got the last laugh, though. A quick internet search for *Cat Fancy's* HQ results in the address 3 Burroughs Drive in Irvine, California (the number 3 was thought to hold special powers by the author).

Near the twilight of their lives, poet Allen Ginsberg asked Burroughs whether he wanted to be loved. “Depends... by who or by what?” he replied. “By my cats, certainly.” Based on statements like this one, it's no surprise that over the years he cared for a long list of cats at his home in Lawrence, Kansas. Once, when discussing the possibility of a nuclear attack with a young lover, Burroughs claimed that what he worried about most after the fallout was what would happen to his cats.

Besides his devotion to his four-legged friends, Burroughs also maintained a serious love of all things related to science, the occult, magic, and the subversion of tradition and control systems. He received a formal education at Harvard University and briefly studied at medical school in Vienna before dropping out to begin his life as a writer.

Roger Holden, who lives in Lawrence and was a good friend of Burroughs's, is an inventor who shared the writer's love for cats, science, and challenging conventional ideas. Roger first became interested in science by way of computers, specifically “audio-digital sound synthesis and hands-on exposure to the world's first video-frame buffer based on silicon-chip memory (i.e., digital television).” He subsequently invented a robotic animation-camera system that was used to film shots of featured books on *Reading Rainbow* and for years has been working on an R2D2-inspired holographic-projection system, which he hopes to finally unleash on the public before the end of 2012.

The pair collaborated on a few projects during the author's Kansas years, including 3-D stereograms (what later came to be known as Magic Eye pictures—that ubiquitous 1990s phenomenon) that were eventually exhibited at the 1996 art show *Ports of Entry* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Even more important to their close friendship, when Burroughs's beloved white cat Marigay became ill, Roger took it upon himself to bypass the traditional medical establishment and save the life of the creature Burroughs believed to be “the sacred cat” using alternative methods.

VICE: How did you come to take care of Burroughs's cats?

Roger Holden: I would drop by about once every two months or so with friends, and we'd have dinner and discuss things—UFOs and mutual interests. William discerned that I really cared for cats, and he asked me, “Would you ever be interested in having a cat someday if I gave you one?” I said I certainly would. One day he called and said he had a cat that had showed up on his front porch. It had been in an automobile accident of some sort, and he told me he took it to a veterinarian, who nursed it back to health. Then he offered me the cat, and I accepted. He named the cat Porch because he found the cat on his porch. Over the following years and up until the cat's death in 1995, William took care of the veterinary bills for Porch. The veterinarian—whenever he would send out a medical report or a bill—would refer to the cat as Porch Burroughs, so I refer to the cats that William gave me with the last name Burroughs. Porch came down with feline leukemia. It was sad to see. We tried to heal him through traditional means, but he eventually succumbed to the illness. I told myself that if I received another cat from William, and if the cat did turn out to have some sort of ailment, that I would try to seek some type of alternative treatment.

Photo courtesy of Jim McCray/Lawrence.com



ABOVE, LEFT: Roger Holden at his home in Lawrence, Kansas. Photo by Barrett Emke.

ABOVE, RIGHT: Last known photo of Butch Burroughs, taken just weeks before he died. Archival image courtesy of Roger Holden.

Many locals know the story of how you came to possess Marigay, Burroughs's "White Cat." How did this happen? In January of 1997, I received a call from William saying that he was trying to find a home for a great white cat. He asked if I would be able to help out because apparently the cat did not get along with the others. I went by his place a couple days later to pick the kitty up, and he went to his bookshelf and pulled out a book called *Cat in the Mysteries of Magic and Religion* by M. Oldfield Howey. He opened to a chapter about the history of cats in ancient magic and said, "This is Margaras, the White Cat—the sacred cat," and that I should read a bit in this book about the overview of this cat in regard to magic and history. Immediately I realized that this "White Cat" he had found was very special in William's viewpoint. Some knew the cat as Marigay, but later I nicknamed the cat Butch Burroughs. I let Butch roam the streets of Lawrence, and he was quite active outside and a pushy bully of a cat. But indoors he was really friendly.

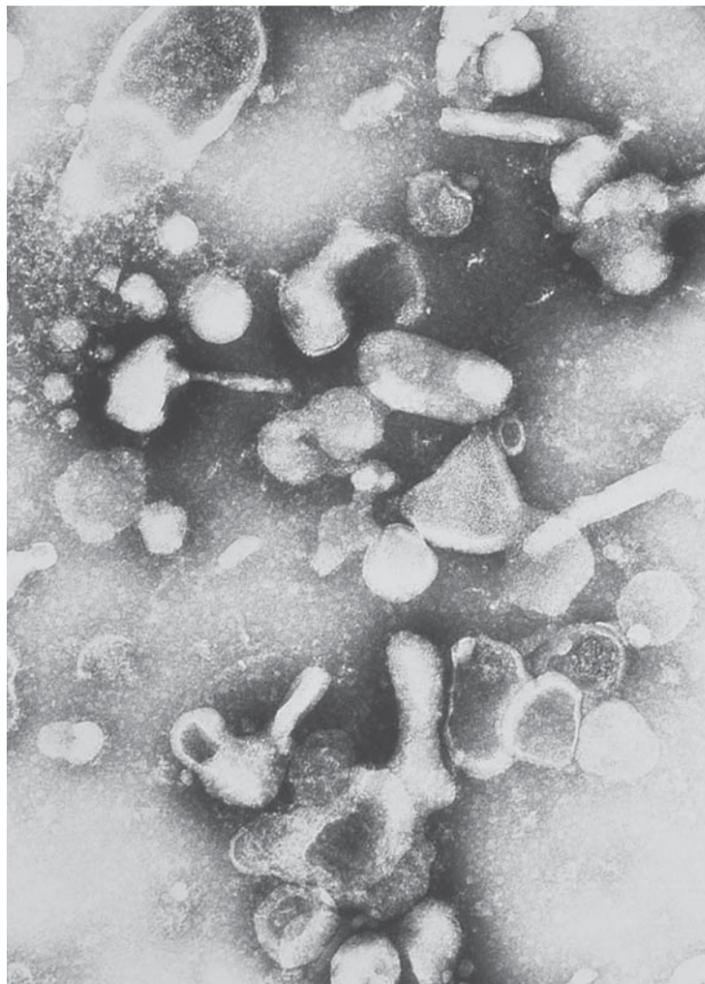
In August 1997, William passed on, and coincidentally—for three days exactly during the period of William's death—Butch disappeared. We later found him at a local animal shelter. After Butch's return I still let him roam the streets; however, one day in the spring of 1999, he was

attacked by a German shepherd and chased under my front porch. I thought everything was OK, but the next morning I noticed that he had been badly bitten so I took him to William's favorite veterinarian. The vet nursed Butch back to health, but during the same visit they discovered that Butch had advanced terminal feline leukemia. I was told he only had a matter of weeks to live. I decided, as I had promised myself, that this time I was going to search for an alternative treatment. Essentially I went into a period of deep meditation: contemplation regarding my faith in the universe and friendship with William. I was hoping that somehow, perhaps via intuition, an answer would come to me. I searched the internet and found various complicated solutions and treatments proposed by people of all sorts. I ran into an obscure statement by someone about how they had attempted to treat their cat with an herbal blend called *essiac* tea, and that it had remarkable healing effects.

As I understand it, *essiac* tea is a Native American treatment. It's also worth noting that the cat was found at Burroughs's house, which was very near to Haskell, one of the only indigenous and Native American universities, correct? Yes. I researched this tea further and found out that it was

WHEN THE LAW BECAME CORRUPT,
OUTLAWS BECAME HEROES.





An extreme close-up view of feline leukemia, a common, usually fatal disease that Roger Holden cured with the help of essiac tea. Photo courtesy of the CDC.

based on a Native American formula specifically developed by an Ojibwe Nation medicine man. It seemed to me that one brand of it named FlorEssence would be the best way to start treatment. It's a blend of eight herbs, and I consulted with specialists at the company to ask for help. They recommended that I give Butch a tablespoon or two of it per day, either with a medicine dropper or by mixing it in with soft food.

If there were any beneficial results, then down the road I could cut the dose significantly. Three weeks later the veterinary hospital conducted blood tests on Butch and determined that the white blood cell count was remarkably improving. So much so that the doctor said that Butch Burroughs was being called "the miracle cat."

How did you react to that?

I was very, very excited about the initial news. I gave myself two or three months to actually determine whether it was going to be a full success or not. By then Butch was almost completely healed. From 1999 to 2005 Butch lived a very robust life, which was directly attributable, in my view, to the use of the essiac tea. They told me he was supposed to live less than three months at the most, but he lived for over five more years.

You took the cat's health and well-being into your own hands, which is a very Burroughsian concept—namely, to short-circuit control structures in order to discover alternative methods of treatment. Burroughs pursued this line of thinking through things like magic, the orgone box, the Wishing Machine, the Dream Machine, apomorphine and yage as treatments to addiction, etc. I think he would have really liked and supported your approach to Butch's treatment. What a success! I look at it as a success due to William, the cat, and myself. I consider the approach that I took to be directly inspired by Burroughs. We had many discussions about the exploration of suppressed and little-known methods for enhancing bodily health. For example, we discussed orgone, vitamin B1, Rife energy beams for healing, and certain yoga abdominal exercises. Our discussions primed my mind to really look for such solutions for the White Cat. If William were still living on the physical plane, I am quite sure that he would want the word to get out about the potential great benefits of subverting approved methods of healing.

Do you think your ordeal with Butch exposes flaws in the traditional medical establishment, at least when it comes to veterinary medicine?

Yes, I do look upon my experience with the White Cat and essiac tea as a contribution to the scientific research of its remarkable potential use for the treatment of chronic ailments. I believe it can be of great benefit to people and pets. Standards of bureaucratic science stand in the way of the acknowledgment of the true effectiveness of such treatments. It is unfortunate that today we are constantly inundated with the message that the only type of real medication contains dangerous chemicals that produce terrible side effects. What good is supposed "better access" to health insurance if our only choices for treatment are the standard types from big pharma? Wouldn't it be great if the legacy of the White Cat, Marigay, indeed was the symbolic searing white light of truth that challenges the all-powerful control board?

It would. It seems to me that Burroughs viewed doctors, veterinarians, and priests as possible agents of a control system that was set up long ago to keep people obedient and happy through various money-generating means, including antidepressants and religion. I guess in order to advance so-called science we must sometimes do our own investigations outside the system of accepted thinking.

I would agree with that fully. At the same time, I would mention that he had the highest respect for the veterinarian and had very good experiences with him. The science that I perform is a type that people can explore and are exploring on their own. For example, I encourage people to research the recent news of the use of bee-propolis extract potentially helping to reduce the size of prostate-cancer tumors.

As Burroughs wrote in *The Cat Inside*, "Joe places a cat box on the board room table. Gently he removes a white cat. The board members crawl under the table, screaming, 'THE WHITE CAT! THE WHITE CAT!'" The addendum to that phrase would now be: "The White Cat has exposed the fraud, the poison, the filth deals—our money and power and control will melt away."

Where was the White Cat laid to rest?

He is buried alongside William's other cats, in his cat graveyard in his backyard. *VICE*

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Shots by **Vincent Skoglund** for the **Holden x Impossible Project**: Our collaboration, *Timeless in an Instant* is an online photo competition and exhibition by 10 amazing photographers, and a special edition product release including a **Holden** customized **Polaroid™ SX 70** camera, **Tanner Goods™** leather camera case and custom **Holden PX 680** color shade film. Find more at holdenouterwear.com/impossible



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80s

Special San Diego Comic-Con edition with Superjail!'s Christy Karacas



It's weird how everybody thinks the future was better in the 60s. Don't they realize all that was just regular present-day shit from the 60s? I mean you give a Playboy Bunny green skin and put a couple foil stripes on a stewardess dress and that's a bold vision of tomorrow? It's like in *Aliens* when 200 years of fashion have passed and the only advancement in suit jackets is popping the back half of the collar.



Rob Liefeld kicked off this thing in the 90s where characters started carrying these insanely huge weapons and developing ridiculously disproportionate physiques because a) ten-year-olds thought it was tough/hot and b) he can't draw in scale. People give him shit to this day for not understanding how the human body works, but I guess these two just blew that argument out of the water.



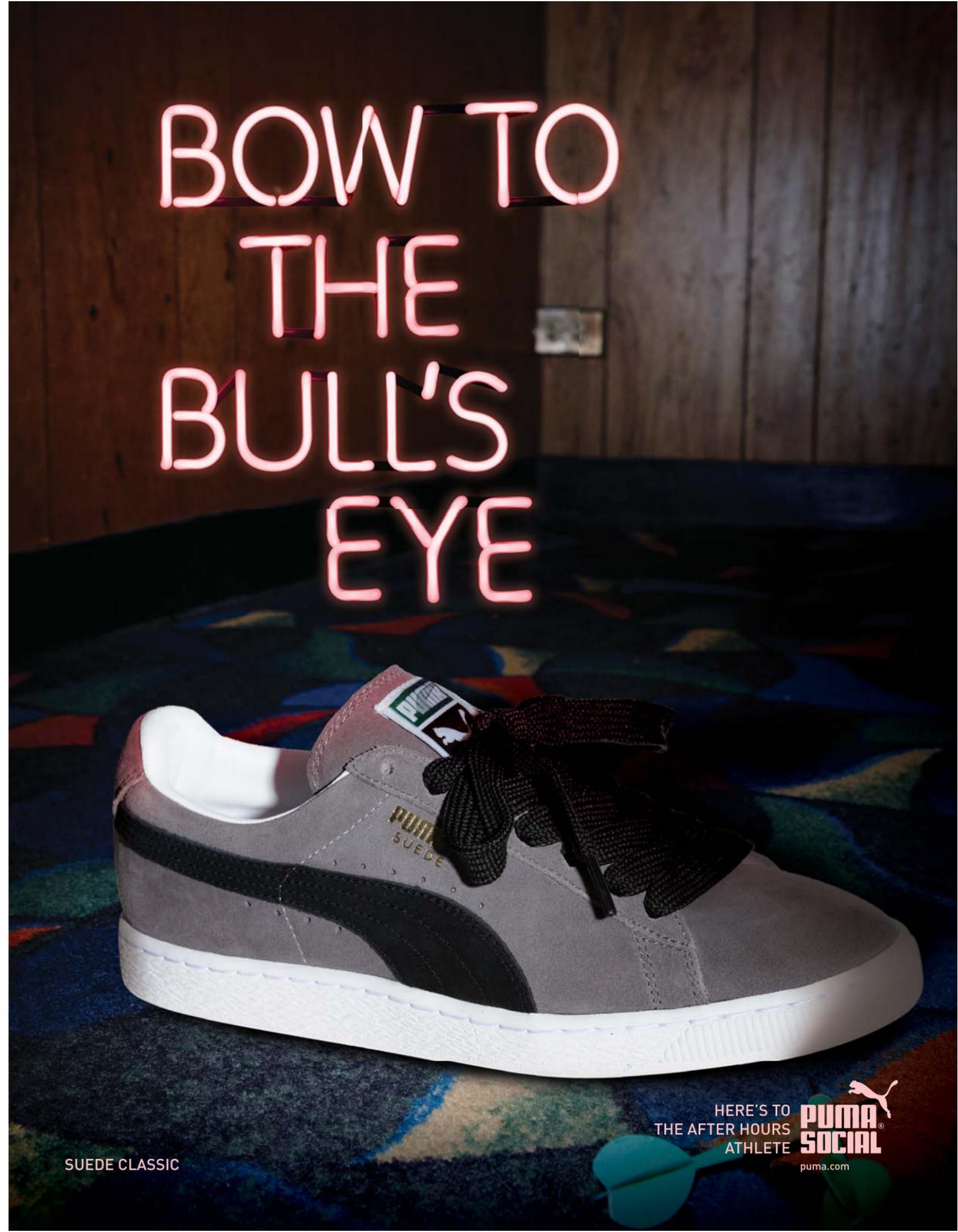
Uh oh, Taylor's really in for it now. Mom's been doing the family whistle for like 20 minutes. I like the parent-kid role reversal you see at sci-fi cons cause it's like revenge for all those times your mom would make you wait for hours hanging out in the clothes racks at Talbots. No clue what's going on with his hair though. Probably some anime thing.



Granted that's not real tits, but fuck it. I don't care. Don't ruin it for me by running your mutant mouth. Just let me jizz on your fake mutant tits. Hey, wasn't the three-titted girl from *Total Recall* also Dottie from *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*? Side note I guess, but still, I love a Martian revolution.



I never realized it until now, but Leia really did dress like someone's crippled nanna in a nightgown. I mean maybe they woke her up or something during the attack, but kind of a weird look for the princess of one of the richest planets in the galaxy. Also kind of weird that this is the most fuckable woman on this page.



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DON'Ts

Special San Diego Comic-Con edition with Superjail!'s Christy Karacas



You know what, dude? Just don't even bother coming. This isn't the high school smokers' pit. That tenth-grade girl with the cyberreads isn't going to be impressed by how you "kinda give a fuck but don't." This is a party for people who are so obsessed with made-up characters from comic books and movies they spend the entire year figuring out how to become them for a single weekend. This is the point of their lives. They don't think you look cool right now. They think you can't afford Spiderpants.



Pretty sure the goggles and gauges were enough of a deterrent without fashioning a wrought-iron gear mask to keep guys from even thinking about kissing you. You basically gave yourself steampunk herpes. God, I hate these guys. It's like, sorry the real past wasn't cool enough for you.



The big thing at sci-fi cons the past few years is for girls to dress up like this schoolboy character Finn from *Adventure Time*, but they change his shorts to a skirt to horny it up a little. So this is a guy dressed like a girl dressed like a guy from a cartoon, which would be pretty clever if he wasn't such a pussy about people seeing his balls.



Is this guy in costume or just a San Diego douchebag trying to hit on another Finn from *Adventure Time*? Wait, maybe he's supposed to be the Jew from *Scott Pilgrim*. You know who I'm talking about. The Leader.



Think of all the costumes you could have dressed in, and you went with Professor Slimer and some weird forest ghost from an anime nobody's heard of. Is this laziness or just plain old obscurantism? And why do Japanese animators always have to put like cat ears or weird pompom horns on nonhuman girls? Please tell me that's not a fetish over there. (I know, I know. It is.)

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DOs

Special San Diego Comic-Con edition with Superjail!'s Christy Karacas



Whoa. This may be the first couple in the history of Comic-Con—maybe the full history of nerds—to let their body types dictate their costumes. I really hope they fuck in character. I'd watch a porn of that.



Real-life uniforms are so shitty these days, sci-fi characters and superheroes actually look more professional than most cops. No more stupid bright colors or Liefeld pouches or like weird stripes that don't do anything. Just a formfitting flight suit in subdued colors, tasteful pair of heels, and quick-release button right at the base of the cleavage (or where it would be).



Hey, that's the same girl. What is she now, one of the Iron Man dancers? This must be her end-of-the-weekend outfit, for when three days of leering nerds and hotel-room Stormtrooper gangbangs have the confidence reserves of her arc reactor fully charged.



Ugh, I remember these dudes. What's really creepy is most of them are local off-duty firefighters. Of all the places you come to denounce fucking and drinking, you pick a sci-fi convention? They could have saved a ton on printing costs by just cutting the list at masturbators. Anyway, good on this guy for fucking with them.



Yeah, I gasped too. Honestly I think it's a little unethical for Hot Topic or wherever to sell bustiers in that size. But credit where it's due, Drama Club Lady Vader has still got at least 18% more body coverage than Slave Leia. Cape and helmet help too.



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DON'Ts

Special San Diego Comic-Con edition with Superjail!'s Christy Karacas



Oh good, it's Dr. Dogdick with still more anime. Here's something that's bugged me. Why does everyone in anime always wear those weird boxy jodhpurs? Is that something from WWII we missed out on? You would need like a full pound of starch every morning to make that shit work in real life. It almost makes anime hair look reasonable.



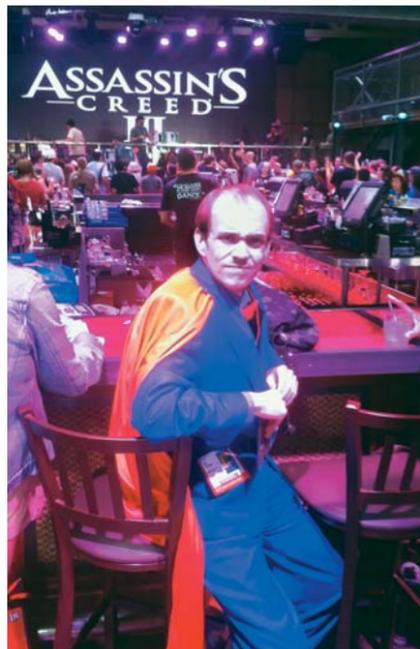
It also sucks that so many people are from video games now. It's not like, "Oh, hey, you're Wonder Woman," you're just someone in a video game. They should have a second Comic-Con for the video-game people. It's not just General Nerd-Con.



Don't be a shitty cartoon goth. Just be a real goth. What's that show where the magician teaches guys how to get laid? I want to start a program like that where I tell kids like these that instead of making their hair into sticky-looking neon haystacks and papier-mâchéing a swordkey for one weekend a year they could just dye their hair black and be getting laid the other 51.



God, does anybody watch non-Japanese cartoons anymore? Where are all the *Planète Sauvage* leotards with the blue shaved heads and the exposed tits? Is that look really more dated than some sort of Japanese farmer's smock and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* hair?



Oh fuck. You know that song "Too Fast for Love" by Mötley Crüe? "Too Old for Comic-Con" by everyone.

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Reinterpretation of
THE GREAT SECRET

Published by Galaxy, 2008;
cover originally from Thrilling
Wonder Stories (Standard
Magazines, December 1948)

To be clear (and because our lawyers insisted on crystal clarity): The following fashion spread is based on reinterpretations of covers of six of our favorite L. Ron Hubbard story compilations, all of which were appropriated from classic science fiction pulps in which the stories first appeared.

VISIONS OF L. RON

PHOTOS BY MATTHEW FROST
ARTWORK BY RICK ALTERGOTT
STYLIST: ANNETTE LAMOTHE-RAMOS

Photo Assistant: Bobby Doherty; Hair: Ashley Nicole Grobmeier; Makeup: Erin Green
Models: Casie C. at Wilhelmina, Hannah Davis at IMG, Alex Glenday at Next, and Zhanna at Mc2
Photocollage and retouching by Daniel Hong; Special thanks to Fast Ashleys Studios

Cushnie et Ochs dress, Bar III earrings



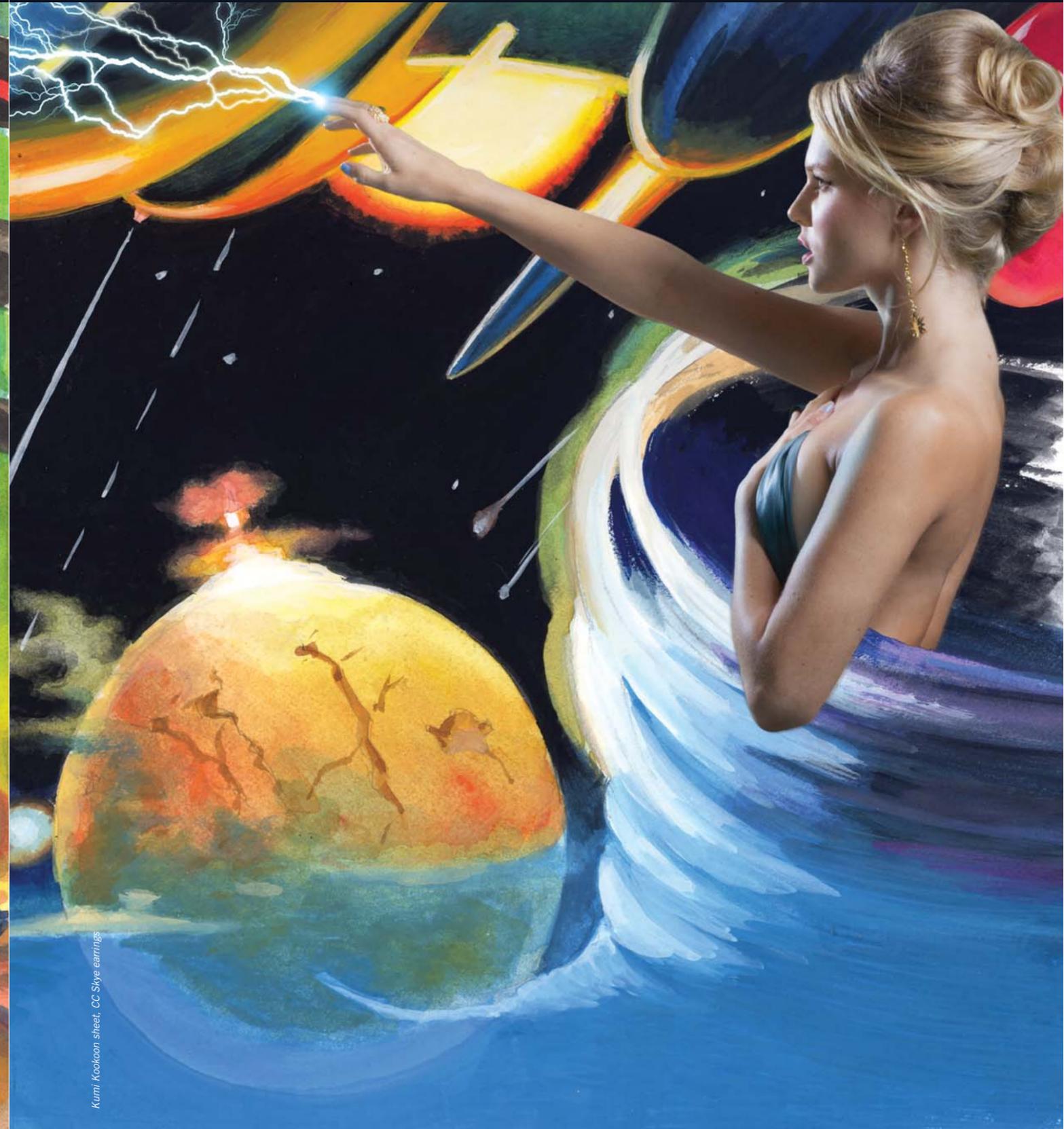
Reinterpretation of
GREED



Jad Chandour jacket, American Apparel top, Joseph pants, Palladium boots

Published by Galaxy, 2011; cover originally from Astounding Science Fiction (Street & Smith, February 1940)

Reinterpretation of
BEYOND ALL WEAPONS



Kumi Kookoon sheet, CC Slye earrings

Published by Galaxy, 2012; cover originally from Super Science Stories (Popular Publications, January 1950)

Reinterpretation of
ONE WAS STUBBORN



adidas Originals x Jeremy Scott jacket and boots, American Apparel short shorts, The Blond's helmet

Forthcoming from Galaxy in 2014; cover originally from Astounding Science Fiction (Street & Smith, November 1940)

Reinterpretation of
WHEN SHADOWS FALL



adidas Originals x Opening Ceremony top

Published by Galaxy, 2009; cover originally from Astounding Science Fiction (Street & Smith, March 1948)

Reinterpretation of
THE PROFESSOR WAS A THIEF



Published by Galaxy, 2009; cover originally from Startling Stories (Standard Magazines, July 1948)



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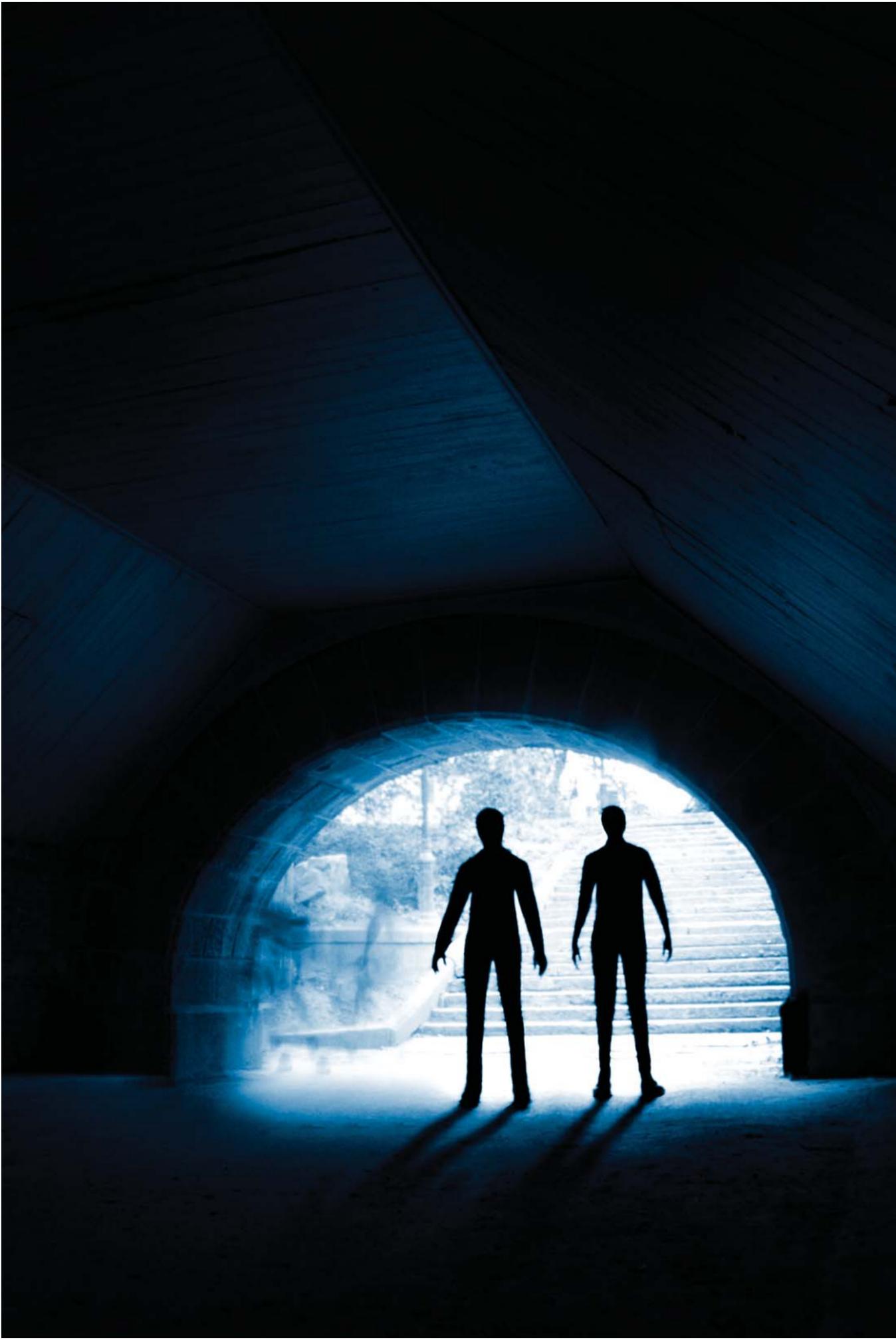


ABDUCTED

PHOTOS BY JASON MACDONALD
STYLIST: ANNETTE LAMOTHE-RAMOS

*Photo Assistant: Bobby Doherty
Stylist's Assistant: Andrew Deady
Models: Mark Ryan Chariker, Andrew Deady,
Kacie Marie, Patrick Sarmiento
Special thanks to Fast Ashleys Studios and John Curtis
Retouching and Special Effects by
Joseph Tripi (josephtripi.com)*

Altamont pants, Vans socks and sneakers, Uniqlo boxers, Nike hoodie, WESC jacket



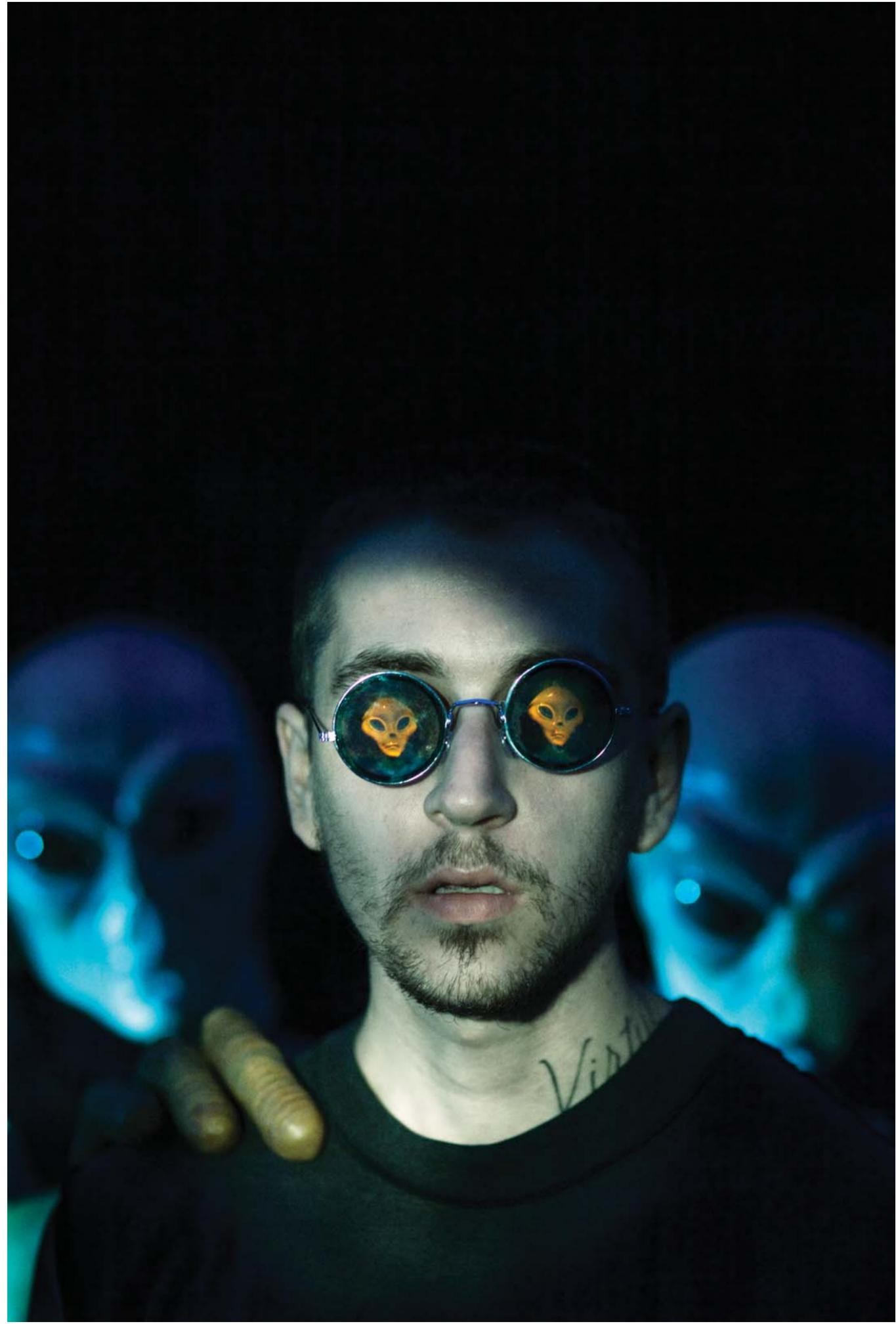
Altamont shirt and pants, Nike sneakers, Volcom shirt, Carhartt jeans, Nike sneakers





Dr. Martens boots; American Apparel hoodie and leggings; Luminex curtain; jellyfish lamp by The Amazing Jellyfish; Dr. Martens x Agness Deyn nightgown

Vans T-shirt; vintage sunglasses







TURTLE BOYS

BY DAVID OHLE
PHOTOS BY MAGGIE LEE

Portions of this text were contributed by Professor H.R. Hepburn of Nelspruit, South Africa

Motorman, David Ohle's 1972 debut, which we're not even going to attempt to sum up here because you should just trust us and read it, is one of very few novels that can honestly be described as wholly original. None other than Gordon Lish deemed the book one of his favorites. But after its release, David completely vanished from the literary landscape, not publishing another novel for 32 years. Motorman promptly went out of print and until recently could only be obtained via photocopied bootlegs that were clandestinely distributed among a cult of devout followers. The below story is a hitherto unpublished investigation of the mutant anatomy of turtle boys, appropriately accompanied by photos of the dissection of a turtle.

Reading certain books and pamphlets brought to the Professor's mind memories of Angel Ozalo, the first turtle boy, Iceland born, who had a remarkable career exhibiting himself in medical fora and symposia (for a fee, of course). His home base was St. Thomas, and he was well known in Royal Society circles for his three-leggedness. Many wanted to amputate the extra leg for their museum collections, but he knew its show value and refused. The additional leg was an evagination of the sacrum, and it was insensate. The knee was fused and unbendable, but he could still flap it under his left thigh and strap it there like a flamingo does during sleep. Half of the flamingos known to the Professor were left-footed anyway. So Angel went on with seeming agility, unencumbered.

The Professor wrote a little commemorative poem dedicated to Angel:

*Turtle Boy, oh, Turtle Boy,
Sprung from hot springs,
Only 18 inches high.
Wondrous legs, no kneecaps
To scrape or joints within them.*

*Play your drums, boy,
Play your drums,
Your flute and panpipes too.
King Dodo, after all.*

One evening the Professor presented a learned lecture on a bird-headed turtle boy who he'd captured in Sumatra. It had to be smuggled off the island because he had no waiver and refused to pay duty. He spared no expense on the boy's toilet and had imported two-headed-turtle-oil cream for lubricating his testicle bag.

At the boy's first show he was full of blooms and wearing a plaid skirt. There was no need for underpants that day because he was showing, to a select few, his new O-ring vagina. In the old days turtle-boy vaginas were very leaky systems, but with the recent development of O-ring vaginal restoration, a boy can reach orgasm by simply inserting a pencil. If a boy is especially active, he can sometimes suffer from clogging, but the O-ring is quickly restored by a natural vaginal decongestant secreted by the boy's proboscis, used in the declogging process, which fetches a premium as a sauce ingredient at all the local restaurants.

The Professor sometimes gave a little lecture to children gathered around: "Children, the first thing you have to know is you must not excite the turtle boy prior to slaughter. This may cause pore bleeding and give the carcass a bloody appearance. The minimal kit that I use is a 30-cm head-meat saw, one or two 10-cm Bell scrapers, a clean singletree or gambrel, a hog or hay hook, and a block-and-tackle chain hoist. Stick the boy promptly after stunning it; this helps for good bleeding. Scalding is good fun, too, if you do it right, but you have to prepare for scalding before killing the boy. I recommend the Long Semado scalding box, but a Bario vat is acceptable, or even an old head barrel will serve the purpose.

"Once the boy is out for the count and nicely bled, it's off to the scalding vat, where it is hooked on the gambrel or singletree over an eviscerating barrow. Then you loosen the pizzle, but do *not* cut the large gland—which contains urine—and remove it at the upper tip of the aitch bone. Remove the bung and intestines by applying light pressure while cutting the tissue that holds them in place. Next you carefully 'unzip' your turtle boy and make a tiny cut just below the pizzle, being careful not to puncture the intestines, and then slip your hand inside the carcass

and keep two cupped fingers on the back of the knife as you cut. This keeps the guts from accidentally being slashed. Unzip the carcass very slowly and let the guts fall down, unbroken, out of the slit you are making. Guide them with your hands into the bucket and be prepared for them to really leap out of the cavity at you. Then free the liver and, mind you, do not make it mushy from squeezing. Run your fingers behind it and pull it from the back. Hold on to the liver and remove it before it drops to the ground. Be sure to remove the gall bladder intact, being careful not to spill bile on the liver. Save the lungs with the viscera for soup. Rinse the body cavity with clean cold water before removing the head."

One day Guntima, a turtle boy, came to the Professor with a problem: "I stink like an oyster shucker after a long day's work," he said. "People on the tram today cried out, 'Oh, my God, what is that stench?'"

Guntima opened his legs a smidgeon and a certain vermilion pathos wafted out. He recounted a life desperately short of fulfilment, which was not at all surprising. So the Professor produced his standard vaginal spiel. "Guntima, you need to understand the nature of the vagina," he said. "It is a chemical emitter that has a wide range of options. You can amplify the odor if you wish, but I would not recommend that in your case. As an emitting communication system we are dealing with the dynamics of surface area—the smaller the vagina the lesser the store of odoriferous goodies. The bigger the organ the greater the concentration. You should opt for the counterpart and go small. Small is better and stinks less."

Guntima sighed, "Why don't you just fill it up with cement and call it a day?"

After a night's fitful sleep and a light breakfast of durian and coffee, the Professor ventured out to the museum. In the Adipocere Hall, there was Home's specimen of an instance of the conversion of a corpse into adipocere over the course of 21 years. It had been recovered from the Shoreditch churchyard in 1831. Next to that was a tableau vivant: a wonderful nodular enlargement of the prostate, a gangrene of the foot, a syphilitic myelopathy, a magnificent scrofula jammed with millet seeds.

In another hall were excellent hypospadias specimens and a well-shaped penile duplication. Against the far wall was another tableau vivant of a swarm of Tay-Sachs kids, a toxic megacolon with colonic dilatation and gangrene with hemorrhagic necrosis, some hyperinflated and atelectatic lungs, and a few Marfan's sclerodermas.

Then, featured in a special exhibit, were half a dozen Minamatas exhibiting insanity, paralysis and coma, some good Ebola river fevers, a fresh Chikungunya all the way from the Philippines, a chicken chucker from Long Semado, and an old-fashioned hog butcher from Arkansas.

The Professor addressed an audience in the museum's assembly hall, saying, "I've just completed my essay on devolution in turtle boys, and I'm rather pleased with myself." He listed a number of examples to make this point: "Nelson Nulgo: an honest whore with the general characteristics of the disease including, but not limited to: loss of sensation at the nerve ends, destroyed blood vessels, ligaments and skin tissues, eroded bones, sores, ulcers, and scabs.

"And then there are Alfred and Ocam Twill, brothers, middle-grade turtle boys, father a feeble-minded drunkard, mother said to be feeble-minded as well. These boys were studs at a Burmese breeding farm, where the administration deprived them of their own rooms and all belongings, even their identities.

"And we have Misty Fogget, low-grade devolvement, a mingled family history on both parental sides, with insanity, epilepsy, consumption, neuralgia, scrofula, and deaf-mutism. Well known in the clinic for his queeps.

"Lastly, let's not forget Gretchen Brat. He was a dwarf and a mute, the fruit of incestuous intercourse between his mother and his mother's grandfather. The mother was an overworked, underfed German immigrant with cretinoid features. Father was feeble-minded. Both were left-handed consumptives. A brother was intelligent but died of consumption. Gretchen loves queeping and regularly produces a genital spray over his partners."

When the Professor reached his 70th year, he became uncomfortable with his own Bateman's purpura, those asymmetrical, irregular purple lesions that afflict the elderly. His skin seemed thin and wrinkled. He had just overcome the bullous pemphigoid blisters hiding among the folds of his groin. At least that was an improvement over his last incidence of pustular furuncles, which continually seeped. He also had a profound rectal prolapse in which the rectum turned inside out, so that instead of being a nice conical cavity as the rectum ought to be, its lining projected from the anus like a dark red finger. One of the Professor's turtle boys was inordinately fond of sucking on it when he was allowed. It was also accompanied by the frequent sensation or urge to defecate. Notwithstanding, his symptoms also included constipation, rectal fullness, the passage of mucus through the rectum, and rectal bleeding.

BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
THESE ARE NOT SHOES BLAH
BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
THEY'RE SANDALS BLAH BLAH
BLAH INSANELY COMFORTABLE
BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
BLAH BLAH SMILE PASS IT ON!
BLAH ALL THE BLAH BLAH



sank
THE RAMBLER



When the Professor lived in the southern part of Africa, he encountered the Afrikaans idea of *mors dood*, meaning “very seriously dead.” A fly that has been swatted into absolute paste on the kitchen table and requires scraping to remove the fly pâté is *mors dood*. A fly that you swat and it pops up in the air and falls dead on the floor is merely *dood*. It is a way of life or nonlife that permeates Africa like the endless cloud of charcoal fire that enshrouds the continent. There are no cat burglars in Africa, only knife-, screwdriver- or gun-toting turtle boys who find it far easier to kill a fast-asleep occupant of a house when the boy wants a can of mushrooms from the kitchen. Dead robbery victims cannot identify them. Judging by their reproductive rate, turtle boys are somewhat faster than rabbits or guinea pigs.

And it is this that explains the Professor’s confusion over an apparently dead turtle boy in the garden of his laboratory building one day. At 16:50 the bloody church bells had started ringing, summoning the Professor home to the first of what would eventuate into several rounds of *arrack*. Down the steps he went with one of his colleagues. As they turned toward their vehicles, they came to a flower garden.

“Oh dear,” the Professor said, “another bloody dead turtle boy in the garden. But maybe he’s just drunk.”

“No, he’s not drunk,” the colleague said. “He’s *eintlik mors dood!* His eyes are open but the pupils have rolled up into his head.”

Several uniformed policemen arrived and set up red-and-white-striped hazard tape—the kind used to outline crime scenes—and pretended that they knew what they were doing. Off the Professor and colleague went, worrying about what horrible damage this dead turtle boy had inflicted on the *Barleria* and *Clivia* blossoms and the *Hypoestes* shrubs.

The next morning, the corpse was gone, and the flowers and shrubs had only suffered minor contusions. Still, one could see the depression among them that the wide body had made.

The Professor engaged the security chap, who had been one of the main hazard-tape festooners the evening previous.

“What actually happened with that dead turtle boy yesterday?”

“Professor, I am very, very sorry to report that that he was only in an alcoholic coma. Too much *arrack*.”

“What did you chaps do with him?”

“Just carried him back to his post in grounds and gardens. And today he will have a *lekker babelaa*s, a big hangover.”

The Professor said, “What was perplexing was that his knees were bent. I figured that if you are flat on your back and dead, you probably would have relaxed your knees to be more comfortable. Also, there was no sign of fly strike, no maggots that I could see.”

“Well, Professor, you should know that when it comes to the slow-motion gene pool, even the flies are retarded.”

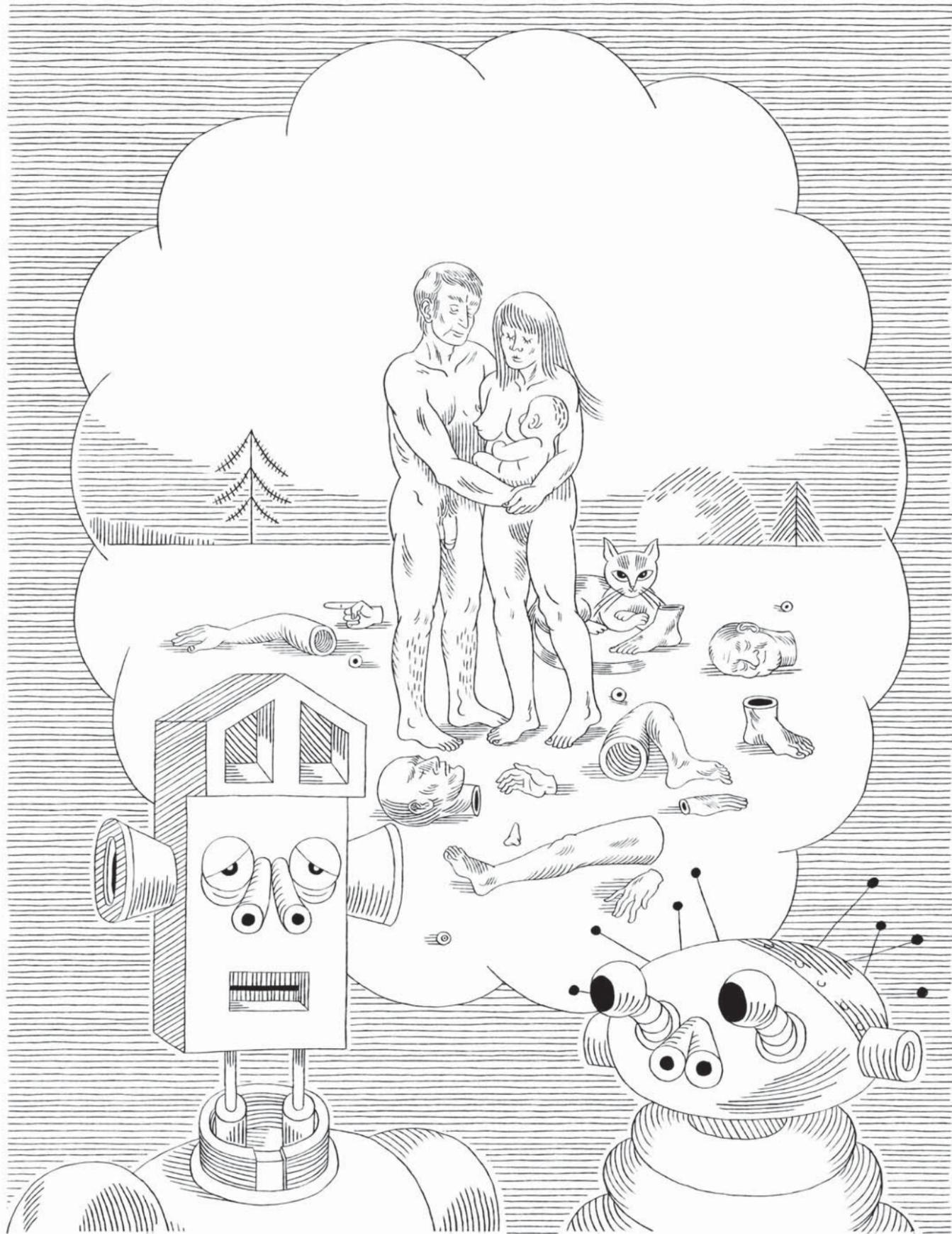
“Yes, I suppose you are right. I remember a few years ago we found a turtle boy in the quarry who already had a corpse pong and there was not a fly in sight. Then there was the one I found at the bottom of the stairs next to the lift, headlong *dood*. He was ventral-side down with his knees bent as if trying an aerial genuflection. It somehow lacked effect. Practically all that we could do is flare the nares for corpse pong and hunt the flies. Failing that, we assume sleep, alcoholic coma, or forgetfulness, but not death.” *VCE*



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A PUZZLE

BY STANISŁAW LEM
 TRANSLATED BY BILL JOHNSTON
 ILLUSTRATIONS BY SOPHIA FOSTER-DIMINO

Polish author Stanisław Lem is arguably the most celebrated writer of science fiction among the most stringent and hard-core guardians of the genre. His widely read 1961 novel *Solaris* revolves around the scientific exploration of the eponymous, completely water-covered planet and culminates with the researchers' realization that *Solaris* is conscious, examining them, and somehow manifesting physical representations of their darkest repressed memories.

What most people don't know about *Solaris* is that its initial English release (i.e., the one that's on most English speakers' bookshelves) was translated from the French version, which was translated from the original Polish text. Anyone who knows anything about literary translation understands that this is a great way to mangle a writer's carefully considered phrasing and, at worst, the meaning of the text itself.

Last year, to mark the book's 50th anniversary, a direct Polish-to-English translation of *Solaris* by renowned translator Bill Johnston was commissioned by the Lem estate, allowing English-speaking readers to finally experience the book as its author intended.

Bill was kind enough to provide us with "A Puzzle," a short story by Lem that has remained unpublished in English until now. Its subject matter concerns a cyborg doctor of magnetics, robotic theology, "Jelly Brains," and a lot of other esoteric and interesting topics.

Father Zinctus, Doctor of Magnetics, was sitting in his cell and, squeaking since he had deliberately omitted to apply oil to himself for purposes of self-mortification, was poring over a commentary by Chlorofantus Omnicksi, paying especial attention to his widely known Book Six, "Concerning the Creation of Robots." He had just reached the end of the verse concerning the programming of the universe and was scrutinizing the pages of brightly colored illuminations that revealed how the Lord, having acquired an especial fondness for iron among the metals, breathed life into it, when Father Chlorinian tiptoed into the cell and stood discreetly by the window, trying not to disturb the eminent theologian in his cogitations.

"What is it, Chlorinian, my dear fellow?" Father Zinctus asked after a short moment, raising crystal-clear eyes from his tome.

"My lord and father," said the other, "I'm bringing you a book recently prohibited by the Holy Office—a work engendered by the whisperings of Satan and written by the dreadful Lapidor of Marmageddon, known as the Halogenite. It contains descriptions of the sordid experiments he conducted in an attempt to refute the true faith."

He placed before Father Zinctus a slim volume already stamped in the requisite way by the Holy Office.

The old man wiped his brow. A little rust sprinkled down from it onto the pages of the book, which he took briskly in his hands with the words:

"Not dreadful, not dreadful, my good Chlorinian, merely unfortunate for having strayed!"

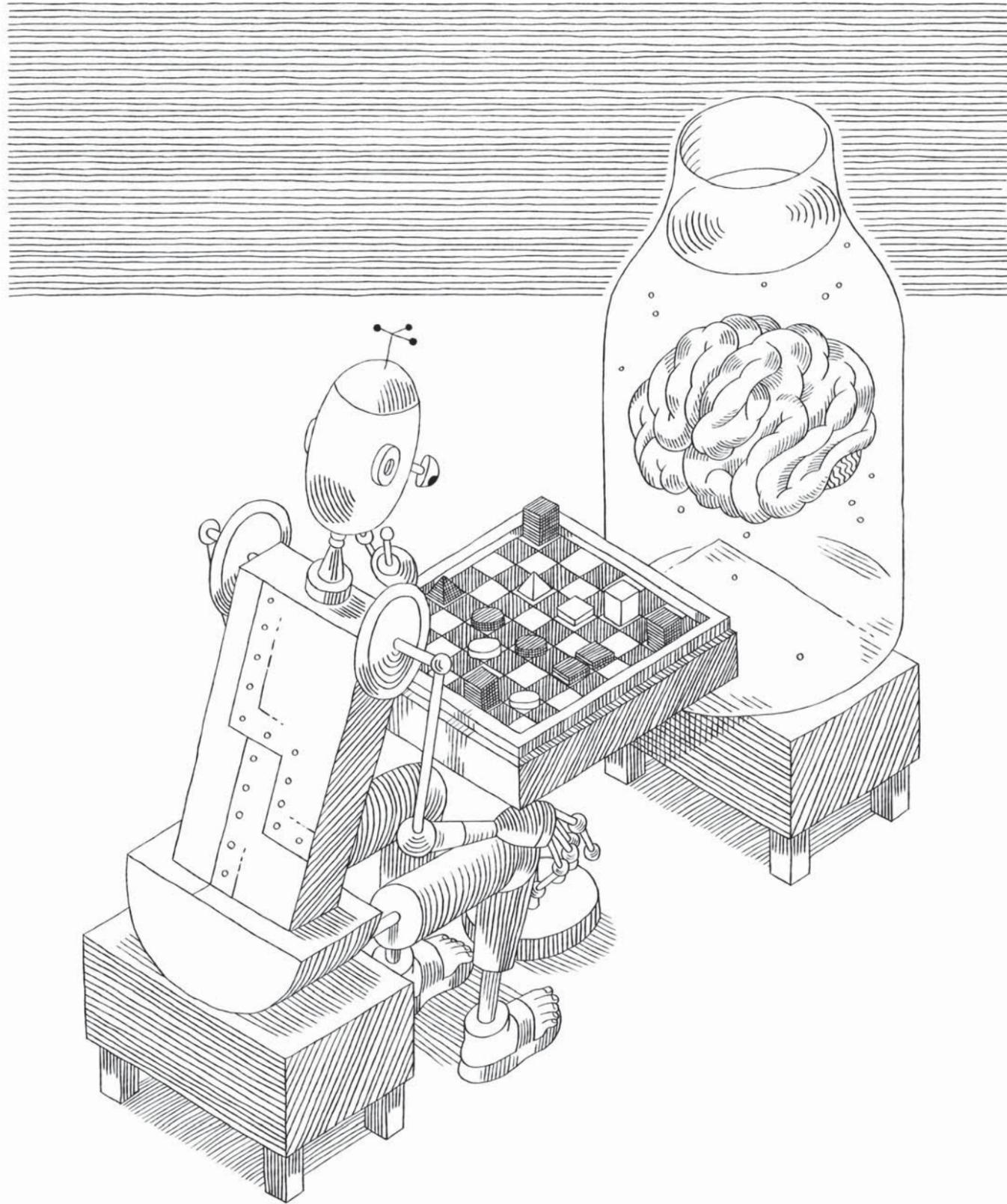
As he spoke, he turned the pages. Scanning the titles of the various chapters—"Concerning the Creatures of Softness and Pallor"; "On Dairy Produce That Can Think"; "Concerning the Genesis of Reason from the Unreasoning Machine"—he gave a faint and entirely benevolent smile, then said casually:

"Listen, Chlorinian—you and the Holy Office, for which I have the greatest respect, you both take the wrong approach to things. I mean, what is this, really? Sheer gobbledegook dreamed up at the drop of a hubcap; balderdash; false legends brought back to life for the umpteenth time—all based on these squishy or squashy or fleshy beings, as the other Apocrypha call them, or the Jellymen, who allegedly created us at one time out of wire and screws..."

"Instead of the Almighty!" breathed Father Chlorinian with a shudder.

"Anathematizing everything left, right, and center isn't much use," Father Zinctus went on good-humoredly. "When it comes down to it, isn't it more sensible to take the position of Father Etheric of the Phasotrons, who three decades ago declared this to be not a theological problem but one of natural history?"

"But Father Zinctus," responded Father Chlorinian, almost jamming up, "it's forbidden to preach that doctrine *ex cathedra*, and in fact the only reason we refrained from condemning it was because of the great piety of its author, who—"



“Calm down, dear Chlorinian,” said Father Zinctus. “It’s just as well it wasn’t condemned, because it’s not at all bad. Etheric said that even if we accept the existence of soft beings who at some time supposedly made us in their workshops, then annihilated themselves, that doesn’t rule out the supernatural origins of the spirit. After all, by the will of the Lord, who is all-powerful, those simple pallidians could have become the instrument of the true creation, which is to say He entrusted to their hands the building of a steel people who after the Last Assessment will raise songs of thanksgiving unto Him. Though of course I do agree that an alternative position categorically rejecting such a possibility borders on a terrible heresy, for it goes against the Scripture in denying His almighty power. What do you say to that?”

“The thing is, Father Zinctus, that Cyborax, Doctor of Holy Theology, has shown how the so-called Well-Based Studies of Tourmaline the Pallidologist that Father Etheric draws on contain not only arguments that are an insult to reason but also blasphemies against the faith. His book states that the well-dwellers produced their offspring not from standard designs, in consultation with reproductive engineers, the only natural way, by the assembly of prefabricated parts—but instead in the absence of any training or documentation, hugging-mugging and without any forethought whatsoever. Yet how on earth could undesigned progeny be possible? If they were merely illicit, for instance made from a design that had not been approved by the relevant office of the Department of Demographic Production—this I could understand. But without the least documentation?!”

“I confess it’s strange, but where is the blasphemy in such a thing?”

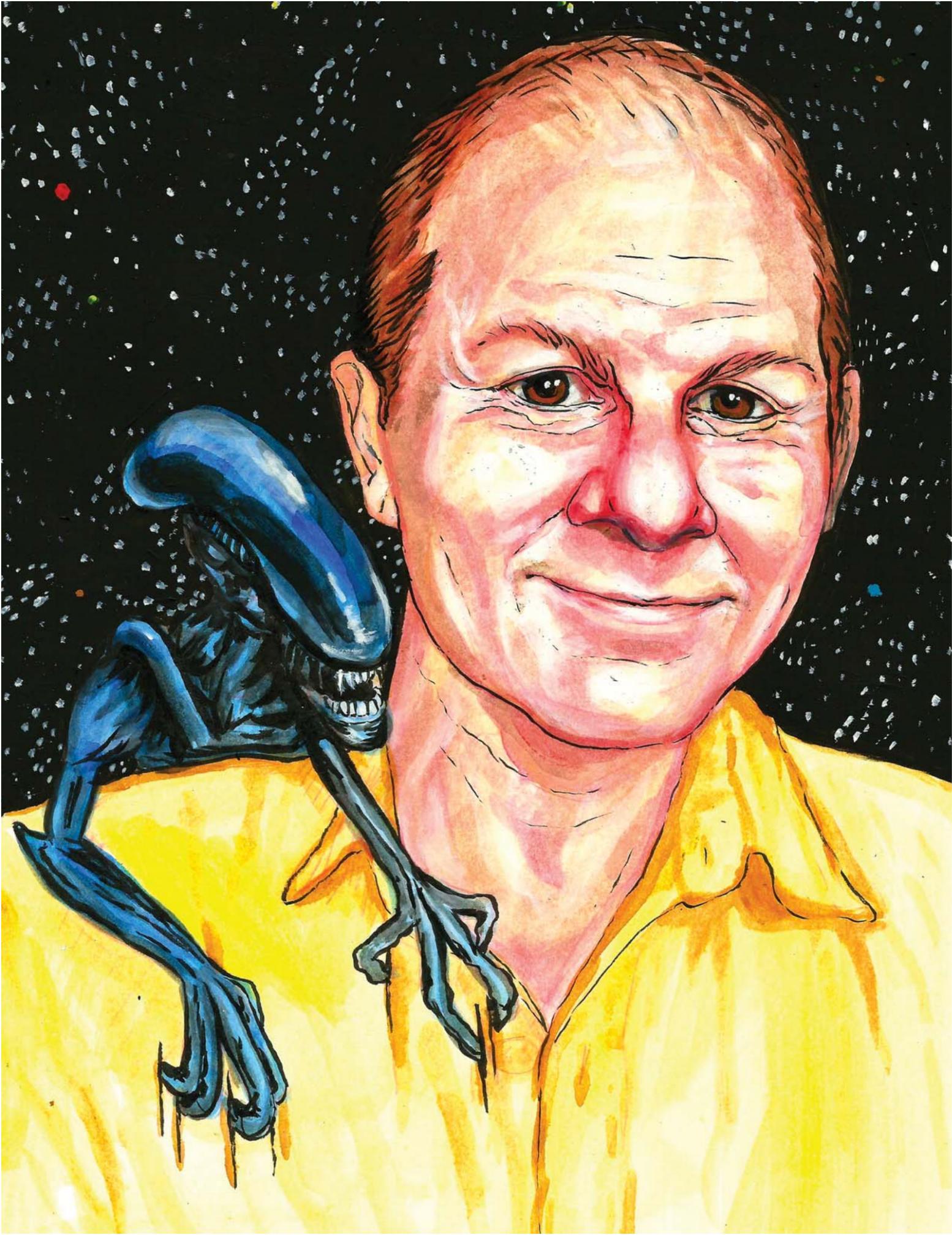
“Forgive me, Reverend Father, but I in turn am surprised you don’t see it... I mean, if they were able *stante pede, expromptu*—just like that, without any preparation—to do what for us requires graduate studies, the formation of a committee, and specialized computations, then each of them must have possessed reproductive competence at their fingertips that was equal to the knowledge of all our cyberneticians, PhDs, and maybe even tenured informatics professors put together! Could that be? How is it possible that the merest whippersnapper should be able to produce offspring without a second thought? How could he know what needed to be done? That would mean the alternative to earning a higher degree is to produce young without any expertise, in one go, with a couple of prods—I can

barely even express such an idea. Because that would give those beings the power of *creationis ex nihilo*, making something from nothing, and by the same token the ability to work miracles that is the exclusive prerogative of the Lord.”

“You say they were either geniuses of conception or miracle workers,” said Father Zinctus. “Yet the Pallidologist Dialysian writes that though they did not make their descendants in learned council and through consultation, they also did not do so alone, but in pairs. It’s there that I perceive their professional specialization! Such an idea is confirmed by words we’ve recovered from the pages of burned library books, where one of them is said to have ‘tender feelings’ or a ‘soft spot’ for another; thus *semper duo faciebant collegium multiplicationis*—they always multiplied in a council of two—don’t you see? They would seek seclusion so as to consult with each other, work up the plans, carry out the necessary calculations. No doubt they did in fact confer on the conceptualization, because without the proper conceptual work conception itself is impossible, as the word itself clearly indicates, my good Chlorinian. They must have collaborated on the design before they began assembling the microcomponents, it could not have been otherwise. Devising a reasoning being, whether hard or soft, is no trifling matter.”

“Let me tell you what I never hope to see,” declared Father Chlorinian in a trembling voice. “Your ideas, Reverend Father, have entered on a dangerous path! The next thing you’ll be telling me is that offspring can be produced not at the drawing board, after the testing of prototypes in the lab, with the highest concentration of spirit there can be, but in a bed, without any prototypes or training, haphazardly, in the dark, and quite unintentionally... I beseech you and I warn you that this is not only futile nonsense, but the prompting of Satan! Recollect yourself, Father...”

“You really think he would go to all that trouble?” retorted the stubborn old man. “But never mind the obscurer points of child production. Come closer and I’ll tell you a secret that may reassure you... I learned yesterday that three chemisticians at the Colloidal Institute have built out of a combination of gelatin, water, and something else—cheese, I believe—a kind of pudding they call Jelly Brain, which not only can perform operations in higher algebra but also has learned to play chess; it even beat the director of the institute. As you can see, it’s pointless to insist that no thought could ever arise in any gelatinous substance—yet that is precisely the unbending position of the Holy Office!” *Q.E.D.*



THE NOVELIZER

An Interview with Alan Dean Foster on the Art of Adapting Sci-Fi Movies into Books

BY HAMILTON MORRIS
ILLUSTRATIONS BY PENELOPE GAZIN

Even if you've never heard of the author Alan Dean Foster you definitely know the titles of his works: Alien, Aliens, Alien 3, Transformers, Star Wars, The Thing, and many other novelizations of films. Over the past four decades, he has successfully reverse-engineered more than 30 movies based on original scripts into book form, making him the most prolific sci-fi novelizer of all time. And given the recent trend of studios forgoing the commission of novelizations, he may never have a successor.

While film novelization is often considered a base, mercenary source of income, devoid of literary merit and limited to the creation of cheap single-edition paperbacks with embossed covers, it has in fact been practiced by the most respected authors of science fiction. Orson Scott Card novelized *The Abyss*; Arthur C. Clarke wrote the novel *2001* at the same time he was hashing out the film's screenplay with Kubrick; Isaac Asimov not only novelized *Fantastic Voyage* but followed it with a sequel, *Fantastic Voyage II: Destination Brain*; and Michael Moorcock novelized *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*, a book based on a movie based on the Sex Pistols, who were based on an impresario's idea of something that sounded like "sexy young assassins."

Novelizations have existed since at least the 1920s, commissioned by studios as a way for moviegoers to relive their favorite science-fiction and horror films after leaving the theater. The advent of laserdiscs, VHS tapes, and DVDs threatened their existence, yet they persevered, finding new audiences into the 80s and 90s. Shortly after the turn of the millennium, the market for novelizations began to dry up; even a spate of new video-game novelizations could not restore vigor to what had once been a great (if not respected) sector of the publishing industry. How will the science-fiction fans of tomorrow satisfy their appetite for transmedia literature? Will novelizations still exist? I called Alan to find out, and we ended up talking about a lot of other things, too.

VICE: I've wanted to talk to you about the Alien novelizations for a while, but I'm glad it didn't happen until *Prometheus* had come out because I've been wondering what you think of it.
Alan Dean Foster: I haven't seen it yet.

Really? Why not?

Well, it comes from living in a small town where the nearest theater of any consequence, or the nearest theater period, is a 20-minute drive away; and the fact that my wife can't go to the movies anymore because she can't sit up that long; and the fact that I don't live someplace like LA or New York or Boston where there's a like-minded group of people to whom I can say, "Hey, let's go see *Prometheus*."

I'm amazed you could resist the temptation. You spent so much of your professional career immersed in the Alien franchise. Aren't you curious?

It's kind of funny because everyone talks about tipping points, and I think we're nearing the tipping point where people will no longer go to see movies. They'll read the reviews, they'll see all the clips on YouTube and on io9 and TV and that'll be about 90 percent of a movie. The actual movie won't even have to be made. They'll simply talk about the movie that would have been made, and shoot all the good stuff for the clips online. The reviewers will review the clips—and the rest of the movie, you'll kind of just fill in the blanks yourself. I'm afraid that's the way we're headed, and I'm only being half-sarcastic.

At first I wanted to know why you weren't chosen to write the *Prometheus* novelization, but then I realized there is no *Prometheus* novelization.

Though I haven't seen the film, I've been following its development very closely. I haven't seen one word mentioned about a novelization, which is very unusual and kind of interesting. Obviously for the studio it's just another promotion and another few bucks in their pockets, so they'd love to have one

out, but I haven't even seen any mention of a name or a publisher or anything. With the film already out it's very unusual, and one wonders why.

Especially unusual in the case of *Prometheus* because the studio and filmmakers went to great lengths to produce an immense body of transmedia promotional material. The trend is to build an expanded universe in which to situate these types of films, and in that context it seems we are living in the best time in history for novelizations to flourish yet they have somehow become passé.

It's very odd. I still think there's a place for novelizations. You can take the novel anywhere and read it, and there are just certain things a novelization can do that a film can't. The landscape of the novel is created with an unlimited budget. You can spend ten pages exploring the inner thoughts of a character, which you can't do even in the director's cut of a film unless you have a really powerful or indulgent director.

"I couldn't stand when my *Aliens* novelization came out and the marines' language had been bowdlerized."

I wonder if them not wanting a novelization has something to do with maintaining total control over the film's universe and intellectual property—not allowing anyone to contaminate the narrative bloodline with ideas that haven't been approved by test audiences, market researchers, and statisticians. There is an inherent risk in novelization; the act of expansion necessitates the introduction of new material, unless you're inclined to spend dozens of pages objectively describing the physical dimensions of Noomi Rapace's body or whatever.

To some the job is simply to pad the screenplay enough to bring the novel up to 200-some odd pages, and that can be done with minimal effort, but I see a novelization as an opportunity to answer questions the film does not address. And yes, that does pose a threat of explaining things the director would prefer remain shrouded in mystery. When I wrote *Aliens*, I got to talk about the aliens' actual biomechanical structure and how a particular joint might rotate, and how the whole telescoping mouth apparatus works—things that, as you're watching the movie, you see and want to understand more about but move too quickly to be understood. Or what about the alien's motivations; does the alien have motivations? That's something you don't have time to explore in the films, at least not in the first one. But I get to do that in the books.

Alien is Ridley Scott's cinematization of an illustration from H.R. Giger's *Necronomicon*, which in turn is Giger's adaptation of imagery he envisioned while reading H.P. Lovecraft. So why the fear that novelizers will introduce unsanctioned material that becomes canon? Who can really claim the story as their own?

Well, Dan O'Bannon gets to claim the story. He wrote the original screenplay for *Alien*, and unfortunately Dan is no longer with us. When I came along I had to deal not just with Dan

O'Bannon's version but Ridley Scott's and James Cameron's and David Fincher's versions too. It's my job to make everything fit together as well as I possibly can, and it becomes extremely difficult at certain points. I only had three weeks to write the *Alien* novel. The main problem I had was that the studio was paranoid, as studios tend to be, and despite the fact this was a pre-internet time they refused to tell me anything about what the alien looked like, not even a written description, not a single photograph. So if you read the book version of *Alien*, there is no description of the alien, it is simply referred to as "the alien." That's the way I had to do it, and it was a difficult job. Sometimes the issue wasn't that I diverged from the original film but rather that I didn't diverge enough. I couldn't stand when my *Aliens* novelization came out and the marines' language had been bowdlerized.

The publisher censored your text without telling you?

I was just as shocked as you. I didn't know about it until a fan wrote me and said, "Why did you do this? It looks silly, you've got all of these space marines walking around talking like sixth-graders." I had no idea, so I picked up a copy of the book—I don't reread my own books, I'd rather read somebody else's book—and thought, *Son of a bitch!*, and that's what I wrote to Warner Books and said—although my language was more colorful and extensive. They said that somebody had decided that they wanted to be able to reach a broader teenage audience, which is hilarious in itself, as teenagers never use any of the language the characters in *Aliens* used. So they changed it all arbitrarily and they, probably very sensibly, didn't tell me they were going to do this until it was a fait accompli, or else I would have raised holy hell. Not for my own sake so much—it's Cameron's original language and it should have been preserved as it was written, which is what I did.

It's weird they chose to be so conservative concerning a film that is essentially about a monster that consists of a giant erect penis with a telescoping vagina-dentata penis-mouth that reproduces via oral rape. Has James Cameron ever commented on your *Aliens* novelization?

Yes, I did have a brief discussion with him about one scene, which we resolved. At the end when the alien queen gets blown out of the airlock, and Ripley then climbs up the ladder and shuts the airlock door... it bothered me from a scientific standpoint because it wouldn't work. You'd lose all of the air out of there almost instantly, plus the thrust would probably make it impossible for her to climb the ladder. I asked Cameron about this and he said, "I know that, but I wanted that shot." And he's usually very careful about his technical stuff. In Hollywood the scene always trumps the science—that's been true since the silent days.

In *Alien 3* I tried to correct some of the more glaring scientific mistakes from the film. For example, you have people sitting on a pile of used batteries trying to find some that are still good to put in their flashlights—this is hundreds of years in the future and these people are still using D cells? I'd never expect anyone to be scrutinizing the details of my novels 20 years on, but there were errors in those scripts I could not ignore. I disliked writing *Alien 3* so much that I declined the offer for *Alien: Resurrection*.



I was amazed that you wrote most of these novels in less than a month, but then I read that Michael Avallone novelized *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* in three days. It seems that's the industry standard. How is it possible to write so quickly?

The first thing is you don't do much else, you just write. I've always been a fast writer, and it's a blessing and a curse all at the same time because while I can write quickly I probably should take more time with certain things. I get bored with my own writing sometimes. I'm a visual writer; I learned how to read from comic books, primarily *Uncle Scrooge*. What I used to do, and what I did when I wrote *Alien*, was dictate my rough drafts. This is before the age of computers, and I could talk faster than I could type on a Smith Corona or an IBM typewriter. Then I would turn it over to a typist and she would transcribe it, and I would write the final draft from that. But then computers came along, and I found I was essentially getting an extra draft out of just typing it on the computer.

I'm curious how a life of novelization impacts your perception of the world, do you see potential for narrative expansion in all things? Is there anything that could not serve as a substrate for a novelization, for instance, could you novelize an inanimate object like a can opener or a pile of change?

I'm not sure about a can opener, but I have novelized a movie poster. In fact, it was the first novelization I ever did. In 1972, the modern era of film novelization was really just beginning and Ballantine Books had bought the rights to a really horrible Italian female-Tarzan film called *Luana*. Ballantine approached me and asked, "Can you turn this film into a book?" So I, being a young writer, said, "Sure!" When I asked for a copy of the script they said the only one they had was in Italian, which I didn't speak. Ballantine said they would set up a private

screening for me in Los Angeles, but the film was in Italian and without English subtitles. I'm sitting there thinking, *Wait a minute, I have a serious problem here*. In addition to its being in a foreign language, the film was so bad that I could hardly sit through it. Luckily, they had hired Frank Frazetta to do two paintings to promote the film, both of which have been reproduced many times in all the Frazetta art books, even though they're not always presented as being publicity art for this horrible movie. They're typical Frazetta paintings: There's a spectacular, ferocious-looking female Tarzan with a lion and a panther. So I thought, well, I'd write my own female-Tarzan novel based on the poster, which is why the book is dedicated to Frazetta. The capper to the whole thing is someone from Disney picked up a copy of my *Luana*-poster novelization and contacted Ballantine Books to ask if the film rights were available.

The cinematization of a novelization of a posterization of a cinematization of a screenplay?

Apparently, that's what they wanted. That was my first novelization and one of the more difficult ones at that. After that came the Star Trek and Star Wars books, which are still in print. That kind of changed everything novelization-wise, for me anyway. I became the go-to guy. But you don't plan these things out in your life. I never asked to be the novelizer. I was writing my own original science-fiction books and stories, and I just kept getting asked, Will you do this, will you do that? And I like the challenge—to turn out a decent novel in a nonexistent period of time. I kind of got to do my own cut of the movie, when I wasn't messed with, at least, and fix the scientific areas as best I could while expanding on the characters, plots, and backgrounds. And for a fan that's kind of fun. I take pride in my novelizations. *WCB*



CRIMINAL CHLORINATION

An Interview with a Clandestine Chemist

BY HAMILTON MORRIS

In the popular imagination, the landscape of clandestine chemistry is a monotonous one, peppered with pastures of GBL saponification and bluffs of pseudoephedrine reduction. But there exist lone experimenters, tinkerers, gentlemen scientists, who seek to further the field of psychoactive-drug synthesis in the privacy of their own homes. For their participation in the ignominious marriage of proscribed nucleophile and electrophile they often pay a dire price: their freedom. Here I present an interview with a clandestine chemist acquaintance whose curiosity regarding forbidden molecules left him locked in a cage.

VICE: I wanted to talk about clandestine chemistry and what it's like to operate an underground laboratory. How did you first get started?

Anonymous chemist: In the early 90s there was a massive outpouring of information on psychedelics. You had Terence McKenna parading around in a DMT T-shirt, talking about salvia, yet nobody knew where to get either salvia or DMT. It seemed criminal to have to go to a Grateful Dead concert or a rave—these awful scenes—to try to acquire interesting and unusual drugs, but there were few other choices. There were some compounds that had always been commercially available from chemical-supply companies, but most of the phenethylamines were really hard, if not impossible, to get.

I was a scientific kid, and I followed my curiosity to its natural end. My first actual synthesis was DMT. In retrospect that seems ridiculous, but it was something that I just could not find. Nobody was doing extractions; these were the days before the widespread availability of botanical sources. I studied the synthesis and decided to go the classical route via indole, but my first DMT synthesis was pretty shitty—literally, indole smells like crap—and it just reeked up the building I was living in. This was pre-meth-lab hysteria, so while it wasn't normal to have your apartment smelling like shit and solvents, it didn't ring any alarm bells. By the time I successfully produced DMT, I'd learned enough chemistry that I had a much broader synthetic palette to work with. This

was probably 1993 or so and there was all this hype around MDMA. Like I said, the terrible raves were in full force. It started out as a very expensive hobby and I gave away whatever I made, but that's not sustainable in the long term so I began to sell the material as well.

What was your motivation for distributing the chemicals in large quantities?

You hear all this messianic bullshit from chemists. My motive was very clear: I just wanted the opportunity to try drugs that were unobtainable otherwise. I tried MDMA and moved to DOM, mescaline, 2C-B, and various others. I really enjoyed watching the ripple effect of throwing these things out there, to see question marks stretched across people's faces, and it became my primary source of income for about seven years.

It's interesting how things have changed. Now most of these drugs can be obtained without much effort, but the precursors for their syntheses are closely guarded.

It's different. Back then, trying to get any of the substituted benzaldehydes was a serious bitch; those aren't exactly linchpins of chemical commerce. The straight-to-consumer international chemical trade was in its infancy. But now there's also a lot more heat on certain things—back then you could buy a 55-gallon drum of camphor 1070 or oco tea oil for \$3,000. There's just no way you could do that kind of

The last dregs of a MD-phenylacetone drop into Hg amalgam.



HgCl₂ being weighed.

thing anymore. I wouldn't say it's harder or easier, it's simply different and it's always evolving.

I'll give you an example: Around 1998 there was a group of us that were trying to work on some of Shulgin's thio-compounds, the 2C-Ts. They were a lot more difficult than the standard phenethylamines and we just couldn't do it effectively. So eventually a private group of chemists and investors pooled their resources and commissioned a laboratory in Poland to produce a kilogram of 2C-T-7. It was ridiculously expensive, and the entire process felt like a really extreme measure. To the best of my knowledge, that group effort was the first instance of custom syntheses of a gray-market drug by the end users. Less than two years later, the chemical took off and was introduced as Blue Mystic in the Netherlands, and then as a pure chemical in the States. 2C-T-7 was one of the first "research chemicals" in the modern designer-drug sense, and I think some of its initial popularity came from the fact that it had been totally unavailable due to the difficulty of producing it in a clandestine lab.

Back then the internet served to disseminate knowledge about drugs. There was less emphasis on disseminating the drugs themselves. Starting in the 90s, there were a series of forums where chemists would convene to discuss their work. One of the results of these discussions was that a lot of these syntheses got translated into plain English anyone could understand. To people without formal training in organic chemistry, the terminology used in chemical journals and pharmaceutical patents is so technical that it is effectively a foreign language. *PiHKAL* made things

a lot easier—Shulgin speaks in a language closer to what the average dude can understand. But the online discussions took things even further, and the result was that a lot more people decided to try their hands at synthesizing MDMA.

The biologist Eva Harris described a simple technique that allows people in developing countries to run PCR via manual thermal cycling, and the work is widely considered to be a masterpiece of science communication. What struck me while reading her book is that she was effectively doing for genetics what clandestine chemists had done for amphetamine synthesis—they're both results of the same impulse to simplify, increase accessibility, and bring technology to the people who need it.

I used the proceeds from my work to get proper equipment, but some of my fondest memories are from when I was just starting out. I was trying to make remarkable things using completely unremarkable tools. Everyone was doing mercury amalgam reductions or lithium aluminum hydride reductions, and that was it. There was this meth-lab lore about bikers who would supposedly take an aluminum keg, pump methylamine and phenylacetone inside, and throw the keg into a river to keep the reaction cold enough to prevent it from exploding. It was certainly a bullshit story, but some dudes actually ran with it and began using 55-gallon PTFE kegs as reaction vessels in the reductive amination of MD-phenylacetone and nitromethane. This is a violent reaction on the small scale, so they'd just throw in a kilo, hook up a pressure-relief valve, and hope for the best! Everybody thrived on improvised equipment.



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I can understand improvising certain things, but without any analytic equipment you are essentially working blindfolded. So much chemistry revolves around figuring out exactly what you've got sitting in your flask—working without access to sophisticated analytic equipment is like traveling back in time 50 or 100 years.

Even in university labs, analysis was more difficult; there were no references for most of these chemicals, especially not the phenethylamines. It was really a guessing game. I had no recourse other than thin-layer chromatography to monitor reaction progress, and then taking a melting point of the final product. That's why the forensic reports were so fascinating to me when I was raided. Of course, it's unfortunate that the first glimpse into the true chemical identity of my products was occasioned by my arrest, but even as I was having my freedom taken away I was totally fascinated by what the forensic chemists had found.

“Even as I was having my freedom taken away I was totally fascinated by what the forensic chemists had found.”

What exactly were you charged with?

My first charge was actually for the manufacture of methamphetamine. For reasons I won't get into, I wasn't arrested at the time of the raid and promptly fled overseas to await the forensic report. I was charged in absentia with manufacturing methamphetamine because that was all the cops knew how to process. They were taken aback by my laboratory. The 2C-C I was making was just not in their chemical lexicon. They thought it had to be methamphetamine and were determined to prove it. That charge stuck for the better part of a year. At one point, my defense attorney and I said, “Let's go for this meth thing. We can beat that one.” The field tests came back positive for methamphetamine, but the narcotics officers knew something else was going on, so they sent for a private contractor to test for traces of scheduled compounds. These guys tested everything; they were quite literally analyzing the paint on the walls of my laboratory. Then they outlined possible synthetic routes based on their findings, and I must say they hit every fucking nail on the head. I was halfway hoping when I was hiding out overseas that they might not find anything. Not a fucking chance!

And what did they find?

Well, one thing they *didn't* find was methamphetamine. I was extremely careful not to keep large quantities of anything scheduled in the laboratory while it was active—it looked simply like a well-equipped organic-chem lab. I think they chose to pursue the 2C-C because it was the only material present in quantities large enough to warrant a serious charge according to the sentencing guidelines. I was experimenting with various procedures to chlorinate 2C-H. Shulgin's original method was a bit messy and low-yielding. I used sulfuryl chloride, which resulted in better yields, but there was a problem with not being able to separate polychlorinated impurities with recrystallization or distillation. The trick I found was to chlorinate the benzaldehyde, which made for easy separation. It was really cool to look postmortem at the lab report and see exactly what had come out of it. I actually got a thank-you card from a few of the staff at the forensics lab for giving them what they said was the most interesting work they had done in ages.

Wow! How did their report play out in court?

A jury of your peers often isn't the greatest thing, as apparently my peers are not that bright. A bunch of talk about differing functional groups just confuses them; all the prosecutor needs to do is get up there, point out the laboratory equipment and chemicals, and talk about the tragedies of the meth epidemic, and you're fucked. It was amazing to me how idiotic it all was. They were claiming that my 2C-C intermediates were 2C-B, of which there was not a nanogram in my lab. When we tried to point out that the two chemicals contained an entirely different halogen, they just rolled their eyes as if to say, “Oh, here you come with this chemistry gobbledegook again.” And I had to plea out of that charge. The whole thing was like tending an apple orchard and being charged with running an illegal orange grove. I ended up with a few years. Arguably, I was lucky.

Yes, arguably. Do you feel as if you garnered more respect from the police and prisoners than the typical inmate because you had committed an intellectual crime?

I found it easier in jail to just lie and say, “Yes, I was cooking meth.” That went over so much better than trying to explain, “Well, I was working on an unusual halogenated psychedelic phenethylamine.” Other prisoners come up to you and want to talk about chemistry—all the other purported meth cooks assault you with these totally fantastical syntheses that they swear were working. You just stop arguing and say, “Yup, that's awesome, I also did that when I was cooking meth.”

After your release, how did you reconcile your relationship with chemistry? It's rare, but some people involved in chemistry crimes have gone on to successful academic careers.

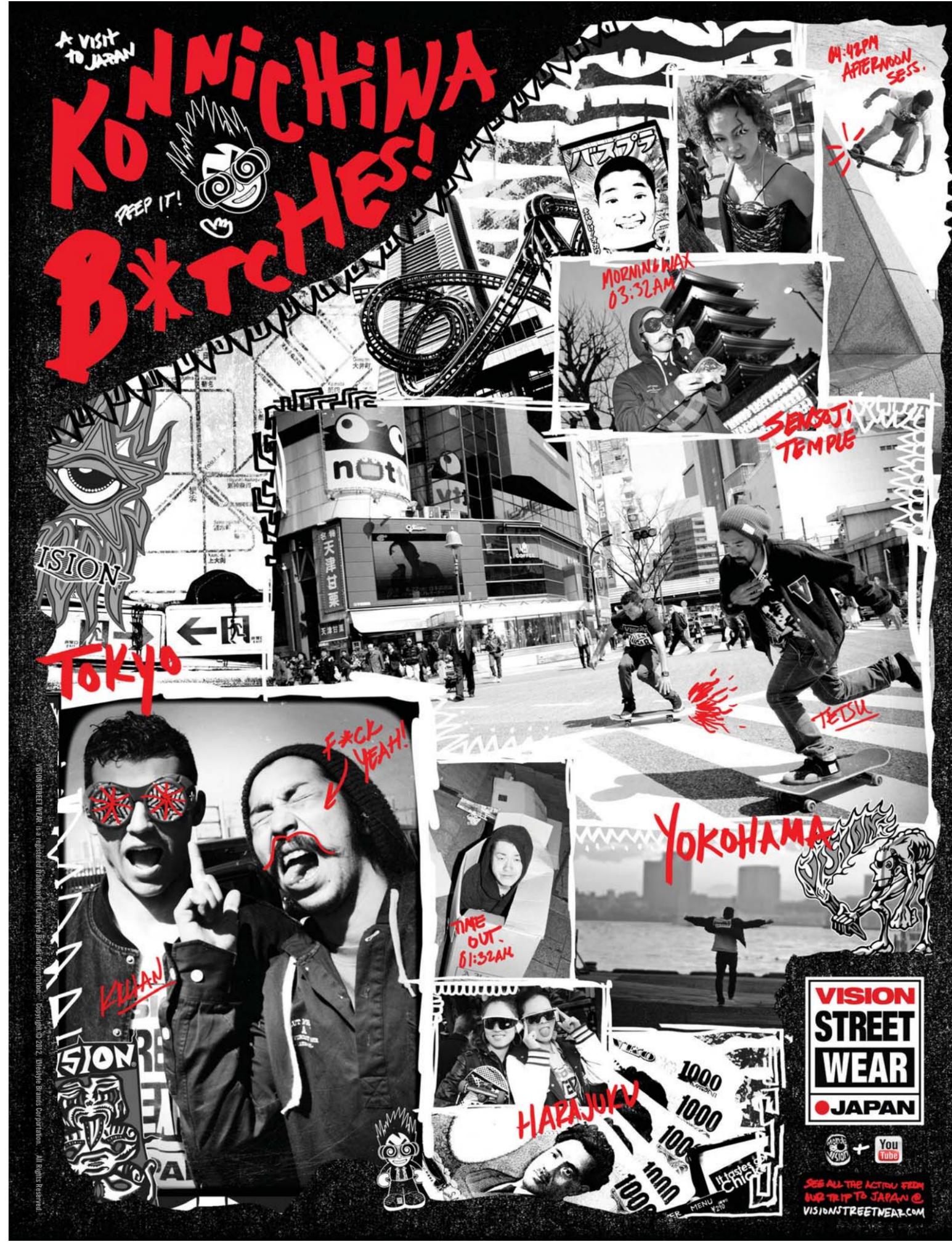
If you've figured out a way to transmute mercury into gold then it's really hard to ignore that. You never forget how to ride the bicycle that is synthesizing MDMA. Of course, it's a vicious cycle: You receive a prison sentence for illegal chemistry, and when you are released the illegal income is even more attractive because you're unemployed. It's a bitch to replace all of your reagents and equipment, but that's *nothing* compared with the difficulty of learning organic chemistry in the first place.

What did you do when you were released?

An unanticipated thing happened while I was in prison: The market changed dramatically, and my job was effectively outsourced to China. By the time I had returned to normal society, things were unrecognizable. I was blown away. The research-chemical market was going full speed ahead, and all it took was mephedrone to really blast that into the public consciousness. In retrospect, those early days of 2C-T-7 seem so quaint. The synthesis community has fractured; there are some pockets out there, but the original need no longer exists. I have mixed feelings about the increased availability of these chemicals. In today's climate I might have never become a chemist. Half the chemicals that motivated me to sit down with a chemistry textbook can be purchased online with a debit card. Strangely enough, the research-chemical market put scores of hardworking American clandestine chemists out of business. I can't compete with China, so I'm yet another victim of globalization!

So what now?

For me, I still have a great interest in chemistry—perfumery has been something that's really been exciting me lately. So yeah, perfumery. Maybe. *VCS*

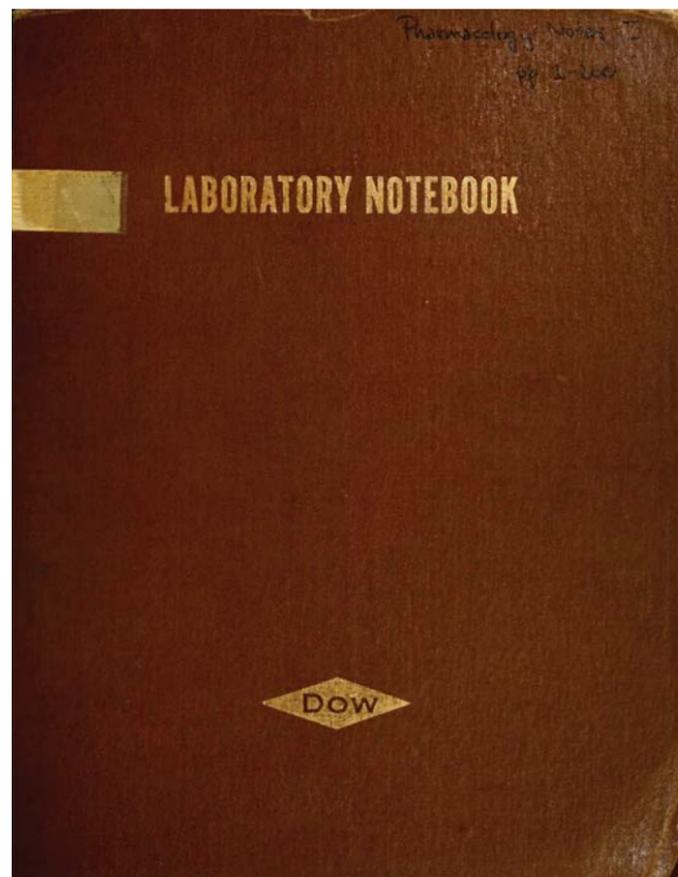


PAGES FROM THE LAB NOTEBOOK OF ALEXANDER SHULGIN

A Glance Through the History of Psychedelic Chemistry

INTRODUCTION AND CAPTIONS BY PAUL DALEY AND HAMILTON MORRIS

Archival material courtesy of the Shulgin Collective



Reproducibility is the heart of the scientific method, so all good chemists must keep a laboratory notebook. If you don't record the details of your lab work it might not be possible for other researchers to reproduce it later. While the work of many scientists may languish in the yellowed pages of forgotten journals, there will never be a shortage of chemistry enthusiasts eager to repeat Alexander "Sasha" Shulgin's syntheses. Starting with his freshman chemistry classes, through his employment at Dow Chemical, and into the years of independent psychedelic experimentation with his research group, Shulgin meticulously documented his syntheses in a series of notebooks that are currently being digitized and made publicly available. Presented here is an assortment of unpublished pages ranging from his first psychedelic synthesis to his later investigations of MDMA derivatives and γ -ray-emitting radiopsychedelics. *CSB*

THE DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY
BOOK NO. GP 40-60²⁵
DATE 4/5/60

SUBJECT Prep of a nitro styrene.

Attempt:

COc1cc(C)c(C)c1C=O

→

COc1cc(C)c(C)c1C=C[N+](=O)[O-]

Butyl amine method.
(for 2,4,6-trimethoxy- ϕ -CHO + ϵ -NO₂)
D.C. 19 11-16 (1954)
They also describe the HOAc, NH₄OAc method

9.8 g XI-24 (plate dried only)
into ~50 ml anh. EtOH. Δ to dissolve
+ 3.2 ml ϵ -NO₂
+ 0.36 cc BuNH₂ - Δ on SB. 11:30 AM.
light yellow colored solution.

Product described P. Hey. Quart. J. Pharm. & Pharmacol 20 129 (1947)
yellow prisms ϵ
EtOH mp 95°
fused TMA mp 219-20 via electrolytic reduction

4/6/60 - in AM. - still same color - trivial amt evaporated. off 7:30 AM - sec. amt diddle → yellow oil. ∇ CO₂ → yellow solid that redissolves on plate. - a little solid (cub) in H₂O → yellow paste. evap all on SB ϵ air stream. add 35 ml HOAc, 3.2 g ammonium acetate - almost 6 ml EtOH₂ - onto reflux ~90° AM. off at 10:30 - ∇ to RT - add H₂O & seed → yellow x'tals (dark brown ML.) - total H₂O ~ 60 ml. filter - wash ϵ ~ 40% HOAc → deep goldish-yellow x'tals - dry on plate

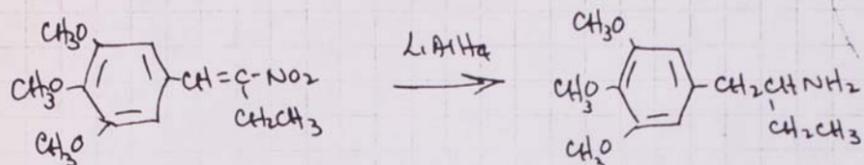
4.3 g
mp 90-92.5°
see page 25 for recrystallization

OCTS 4/19/60

This is the earliest page in Sasha's collection. It is a photocopy he made at Dow around 1989 while he was collecting his previous research for PIHKAL, his phenethylamine magnum opus. The page illustrates the formation of the nitropropene precursor to TMA, or 3,4,5-trimethoxyamphetamine, which was his first foray into the synthesis of psychedelic amphetamines. TMA is an active compound, but it lacks the beatific serenity of its 2-carbon homolog, mescaline.

SUBJECT Reduction of a Nitrostyrene

DATE 6/22/60



(patterned on page 27)

8.4 g XI-86C in Soxhlet thimble.

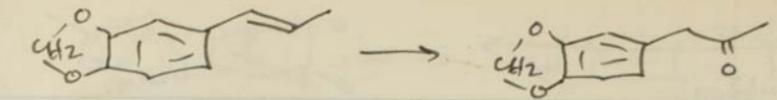
5.7 g LiAlH₄ - into 300 ml ether.

added subsequently another 200 cc as in 1 l. flask want full enough to → safe reflux - start extracting ~ 8:30 AM. Run rest of day - still some xtals - 6/23/60 - all day long - done. 6/24/60 - ∇ ice - + 300 ml dil H₂SO₄ (12cc conc diluted appropriately). Separate aq. & ether layers. Aq. layer extracted 1 time in ether → add ether and brought to ~ pH 6 in Na₂CO₃ soln (may have gotten as high as seven. & to boil - filter - wash Al crap in boiling H₂O. Defatate oily globs & film in filtrate - not sol in hot H₂O - boil filtrate down. (10 min boil → due to too cc but has gone yellow and big droplets of orange oil are bouncing around - stop boiling here and add boiling solution of 8 g picric acid in 90 ml EtOH - color intensification - heavy red. brown oil separates on cooling - this somewhat solidifies - + some xtals that subsequently come out on standing. These (mp. 65 - ~112° dec) have IR same as oil - both different from picric acid itself. 11.4g. - boilup in dilute HCl - 350 cc H₂O ~ 60 cc HCl - not all goes into solution. globs of oil bouncing around at boil. Separate mechanically - to page 90

down in vol to ~ 1/3, Mh's RT air stream

ether
↓
~100 mg goo out.

Repeat.



see 4:86

To a mixture of:

450 g 80% HCO₂H
105 g 30% H₂O₂

Adrich
(375g 96% + H₂O QS → 450g)
(90g 35% + H₂O QS → 105g)
↑ Willard, el cheapo

add, with good stirring:

92.2 g isosafrole (F & B) in 360 ml acetone.

Add ~ 10 ml at a time - (keep temp < 40° - at ~ 1/3 point jump → 40°, external ice water, complete addition at ~ 1 hr. still exothermic Rf for another 5 hrs. Coocasmal cooling needed, temp between 35, 40°. then OK to stand. Exotherm definitely over at ~ 4 hr. ~~hour~~ at 6 hr. OK on rotary. 8 hrs 30° only a few ml over & more at 40° excellent.

↳ 146 g black sludge Add 180 ml MeOH, Add 1080 ml 15% H₂SO₄ onto S.B. 1 PM. probably 2 PM to temp. (2 flask) off 5:30 PM. ∇ RT. Add H₂SO₄ 180 g dil. to 1080 ml EtOH

Ext 3x ~ 200 ether (3x 100 ml in 2 ag. funnels) wash in 1%, 5%, 5%, 5% NaOH (75 ml each) flask → 89.6 g crude deep brown oil. Kf. 0.3 mm/Hg. over 120 → 140° → 59.1 g pale straw oil. 7/1/62 - slup 7/10/62 10/8/62. #1 → 141 sludge → 100 → 53 195 sludge →

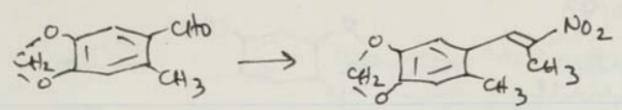
#2	79g crude → 54.9
#3	101.6g crude → 63.4
#4	82.9 crude → 53.4

89.6 crude
59.1g over

This page details the synthesis of α-ethylmescaline via reduction of the nitrobutene precursor with lithium aluminum hydride. α-ethylmescaline proved to be an inactive mescaline homolog, but α-ethylation of other phenethylamines created promising compounds such as MBDB and ARIADNE, the (R)-enantiomer of which was patented for restoring motivation in senile geriatric patients under the trade name Dimoxamine.

Formation of 3,4-methylenedioxyphenylacetone from isosafrole with formic acid and hydrogen peroxide. This ketone is an early intermediate in the synthesis of several known entactogens. An infamous misprint in Michael Valentine Smith's book Psychedelic Chemistry reads "add 100ml H₂O₂" when it should read "add 100ml H₂O." All it takes is a superfluous subscript numeral to turn a simple substitution reaction into an explosive black fountain that will not stop!

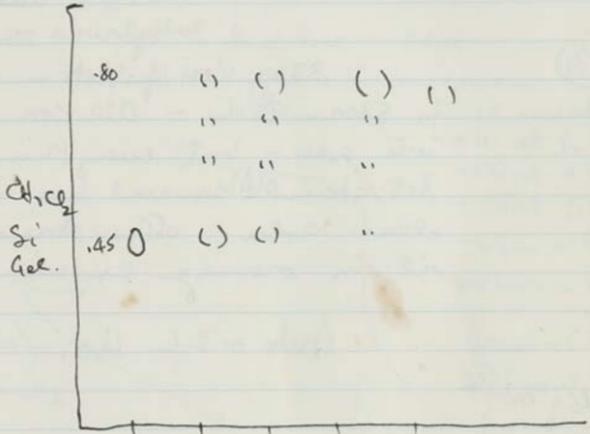
Sept. 7, 1984.
Attempt:



21

1.18 g aldehyde from main crop, 5:20, into
 13.2 g $\text{NO}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_3$ - add
 0.09 g NH_4OAc - into sfs at 5:55 PM.

Off in AM ~ 9 AM - color still very friendly - good yellow.
 Strip on RE → good nil, maybe ~ 2 g. add 2 g hot MeOH, let cool gives spont. xtal. filter wash w/ an. amt MeOH



0.64 g beautiful yellow xtal. mp 116-118° into reference collection

nextal ~ 0.05g from ~ 1/2 ml (!) MeOH, D → ~~next~~ lustrous bright yellow xtal. mp 120-121° to microanalysis (5.21A)

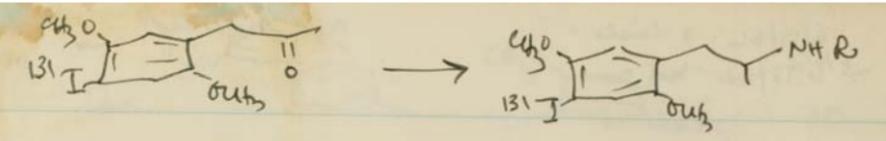
C = 59.72262
 H = 5.012523
 N = 6.332559
 O = 28.93231

MOLECULAR WEIGHT IS 221.206
 Ok

$\text{C}_{11}\text{H}_{11}\text{NO}_4$	theo	found
C	59.72	59.55
H	5.01	5.11
N	6.33	6.23

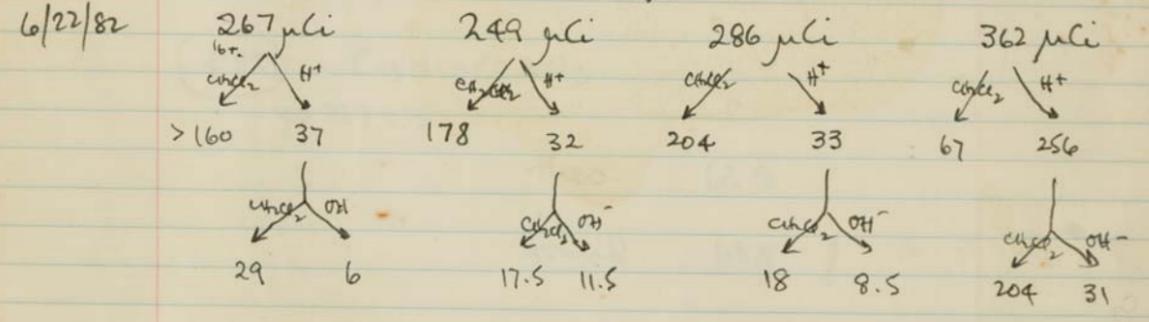
Formation of the nitropropene precursor to MADAM-6 (or, by way of the ketone and reductive amination with methylamine, 2-methyl-4,5-methylenedioxymethamphetamine). Sasha found MADAM-6 to be inactive, but like all inactive compounds, it offered valuable insight into the structure-activity relationship of its relatives. Recent anecdotal reports suggest that the closely related aminotetralin compound MDMAT displays activity at doses around 500 mg, further indicating that substitution on the 6-position reduces potency in MDMA-type entactogenic compounds.

90 6/18/82



R =	CH_2-	$(\text{CH}_2)_2\text{CH}-$	$\text{CH}_2(\text{CH}_2)_5-$	CH_3-
run #	28	29	30	31

All - scrapings from prep-TLC in four 1 ml vol. flasks, + 20-40 mg amine-HCl + 0.5 ml MeOH + ~ 20 mg NaCNBH_3 - Shake to totally wet - stand Friday → Tuesday. All worked up by transfer into a 15 ml cont. tube - 2 x 1 ml each ~ 10% H_2SO_4 & CHCl_3 - shake - spin - ag. sep. - 2" H_2SO_4 - spin - sep., OH⁻ ~ strong base to pH 9, 2 x 1 ml CHCl_3 - sep.



See page 4:116 for more amines.

This page shows planning for synthesis of several radiolabeled amphetamines resulting in iodine-131-labeled DOI. Radiolabeled DOI was a powerful tool for imaging the central distribution of serotonergic psychedelics as well as blood circulation in the brain. Eventually Sasha developed a very fast synthesis that could produce radiolabeled DOI¹²² in less than one half-life of I¹²⁵.



Card-17
Neuro-physical
Fusion
The Electron Lovers

EXCERPTS FROM 'THE PERIODIC TABLE OF ENERGY'

BY TIMOTHY LEARY

On January 17, 1973, Timothy Leary—the “high priest” of LSD and, at the time, the “most dangerous man in America,” according to Richard Nixon—was apprehended by US officials at Kabul International Airport in Afghanistan. Leary had been on the lam for almost three years, following his Weather Underground-assisted escape from a prison in San Luis Obispo, California, after he had been sentenced to a term of six months to ten years for possessing two joints. From Afghanistan, Leary was sent to the California Medical Facility, a state-run prison in Vacaville, before being transferred to Folsom Prison. During his imprisonment in CMF he conceived The Periodic Table of Energy, a 203-page “manual explaining how to decode the basic blueprints which guide the evolutionary journey” that explores theorized convergences between the periodic table of the elements, evolutionary biology, genetics, neuroscience, extraterrestrial intelligence, the tarot, the I Ching, and the zodiac. The manuscript remained hidden for close to 40 years, and no portion of it has ever been published until now. VICE was fortunate enough to acquire a small selection of pages, which we have reproduced here in some semblance of a logical order. If you're interested in reading the entire work you can spend an estimated \$30,000-\$50,000 when Bonhams auction house puts it up for sale on October 10. Until then—and probably forever—this is the only glimpse you're going to get of Leary's Periodic Table. 

NEURO-PHYSICAL LINKAGE;
CARD 17 // NUCLEAR FUSION; STAR FLIGHT

TAROT: ~~(Elsewhere known as The Star)~~
^{STAR}

Let ^{the} this slot represent the externalized-output of/Sixth Circuit.~~energy~~
Neurological ~~energy~~ and atomic energies tuned-in, linked. This card is the active side of the passive, consumerism reception of Einsteinian energies which was discussed in card 15.

Interstellar Neurogenetics ~~provides~~ ^{passive} recognizes the/electronic cyborg phase as necessary. ^(slot-15) But it is equally necessary to hook up the accelerated ¹ and intensified energy. ^{Let us} We speak here of ~~the~~ ^{telepathic} neurological marriage...the fusion of two or more persons who have reached stellar consciousness, who radiate, who receive and transmit at ~~relativistic~~ relativistic frequencies. By electronic communication we do not mean or radio waves the larval use of television signals/to engage the lower circuits. We mean interstellar communication between two nervous systems. The natural and inevitable application of Einsteinian technology is ~~the~~ interstellar flight. ~~The~~ The major scientific-political issues of the 1960's ~~were~~ ^{for} ^{pleasure} involved Fifth circuit energies--control of the Body ~~by~~ ^{individual/or} by the state. Freedom to use neuro-somatic drugs, sexual freedom, refusal to have one's body used as military instrument (draft resistance) or as economic tool (drop out philosophy).

The major scientific-political issues of the 1970's involve Sixth circuit energies--electronic surveillance, space flight, satellite snooping, nuclear energy disputes both economic and military. These Sixth circuit issues are not just political they are also "spiritual" involving the directional myths of society.

~~Preface~~
1.4 This book uses the Periodic Table of Elements as a Device for the transcription, translation, transmission, transformation, transfer, ~~think of this book as a~~ chemistry, transfusion of the symbols of modern Astro-physics, ~~and~~ Neurology and Genetics to the symbols of Religion, Alchemy, Metaphysics, Psychology, Philosophy.

Translation: a rendering from one language into another; a change to a different substance or form; the process of forming a protein molecule at a ribosomal site of protein synthesis from information contained in messenger RNA. The I Ching, the Zodiac, the Tarot decoded as DNA scripts.

Transmission: the process of instance of transmitting a nerve impulse across a synapse; the passage of radio waves in the space between transmitting and receiving stations; an assembly of parts, including the speed changing gears, by which power is transmitted from an engine to a live axle. The eight gears of the nervous system; the eight levels of I Ching, Zodiac and Tarot.

Transcription: an arrangement of a musical composition for some instrument or voice other than the original; electrical transcription; the process of constructing a messenger RNA molecule using a DNA molecule as a template with resulting transfer of genetic information to the messenger RNA. The Tarot-Zodiac I Ching correspondences.

Transformation: the operation of changing (as by rotation or mapping) one configuration or expression into another in accordance with a mathematical rule; esp: a change of variables or coordinates in which a function of new variables or coordinates is substituted for each original variable or coordinate; the formula that effects a transformation; one of an ordered set of rules that converts the deep structures of a language into surface structures; genetic modification of a cell and esp. of a bacterium by introduction of DNA from a genetically different source. the twenty-four stages of evolution; the twenty-four Tarot cards, the twenty-four signs of the Zodiac.

Transfer: to convey from one person, place or situation to another; to print or otherwise copy from one surface to another by contact; the carry-over or generalization of learned responses from one type of situation to another; a place where a transfer is made (as of trains to ferries or as the twenty-four I Ching units).

where ~~or as where~~ one form of power is changed to another; a ticket entitling a passenger to continue his ~~jour~~ or her journey on another route. Tarot I and Tarot II. Zodiac I 15A and Zodiac II. trans-fusion; trans prefix meaning on or ~~to~~ to the other side of; across, beyond; beyond a specified chemical element ~~m~~ in the periodic table (transuranium) characterized by having such atoms or groups on the opposite side of the molecule; fusion ^{is} the act or process of liquefying or rendering plastic by heat; a union ~~by melting~~ by melting; a merging of diverse elements into a unified whole; a political partnership; the union of atomic nuclei to form heavier nuclei resulting in the release of enormous quantities of energy when certain light elements unite. The Terrestrial Zodiac and the Extra-Terrestrial Zodiac. FOR RECEIVING, INTEGRATING AND TRANSMITTING KNOWLEDGE.

1.5 The Nervous System IS THE INSTRUMENT ^{There is the Nervous System with the story of Charles Darwin voyaging in the Beagle, observing and classifying the various species found in the most remote regions of the antipodes. Assume that In similar fashion the authors have almost spent a much longer period of time exploring by every means available the galactic immensities and varieties of the consciousness and behavior of the various species of the genus homo. this conclusion its significance One conclusion has emerged. It is obvious but yet its importance and universality has not been understood nor applied in human affairs. IT IS THIS: nervous system is The instrument is the center, ~~the~~ source and sole instrument of consciousness, learning, memory, behavior, intelligence, and knowledge. There is only one field of science and knowledge and that is Neurologic; the logic of the nervous system.}

All other human disciplines and behavior ^{recorded and mediated} exist only through as registered, mediated by the nervous system. The dimensions, variables, divisions, groupings, lawful relations defined by the sciences and all the other fields of human endeavor are based on, filtered through, determined by the receptive, TRANSMITTING AND INTEGRATING AND SEQUENCED TRANSMITTING CHARACTERISTICS variables, divisions, groupings and lawful sequences of the nervous system. Assume that this discovery is similar to, but more important than, the emergence of atomic and nuclear physics. Let us ~~We might~~ speak of the Einsteinianization of human knowledge by Neurologic. The relativization of consciousness and imprinted and learned circuits of reaction.

the
 One might object that ~~the nervous system~~ the nervous system
 as seat of sensation, perception, consciousness and intelligence ~~is not~~ is not
 a new concept. ~~Again~~ Again the comparison ^{with} of atomic physics. ~~It is not~~
~~Democritas pointed out~~ Democritas pointed out ~~that~~ that all matter was composed of atoms,
 Newtonian
 over two thousand years ago. In spite of this clue, ~~modern~~ physics
~~produced~~ produced the magnificence of modern technology ~~in~~ in total
 disregard of the ^{elemental} basic energy-structure of matter. Assume that in exactly the same fashion
 the symbolic mind using the
 lower circuits of the nervous system have produced magnificent and complex
 systems of thought in total disregard of the basic neural structure of
 consciousness and intelligence.

The Einsteinian formulae demonstrated the relativity of ^{energy} ~~space~~
 time, and matter. Leading to the ~~fission~~ transmutation of elements and
 the release of enormous energy by means of fission and fusion.

Neurologic ^{assumes} ~~has demonstrated~~ the/relativity of ^{fluid} experience,
 of experienced-time and mind by means of experiments which have fissioned and
 fused mental-conscious structures.

~~The anatomy and function of the~~
 A systematic descriptions of the/circuits of the nervous
 system, ~~their~~ and the sequential nature of their
 emergence in the individual and species is presented in the book Interstellar
 Neurogenetics.

Just as every natural science ^{and every branch of engineering} has been revised, expanded and
 redefined in the light of atomic and nuclear physics, so is it necessary to
 expand and redefine every branch of human knowledge in the light of the
 relativity ^{and} the fission-fusion capacities of the nervous system.

Neuro-ecology ^{be} the study of the nervous system in relation
 to the ~~environment~~ environment, ^{might be considered the basic science}
 of which every other science is sub-division.
^{let} Neuro-ecology ^{be} the study of ~~the~~ how our knowledge of
 geological processes are limited and directed by the capacities of the ner-
 vous system and how the nervous system is ~~influenced~~ formed and influenced

by ~~the~~ geological forces.

~~Neuro-philosophy is the study of~~
^{let} Neuro-physics ^{be the study of} how our knowledge of atomic and
 nuclear processes ^{is} limited and guided by the general capacities of the
 nervous system and by the neural imprinting ^{and conditioning} of the scientists ~~raised~~
 who study these processes and how the nervous system is formed and influenced
 by physical forces. ^{defining} ^{hypothetical}

This list of hyphenated sciences could continue for pages.
 We are attempting to illustrate the fact that the basic instrument for ^{receiving,}
^{storing,}
 observing, recording, synthesizing, and transmitting information about
~~any~~ all ~~science~~ fields of knowledge and branches of human activity
 is the nervous system along with the extensions of the nervous system
 which have been designed by the nervous system e.g. computers, electronics etc.

It is obligatory in every scientific report to describe in great
 precision the instruments used to obtain the data and the methods used to
 analyze the data. Science, ~~and~~ philosophy and human affairs in general operate
 with ~~an~~ inefficiency and dangerous shortsightedness because of the ~~total~~
 ignorance about the nature of the instrument, ^{used, i.e. the nervous system.}
 robots ~~operating~~ operationally programmed by genetic templates, neural
 imprints and social conditionings of which they have no knowledge.

A ~~systematic~~ ^{1.} description ^{2.} of the genetic blueprints which
 program and direct evolution and of the circuits of the nervous system, their
 function and the sequential nature of their emergence in the individual and
 the species is presented in ~~the~~ ^{Transmission} Interstellar Neurogenetics. This ~~book~~
 is an instructional manual for the use of the nervous system according to the
 instructions issued by the manufacturer. ^{would not} a rudimentary understanding of the
 operation and management of the nervous system ^{clarify} and enlightens every
 aspect of life. [?] Just as the ~~microscope~~ microscope produced a deeper understanding

NEURO-PHYSICAL

15: ELECTRONIC PASSIVITY ; The SYNAPSE CONSUMER

TAROT: DEVIL

(Elsewhere known as The Devil)

Let ^{the} this element represents ^{the} pre-imprint, passive-receptive phase of the Sixth Circuit. The transition from ^{the} Newtonian physiologic ~~tax~~ of the Fifth Circuit to ~~the~~ Einsteinian relativity. A passive experiencing of the electronic level of energy, atomic fission, nuclear fusion, electric computers, radio waves, neurological consciousness, reality registered as vibrations, the brain conscious of its own ~~elektzrize~~ electrical rhythms, time dilation.

The Tarot cards designed hundreds of years ago, can give only ~~the~~ vague suggestions about ^{this} the level of energy and consciousness which the human mind was able to decipher only in ^{this} the last century.

The general idea ^{is} the immature, indulgent, self-centered basic and powerful ^{energies} passive use of the ~~energy~~ mediated at this level of consciousness. Atomic energies ~~are generated by physics and chemistry~~ released by the fissioning devices of physics and chemistry-- Crooke's tubes, cloud chambers, nuclear accelerators, neuro-active drugs which fission and accelerate consciousness--not used to link up but to satisfy the demands of the lower circuits.

In many Tarot diagrams the Devil is portrayed as an extra-^{chained} terrestrial being who has ~~yoked~~ a naked man and woman together.

De Laurence has this card signifying "the Dweller on the Threshold without the Mystical Garden when those are driven forth therefrom who have eaten the power-giving fruit."

When an ^{individual} ~~individual~~ or species ^{evolves} ~~moves~~ into a higher level of energy ~~the first reaction is~~ the initial reaction is to use the energy for self gratification and ~~is~~ for intensification of lower circuit programs. Thus ~~the~~ ^{hucksterism,} electronic energies are used for war, ~~control,~~ political control, profit, and to bolster the domestic morality, via "G-rated" movies and TV programs.

It ^{was} ~~is~~ capriciously ingenious of Edward Teller, ~~menacing~~ Father of the Hydrogen bomb, to arrange his facial muscles ~~and~~ to resemble the Tarot Devil.

SLOT 15: NEURO-PHYSICAL PASSIVITY

The Synapse Consumer

Sixth Childhood



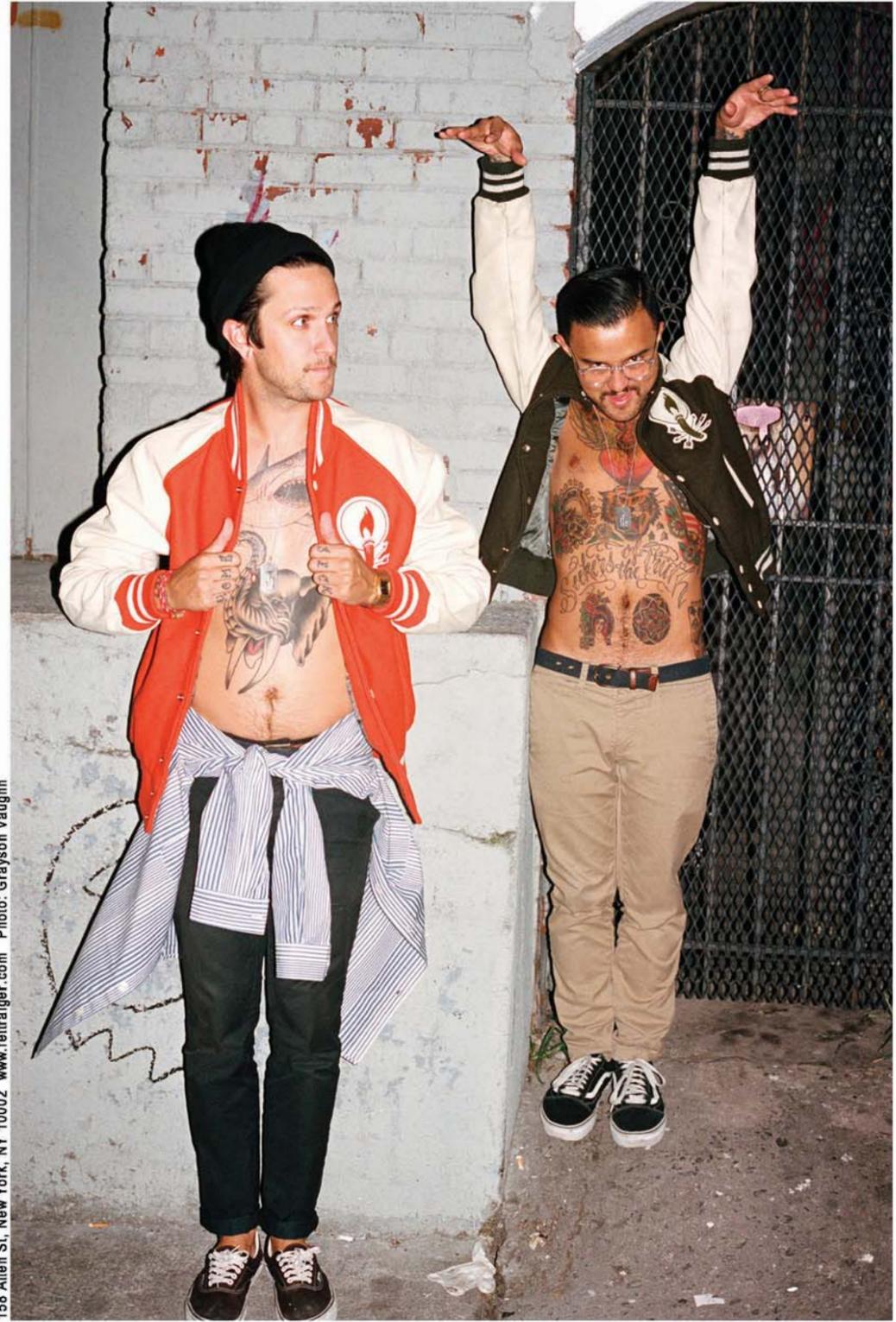
"The transition from the Newtonian physiologic of the Fifth Circuit to the Einsteinian relativity of the Sixth. A passive experiencing of the electronic level of energy, atomic fission, neural fission, ~~neural~~ neural reception of electronic computers, radio waves, reality registered as vibrations. The electronic-neurological energies used for ~~passive~~ passive reception, narcissistic pleasure, exploration, radio-active rapture."

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LI'L THINKS: NEXT LEVEL

BY KATE CARRAWAY, ILLUSTRATION BY PENELOPE GAZIN

Kate Carraway also writes the weekly *Girl* News column for VICE.com.

Futurism isn't what it used to be. In late-1950s and early-60s U. S. of A., the sensibility was entirely optimistic. The reasonable adults who had infested city-adjacent farmland, creating car-contingent lifestyle paradigms, wondered when they'd be flying airplanes to work: this year, or the next. Those who had a pulse also had a job. Dreaminess about what would and could be was once collective and literate and transmitted through not only science fiction novels but also space comics starring Buck Rogers.

The way I see it, the type of boxed-in American Dream with Johnny Carson and social novels either fucking sucked or was so claustrophobically limited if you weren't a straight white man, obviously. Everyone watched the same TV shows, read the same books, and shared in the same superficially positive narrative. Then, owing to various social fractures and the usual periodic recessions, all the way into the AIDS-y 80s and the carcinogenic burn of Wall Street money, that early optimism

was reconfigured into an American psychosis of certain-death horror and terrified self-obsession.

None of that is, like, new. Since I've been conscious ('89? '90? I remember the end of the Cold War, but only through the soft weave of a satin-edged blankie), the cultural consciousness has been hungover, or something, in dull shock that *this* is what's real—that something was lost, reveling in repetition and postpunk and featureless Calvin Klein slip dresses and embarrassment about whatever, maybe the incipient sense that something, or everything, is over. (Which follows, logically—Buck Rogers giving way to *Blade Runner*.) Mid-90s Jonathan Franzen (*that* guy) wrote, "For every reader who dies today, a viewer is born, and we seem to be witnessing... the final tipping of a balance," a phenomenon he characterized as "apocalyptic," which, whatever. Reasonable adults expected, and continue to expect, nothing.

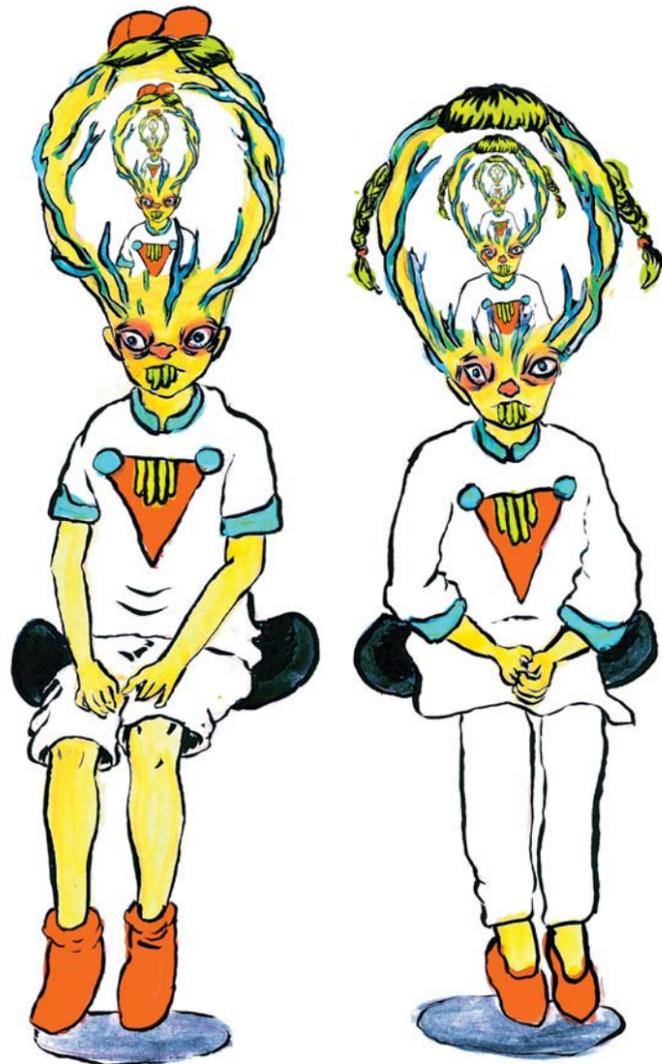
It can't last forever and ever, though. In a post on his Gizmodo site in July, Gawker Media boss Nick Denton wrote, "We need to recapture some of the naïveté of the 19th century or the early space age." Agreed. Somehow, our sense of wonderment has been corrupted by a social, cultural, and technological bathos, totally despite ourselves, despite the myriad capabilities of the internet (like, everything).

The recent past has been more infused with legit THE FUTURE!-ness than all of the technology of the previous 40 years, even if we stack up the stuff from those decades and bleed it for meaning. Somehow, the infinite potential of the internet's wildness (and that of message boards and relational aesthetics and Facebook) mostly diverged into cruel, lonesome individuation.

Denton continued, "Even a call for naïveté seems itself naive in a cynical climate," and cited the inescapably vapid nature of social networking; I'll add that the larger impulse to "curate" one's personal online experience—usually as a viewer, not a reader (sowwy, Franzen), and always as performance without participation—is mostly corrupt. Any idiosyncratic representation of online personhood could be called "good," and it's also "good" that the machinations of social media are handily alienating a super-bullshitty mainstream, but it all happens in a very banal, basic way. Ultimately, the primary way to use the internet is utterly impoverished. (There are undoubtedly pockets of nascent collectiveness, like meme-based internet aesthetics and, more recently, the related and hopeful retro-futurism showing in, say, Balenciaga's new and very dope leather sweaters, fronted with sci-fi images, and spacesuit-y work wear.)

It's hard to care about the world at large and its potential when you don't have to, when there is no demand on the people who determine the future to be interested in it; it's hard to feel or want to feel naive when the social emphasis is skeptical, ironic (STILL!), and turned inward, to the point where there is no—no!—common vision of the future.

"In the 50s, everyone thought everything was going to be great." My dad said that. (He's so old.) And yet the current keepers of the new, the possible, the internet, the historical figures of transformative youth chaos, have largely abstained from thinking about what everything is going to be like. And all this so we can look at things, alone. 'S boring. If we're doing all of this to forge something for ourselves, so far we're doing it wrong.



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COMBOVER: WHITE LIE/BLACK FLY

BY BRETT GELMAN, PHOTOS BY JANICZA BRAVO

Featuring Melissa Stephens



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

Why is everything in this town always so close to falling apart? My sciatica is killing me. My scrotum feels like it's going to explode from the pain. And my eyes are twitching like they've got butterflies in them. Speaking of flies... GODDAMMIT, MELISSA STEPHENS! GODDAMN METHOD ACTORS!

I hired her to do this sci-fi flick I'm producing: *White Lie/Black Fly*. It's all about a woman who's a scientist, but little does her husband know that she's a mad scientist. She injects herself with fly blood to see if it'll make her have superpowers, and bingo! She does! The problem is that with her newfound powers comes a whole boatload of crazy, and she becomes kind of like a supervillain. She jumps around and terrorizes her town with her fly laser gun. Great, right? And who could play the part better than Melissa? She's the best of the best. My dilemma is that when she takes on a role, she stays in it throughout the goddamn premiere party.

The crew tells me she's been crawling up walls, jumping on people, and even eating caca. Yes, you know how flies eat caca? Well, apparently, that was a very important detail she didn't want to leave out of her performance. She's gotta tone it down or we're going to have 50,000 lawsuits on our hands.

I get to set, and the director is tearing his hair out. They're shooting up by the RKO caves. I'm told she's running around up there like a real nutso. "She won't come back," he said. "She saw a spider in her trailer and thinks we're trying to kill her! You gotta do something, Combover!"

I walk up the hill. I get to the caves. I hear something in one of them.

"Mel?! Mel?! Is that you?!"

She comes out. She's wearing an eye patch, but she still has on her street clothes.

"*Buzzzzzzz* off, Combover," she says in a high, squeaky fly voice.

"Come on, Mel, cut the games. Let's go back to set and make a movie."

"Movie? What movie? I don't know anything about any movie. The only thing I know about is a murder plot. You'd just love me to come back down there so you could see me get eaten by *poizzzzonous sssspiderzzzz*."

"Nobody's trying to kill you with spiders, Mel."

"*Nizzzzzzze* 'white lie,' Combover! Now, how about I introduce you to... Black Fly?!"

She throws a chunk of cave dust into my eyes. I thought it kind of strange the way she forced the title of the movie into

the middle of our conversation. When I open my eyes again she's in her Fly Woman outfit.

"I AM BLACK FLY! You might think my name should be Blond Fly because of the color of my hair, but it's not! It's Black Fly! On account of my black heart! I care for no man! For no man *carezzzzzzz* for Black Fly! I will *zzzzzzzzlaughter* everyone who *triezzzzzzz* to get in my way!"

She shoots at me with her fake laser gun.

"Oooooo, *zzzzzeemzzzz* like my fly *lazzzzzzzzzz pizzzzztol* does not affect you. I *guezzzzzz* this *meanzzzzz* I need to murder you in the old-fashioned way. With my fly *handzzzzzzzz!*"

She starts running at me. I run! I'm scared out of my mind until I realize... SHE'S NOT ACTUALLY A FLY WOMAN WITH SUPER FLY STRENGTH! I turn around and grab her by the arm.

"I don't care what your acting process is! You're going to break character, or so help me I'll ruin you!"

She breaks free and runs!

"Black Fly only *lizzzzzzztenzzzz* to one *perzzzzon!* *Herzzzzzz!*"

She's too fast. I can't catch her. Then I remember something I noticed at the props station on the way in.

I go back down the hill and grab it. When I come back, Melissa is hiding the brush.

"What you got behind your back there, Combover?"

"Oh, just a little something to even the playing field."

I whip it out.

"OH NO! A GIANT *FLYZZZZZZWATTER!*"

"That's right! And you get with the program, Melissa, or so help me, I'm gonna flatten you like matzo!"

I swing the swatter.

She buzzes.

I swing.

She buzzes more.

She moves around in quick, jagged motions. She trips and falls in the dirt. She scrapes her knee on a rock and starts crying.

"Now get the hell up and get back to work!"

"Fine. I'll go back down and shoot, but you have no right to meddle with my process like this."

I throw the swatter to the ground.

"Process is for prima donnas, and I ain't no putz. Go get touched up."

I need a touch-up myself.

Goddamn actors. Schlemiels through and through.

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THE CUTE SHOW PAGE!

BY ELLIS JONES, PHOTO BY ANGIE SULLIVAN



Kuppy-Cats!

In 1996, Scotland's Roslin Institute cloned the fluffiest, most adorable sheep they could find, named it Dolly, and everyone except for uptight religious people let out a collective "Awwwww" heard round the world. It is a little-known fact that in the years following Dolly's miraculous birth, at the end of each workday the scientists responsible for her existence would incessantly bicker about whose turn it was to take her home and cuddle with their baby. Their solution, to clone more impeccable fluffballs, resulted in hiring more scientists, and it was soon obvious that keeping up with demand would be impossible.

Last month the feud was unexpectedly resolved when VICE received a phone call from the Institute's senior somatic-cell nuclear-transfer expert, who claimed to be "Cute Show! fan number 1!" (and who also wishes to remain anonymous). He invited us to exclusively document the unveiling of what he would only describe as "the cutest being ever created." Of course we booked the next flight to Edinburgh.

We arrived precisely on time, and the receptionist directed our crew to wait for our mysterious host outside a door in a nearby hallway. Within minutes a man with bright orange hair and wearing a lab coat stormed down the hall holding a cat carrier. He barely acknowledged us as he rushed past and grabbed hold of the knob, flinging the door open.

"TIME TO SHUT THE FUCK UP, DICKFACES!" the scientist screamed. The room went silent as he slowly opened the cage door and gently removed a two-week-old specimen of his own invention, plainly stating, "Behold the final frontier of cute: the kuppy-cat." As he cradled and rocked the newborn, which he introduced as Ginger (Mark II), his colleagues immediately began arguing about who'd get to hold her first. "IDIOTS!" the biologist shouted. "Do you think I'd be stupid enough to repeat this mistake? They are born in litters, duh. There's one for each of you." Two lab assistants entered the room, each carrying a cardboard box containing seven identical kuppy-cats. And if things continue according to plan, in the next few months you too will be able to purchase your very own kuppy-cat at the nearest pet store.

Hey, we know how much you want to believe this and watch a video about them, but kuppy-cats aren't real. We made them up because the world needs them and hopefully some miracle worker will be inspired by reading this and create them. In the meantime, watch all of the adorableness of past episodes of the 100 percent real and huggable animals featured on The Cute Show! on VICE.com.



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THE DARK KNIGHT XXX: A PORN PARODY

Dir: Axel Braun
Rating: 9

vivid.com

As I write this review with heavy heart, the tragic shootings in Aurora, Colorado, by James Holmes at the opening of *The Dark Knight Rises* are barely a week behind us. I stare at the Wikipedia page for the Aurora shootings to make sure I'm spelling "Aurora" correctly, and I can't help but wonder what ever happened to that short, big-titted Puerto Rican chick named Aurora I knew when I was 18 who worked at that weird science store, Star Magic, in the Newport Centre mall in Jersey City.

I don't remember much about her other than her rack was enormous and she always wore low-cut shirts to work (the reason, I assumed, that a store that sold crystals and bags of astronaut ice cream was so busy). She also had the token Robert Crumb-drawing Puerto Rican ass and was barely four feet tall—perfect for standing blowjobs, I imagined. The best way I can describe her is as a bald, sexual Ewok. (Side note: When I was 18 I sent a pitch to *Star Wars Insider*, via US mail as was customary at the time, and it was accepted! I have the acceptance letter written on Star Wars letterhead to prove it! I was so excited and proud that I smoked all the weed that was available on earth that night. I got so high that I never wrote the article. God, weed sucks.)

If only there was a way to track down that fuckable Ewok and see what she's up to and what she looks like... oh, right. Facebook. Let's see. Why do private detectives exist in 2012? I found her in less than three minutes thanks to her being a friend of a friend of mine. Looks like she had a kid a while back and eventually wound

up cheating on the dad with a black-belt neighbor who was also married with child. Her baby daddy dropped her like shells from a gun in a movie theater, and she ran off with the married dude.

It seems as if they're living happily ever after in Harrison, New Jersey. But it appears that her tits are now located a lot lower than I recall, and they don't really fill out her shirt the way they did in 1994. Just as hip-hop died outside the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles, so did her big beautiful breasts in 1997. I'm no Columbo but I've seen a lot of episodes of *Law & Order*, and I can't help but wonder if the two crimes are somehow related. Perhaps her baby daddy killed Biggie? Or maybe, just maybe, her baby daddy isn't the baby daddy. Maybe the father is Biggie Smalls, and his soul was transferred into the fetus at the time of his death. In which case, fuck her tits.

I never actually saw them unsheathed in person, so if her tits had to go to shit so that the world could witness the resurrection of the greatest rapper of all time then that's a sacrifice worth making. Let's say the kid was born when Biggie died in 1997. That would make him 15, which means it should just be a few more years before he loses that Chi-Ali kiddie voice and starts rapping like a man. I wonder if he has a Facebook page? I want to be the first to friend Biggie II.

And while I'm stalking MILFs, what ever happened to Charli Baltimore?

More stupid can be found at ChrisNieratko.com and twitter.com/Nieratko.

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TEACHING DEBBIE HARRY ABOUT BATH SALTS

Was Fucking Amazing

BY KELLY McCLURE
PHOTO BY YSA PÉREZ

It doesn't matter how great you think your musical tastes are, or how often you discover some obscure postpunk band and write about it in your little cry-baby diary (or "blog," same difference), as long as you accept one simple fact: No performer on the planet is cooler than Debbie Harry. I recently had the pleasure of interviewing her, and we talked about all kinds of awesome stuff, including her current tour with Devo. Somehow, I also ended up accidentally teaching her about bath salts, which is the part of the interview excerpted below. Sorry to burst your bubble, Debbie. You were going to find out sooner or later.

VICE: What do you think about bath salts? Like, this business of people freaking out and eating other people's faces and whatnot.

Debbie Harry: [looks shocked and mortified] I don't know about this.

The face-eating part or bath salts in general?
Bath salts are a drug?

Oh, man, OK. I don't even know where to start... I'm not talking about actual bath salts that you drop in a tub of hot water. I'm talking about the *other* kind of bath salts, the synthetic drug that is ravaging the country and turning humans into complete zombie psychopaths who are incapable of logical thinking. It's a neurotoxin people are taking for fun, basically.

Well, zombie-ism seems to always be popular. We had some zombies in the video we did for "Mother" [off of *Panic of Girls*], but I didn't know about bath salts.

I'm sorry I had to be the one to bring this bummer into your life.
But they don't stay like this, do they? Do they always stay zombies?

I mean, they're not literally zombies, like with their skin falling off and stuff, and really the guy who kicked off the zombie scare was this dude in Miami who allegedly took bath salts and gnawed off some poor homeless man's face, but later they found out the only illegal substance in his system was pot. Still, bath salts make you act like the walking dead, for sure.

Well, hey, I've known a few biters.

Since this is happening so often, the nerds on the internet are saying there's gonna be a zombie apocalypse.
They wish!

Where would you flee to and hide in the event of a zombie apocalypse?

I'd like to be a fly on the wall and just watch it all. I'm sort of voyeuristic these days; I don't really know if I'd want to get out there and do hand-to-hand combat with a bunch of zombies. I don't think I'd stand much of a chance. Can you kill them? These bath-salt zombies?

Yeah. They're just regular people. The cops shoot them and they die. Or you can too, I suppose.

I can't believe I haven't heard about this! I've always thought that there were too many people in the world. Somebody asked me once, "Do you think that the world is gonna roll over from the weight of all these people?" It makes you wonder, can life be supported in this environment?

Well, not with zombies running around, for Christ's sake! Whenever I had dreams about monsters when I was little, I'd always just join them so then they wouldn't run after me anymore. We'd be together, hanging out and chasing someone else.

Well, yeah, you want to survive. I still can't believe I never heard about these zombies. It's like a childhood dream, isn't it? *VICE*

You're stupid if you think we only spoke with Debbie Harry about bath salts. See the whole enchilada—which touches on making timeless music, getting abducted by Ted Bundy, and how she developed her iconic look—in a new episode of VICE Meets..., now playing on VICE.com.

Photo: Vincent Sanguini



● MEDIS

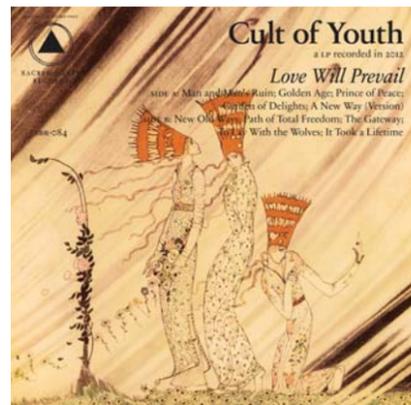
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REVIEWS



BEST ALBUM OF THE MONTH: CULT OF YOUTH



BI-POLAR BEAR *When Ledge is Home* Modern Shark

The packaging for this is very tricky. The CD comes in this cutesy cardboard case with a fold-over tab, and the art is a drawing of a bummed-out teddy bear. I put this in so ready to hear some kind of twee music about tandem bicycles and loganberries, but instead I got ten very mediocre rap songs that never reach more than a casual ramble's pace and don't say much about anything. I like the bear, though.

TEDDY TRICKERY



OREO JONES *Betty* Rad Summer

Nobody ever sends us hip-hop stuff to review and it's really depressing. What do you think, that we're over here skipping rope while listening to *This American Life*, or some other combo of activities that would indicate to you that we don't appreciate all different kinds of music? We never told anyone that we don't like rap, we just tell people (over and over and over) that we don't like music that sucks balls. It took us 89 years of digging through inboxes and cubbyholes to find this album to review so we wouldn't have just two things under the rap category. Having just three isn't much better, so please, send us more to review. Sorry that your review got stolen, Oreo Jones, but we had to get all of that out on the table.

VICE



KREAYSHAWN *Somethin 'Bout Krey* Sony

I've been ready to love this album for almost a solid year before it even came out. Now it's finally out, and guess what? I love it! What's everyone's problem with Kreyashawn anyway? She's a white girl rapper who

looks good and makes fun, random shit to listen to. If that's somehow upsetting to you, then you need to go lie down in the corner and think about why you've grown up to be such a butt pimple who hates fun.

BUMPIN BUMPIN



FUR COAT *Mind over Matter* Crosstown Rebels

When I was at SXSW this year, I got into a bunch of conversations with musicians about what it takes to make a music editor notice a band and actually listen to what they send in. I told them that the answer is stickers, handwritten notes, or an interesting album cover. Everyone I said this to looked at me like I was an idiot, but the only reason I'm reviewing this Fur Coat piece of trash is because there are naked tits on the cover, so... who's laughing now, bands?!?

KELLY McCLURE



KID KOALA *12 Bit Blues* Ninja Tune

A Canadian man of Asian descent who dresses up as a koala bear and creates blues music using a SP-1200 sampler. We should put this kid in a rocket ship and blast him off into space for the aliens to observe; he's like a five-piece combo platter of everything that is cool on Planet Earth. And yes, I am well aware that he's a turntablist, but what's a gal to do?

SOPHIE SAINT THOMAS



SSION *Bent* Dovecoat

Somewhere in suburban Indiana a father has just googled "gay culture." His 19-year-old son, home for the summer after his first year at Oberlin, has

come out of the closet, and Dad is trying his hardest to "understand" despite his own staunchly conservative views. He even downloaded *Bent* from iTunes and is listening to it while scrolling past banner ads for bulge-boosting briefs and HIV-support services. He resolves that, while he loves his son and always will, this whole lifestyle is "a lot... too much..." Later that night, he googles "What are poppers?" This is enough to break his 14-year streak of sobriety.

GIRL REPORTER



OTTO VON SCHIRACH *Supermeng* Monkeytown

According to the press release for this, Otto Von Schirach was born in the Bermuda Triangle and uses his superpowers to continually save Earth from the Annunaki Reptilian Order. Ooooo-K, guy. Really, though. Do you think it's awesome to be a gay man? Yes or no? Usually I think yes, but then I wonder whether it ever gets stressful. Like maybe you get sick of always having to make sure you poop and really clean it out in there before going out on dates. And, like, who's gonna buy the lube THIS time? So many butthole-related questions.

RETARD JAMMIES



LYMBIC SYSTYM *Symbolyst* Western Vinyl

What's your first memory of being a young robot? Is it your first robo-X-2.75.1-Chrystmys, stockings hung and dripping with steam-powered rotary-cuff oil? Is it the first time you got caught behind the gears at the robo-bowling alley/roller rink? Perhaps it was your first robo-kiss, steam shooting out of every crack in your welding (embarrassing), while you stared deep into AR-C778's ocular scanning grid, with explosions of happiness inside your robo-heart as the score built to fever pitch and you adjusted yourself to disguise that first roboboner... and Lymbic Systym was playing and you were smiling that gleaming holo-smile.

ALEX HOLMES

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REVIEWS



WORST ALBUM OF THE MONTH: OTTO VON SCHIRACH



DREAM AFFAIR *Aborted State* Nostilevo

 My best friends put out this album and I know I'm supposed to be all supportive and everything, but it just reminded me of how uncool I am compared with them. And how they have so many rare records and know so much about synths and stuff, and I don't. Fuck it, I'm just going to be cool with not being cool (like Amie Barrodale).
BRALESS BETTY



SLEEPYPIES *Weird Wild World* God Mode

 While all your friends start to grow up and get real jobs and get engaged and say things like "I really understand why cops are important for society," it's nice to know there are still three dudes like this in Brooklyn, working part-time jobs and cranking out spazzy, snarky pop-punk that makes everyone else look about as tuned in as William F. Buckley Jr. That knowledge, when mixed with this fan-fucking-tastic record, makes a perfect tonic for those moments when you get fired and have to find newer, poorer friends.
BENJAMIN SHAPIRO



BUTT PROBLEMS *...It's Fine* Self-released

 This album manifested in a random part of our office and the receptionist brought it over to me, held high in between two fingers like it was a dead bug, and said, "This must be for you." Fuck yes, this is for me. I love self-released surprises like this so much that I could fold them up like Totino's Pizza Rolls and slide them inside of my vagina for safekeeping. Of course, I

was that weird kid who always wasted her allowance on those shitty grab bags at the comic book store. So I guess that means I appreciate the element of surprise more than the resulting product. But the difference here is that this is actually awesome. Most of it is just screaming about woodpeckers and having poop on your dick. At least I think that's what they're saying, and if not, they should be.

KAYLE MAQLUE



CULT OF YOUTH *Love Will Prevail* Sacred Bones

 Leave it to an SS-haired boy with a Death in June fixation to teach me about love. And he even did it the old-fashioned way, by dropping a little acid house into the frantic power strumming, then gently easing the whole song into my ears, first slipping a little ecstasy into my beer and then his whole cock into my throat in the cab home from The Cock. Romance lives.
KEVIN



HELVETIA *Nothing in Rambling* Joyful Noise

 Not gonna lie, I thought this band was called Helvetia, and in my mind they were a *sweet* noise band that banged on human skulls and threw monkey corpses around and shit. But they're not. They're just some spacey indie-pop thing that toured with Built to Spill. This record is fine, I suppose. I'd like it a lot better if it weren't so fucking boring.
DICK CORVETTE



DINOSAUR JR. *I Bet On Sky* Jagjaguwar

 Fuck, dude. Dinosaur Jr. are SO fucking heavy. We're talking wanton air-guitaring levels of heavy. Epic bong rips heavy. Saying the word "bro" over and over again heavy. Those weird quasi hugs dudes do

that end in snaps heavy. Uranium and shit. Just when I'm ready to write guitar rock off forever, Dino Jr. come along and put out another record and remind me how stupidly, terrifically wrong I am. Every record of theirs sounds exactly the same: goddamn perfect. This one is written from the perspective of a vampire.

DICK CORVETTE



MENOMENA *Moms* Barsuk

 I don't think this is the band I thought it was. I could have sworn that someone made me a mixtape with a Menomena song on it a few years ago, and I played it over and over and over. But judging from what's on this album, that couldn't possibly be the case. No. I for sure don't like this at all. This is not an enjoyable experience for anyone. It makes me want to go Plath.

PUDDIN HEAD



NEW WAR *S/T* Fast Weapons

 It seems like everyone is trying to sound like a band from the 80s these days, which is fine by me as long as we never make it back to the 90s again. If you were to rate this on a scale with "any Sufjan Stevens album" on the left-hand side and the *Drive* soundtrack on the right, it would land about three-quarters of the way to the right, somewhere around "any These New Puritans album." Also, I always find it a little funny when a band is from Australia. What kind of bugs you all got over there? Big ones? I bet they are.

KAYLE MAQLUE



THE HELIO SEQUENCE *Negotiations* Sub Pop

 OK, first off, this is a *tentative* smiley face. The Helio Sequence have been trying to make it for

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REVIEWS



more than ten years now, and honestly, if you listen to their albums, you can see why. It's mostly the same crap that you can hear at any concert space or basement party in Portland. This new one, though, shows just enough potential that these almost-too-old indie rockers might get some limelight before they have to give up and sell insurance or get their real estate licenses. Ask your once-hip, now-married older brother about them. He probably bought their album in 1999, and he'll take pleasure in telling you he knew they were good all along. But, shhh, he's lying. Or has bad taste.

ALEX HOLMES



WHITE LACES
Moves
Speakertree

Have you ever been to Richmond? It's the kind of place where you'll get jumped by a pack of Dickensian bicycle urchins for stealing one of their wheels (you didn't), then consoled by the guy from GWAR under a statue of a 200-year-old slave owner. Abysmal. I guess the only way for decent people to keep sane there is to lock themselves in a basement and turn old Mariah Carey samples into Lilysesque dream-pop. Works for me, too.

ARCHIE SHEPP



WOODS
Bend Beyond
Woodsist

I wish I could have seen them in their prime. My uncle saw them at the Fillmore West, opening for the Byrds and Derek and the Dominos in '68. Before one show, Duane Allman gave the drummer so many ludes he couldn't play, and Ginger Baker had to stand in. Somehow he "got lost" in the green room for three days, during which he recorded horn tracks for Amon Düül II's *Phallus Dei* under the name Gay Edgar Hoover. They should release a book of these stories because I bet people would like to read that stuff, and with all these archival Woods recordings being released, it just makes sense.

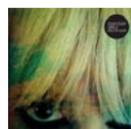
DJ DRENNEN

BEST COVER OF THE MONTH: SSION



AGENT RIBBONS
Let Them Talk
Antenna Farm

Ever since publicists found out that the VICE's music editor is a carpet muncher, they specify which bands have lesbians members when they send out press releases. At first we thought it was hilarious that they thought it'd actually work, but then it started working. Agent Ribbons isn't just a lesbian band, though. They're a good lesbian band. BOOTY BOOTY



DUM DUM GIRLS
End of Daze
Sub Pop

I used to listen to Dum Dum Girls records with my husband on Sundays, but then we moved to NYC, and this town drilled a hole in our marriage and fucked the socket raw. Now he's my ex-husband. *End of Daze* is a perfect soundtrack for that numb relationship purgatory—you stare out the window at jack shit for days straight, starve yourself, and shit yourself. Wash. Rinse. Repeat.

JENNIFER DARLING



EVEREST CALE
Beast
Self-released

An album made by soulful Brooklynites about various feelings, the ocean, and clocks on the wall counting down to some terrible sadness is so cliché that it's like burning your tongue on pizza cheese. It's always going to be there and always going to happen no matter what. The only difference between those two comparisons is that pizza cheese only makes you constipated if you eat too much of it. This will clog you up after minute 1.

INDIAN BUMMER



DIGNAN PORCH
Nothing Bad Will Ever Happen
Captured Tracks

Do you ever think about what it is about a certain piece of music that makes you enjoy it? Like, it's just noise, you know? Just some random people blowing spitty breath into instruments, or strumming on strings with not much more dexterity than a monkey, or banging on things with sticks. Do you think that maybe devout Christians are right, and nonsecular music really is the work of the devil, and we've all been brainwashed to waste our lives chasing after pleasures of the flesh? DO YOU THINK THIS IS TRUE?? I'd at least kill a goat for this band. This album is that fucking good.

HEY SALLY



THE SEA AND CAKE
Runner
Thrill Jockey

If you've followed the Sea and Cake only peripherally in their decades of releases, you might think you've got them pegged. "I get it, Sam Prekop's voice is like butter. They're indie-rocking the Chicago jazz-scene, GAWD." That's all technically true, but what you don't know is that each member of this band knows how to perfectly fold a fitted sheet.

ROBIN BACIOR

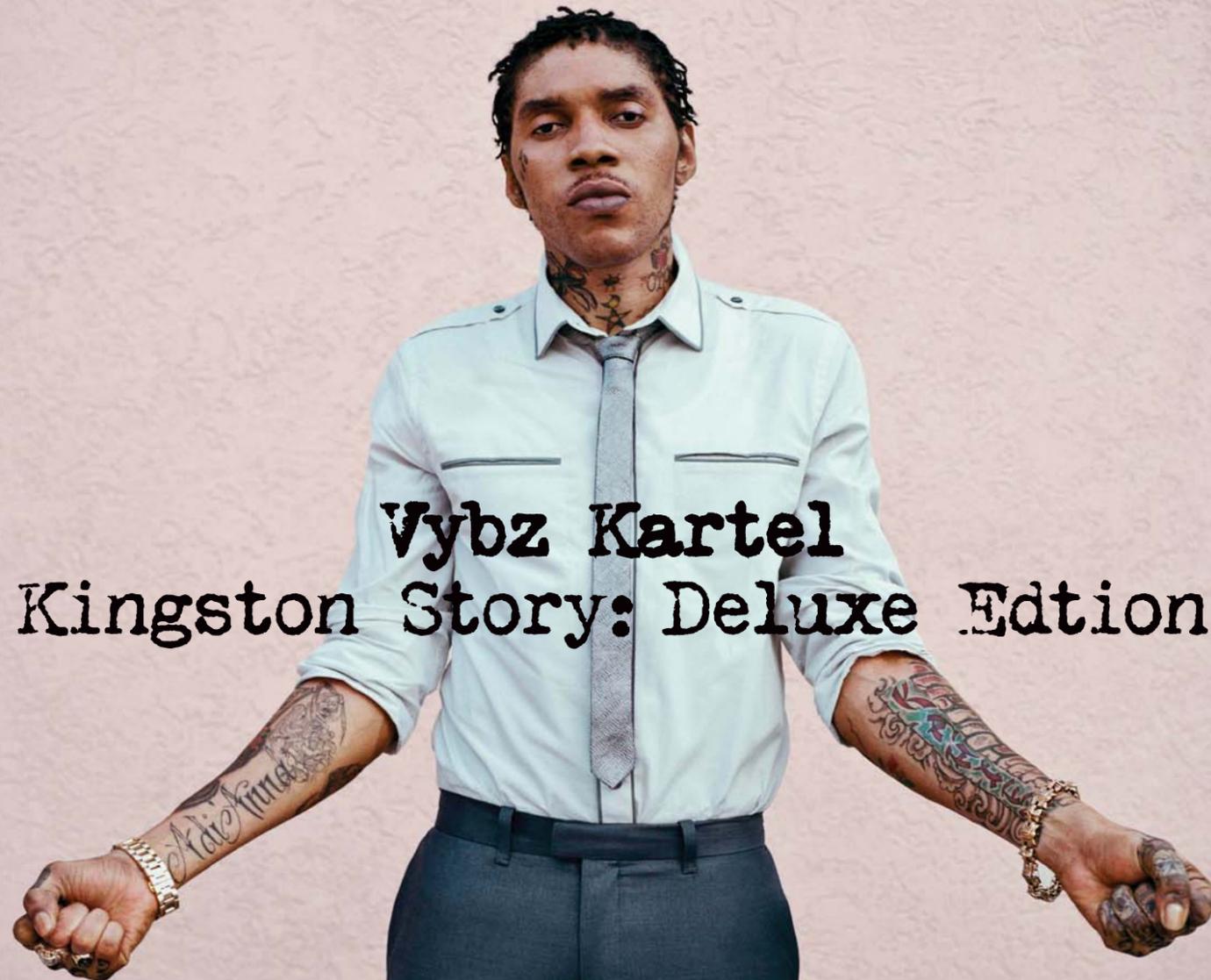


THE SOFT PACK
Strapped
Mexican Summer

I put this album on and then started reading through a few of my favorite blogs, waiting for the music to sink in and produce some sort of feeling or reaction. I became engrossed in an article about female comic book artists and was about to move on to something else when I realized the music wasn't playing anymore. The album had been over for some unknown amount of time, and I didn't even realize it. I couldn't remember a single thing about it. This is a truly unremarkable collection of songs—a perfect sampling

Riddim Magazine's Album of The Year re-released as a Deluxe Edition with two unreleased bonus tracks.

"Vybz Kartel doesn't worry about conforming to expectations; he'd rather break the rules."
- *The New York Times*



Vybz Kartel Kingston Story: Deluxe Edition

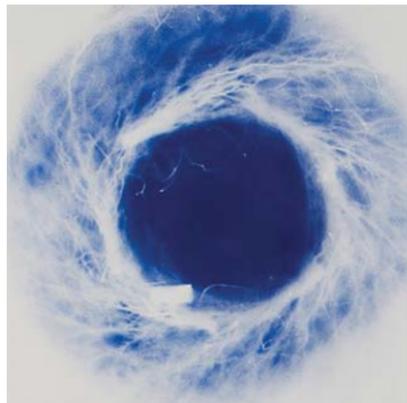
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REVIEWS



of nothing. I'm tempted to play it again to see if I wake up pregnant or find that I had pulled out all my teeth while it was on. This is musical roofies.

RYAN GOSLING



ARIEL PINK'S HAUNTED GRAFITTI

Mature Themes
4AD

When you grow up you have to worry about lots of boring crap like 401(k)s, getting your tubes tied, mammograms, rectal exams, baby toys that won't choke your kid, bequeathing, burying your parents, and loads of other annoying odds and ends. But as Ariel Pink has proved, there's another way. Instead of becoming a true-blue adult, you can just decide to sleep on friends' couches in perpetuity, speak in cryptic riddles whenever you're asked a question, continually make your band-mates endure frothing, Klaus Kinski-level freak-outs onstage, and fuck anything with at least one leg. Oh, I forgot to mention: The latter path is only an option if you write the most weirdly catchy and strung-out songs imaginable, specifically ones that sound like a combination of the Kinks on special K playing synths stolen from Yes and the Doors if Jim Morrison weren't a too-serious poet fatso.

PENIS PILOT



CAT POWER

Sun
Matador

Have you ever been to a dumpy restaurant where the menu has like four things on it, but you order something anyway because your friend Conner is on some weird diet and can only eat eggs, so you might as well just bite the bullet? Then your food arrives and you're like, "I did not expect this dirtbag diner to put lemon and rosemary on these potatoes!" Well, this record is like said restaurant, and the "lemon" is like a Gloria Estefan send-up while the "rosemary" is a nod to Black Flag in the middle of a rap. This is the kind of restaurant that you think about writing a Yelp for, but in the end you don't because you're a lazy fuck.

DJ DRENNEN

WORST COVER OF THE MONTH: YOKOKIMTHURSTON



TOY S/T

Heavenly

A few weeks ago, I went camping with some friends in upstate NY and at a certain point one of them shared a piece of chocolate with me that had mushrooms in it. I forgot all about it, and had assumed it wouldn't do much because the piece I ate was so small, but then 30 minutes later I was lying in a field, watching the Milky Way pump like a human heart, and talking about the "dark wildness" of the world. Something about this album produces similar effects, with the added bonus of my NOT waking up the next morning with mud all over my face and smelling suspiciously of pee.

RYAN GOSLING



GRIZZLY BEAR

Shields

Warp

Do you ever do that thing where you meet someone you really like, hang out with them for a few weeks, finally sleep with them (and it's amazing), and then the next morning you "accidentally" shove one of their sweatshirts into your bag and find excuses to wear it for the next week until the person decides they don't like you anymore and asks for it back because you're insane? This is the aural equivalent of those events.

DILDO BUGGINS



ERASERHEAD

Original Soundtrack

Sacred Bones

Listening to the *Eraserhead* soundtrack makes me angry with contemporary indie filmmakers, mostly because sound design and scoring have shifted from "creating a space inside which the film can live" to "Beach House/sounds like Beach House." Give it a listen and see

how layered and terrifying it is, and I'm not even talking about the included dialogue about that demon baby. Peter Ivers's "In Heaven" may be the only actual song on here, but it is a well-timed release from the grand crescendos and the Fats Waller party-organ hymnals. At one point, I reached to turn the volume down, and then was like, this is fucking beautiful when it's loud! It's a testament to how good a film *Eraserhead* is. I'm gonna listen to my whole DVD collection now—no video—and see how my fave movies hold up. *Norbert*, by the way, probably ain't gonna make it.

A. WOLFE



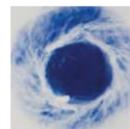
THE SOULJAZZ ORCHESTRA

Solidarity

Strut

World music always makes me think of a bunch of different things, primarily of how I bet it would sound even better if played from the car stereo of a brand-new convertible. All like, "UH! My life is so high stress with all of this international espionage and charity balls, I'm gonna go take a drive up the coast and just listen to happy music that mostly consists of hand percussion." Also, music from other countries (although let's be real, this band is from Canada and just PLAYS world music) makes me feel like I've never traveled farther than my mailbox, which makes me cry mini American flags.

JAMES JOOT



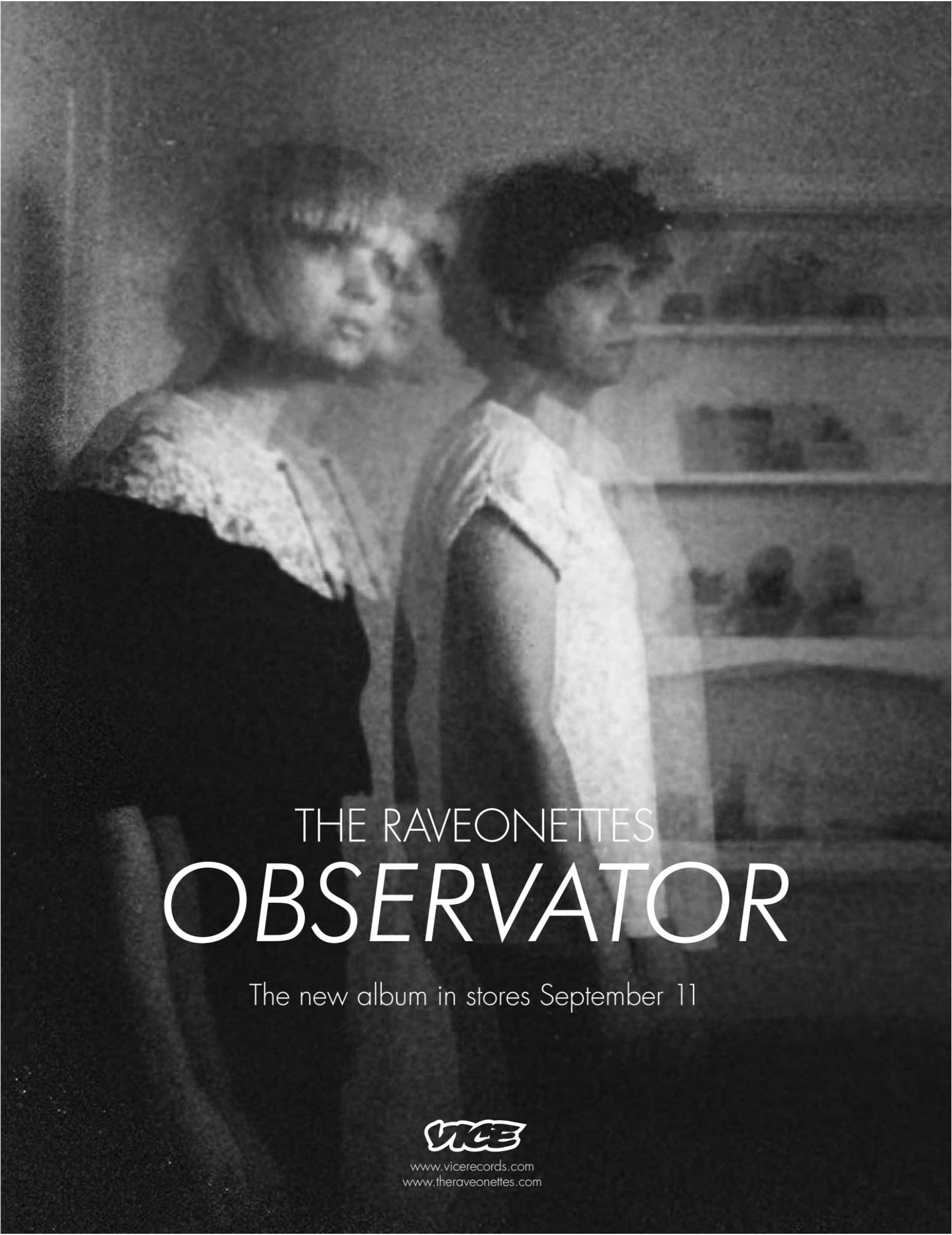
YOKOKIMTHURSTON

S/T

Chimera Music

This is a collaboration between Yoko Ono, Kim Gordon, and Thurston Moore that has been so underpublicized literally only five people know about it. I tried to tell someone about it and they basically told me I was lying. This thing does a great job of bottling the kind of unique musical tension that can only be created in a recording room occupied by a recently divorced couple and an actual insane maniac. If you can listen to this all the way through, you should get a T-shirt that says so. I'm giving it a smiley because it's better than a scary roller coaster, and who doesn't love a nice fright?

HOT GYNO



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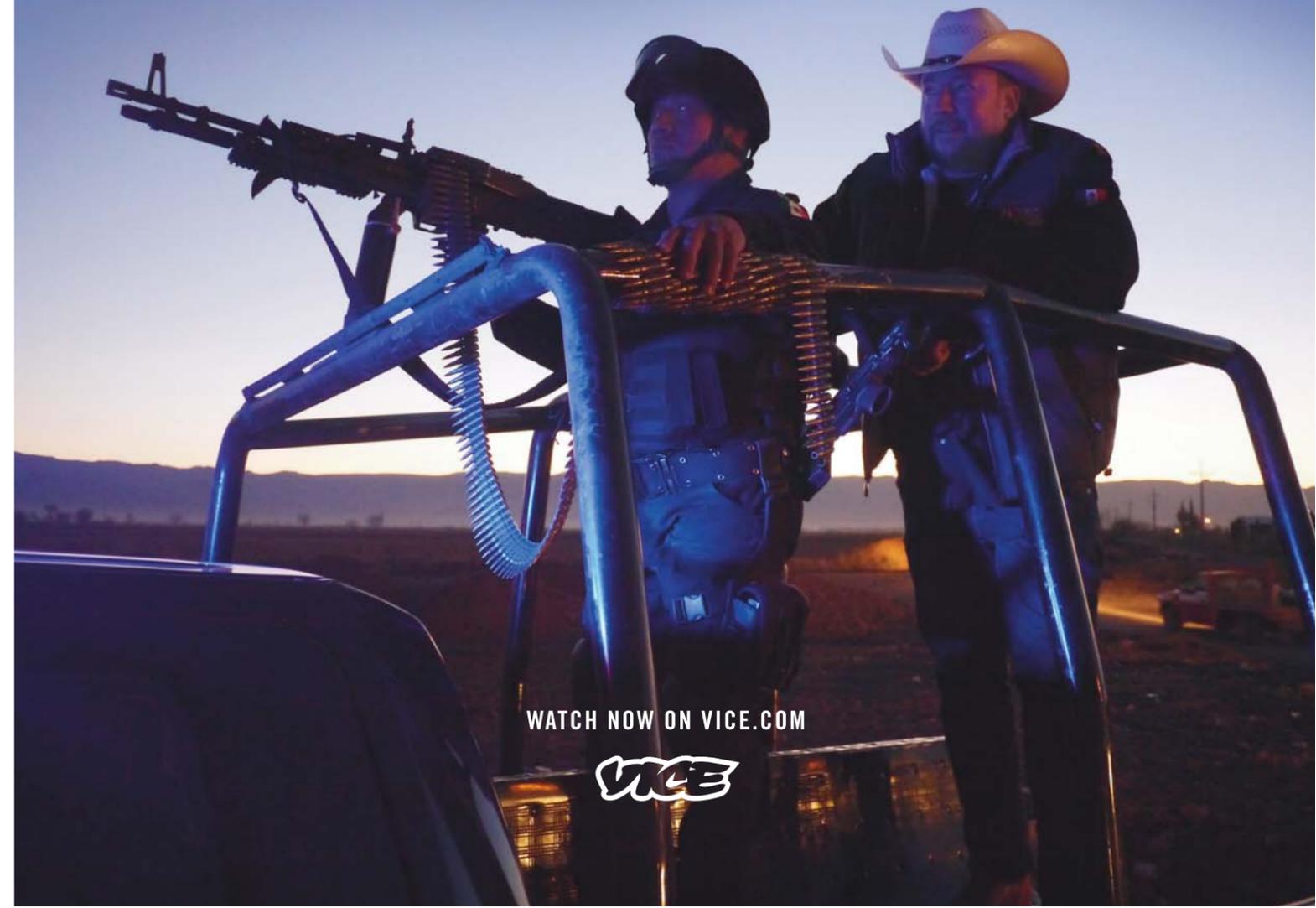
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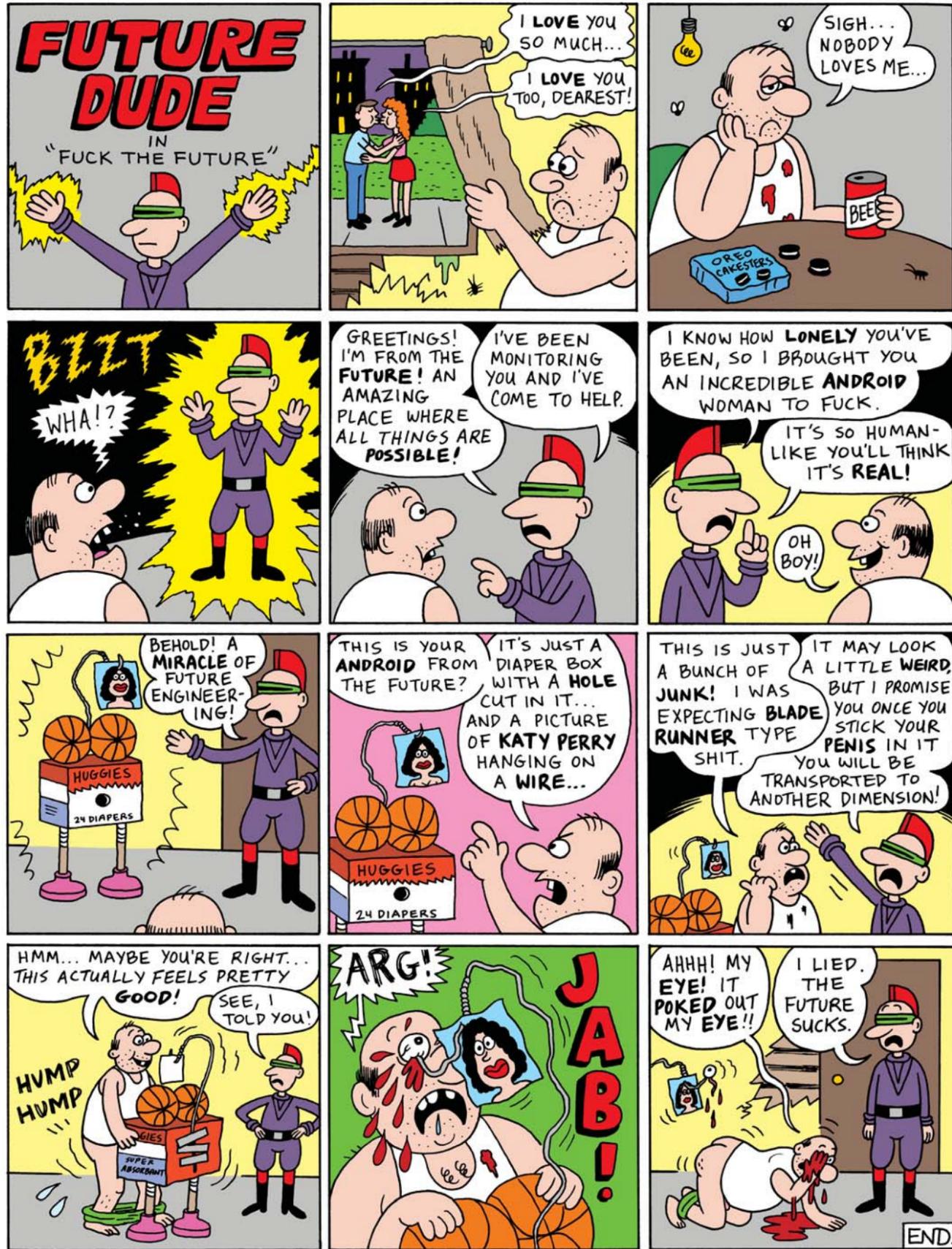
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