



negative **CAPABILITY**

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+ contests, survival tips, slight
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psychotic Polar Bear from the
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\$ 3

LESS THAN AN IMPORTED BEER IN A
CIGAR BAR AND GIVES A BETTER BUZZ

IT IS ALWAYS POLITE to thank those who have made contributions to your work, not only because people love to see their name in print, but also because it is nice to publicly and loudly declare that *without these people, this thing you are holding would not have been possible*. Well, it would have been possible, just less likely, okay? My most sincere thanks and love to:

JULIANNA, the bug that makes it all worthwhile, not just this zine either, I mean EVERYTHING.

MY FAMILY for making me a decent human being, barely.

JEFF KOYEN & HIS LOVELY FIANCÉE, AMY. Jeff, for being: an inspiration, a good friend, a font of knowledge, the only cool boss I have ever had, and a damn fine American to boot. Amy, for getting me a job and for keeping me from losing my mind by chatting with me online when I was bored and couldn't find hot lesbians for cybersex.

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YOU, for buying this and looking forward to the next one.

APPLE COMPUTER, not for any free junk, just for sticking it out and making a superior product. If it weren't for Apple, I would have had no fucking idea how to do this. So thanks to Quark, too!

Every fucking thing in this zine is © 1998 Jøshua Saitz, except for one thing. The cover was my idea (it is called "Setting the World on Fire") but the actual art and logo were done by the highly talented, socially aware, politically correct and well-hung Gabe Mera (thestrain@aol.com). Pay him for something and make his volunteering worthwhile. My icon was designed by the lovely and talented Jeff Koyen (crank@inch.com) though he said I could just have it. If you want to reprint anything, write to me and ask first, because my lawyers are a pack of vultures who would like nothing better than to make your possessions mine. I am extremely fair and open-minded, so don't hesitate to ask, and never forget the first rule of negotiating: try bribery first, not last. Really. If you want to advertise in the next issue, please write because unless something magical happens, I'll need your help. For subs, all I will commit to is AT LEAST two more, so just send \$7 cash (please!), check or money order made out to me, Jøshua Saitz, and you get the next two mailed the day I get each issue from the printer! That'll make things easy for all of us.

If you need to contact me, please write to:

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negative_capability@cidesigns.com for mail
www.cidesigns.com/negcap for my web site!

Take My Word For It

The following people and things are all good, smart, righteous, and doing something that I believe in very strongly. Check them out, support them, do what you can.

ADBUSTERS (www.adbusters.org)

The most daring publication I have ever seen, and the only one challenging the status quo.

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

www.nine.org/notw/notw.html

Human folly at its sharpest.

THE ZODIAC KILLER

Only an overachiever could kill with impunity, taunt the cops, and get away with murder. Bravo!

HOWARD STERN (www.koam.com)

If you ever have to be up early, this genius will save you.

CONCRETE TV

The best goddamn public access show in the world, ever.

CRANK (www.crank.com)

Hysterical, cruel, thoughtful, self-loathing and honest. Perfect.

SONY PLAYSTATION (playstation.com)

If you ever liked video games, get Tekken 2 and this system.

JAMES RANDI (www.randi.org)

This raconteur has debunked more phony nonsense than any other living human being, with a vicious sense of humor.

THE BOO RADLEYS

The best and most original pop band ever, bar none.

BILL HICKS, GENIUS/COMIC

Ryko has released all four of his comedy CDs, so buy them!

HBO (www.hbo.com)

The best pay channel, and home to the three funniest former stand-up comics on TV: Dennis Miller, Garry Shandling and Chris Rock.

THE SIMPSONS & SOUTH PARK

Only cartoons can get away this kind of vicious satire, because 95% of TV is toothless.

JOHN KRICFALUSI (spumco.com)

The fucked-over genius from Ren & Stimpy deserves your support.

RUDOLPH GIULIANI

One of the few Republicans with soul, heart, balls and a brain.

THE SURREAL GOURMET (foodtv.com)

Most of Food TV's content is half-baked (har!) but this guy rules!

LURKY (www.fuckgeeks.com)

The King of the Monkeys, one of my oldest friends, and the smartest freak I've ever known.

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MANIFESTO, OR WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

Let's begin at the beginning. My problem is that I care too much about some things and care too little about others. I am convinced that there is no such thing as God. I prefer getting blown to having sex, and not just because I am lazy (which I am). I am too smart for my own good, and I am not shy about it in the least. I think drugs are good, unless you're weak and have no self-control, in which case you should stick to gum or chewing your nails and leave the drugs for me. I can't sleep much and I don't sleep well, so if you want to know what my problem is, just lay the blame there. I am neurotic, misanthropic, petty, vain, impatient and hostile. I am also sweet, thoughtful, caring, overly sensitive and very generous. I can't reconcile it either, so don't sweat it. You'll see, in the future, in these pages, that I am a contradictory person. I accept that, not as hypocrisy, but as a given. I think everyone is full of contradictions, but I can admit it, up front, right here and now, without hesitation or bullshit.

I write. That's what I do. I need you to do one thing for me, and you don't even have to do it well. Read this. Then give it to a friend. Then tell them to pass it on. I can't afford to make a million of these things, and if you care about what I am saying, buy a copy to save, this will be worth nothing someday. I don't need your money. I just need you to read this. Actually, I could use your money, but I will take what I can get.

Everything will not be spelled out for you, so please pay attention as best you can. I won't be a whiner and I won't be too much of a pain in the ass. I am glad you're reading this, because it means there is at least one person who thought this thing *looked* interesting enough to take a chance on. That means we have one thing in common so far. Even if you hate what I am doing, at least you took a chance, when you could just have easily gotten something totally useless like *Spin*, or worse, *People*.

I will try to make this experience useful and rewarding, because to me, the things I like best are those things that I think no one else knows about. I am sure that

other people do this, but usually I like a band until they start getting radio airplay. It is not even that I am concerned that the band is a "sellout" because everyone is a fucking sellout. Let's not kid ourselves, okay? I just feel that the personal connection that I have with the band, or the movie, or the restaurant or the zine has been broken because of all the douchebags sucking it up like it was some kind of disposable trend. I don't want to be disposable. I have a lot to say, and most of it is pretty interesting. If it isn't, let me know, and I will be more than happy to piss you off some more.

There is always a danger when writing shit like this that the author will feel the "importance" of the moment and waste time and energy trying to be profound or preachy. Fuck that. I am not even going to pretend that this is the best I can do, because I know it isn't. I don't care about it being the best. My best work has not happened yet. I have to fuck this up for quite a while before I get to being the best, and when it does happen, not only will you know, but it will be over as soon as you realize it. That's what good is, to me, something that disappears as soon as you see how good it is. I was going to use the word ephemeral but I felt like a douche just typing it.

Many of these pieces are longer than you may be used to seeing in a zine, but to be honest, I have cut them down as much as I could. At the same time, part of the impetus for starting *Negative Capability* was that anyone else who wanted to use my work wanted to butcher it beyond recognition. I didn't want that to happen, so I am going to publish everything in its entirety. There have been a few times in my life that I thought I was going to launch a real magazine, and of course, just as things started to come together, they fell apart. The problem has always been that the more people are involved, the less likely you are to pull it off. This is not to say that I wasn't working with cool people, it's just that nothing really good or original comes from a consensus. The more meetings you have, the less you want to be around each other. And of course, as soon as you have to agree on

anything with just one other person, both of you are compromised.

Don't get the wrong idea about me. Sure, I am writing every goddamn word in this thing, taking most of the pictures, doing the design, and spending my own hard-earned dollars to get this thing printed in a professional manner (and I have been unemployed since the IRS seized the company I worked for at the end of July, 1997) so you can have something cool and new to read. I came to the sad realization that no one wants to invest in me, or trust me, or give me a chance to do something meaningful and interesting. Time is not on my side, in fact the things I can count as "being on my side" number fewer than you can imagine. I believe in myself, and now, I am putting my money where my mouth is. The point is, this is what I have to say, but this is not the whole story. That's for you to decide, if you want. I will show you the world as I see it, tell you some funny, scary, interesting or bizarre stories, and then be on my way. I want to know what you think, and if you care. I realize that this thing is dense with words, but the words *mean something*, and I have also thrown in a bunch of pictures for you to rest your weary eyes.

The world is collapsing upon itself; everyone is fractured, bitter and hostile. Resources are dwindling, everything is getting corrupted, polluted and infected with incurable diseases. So why the hell not spend an evening smoking pot and playing Tekken 2? I fixate on the negative because that's what I am. If I thought it was hopeless, I would have killed myself a long time ago. I keep thinking that some huge catastrophe will wipe out everything that I hate and leave the remaining few things that I can tolerate in peace and harmony. See how sick that is? I would classify myself, if forced, as a "hopeful cynic." I see the world as it is, and I wish it would die. And because I wish it would die, that means I have hope, even if the only thing I hope for is everyone else's death. Anyway, one of the things I do know is when to shut up. So that's all. But don't worry. I will think of something else to say tomorrow.

Let Me Warn You

MOST OF YOU ARE STUPID

I HAVE ACCEPTED THAT AS FACT. Not you personally, but someone else that you will loan this to, or the person who will pick it up when you leave it on the bus. I want you to write to me, but I can't take it if you're really stupid. If you have nothing to say, if you can't spell, if your grammar is awful, if you can only find used napkins to write on, SAVE IT FOR SOMEONE ELSE. Trust me when I tell you that it will piss me off to no end if you write to me and show me how retarded you are. And if you or someone you know is actually retarded and you take offense to that last statement, I could not possibly care less. There has to be someone I'm allowed to make fun of for fuck's sake. Why not pick on people too dim to feel bad that I am making fun of them? If you're cruel and enjoy tormenting the retarded, tell them that I think they suck, and if it were up to me, we would use the retarded as food, since they are mostly wasted meat. If you like the retarded, bully for you. I find them annoying, and I am allowed to feel this way.

I realize that we are in a culture that values verbal ability above the ability to write. That sucks, but I cannot change it. I know that most people don't read and even fewer write. And you know something? Even among those that can and do write, most of them shouldn't. Most of them have nothing to say, or worse, they *think* they have something interesting to say, and no one cares about them enough to tell them to shut the fuck up. I will tell you, if the need arises, to shut the fuck up. In addition, I am so sick of people who insist that all writing must be personal, painful and sad. You were molested? Get over it. Mom died? It's funny how you make it sound like I care.

It is important for me to give you this brief lesson now, before you put pen to paper or sit down to e-mail me. If you know this stuff already, I love you, get writing! If you don't know it, don't be insulted, just pay attention. This may help you find work, romance and a fulfilling career. If you don't know this stuff, and you write to me, be aware that I will savage you without remorse and without mercy, okay? YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED.

- There is no such word as "alot." It is two words that dumb people put together for reasons I have never fully understood. If you can put a word in the middle of it, as in "There are a *whole* lot of reasons dumb people annoy me," then it can't be one word. I don't care if your teacher said it was okay, or your mom doesn't mind it. I am telling you, every single time I see "alot," I hate the author and I know that I am smarter than they are.

- There is also no such word as "anyways." Never has been. Never will be.

- Whenever you write anything that has quotes and ends in a period or comma, put the period or comma **INSIDE** the quotes. I don't care if it is a title, a colloquialism that you are using in quotes

because you didn't say it, or if it is a nickname, JUST DO IT. Let me give some examples, so you aren't confused. She said, "I enjoyed reading *Negative Capability*." There is nothing more fun than killing "retards." I said to him, "You should have ten copies of Jøsh's story 'Retard Stew.'" The only exception is when you are asking a question and what you are referring to is part of the question. For example: Did you ever read "Retard Stew"?

- Lose and Loose. I really don't know why people can't get this one either. Your mother is loose, so you are a loser.

You lose your mind. Your pants are loose. They sound differently too.

- There are many words that sound the same, but do not mean the same thing, and are not interchangeable. There are also many words that are spelled the same, but are pronounced differently depending on the usage. The most common mistake is people using "your" and "you're" incorrectly. After you read this, you will have no fucking excuse for not knowing it, so pay close attention. "You're" is the contraction of "You" + "are" and is used in place of those two words, to save space. "Your" is a possessive and it means "it belongs to you." If you are ever curious as to which one to use, think about if it would make sense to use "you are" instead, and if it does make sense, use "you're" and if it doesn't, use "your." Here is a perfect example, "You're a total fucking nimrod if your grammar is bad." In this specific



If you must marry your cousin, PLEASE DON'T BREED, or you'll end up with one of these!!

situation, you could easily say, “*You are* a total nimrod...etc” At the same time, it should be obvious that you could NOT say, “...if *you are* grammar is bad.” Any questions? If you still don’t get it, go smack a teacher.

- Many people confuse “there,” “their” and “they’re” because they all sound the same, and since people don’t read, they don’t know there’s a difference between them. There = a place, as in, “I was over *there* to get a blowjob from your mother.” Their = possessive, it means, “it belongs to them,” as in “*Their* dicks were being worked really hard by your mom.” They’re = a contraction (or bringing together) of two separate and distinct words, “They” + “are” = They’re, as in “*They’re* coming all over your mom’s face, and she looks like she really likes it.” Also, the word “wind” can be pronounced like “wind a watch” or “the wind in my hair,” and it is only by observing the context that you can know how to pronounce it properly.

- If you don’t want to look stupid, please avoid using slang spellings of common words. This list includes: cuz, becuz, wassup, yo, cum, kewl, “da bomb,” homey and many others. Also, it is not cool, original, daring or interesting when people mix caps and lowercase letters as in, “I DoN’t KnOw wHy No giRliEs WaNt tO FuCk mE.” The answer is in your question, chump. In addition, all complete sentences must have verbs and not end in prepositions. So, never say, “Where you at?” say “Where are you?” because the second one has a verb in it, the first does not, and the second does not end in a preposition, like the first one does.

If you don’t have a computer, or don’t have a friend with

decent grammar to proofread what you’re writing, write as simply as possible. This means don’t try to use fancy words if you don’t know what they mean. If you can’t handle that, copy the following note LETTER FOR LETTER, and mail it to me.

Dear Jøsh-

I just read *Negative Capability* #1, and while I found the pictures very interesting, all the words confused me. On an intelligence scale, I would place myself below Forrest Gump but above Karl Childers from *Sling Blade*. I realize that it is usually inappropriate to compare real people to fictional characters, but as I have said already, I am very limited in my capacity to think. Please forgive me.

Enclosed is \$7 cash (postage paid) for the next two issues, whenever you can get them out. I realize how busy and important you are and I believe in what you’re doing. I vote with my dollars, and I am voting for you.

Love,

X

I used an “X” there, but if someone has taught you to sign your own name in cursive letters, by all means, sign away. If you have trouble understanding this, please use light paper and trace the letters. Thank you.



THE PORNO MOVIE NAME GAME

I REMEMBER NOT TOO LONG AGO that porno movies used to make me laugh by coming up with titles or plots that parodied mainstream movies. I always thought it was kind of ballsy to do that, and every time I saw a new one, I would remember the title and laugh about it for days (I wasn’t on medication at the time). I can clearly remember when I saw *Edward Penishands*, *Ball Street* and *Forrest Hump* (and a rival parody called *Foreskin Gump*) on the shelves of the local video emporium. Because Blockbuster is run by religious nuts and pussies who kowtow to religious nuts, that particular chain will not carry porno, though for some reason they carry high school jerkoff films like *Private School* and *Porky’s Revenge*.

Nowadays, I would be amazed to see any parodies at all. I don’t know if lawsuits have affected the porno industry, or if maybe they are moving in a new direction, but I for one will not let this trend die unnoticed. I have always felt that I could contribute something worthwhile to any industry I saw fit to bless with my creativity, and mostly I am

mistaken. Since porno has dropped the ball, so to speak, I would like to pick it up.

I am offering these titles to anyone willing to use them for porno, free of copyright. I also thought up some cool ones for TV shows, certainly better than obvious crap like *The XXX-Files* and *The Sex-Files*. Juli also thought of a few, but I am not sure how many of each will make the final cut. You’re welcome to play along, and if you come up with some of your own, by all means, send them in. I will be happy to evaluate them and pass them on to my fascinated audience.

Cop Land becomes *Cock Land*

Touched By An Angel becomes
Sucked By An Angel

Gummo becomes *Cummo*

JFK becomes *Jay F***s Kay*

NYPD Blue becomes *NYPD Blown*

The Week In Rock becomes
The Week With Cock (a gay male porno)

I Know What You Did Last Summer becomes

I Know Who You Did Last Summer
Gang Related becomes *Gang-Bang Related*

3rd Rock From the Sun becomes
3rd Cock in the Buns

Joanie Loves Chachi becomes
Bonnie Loves Crotchie

In & Out becomes *Anal In & Out*

Kiss the Girls, well, that’s perfect as is.

The Matchmaker becomes *The Snatchmaker*

The Chris Rock Show becomes
The Kiss Cock Show

Spin City becomes *Sperm City*

South Park becomes *Mouth Park*

Cop Rock becomes *Cop Cock* or *Cock Rock*

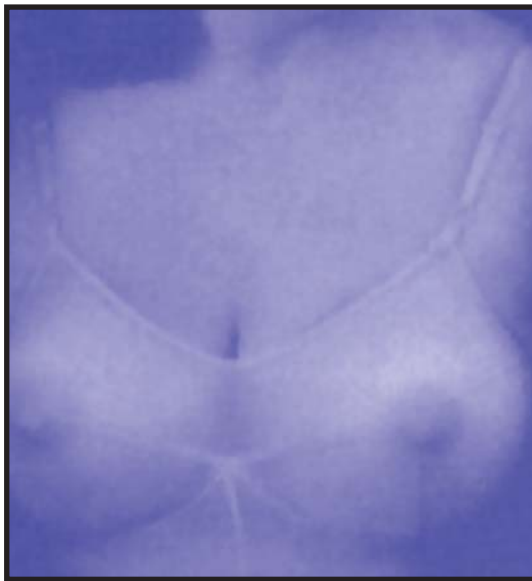
Everybody Loves Raymond becomes
Everybody Does Raymond

Storefront Hitchcock (the new Jonathan Demme concert film featuring my hero Robyn Hitchcock, coming 3/98) becomes *Whorefront Suckcock*

Alien: Resurrection becomes *Al & His Big Erection*

Okay kids, time for a cliché that always works. I have a bunch of cool shit that you'll like, and I will be happy to part with it, if only you can impress me a little.

Something for nothing, almost



Here is a picture of some nice old celebrity boobies. Name the owner, and you will win a floppy full of celeb nudes (please specify Mac or Windoze, because as a proud Mac owner, I can do both in a pinch, goddammit). Every single person that gets it right will win the floppy, and one of those winners (chosen at random by me!) will win the "Bonus Porno Prize Package" which includes body jewelry, a porno mag, a porno video and a mystery prize. You must include an age statement with every entry, on the off chance that you win. The pics you will get include Cindy Crawford, Naomi Campbell and Michelle Pfeiffer, plus many other really unusual ones that are sure to make you happy and/or very ill. No hints, either, so don't bother asking. Okay, one hint: I would never fuck this woman because to me she was never hot, but others might like to get a piece of Hollywood history. Also, I would like to put out a call to see if anyone has porno featuring women with mastectomies or amputations. I have seen pregnant, animal, bondage, you name it. Those two are the only things I have never seen in porno, and because I haven't seen them, I would like to. Make that happen for me, and I promise to reward you handsomely. Make sure everyone in the flick is over eighteen, because quite frankly, I have no desire to be raped in jail, I am too pretty.

I have a couple of really cool books, one all about Howard Stern, another about Origami (including instructions and pages with fold marks, to make your own!) and some other mystery prizes that are very valuable and interesting, and I would like to share them with you. In order to take them off my hands, you have to tell me the name of the movie that this zine takes its title from. The words are seen as text during one particular movie. When I was trying to come up with a title for the zine, I saw this movie again on TV, and thought it was perfect. Recently I did a search on Amazon.com and found two books with Neg Cap in the title, one from 1939 and one from the 60's, so maybe it means more than even I realize. It would

also help if you tell me what the text in the film refers to, though it is not required to win. It will, however, propel me into a really fascinating discussion of all the other titles that got flushed because they weren't as good.

I will give some cool cards and other kinds of stationery as well as matching envelopes (not too girly) to the person who can answer this rather trite and silly question. There was a band in the 80's that had a hit with "AEIOU Sometimes Y" that was called Ebn-Ozn. What I want to know is, where did they get their name from? You must be very specific, you can't just say, "They heard it somewhere."

Hey, let's talk about band names some more. I never liked Nirvana, and don't like the Foo Fighters. That doesn't matter, really. My question is: What exactly is a Foo Fighter? What I mean is, they took their name from a real thing, and what was that thing? I will give some CDs for this one, at least three that are good. These are CDs I have paid for with my own hard-earned dollars, so don't think for a second that I am spreading some free promo crap.

On page forty-three of this issue is a list of a whole bunch of my favorite cover songs. Only one song on that list is made up (meaning as far as I know, it has never been

played or recorded, because I made it up). Name it and you get two free tapes of covers!

For the kids, because I find them so annoying: I will gift you with a kit to make your own teddy bear, from scratch. It's really pretty cool actually, I have one myself. I will also give you some interesting stickers, some kidvid from my collection and some rubber stamps. Maybe something else, I can't think of anything else right now but I am sure there'll be something. I wonder if these questions will find any winners, maybe they're too hard. No, mustn't assume the worst, right? The question: Who was the voice of the Great Gazoo on *The Flintstones*?

Since my very cool sister was kind enough to tape *The X-Files* in reruns on FX, since Time Warner SUCKS and won't add that channel, I have some cool episodes on tape that I can now give away. You'll be pleased to know that the quality is high, and while I am not sure which episodes you'll get, I will take requests. To get them, you'll have to answer this question: The actor who plays Cancer Man played an ob/gyn in what comedy?

When you enter, please specify where you want your prize sent, in case you win, and in the case of the titties, if you have a specific nude in mind that you want, SAY SO and I will do my best to disappoint you. No e-mail entries accepted. You can enter all the contests on one letter, BUT, if you want two guesses at any of the questions, you must mail them separately. If you don't follow this rule, I will only count the first guess that I read. Don't even try to cheat because you will make me angry, and you won't like me when I'm angry. All decisions by me are so final it's scary. Everything is at my discretion. And don't you forget it.

Please send all entries, bribes and pleas for mercy to me, at my cool new P.O. Box (should I be scared of you?)

Negative Capability

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JUNKIES ARE A DIME A DOZEN,

but usually you expect them to be white trash, really stupid or rock stars. I have seen dozens of junkies on TV, and they all have washboard abs, chain smoke and count Jack Daniels as a major food group. That has always amazed me. I mean, how can you remember complex chord changes, the location of all your effects pedals and when it's time to sing back up when you are loaded to the gills on junk? Don't ask me, because I would never touch heroin.

Don't get me wrong, I love drugs. I think drugs are great, for people that can handle them. But it is the people who can't handle taking even vitamins without getting hooked that concern me. And the thing is, heroin is one of those things that no one does "on the weekend" or "at parties" because it isn't possible. It also isn't a very social drug, most junkies are total zombies who can barely get a steady stream of urine going much less hold up their end of a conversation. I am sure the same goes for crack, but to be honest, I have

sure as shit can't get off anything by yourself, and then, finally, you can be back where you started. But at that point, you have to avoid all temptation, you have struggle one day a time. And worst of all, you will probably have to spend odd nights sitting in a dirty plastic chair trading horror stories with losers just like yourself. If you are one of those people, I just want you to know, on a personal level, how much I am laughing at you. Congratulations, you are one of the few people in life who get what they deserve.

my emotional condition.

Alcohol is another story entirely. I used to go to parties when I was in junior high because I was hyperactive and very entertaining. I would try anything to make people laugh or impress older people, and for the most part, they accepted me as the token young kid. At parties I would stand in line at the keg in some kid's backyard and fill a dirty plastic cup with piss warm foam and a shot or two of beer and feel like I had the whole world on a platter. I would walk away from the crowd and try to choke it down, but no matter what I did, it tasted awful. It wasn't until I went to a party where they had beer in bottles that were cold that I actually found a beer that I could enjoy. I never liked Budweiser, it tastes like a bad beer that has been watered down. When I was fourteen I drank Heineken if I could get it, Coors if there was nothing else. My older brother worked as a busboy at a fancy restaurant right down the street from my best friend's house, and sometimes we would go meet him out back. He would sneak us a six or two from the cooler, which was not attached to the restaurant. We would then take the beer to someplace secluded, or the Friendly's parking lot if they were closed down for the night. And we would drink beer and feel like we were doing something cool.

The hard part came when I would try to get home, since I skated everywhere. I knew all kinds of shortcuts through driveways, back alleys and vacant lots to get home, but I could never chance that route on foot, because I would have to go slow enough to

get caught along the way.

If I had too many

My Best Friend Is A

only known one person who did crack and when he was doing it, he thought he was the second coming of Jesus, no joke. He also said that he did the crack so it would register in his blood so he could get into a detox program and get a nice bed, which was much better than the street or the Y, to hear him tell it. I have never even seen heroin, because if I hear that it's in the room, I know it is time for me to go.

In my twenty-eight years I have enjoyed many drugs. I still do, from time to time.

I do not have an addictive personality, because if I did, I wouldn't do any drugs. There are some drugs that hook you whether you're an addictive person or not [Actually, to be honest, I think people who say they have an "addictive personality" are full of shit and trying to blame genes for their own inability to exercise self-control. I mean, I love french fries, but I try not to eat them too often so I don't turn into a walrus]. If you are a person who has such a personality, you can do it 2 ways: 1) you can avoid drugs and stay happy and accomplish something with your life. Or, 2) you can show how weak you are and get hooked on a few of them, then swear them off, then ruin your life when you fall off the wagon, then go to some 12-step or rehab or detox or whatever the hell you can afford, because you

I started with beer and pot when I was about 14. I was a little skater dude, I wore Vans, I had a couple of decks, my knees were scraped up, and I had quite an attitude working. In other words, I was the suburban rebel cliché number 12. As far as I am concerned, that

beats the shit out of Audio-

Visual geek, dumb jock or weird foreign student any day. Because I could skate, I spent time ripping up things in parking lots, dreaming of buying plans for a half-pipe, and meeting guys who were older but weren't cool because they were still into skating. Those guys always had pot, and had no problem letting me try it. I loved pot from the first time I ever tried it. It has a reliable, soothing effect on me. I am funnier, more relaxed and in some ways, even sharper than without it. Every time someone tells me that it makes them paranoid or weird, I feel pity, but no empathy. I have never been paranoid, or anxious or experienced any negative feelings as a result of pot. In fact, under normal conditions, I am very paranoid and anxious and pot is the only medication that works to cure me. In fact, I am hoping maybe I can get a prescription for a couple of joints to ameliorate

Junkie!

drinks, I couldn't

balance on my board. There is nothing more pathetic than having to carry a skateboard, unless your leg is broken from a skating mishap that had witnesses. So I would try to skate while I was drunk, and it didn't take much to get me drunk, not more than three beers in an hour. I remember one night it took me more than an hour to finish a route that *sober* would have taken me about 10 minutes. I kept falling and wiping out. The beer gave me courage to try a frontside ollie or to jump off a high curb or to do a really fast jump over an obstacle. The beer also numbed me, so I could keep falling down and not care.

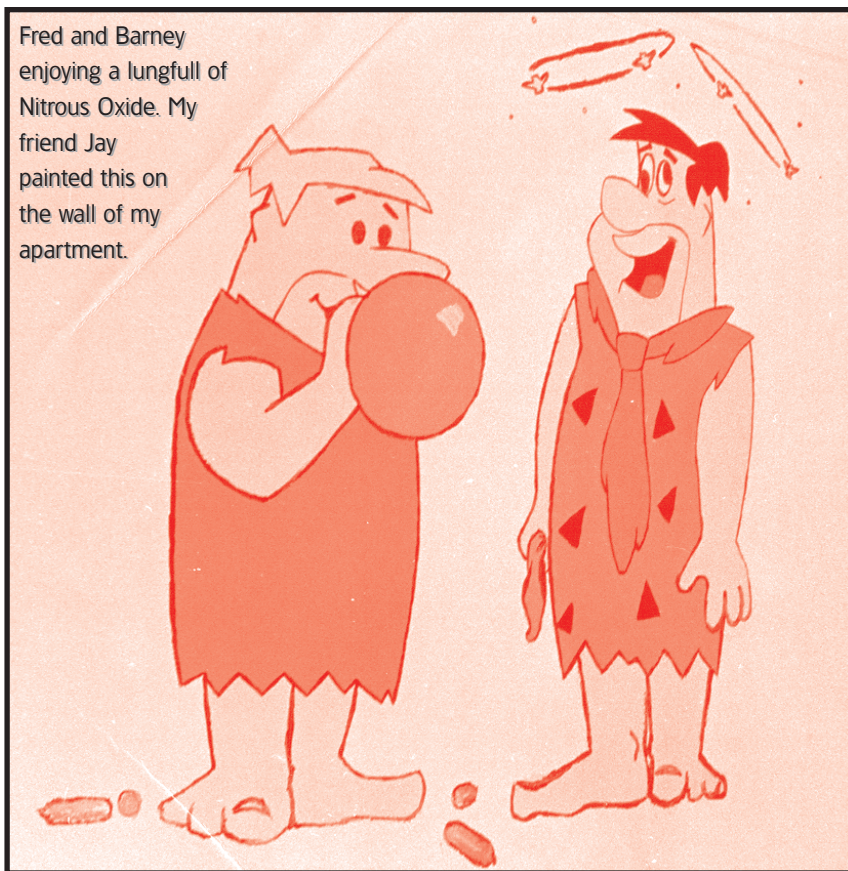
By the time I was a senior in high school I liked to go to parties merely as an excuse to get wasted. I have always been too smart for my own good, and the pressures I felt as a junior and senior, trying to ace the SATs, trying to get into a good college, trying to finish all the AP classes so I could to place

out of the same subjects in college, was very draining. Weekends were the perfect time to blow off steam. I never did anything too stupid though. Even when I was fall down drunk I knew better than to get in the car with a drunk driver, and even when I was so stoned I couldn't stand up, I knew better than to make out with a girl I wasn't into.

One spring day, long after the SATs were over and all my college applications were in, I got a call from my friend Bill, who was cool because he smoked pot, and he had a new car. He said he was going up to Clark University near Boston to visit our mutual friend Henri, who was a year older than us. Henri was cool because he was one of those kids with a totally fucked up family. Whenever I went to his house, he would tell his mom to make us something good to eat, and he would curse at his parents, and yell at his sister, and he would smoke in the house. To a candyass like me, it was a glimpse into an unknown and very cool world. Henri is also notable for the fact that he introduced me to whippets, and would make runs to the local head shop to buy rolling papers, balloons and cases and cases of whippets. For a whole bunch of reasons, I have never had nitrous at the dentist. It may be because I have only had one cavity, and it was discovered the same day I had to get my wisdom teeth removed AND attend my grandfather's funeral. For obvious reasons, they decided to make the drugs a little more hardcore, which is always okay with me.

Henri had invited Bill and I up to his school for a tradition called Spree Day. For all I know, it is still going on to this day. The point of Spree Day is to cancel classes, open the dorms, and for everyone and anyone to take as many drugs as they can possibly handle. That's what the brochure said, anyway. I bullshitted my step-mother into thinking I was visiting Harvard because I wanted to go, and for that, she said, I could miss a few days of school. We drove all night, ignoring the speed limit, listening to some godawful Pink Floyd and smoking a couple of bones that Bill rolled. We got there at first light, and found Henri in the middle of huge piles of broken bong and debris. Dirty cats came and went without regard to anyone. We were exhausted, so we took a nap in one of the empty rooms. Henri came and woke us up at noon because he needed our help. He brought us out to the living room where there were five other people already waiting. On the floor in the middle of them was a water bottle like they use in an office water cooler, but it was upside down. On top of the spout was a wooden cereal bowl with holes drilled into it and some screen which had been cut from the windows. It was full of ground up green buds, at least 1/2 an ounce of sweet looking pot. Taped at irregular intervals along the top of this contraption were eight clear rubber hoses. It took me a few seconds to realize what it was, and when I did, I noticed that it had a name taped to its side, "Octo-Bong." Apparently, for it to work effectively, it needs eight people, one working each tube, to get sufficient suction to make the pot cook. I was happy to oblige and sat next to Bill as we introduced ourselves around. Henri took out a blowtorch and told us all to start working it. Clouds of smoke erupted from all over the room until we couldn't even see each other. After about three hits, the college boys were getting worn out, so we had to abandon the Octo-Bong until later. Then came free lunch in the dining hall, live music in the Quad, hot college girls wandering around half-naked, whippets at the midnight screening of *2001*, and then back to Henri's for some gravity bong. If you've never seen one, it works a little like this. A removable bowl is fashioned and then mounted on top of a stem, or some piece of tubing. The whole thing is then attached to some kind of bucket, in this case, it looked like a chlorine bucket, or some 20 gallon white drum. You put the whole thing into a bathtub or some other body of water, though bathtubs are easiest. Then you light the pot and pull the drum up and away from the water. While this is

Fred and Barney
enjoying a lungfull of
Nitrous Oxide. My
friend Jay
painted this on
the wall of my
apartment.



happening, smoke is being pulled into a growing pocket inside the bucket. Then the bowl is quickly removed and replaced with a person's mouth. Then they push you and the bucket down and all the smoke is forced into you faster than you can react. I did two gravity bong that night, and when I finished the second one, I fell face first into the water, much to the delight of everyone watching. I couldn't wait to get to college.

By the time I got to college I felt pretty close to being indestructible. I would offer to try anything new, and though it sounds stupid now, I was never afraid of dying. Other people were much more worried about me dying than I was. Back then, I smoked pot and drank on a pretty regular basis. My school was three minutes from the state border, and I could always find some older person to get me some 180 proof vodka or grain alcohol, which are legal in Connecticut. In the suite where I lived, the other guys and I used to stack all of our empties on top of the shades like jocks display trophies.

I first tried acid on Thanksgiving break, when I had to go home from college for a few days. Some friend of my sister had a sheet of acid, which in my ignorance I assumed would be a few feet across. This friend came to a party at our house (my step-mother was far away on some tropical island) and gave me two hits of blotter acid with pictures of a yin/yang symbol on it. I didn't think there was any way that a piece of paper that small could do anything to me.

Forty-five minutes later I had locked myself in my room in the dark, feeling like I had unleashed a torrent of demons into the room with me. I had really weird hallucinations for hours, and I came in and out of the party as the drug ebbed out of my system. There were only a few other people there who took acid with me, and I soon realized that it would be best to stay with people who were similarly situated.

When the party broke up, I washed up and went to bed, thinking that it was all over. I climbed into bed, turned off the light and closed my eyes to sleep. Instead of drifting off, I saw my room begin to throb and undulate around me. My blanket was slowly breathing on top of me, so I threw it on the floor. All the posters in my room were dancing a little jig. Even when I closed my eyes, I kept seeing all

kinds of weird things. I felt like I was going down a long tunnel that looked like the sets from the movie *Tron*. Everything had little neon accents that glowed brightly as I passed through them. Then I felt like that little red half-moon thing that you control in the video game *Tempest*. I thought the whole world was exactly like *Tempest*, with weird sparkling creatures making their way toward me, with evil on their minds.

Half an hour later I decided that I should try to quell the demons with some alcohol, and while it did slow me down, the hallucinations continued long into the night. I finally fell asleep after the sun came up, and I was relieved when I woke up and the whole world returned to normal.

After that I tried mushrooms, mescaline and then into some fringe drugs like morning glory seeds and banana peels, which gave me more of a headache than a high, but whatever didn't kill me

only served to make me stronger. I got offered coke more times than I could count, but always passed, thinking that snorting drugs was a full admission that not only were you into drugs, but you would do whatever you had to to ingest them. Besides, every other drug I did was in front of others, coke was always covert. It was always done in a locked bathroom or out of some nefarious looking devices in a dark corner of a party.

In a way, I also thought that coke was one of those drugs that people do a few times and then just totally lose their minds. I had seen *The Boost* on cable once and watching a pathetic, ranting James Woods talk about how he was going to make something happen as soon as he cleaned up was very disturbing to me. I never listened to Nancy Reagan or any has-been rocker like Vince Neil warn me about the evils of drugs. Those people were either too stupid or too removed from real life to realize that drugs, under the right circumstances are not only not bad for you, they can actually help people develop.

I got talked into coke by my friend Ali, who was one of the sweetest people I ever met. She had a bit of crush on me, so she would ply me with gifts and drugs to get me to hang around, and she was a lot of fun, so I let her enjoy my company. She had an electric bong, the likes of which I had never seen before or since, and she let me use it whenever I wanted. It basically consisted of a jar with tubes coming out of it, a small motor, and red plastic mask that you put over your face. You put pot in the bowl, plug in the machine, put the mask on your face, and just

sit there like a zombie and suck up the smoke. I loved that thing and used it whenever I had some free time. Once, while I was using it, she put some coke on top of the pot, without telling me. I could taste that something was different immediately, and the smoke also changed color when it came out of my

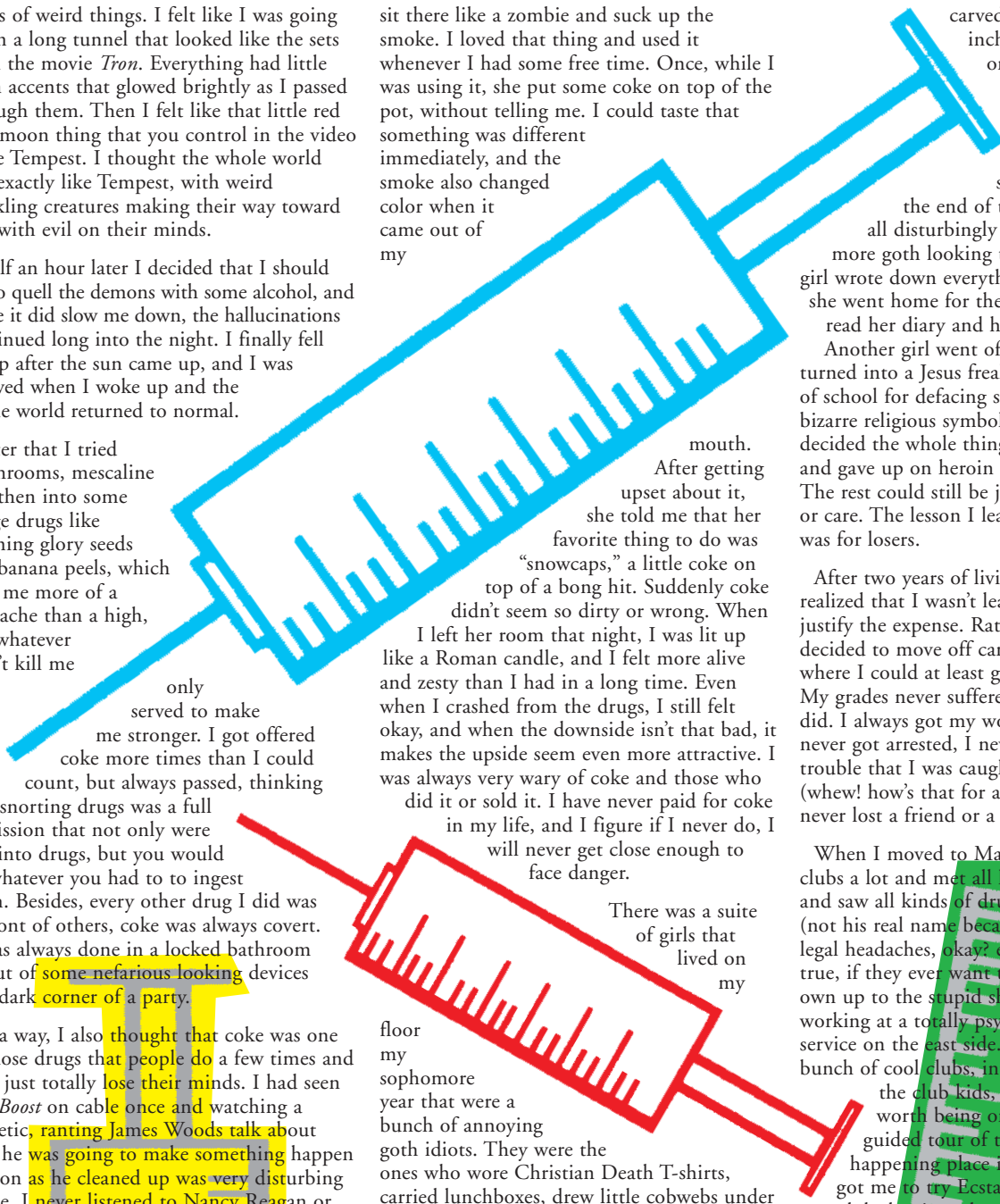
mouth. After getting upset about it, she told me that her favorite thing to do was "snowcaps," a little coke on top of a bong hit. Suddenly coke didn't seem so dirty or wrong. When I left her room that night, I was lit up like a Roman candle, and I felt more alive and zesty than I had in a long time. Even when I crashed from the drugs, I still felt okay, and when the downside isn't that bad, it makes the upside seem even more attractive. I was always very wary of coke and those who did it or sold it. I have never paid for coke in my life, and I figure if I never do, I will never get close enough to face danger.

There was a suite of girls that lived on my floor my sophomore year that were a bunch of annoying goth idiots. They were the ones who wore Christian Death T-shirts, carried lunchboxes, drew little cobwebs under their eyes and wore more black veils than a dozen Italian grandmothers. Toward the end of that year, all of those girls decided that they were going to try heroin as a group. I am not sure if it was the groupthought or the goth pretensions that irritated me more, but it didn't matter, at least they were making a concerted effort to rid the planet of themselves, and I respected that. Night after night I would walk by and see them lined up to puke their brains out. They all started by snorting it, because they were a bunch of pussies. Of course they couldn't handle it, and after a week or so of trying a few were able to get to the point where they wouldn't throw up. Of course, they all made up cute names for the drug and its various stages of intoxication, and we all laughed at them. We started calling them "The Suicide Suite" after one tried to slit her wrists, and another

carved "Fuck You" in two inch bloody block letters on her calf. I am sure it was more fashion daring than suicide attempt, but it did give me the willies something fierce. By the end of the semester they were all disturbingly skinny, pale and even more goth looking than before. Sadly, one girl wrote down everything she did, and when she went home for the summer, her parents read her diary and had her committed. Another girl went off the deep end and turned into a Jesus freak. She was kicked out of school for defacing school property with bizarre religious symbols. Another girl decided the whole thing was a big mistake and gave up on heroin and all the other girls. The rest could still be junkies for all I know or care. The lesson I learned was that heroin was for losers.

After two years of living on campus I realized that I wasn't learning enough to justify the expense. Rather than drop out, I decided to move off campus, to the city, where I could at least get some work done. My grades never suffered, my mental health did. I always got my work done on time, I never got arrested, I never caused any serious trouble that I was caught and convicted of (whew! how's that for a disclaimer?) and I never lost a friend or a job because of drugs.

When I moved to Manhattan I went to clubs a lot and met all kinds of weird people and saw all kinds of drug casualties. I met Jon (not his real name because I don't need any legal headaches, okay? everyone else's name is true, if they ever want to step forward and own up to the stupid shit we did) while working at a totally psychotic answering service on the east side. He took me to a bunch of cool clubs, introduced me to all of the club kids, got me on every list worth being on, and gave me a guided tour of the VIP rooms of every happening place in New York. He also got me to try Ecstasy for the first time, at a club that is no longer in business called Quick! He bought it for me because I was making \$5 an hour, and because he was a spoiled rich kid, he could afford to buy for both of us. I can't even find the right words to describe the first time I took E, but I can try. At first I felt a little nauseous, like I hadn't eaten anything good in a while. Then, after a bit, I felt it register in my system. My vision didn't exactly become blurred, but everything that I looked at seemed bathed in a soothing white light that made everything seem pretty and very friendly. The chair I was sitting was made of red velvet, and I found myself unconsciously stroking the fabric. It felt soft and very giving, and it was getting me all worked up to feel the fabric. Then I felt like my blood had been replaced by cool, pure, spring water. I could feel this coolness rushing through my veins, pumping through



my heart, throbbing in my brain, and it was amazing. I felt like I was plugged into something magical, like all of my nerve endings were being stroked all at once by themselves. I felt like the person that I was inside was finally coming into focus. Instead of being nervous or edgy or intimidated, I saw everyone around me as kids who were a little older. They were all wearing costumes and trying to make friends with each other and I felt like I was one of them and I could do or say anything that I wanted. I felt like no one could hurt me and no one would even want to.

I thought maybe I should have a drink but Jon said that everything would taste bad except water, and he was right. Water tasted like it was delicious and alive, like each molecule had a little bit of thirst to quench on my tongue and down my throat and all the molecules went right to work refreshing me. I stood up and started feeling the walls, then I found some paintings and was feeling the contours of the dried acrylic and the dry, brittleness of the frames. I decided to go to the bathroom to wash my hands because I was sweating profusely. When I saw myself in the mirror I was astounded. My pupils were totally dilated and I had a halo over my head from the overhead lamps. I looked like an angel, and I felt so peaceful and so powerful and it was just amazing. I decided that it was a waste to just sit in some club and listen to bad house music on a drug so amazing, so we decided to go for a walk. We were pretty deep into SoHo, where all the streets are fucked up and confusing, so I figured out where the World Trade Center was and headed in the opposite direction. After a while we were in the East Village, then we walked through Murray Hill, Turtle Bay, Midtown, and finally we got near my apartment on the upper east side. I didn't want to go home so we walked to the Met and sat on the steps, just sitting and talking. Some homeless guys came up to us so we talked to them. Then some drunks came by and sat down to talk to us. Then some other people started playing in the fountains and making a ruckus. When the sun started to come up I knew it was my cue to head home. Jon walked through the park to his mom's apartment on Central Park West and I walked over to the east side to go home. When I got into bed, my blankets felt soft and inviting, like the place where I was born. My pillow smelled wonderful and it was perfectly cool in my apartment. I had a glass of water, then went to sleep. All of my dreams were lovely and peaceful and I realized why the drug cost \$20 a pill. I have always believed that you get what you pay for and drugs are no exception to that rule.

After that we did E on a regular basis, and I introduced everyone and anyone who would listen to the drug. It has never had the same effect as it did that night, but I know that it isn't supposed to. It is still amazing to me. Every now and again, when we would go to buy E, Jon would sneak off and get some

coke for himself, thinking that I didn't know. He would sneak it in the bathroom or scoop up a fingernail full when I walked away. He thought he was fooling me, but he was not.

I moved to California for grad school a few years later and stopped doing drugs for a while. It wasn't that I thought they were bad, I just couldn't get them. I wasn't upset about it, I just went to school, went to work, and didn't think about it. I had a roommate who had pot from time to time, and from time to time she would throw me some. She also did speed quite a bit, and would spend days playing bizarre role playing games on her Sega Genesis without any regard for the time of day. She would play until she started to get normal, then do another line, then go back to playing. It was kind of disturbing to watch, so I tried not to be there for her binges.

I remained best friends with Jon, he mailed me packages full of magazines and junk on a regular basis and was one of the few people that really seemed to miss me. He also made tapes of the Howard Stern show, cut out the commercials and then mailed me the best two hours from each day's show. It helped me get through a lot of boring nights when I had few friends.

When I decided to move back to New York after grad school, he was very excited. We hung out together all the time, went to clubs, went to the movies and had a great time. I moved back to the city with my new girlfriend and settled into adult life. I worked every day, and every couple of weekends we would get together to do stuff, sometimes with drugs, sometimes without. It was about this time that Jon became more withdrawn and his behavior became more erratic. He has spent much of his adult life (he is 33 but refuses to acknowledge or even discuss his age) waiting for his rich father to die, and leave Jon all his money. Sadly, even his father's father is still alive, and his father is too much of a prick to die on Jon's timetable. So he waits, going from one dead-end receptionist job to the next. He has never gotten a diploma, though he has been to many schools. In many ways his life has been a failure, and he is all too aware of this.

Six months ago or so Jon met a young hustler named Mike (again, not his real name, but it's just so I can give the facts and not worry about the consequences, okay?) in a bar. Mike wanted to fuck Jon, and Jon, from what I know of him, was more than willing. After a few weeks, Jon was taken in by Mike's story. He had been abandoned by his rich family, and was working a crummy dead-end job waiting for the folks to kick as well. He was also sucking dick to get money to buy heroin, but that is a minor detail. Jon decided that even though he couldn't fix his own life, he could fix Mike's. He felt bad for Mike because his life had been so difficult. So Jon ran all over town trying to get Mike into a treatment program, and every time they came close, something would make the whole

deal fall apart, dashing both their hopes. Jon decided that Mike should move in with him so he could be properly supervised. I remember when Jon tried to explain this situation to me. I was shocked. Here was a guy who was unemployed, who couldn't even maintain a houseplant for more than a month, trying to fix someone who was obviously damaged beyond repair.

Jon loved to share details of their filthy lives. "He doesn't really inject it," Jon would gush, "he just skin-pops." To me, that sounds like the less appetizing of the choices, but it isn't my place to judge, yet. Jon's life became a pathetic and totally futile attempt to "fix" his poor friend Mike. In and out of rehab programs, methadone treatment and needle exchanges. In and out of the apartments of old men who like the junkie look in their hustlers, regardless of the dangers they may pose. It got the point where Jon was drifting away from all of his other friends to take care of Mike. Mike would disappear for days, then show up with bruises. Other times he would come by Jon's house, "borrow" a couple of bucks and then disappear again. Jon called Mike's parents, and sure enough their story is another pathetic cliché. They tried everything to make the poor boy happy, but he never wanted to do anything. Every time they gave him money to get help, he wasted it on drugs. Every time they let him come home to get clean, he ripped them off and disappeared. Jon thought they were being cruel, and I told Jon that if his parents don't like or trust someone that they brought into this world, odds are good that the scumbag can't be trusted. Jon would hear none of it.

Eventually, Jon began telling this story that he heard from one of the rehab counselors. The story went like this: X tries to help Y get off heroin. X does this by doing heroin with Y, then saying they can quit together, and share the pain. X gets hooked, Y dies or disappears, and poor X is stuck doing rehab solo. When Jon told me the story, I said, "You know, they should put anyone dumb enough to be X in a bag with Y and set the whole thing on fire." He said I was being cruel. After that, he decided that his little stories would not find an audience with me.

Some weeks later, surprise, surprise, Jon calls to tell me that his poor friend Mike was arrested. "What did he do?" I wondered.

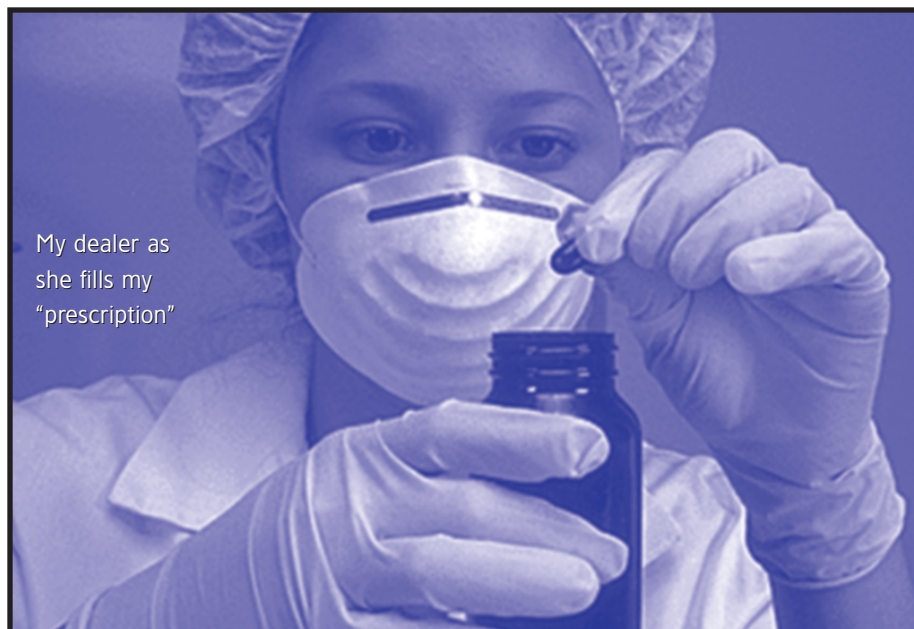
"Nothing, really." Well, as it turns out, little rich white boy Mike was hanging around a significantly blacker part of town, waiting in the alcove of an abandoned building. I told Jon that this, in and of itself, is not a crime. Well, it sort of is if the house is known as a place to score some junk. That is not a crime either, I don't think. Since Jon wouldn't tell me exactly what happened, this is all I know. Let's just say I wouldn't be surprised if heroin was involved. Now Jon was in a panic because his poor wounded bird was going to come off junk in jail! How dreadful! I don't even have a hint of sympathy. Maybe Jon's

right for the first time in his otherwise miserable life. Maybe I am cruel. Fuck it.

Jon finally helped Mike make bail, and some time later, Mike was accepted into a treatment program. His parents agreed to pay for it, but they wouldn't give Mike the money, they would give it to the people at the clinic. The way this treatment program works is this: you fly out to California and they put you in a comfortable residential setting. Then, after a few medical tests, they put you in some kind of coma. While you're under, they clean your blood of every last bit of the heroin. Then, you wake up, clean and sober! No fuss, no suffering, no tears, no chills, no ghosts of dead babies crawling toward you on the ceiling.

In theory, it works fine. Let's just say that Mike is still in California, his parents aren't speaking to him, and he is still on heroin. It really is a nice happy ending, right? But here comes the best part, Jon, or X, as I like to call him, is still on drugs! Jon's father used to pay his rent, but now that he is all fucked up on drugs, he refuses to pay the rent. Poor Jon just lost another job, so now he needs a roomie. Guess what? His heroin dealer needs a place to stay, and can pay a little cash and a little junk, just to help make ends meet. It all became clear just about a week ago. Jon came over after work to tell me he lost his job and to say hello. After talking to me for a few minutes, I could see he was sweating, even though I keep the place so cold everyone's headlights are on high-beams all the time. He excused himself to the bathroom for a minute, which stretched into five, then to ten, then to twenty. Normally, if someone spends that much time in the bathroom, I assume they are just dropping the kids off at the pool, and maybe some of the kids don't want to come out yet. But when he came out there was no flush, and there was no death-diarrhea smell. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to solve this little quandary. My best friend is a junkie, and he had just "skin-popped" in my fucking bathroom. We decided to take the bus to his house so I could pick up some things he has been borrowing for too long. On the bus I noticed that he no longer had the shakes and looked very much like a glazed donut. He barely understood what I was saying and seemed lost in his own world. I was utterly charmed.

Since I had no experience dealing with a junkie, I asked my friends what they would do. Everyone was in perfect agreement. I should get on heroin so Jon and I could get off it together. Yeah, right! They all said that I should confront him, and that I should say that I won't watch him destroy himself. I avoided his calls for a few



My dealer as
she fills my
"prescription"

days and then found the right words to express my total disgust. Here are the e-mails that ended it followed by my final thoughts.

Subject: your "problem"
Date: Wed, 10 Sep 1997 12:35:59
From: Jøsh
To: Jon

jon-

i am sorry to say that i am still very upset about what happened when you came over the other day. i am pretty sure that you know what i am talking about, and i don't really feel any need to discuss it. you are ruining your own life, and i don't want to be any part of it. as soon as you are completely junk-free, and have moved the dealer out of your living room and decided to take control of your own life, give me a call. until then, don't bother, because it is too sad for me to watch. it also explains a lot about why your father doesn't want to support you, look at what you're doing!

jøsh



Subject: Re: This is not helping.
Date: Wed, 10 Sep 1997 21:34:28
From: Jøsh
To: Jon

Jon wrote: (Jon is in italics)

Thanks. I really appreciate the kind "words" from you.

Fuck you and your stupid sarcasm.

#1) I have been in a treatment program (that I joined on MY OWN) since Monday. Why? Because I have no pleasure in doing junk.

guess what jon? you're the stupid asshole who got involved with junk in the first place. you're the moron who brags about being in needle exchange programs.

you're the hypocrite who made fun of Corey [another friend of ours who was on heroin for a long time and is now clean] for doing drugs in jay's neighbor's house and then DID THE EXACT SAME THING. as far as i am concerned, you can stop doing junk whenever the hell you want to. i am sure it cost you your job, and i am sure your father can tell,

because i sure as hell can. you are dirty, your clothes are filthy, you look awful, and you are so fucked up you can't even tell what a mess you are.

#2) the reason this person is in my house is because I have been left with a HUGE back-rent bill because my father has refused to honor his word and help pay my rent. About a month ago, I had planned out a budget that would have had me independant [sic] of him, and would have also left me debt-free by the end of this year. I would be obligated to no one — my father included. I would begin to have a nice normal life. Instead I am left in

a position where I need someone who can pay rent NOW. What am I to do? Do you have ANY suggestions, because I'd sure listen to them. I DON'T want him here, yet I cannot find anyone who I can get to move in immediately.

we have already had this conversation a dozen times already. i don't give a fuck about your budget, it's your problem, pal. you made your bed, now lie in it. i am pretty fucking sure you never contacted any roommate referral services, you just offered your dealer a nice place to sleep in exchange for drugs and cash. LOOK AT YOURSELF, JON. IT IS FUCKING PATHETIC.

So you think you're helping me this way? You're not. I need to talk, and this is no answer. Thanks. I need help, yes. I need support. Emotional. And this ain't it. And don't tell me about how I'm supposed to know that something was bugging you last week unless you SAY IT.

I am helping you? Listen, Jon, you have lied to me, you had been hiding most of your life from everyone you know for a long time now, and it seems like now that you've fucked everything up, you are crying for help. Listen to me very carefully, because I am not sure that you are smart enough to understand what I am saying. I do not want to help you. I don't want to give you support, because you do not deserve it. you are spending all of your time feeling sorry for yourself, and quite frankly I have no interest in that AT ALL. The way i see it, i am a friend to those who are my friend back, and that means that it goes both ways. for months now, you call when you need something. E-mail me this, can you check this for me, blah blah blah. you know how many fucking empty promises you have made to me? i don't care anymore. so many times i have tried to help, i have listened to you complain about everything, i have listened to you tell me that everything is not your fault. your father is a bastard, your boss is selfish, scotty is a drunk, your mother is a bitch, well who the hell cares, jon? you have not been a friend to me, you have not helped me, you have not even listened to me. so many times i tell you things, and next time i bring them up, you forget. every time i talk to you on the phone, you talk, i listen, then i try to get in a word, and you are just off on something else. you know how fucked up you are, jon?

well, i do, and i don't like it, and i don't have to deal with it if i don't want to.

i have enough misery in my life. i have enough suffering to do without your help. i am struggling every day to make something happen for myself, and i am grateful to every friend i have, and i let them know how much i appreciate them in word and in deed. i feel very used by you, i feel like you only care about yourself. i feel like you only call me when you need something.

do you know how many times i have

told you (a) that i don't read the new york times and (b) do not leave five minutes messages on my machine. and guess what, jon? yesterday you left a five minute message asking me if i read some bullshit in the Times. to answer your question, jon, NO I DIDN'T READ THE FUCKING NEW YORK TIMES, OKAY? DO YOU FUCKING UNDERSTAND NOW?

I am open eared, and I would hope you'd talk to me instead of this B.S..

THIS BS? you have some nerve. but, right now, that's quite enough of you. listen again, and i hope you really understand this clearly. YOU ARE NOT A FRIEND TO ME. i think it is because (1) you have no idea what being a friend means and (2) you are incapable of being honest with anyone and (3) you are so fucked up on drugs that you have lost contact with reality.

i am not stupid, in fact i am smarter than anyone i know, including you. i see what you're doing, you keep everyone you know in little compartments so that no one can figure out what you're up to, but i know, jon, and it didn't take me long to figure it all out. i am sure that your father knows. i am sure that most other people have suspicions, but you just bullshit them all into thinking that things are okay, and if they're not, it sure as hell can't possibly be YOUR fault. nothing is ever your fault. you can blame this whole thing on me if it makes you feel better, but i am sure that nothing will make you feel better. this is the last thing that i have to say on this subject. if you clean up your life, no drugs AT ALL, no pills, no nothing. if you get your life together, give me a call. until then, i don't care what you think, i don't care what you say, and i don't care to talk to you. just to prove that you are delusional and only thinking of yourself, at the end of your phone message, you said that i at least OWE YOU a phone call to explain this. GUESS WHAT JON? NO ONE OWES YOU ANYTHING,

and the sooner you stop thinking that way, the sooner you'll own your life.

jøsh

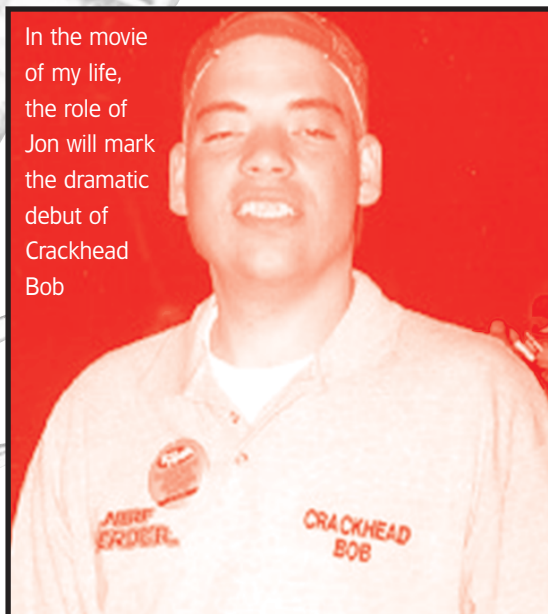
As you may have guessed, we are no longer friends at all. For more than two years Jon said that he was going to run away from his family, his problems and his lifetime of failure. He never did. I knew then that he was so used to being coddled by his family that he could never survive on his own. In addition, he has never had a driver's license (as far as I know) and is terrified of leaving the island of Manhattan. More than a year ago, I decided that I was sick and tired of his idle boasting, so I decided to bet him \$100 that he would still be in the exact same place in a year. The bet was over in August, but I knew he would never have the money so I didn't bother asking for it.

Just to end things on a more personal, and vicious, note, I sent Jon a birthday card by my favorite card company, Dirty Works. Since he is turning 33 and lies all the time that either a) he can't remember how old he actually is or b) refuses to even acknowledge it when people guess, I wanted to let him know that I know. The card I sent said, "For someone as old as you are, it's amazing how little you've accomplished." Then, later, while I was going through my immense greeting card collection (it's a long story, but I am not a total psycho), I found another Dirty Works card that said what I felt should be the last word, "I know you want me to apologize, but I'm not sorry."

I didn't sign the cards or even put a return address on them. I didn't have to. A few days later I got one of the cards back from him. He had taped a piece of paper with my address across the front of the original envelope, and sent the whole card back. In it, he said that I should stay out of his life or he was going to call the police. Imagine that! A junkie sending the cops to arrest a law-abiding citizen over an anonymous, but insulting, BIRTHDAY CARD. Good luck selling that to the NYPD, loser.

At the very end of his note he assured me that by the time I got his card he would have left NYC for good, never to return. The only place he could have possibly gone would be to stay with his junkie friend, who was now mooching off some other tired old queen in Los Angeles. I tried to call him the other day, just to see if he was actually gone or just full of shit again. His phone number has been disconnected and the recording said that no further information was available. Aww. A friendship lasting nine years ends with a whimper as he finally makes a break for it and tries to make it on his on. I wish you luck, wherever you are, Jon. I know you'll need it.

In the movie of my life, the role of Jon will mark the dramatic debut of Crackhead Bob



I Enjoy Being A Girl

EVER SINCE I LEFT COLLEGE, my home has become a repository for all kinds of stuffed animals that I call “monkeys.” Not every stuffed animal is a monkey, most of them are dippy, vapid airheads. As a kid, I was in love with the “Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer” Christmas special. I couldn’t give a rat’s ass about the freakish deer, I liked Herbie, the elf that wanted to be a dentist. I totally identified with that little prick, his loopy hair, his squeaky voice, and most of all, his intense desire to be something that everyone else is not. An elf who wants to be a dentist? Ridiculous. Those pointy-eared little pricks at the toy factory ran poor Herbie out of town on a rail, and he took up with the red-nosed freak.

Eventually, they hooked up with Yukon Cornelius and arrived on the Island of Misfit Toys. There they found a wagon with square wheels, an elephant with polka-dots and all manner of malformed toys. Finally, the three outsiders were in a place where they fit in, where they could be themselves without getting hassled by the assholes that run the rest of the world. Then the whole thing turns to shit. They decide to “rescue” all the toys by foisting them on some unsuspecting kids. On

Christmas morning those ungrateful kids probably turned around and threw those misfit toys away because they make the kids feel “different” and we all know that kids are stupid sheep. Herbie & Co. talk the King of the Island into letting them take the toys away, effectively ruining the island. What’s the point? I always wanted to go to that Island of Misfit Toys and just stay. Fuck the world, why not hang with the cool talking toys?

That’s how it started. I was leaving college freshman year and I found this giant white polar bear next to the garbage. He had a burn on his chest from a light bulb, and whoever owned him before felt this was a fatal flaw, so they dumped him in the trash. I

or, Sensitivity Corner



CrOWley, in his only known photo. His button says, “Do you speak or just nod your head and moo?”

couldn’t let the bear end up in the dump. So I began my own Island of Misfit Toys, beginning with Fozz, that cute white bear. After a while people would give me their old monkeys instead of throwing them away. I found Norm, a narcoleptic beagle, in a garbage can on the street on Central Park West, missing an eye and some stuffing. I fixed him and washed him and now he is fine. CrOWley and his cousin cRow t. servo (the first being named after the lead demon in Neil Gaiman’s novel *Good Omens* and the second after the robots on *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, both spelled to emphasize that they are in

fact, cows] came to live with me some time ago. CrOWley is a pushy little prick. He took my wallet a few years ago, and every now and again, I find money missing. cRow, on the other hand, is gentle as a lamb and likes to pretend he is babysitting the others.



Fozz Edward Bayer, doing a little racial humor, with his impression of a New York City cab driver.

Anyway, the point is, I have dozens of monkeys all over the house, and I have written stories about them and had dreams about them, and even though it may seem a little too precious, that's the fucking point. I am a selfish, heartless, calculating, manipulative little prick who likes his monkeys and doesn't feel the need to explain it anymore. I haven't written many poems, and most of them will never see the light of day, thank you very much. But this one can, because I feel it will counter-balance all the hate and negativity elsewhere in this angry little publication. I had no choice about writing this, so don't you think for one second that I have a tear-stained journal at the ready to record my

oh-so-sensitive free verse about angst. I can't be bothered. Basically I couldn't think of anything pretty or poetic in my life when I was asked to write a poem for a class in grad school, so I sat with the monkeys. CrOWley told me to write about him, to see if I could make him seem sweet and sensitive. Suffice it to say that he was very pleased with the results, though he wanted something much, much longer. He thinks you should put on some Brahms, get some herbal tea, turn down the lights, get some candles going, take out some lubricant— oh, screw him, just read the poem.

CrOWley

Sleeping in the arms of his fuzzy Fozz E.
dreaming
that he is upside-down and underwater
breathing
though he has no gills and no scales he is
unafraid
in the comforting arms of his friend.
safe.
he is gliding silently across fields of
green
lighter than the air that surrounds and
drowns.
clouds part and dance in his
wake
longing to control their own
destiny
unaware that they are the dream and
CrOWley,
the dreamer, decides their fate
before
he is pulled from the sky and
back
into the safe arms of his fuzzy Fozz E.

Lit. Majors

Can Kiss My Ass

have run-on sentences and comma splices (I KNOW, I KNOW, but I LIKE THEM!), I will publish this story myself. And then, when it is all over, I will go back and explain

I once had a conversation with a professor of mine (Aaron Shurin, for those playing the home game) about being a writer. I was reluctant to call myself a writer because it sounds pretentious. I mean, I have the same stupid dream that most other jackoffs have when they begin writing: sitting in a nice house in the country watching the snow fall, listening to music, writing, drinking some hot beverage, and checking the mailbox for royalty checks every couple of days while other drones have to sludge through the bad weather to suck white collar dick to get a paycheck. I figured I would have a nice dog, though originally I wanted a large dog, now I think a small dog might suit me better, but a real dog, not some chihuahua or toy poodle. Anyway, Aaron told me not to bother with labels, they are a waste of time. He told me that I should just say that I write, not that I am a writer. Much later I came the decision that the term “wordsmith” was more appropriate because it implied a craftsmanship as well as a sense that it was something to be studied and to constantly improve upon. Nowadays I can’t be bothered with labels at all. They don’t interest me. I am writing and designing this by myself, so call me whatever you think describes it best.

The point is, when you write, you have to have a reason. Something must motivate you to glue yourself to the computer or typewriter and keep your little fingers dancing (or your big fingers if you’re thick). I am doing this whole thing because I realize that no one else is going to publish me. I have tried. I have sent out literally hundreds of letters and stories and essays and reviews and samples and clips and you-name-it. No one gives a flying fuck about me or anything I have written.

Every time I see a successful writer on TV I want to kill them. I watch hoping that they might clue me in on how to get from where I am to where they are. They all say that they had to persevere and keep on plugging away and yada yada yada. They never say how they went from being a dreamer in their dirty apartment to the asshole annoying me on TV. And they never will. No one ever tells you how it’s done. I wish I knew how it was done, and I swear if I ever find out, I will share it with you, because where I am now, sucks.

Normally, when you write anything, you have to just get it going. You have to put something down so you can throw it away. I don’t work like that at all. I put it down and leave it as is. I always feel like it is purest when it comes right out, and the more you fuck with it afterwards, the less pure it is. Maybe that makes me mental, but I don’t care.

I would like to say that one of the things I know I do well is write fiction. I am good at creating characters and then making them interesting and consistent. I usually have a moral point or some reason why *this* story and *these* characters are here, but I never get to explain anything. So I thought that since I am doing my own thing, and I have this opportunity, and no jackoff from Harvard can tell me that I

what happened, why I wrote it, what it means, and why you should give a shit. This is going to be one of those things that I have never seen anyone else do, so forgive me if it doesn’t go as expected, okay? I don’t want to be predictable, and I certainly don’t want to rip off anyone else. Don’t make any judgements or predictions, just fucking go with it and you will be glad you did. I know what I am talking about. Don’t worry about trying to find me in the story, because it is never what you think at first. Most things are exactly as they seem, and sometimes, when they’re not, they are more interesting. Thanks.

ENTITLED

HIS EYES LOOKED JUST AS MISCHIEVOUS CLOSED AS THEY DID OPEN, and even under the poorly applied and unnecessary make-up, it was clear that even though the life had gone out of him, it hadn’t. There were no more sly grins, no more subtle signs of displeasure: the raised eyebrow, the slightly tilted smile that seemed permanently temporary. I guess I didn’t expect to see a ghost dragging chains or hear the faint echoes of an invisible presence in the room just beyond a closed door, but seeing Greg in an open casket while a priest played the sycophant to his grieving parents, I laughed quietly, knowing that Greg would have laughed with me, at his parents, at his cousins, and at the priest, mocking their values and traditions. As far as I know I was the only guy he had ever kissed, and both of us were drunk, and I guess now that his end of the secret has been kept, I don’t mind saying it, go ahead, ask him if isn’t the truth. He ain’t talking anymore.

I met his girlfriend, Nora, in a bar in Miami, and I can’t for the life of me remember what the hell I was doing in Miami, I mean there ain’t nothing in Miami but Cubans and old people. God’s waiting room, that’s what I used to call it, like they were all sitting in their air-conditioned cubicles or schvitzing on the golf course waiting for their number to be called. The whole fucking place smells like roasting corpses and stale sweat. So I was in this bar, trying to pick up this chick, oh, don’t let my little revelation make you think I was some kind of rump-wrangler, fuck, no, I mean I’m a guy, but I was, well, Greg was, my *best friend*, and we didn’t have to waste time chit-chatting about it, I mean it just was. I thought I had Nora going, I was making fun of all the losers in this dive, I mean the band sucked, the drinks sucked, the A/C sucked, and there was this pervasive sucking sound all over the place. Vintage Miami. This was like two years ago. So Greg comes over to me and starts making like Nora is his property and I’m just some shit-faced asshole, not worthy to chew their used rubbers. I looked at Nora like I was shocked, like she was leading me on, and she leans over and plants this kiss on me, and my

boy Freddie is standing at attention, even though I ain't sure if it's for real, but fuck, man, who cares? We hit it off like gangbusters, like fucking Han Solo and Chewbacca, and if you had ever seen his back you'd know which one I was. We shot pool a few times, and of course I kicked his hairy ass all over the place. They took me to this place called Grand Prix, they have these little go-karts, and man it was a blast 'cause they don't give a fuck if you tool around all drunk. I was obliterated and whipping around this little track, sucking in rubber and clouds of exhaust from those little fuckers. We smoked a joint and played video games, they have this game there called Smash TV where two people can play at the same time. They should just call it "Kill Everyone" since that's all you really do. Just start out in the middle of this floor, it's supposed to be a game show. Anyway, what you have is a gun that fires in all directions and you are surrounded by gun-toting maniacs and you basically have to blast your way out. Blood comes out and people scream and if you hit people with grenades you see body parts just go flying, it's amazing. Then you win prizes, like TV's and shit, and then right into the middle of a new floor, to wreak more havoc. That game is great.

They both kept me entertained for a few months and then it was off to Dallas. See, I write, mostly letters to *Penthouse Forum*, but sometimes I do greeting cards and shit like that. Roses are red, violets are blue, give me a blowjob, and swallow my spew. Poetry, right?

Nora dumped Greg almost six months ago, but now she is crying her fucking eyes out, like she wasn't the one who tore his heart out and showed it to him. She stills looks good though, and me and Freddie are comforting her, and boy does she look like she would be *comfortable* if you know what I mean. She tells me what she knows about Greg dying, dumb bastard fell asleep or passed out in his car in the garage. Man if I had been there he might not have—who am I kidding? I woulda had a double funeral with him. I wouldn't have had such a turnout though, fuck, I mean my parents disowned me so long ago I barely remember what they look like and I never stay anyplace long enough to wear out my welcome, usually takes me about a weekend. I don't drink so much now, sometimes I just make snowcaps, a little snow on top of the bong and whammo, I'm in the ozone gliding over the planet. Looks pretty good from up there.

I was just standing there when his parents came over to me, like they fucking know me or something. I think they are gonna say something obnoxious about my boots, big black fuckers with gold spurs and swastikas and shit, and they look me dead in the eye and ask how I knew Greg. They said it in the past tense, it was weird. I say we used to hang out and talk about filming this screenplay that I wrote about two guys who go on a road trip dressed as Vikings, raping and pillaging, real funny stuff. They didn't even listen to me. They told me that Greg had a will and they know that I am mentioned in it, and then they give me a card and leave. Man, they had this sadness in their eyes, but I know it was all show. I guess I wasn't crying either, but I hadn't seen Greg in maybe three or four months, we got into a pissing match and he won, and I fucking hate to lose. I was going to call him, but there's nothing I can do now, except go and see what's behind curtain number three.

Mostly Greg barely had two nickels to rub together, but I heard that he was pitching some spec scripts in Lalaland. I'm not usually jealous, but he used to churn and burn all this pulp shit and worker safety films, I mean he was all, yeah, I guess I should say *was*, he *was* all technique and no style. His idea of style was to intercut a few frames of strange shit instead of a cool image, because I guess he thought that putting some weird shit in would let the audience think something cool happened, when in reality it was all bullshit. I had a script, real short, and for the line where it says, "He had no idea what to say to Charlotte, his attic was empty, like the family that lived there had moved in a hurry," great line, I know. But he just shows the

face of the guy and then cuts in six fucking frames of an empty attic, which meant to me that the guy was dumb, had nothing in his attic. We fought for like three hours over that, him giving me this elaborate bullshit story about Fellini and Bergman, when really he just read it too fucking literally. That was Greg, all stories and excuses, totally unable to admit when he wasn't thinking.

When I went to the lawyer about a week and a half later I was really hung over, it had started to sink in that Greg was really gone, up until then I really believed that he was jerking me around, that he might just come out and scare the hell out of me. After the meeting was over I knew he was really gone, but fuck, I didn't expect what happened and I was wishing that I was still drunk. I got his stereo and his 8mm camera. And an envelope with my name scrawled in red ink across the front. He misspelled it on purpose, but they didn't ask me for any fucking ID. I waited until I was out of the office to open it, I thought it might be a bad idea to read it in front of his parents. This is exactly what it said:

Dear Chauncey (everyone including you will call me Rex):

If you are reading this letter it means that I am dead, and you should be crying your fucking eyes out, you dick. Today is March 14 and unless I was killed in a freak farm accident I have some bad news for you. I was murdered. I have been getting threatening phone calls and weird dead animals in the mail and the reason I haven't spoken to you in a while is that I didn't want to put you in any danger. I don't know if it has to do with this exposé that I did about slaughterhouse employees, married girlfriends or Elvis, but shit, now I'm dead and can't tell you anything, because I don't fucking know anything. I don't know what you can do about it, you're probably hung over right now, you maggot. Maybe you will very carefully find out who did it and bring them to justice. Enjoy the stereo!

Your mother's fuckbuddy,

Greg

I didn't know what to do, so I went home and visited the ozone, where I could do some serious thinking.

The next day I had to go to a job interview, but I didn't get it, so why bother with the stupid details? I wanted to go visit Greg's parents to find out where he had been lately, but I knew that they were probably just as clueless as I was. I called Nora and invited her over. She showed up like two hours late, but it was worth the wait. She was wearing red heels, and red miniskirt, a really, really sheer white silk blouse, and a lovely red lace bra. Freddie and I were both real glad to see her. I showed her the letter and she told me that she had no idea what it meant, but she said that it sounded like bullshit to her. She gave me the number of some guy named Matt who she said Greg had been hanging around with lately.

When I went to go see Matt he only had nasty things to say about Greg.

"That fucker? Coulda been anybody, man. That fucker once crazy-glued my dick to my stomach when I was asleep. He thought it was hysterical, but I had to pay a doctor three hundred fucking dollars to take a knife to my dick and cut it loose." Freddie cowered. "I thought he died in his car, fell asleep while he was drunk or something."

"That's what his parents told me. Did he owe anybody money?"

"Like anyone would lend him money."

“Yeah, I guess you’re right. Anybody catch him with their girlfriend or wife?”

“Catch him? No. He was slick about that shit. I’m sure people suspected him, but I suspected him of doing all kinds of shit.”

“Like what?”

“Listen, I have to get back to work, I really can’t help you. It sounds to me like it was an accident, I mean his number could have just been up. Someone may have been after him, but it looks to me like he got to himself before anyone had a chance.”

Cocksucker. I went home and had a beer and watched my *Trials of Life* tape that had come a few days ago. Zebras butting heads and these little green frogs in South America who get into fist fights over who owns the leaf. It was a lot duller than the commercials, certainly not worth whatever the hell I paid for it. I decided to check out the camera that he had given me. The serial numbers had been scratched off, but he could have done that just to make his parents think it was stolen. There was a cassette in it, so I hooked it up to the TV and sat back to watch. There was this black guy with severe dreads smoking a big joint and laughing. I could hear Greg talking.

“Greg, why are you filming, man? I ain’t your baby, save that shit for someone who cares.”

“It’s my house, my joint, and you’re my dog bitch, Tav-o. If you don’t want me to—”

The joint exploded and Greg starting laughing his head off. I guess the guy was named Tav-o, whatever the hell that means, and he was staring right at the camera, looking really pissed off.

“You fucker, man, I oughta kill you.”

Greg was laughing hysterically, he was on the floor, filming Tav-o’s shoes. “Man, that was classic. That was fucking priceless.”

Tav-o’s shoes stirred and left the room. The front door slammed and Greg continued to laugh. This could be a help, I thought to myself. Maybe this Tav-o guy did Greg in. Fucking nigger, wouldn’t put it past him. What kind of a name is Tav-o anyway? Why not Shaliqua or Aquanetta? Oh, those are girl’s names. My mistake.

I called Nora and asked her if she knew Tav-o. She did. Barely. She didn’t have his number and sounded like she didn’t even give a fuck. I told her that I thought maybe Tav-o had done it, ’cause he looked really pissed in the video. She told me that I was being a racist, but I tried to explain. She didn’t want to hear it. She thought that Greg had killed himself with his own stupidity, but I didn’t think so. I watched some cartoons and took a nap.

I was in a bar a few weeks later, I had been working on spec for a greeting card company, they’re called Acme, like the place where the Roadrunner bought all of his stuff. They publish Kevin Pope, that guy is a fucking genius. He even got \$10K for doing a little calendar for Pop-Tarts with these idiotic twins called Dweezil and somebody else. They go fishing with Pop-Tarts and catch a whale. Ten thousand dollars for two idiots fishing with Pop-Tarts. I’m sure there is some kind of sexual joke to be made about Pop-Tarts, but fuck if I can think of it.

I saw Tav-o in the bar and decided to buy him a drink, knowing that if a guy bought him a drink he would notice me and come over and talk to me. It worked—he came over and looked me up and down before he sat on the stool next to mine.

“You some kind of faggot?”

“Me? Fuck no.”

“Why you buying me a drink?”

“You look familiar, is your name Tav-o?”

“Some people call me that. Why you got a Nazi thing on your boot?”

“Oh, that’s a goof. Got it at a Dead Kennedy’s show, it used to say, ‘Nazi Punks Fuck Off’ but that part has been scraped off.”

“How’d you know my name?”

“My friend Greg introduced us, I think.”

“Greg Shedd?”

“Yeah. You remember?”

“No, I was probably lit when I met you.”

“So was I.”

“So what can I do for you... I don’t remember your name.”

“Rex.”

“Rex?”

“Yeah, I was wondering if you have seen Greg lately.”

“No. Not in a few weeks. Last time I saw him he blew up a joint and tried to kill me.”

I tried to play dumb, even though I realized that this Tav-o guy hadn’t done it. “He blew up a joint?”

“Yeah, he was always playing practical jokes on me, but that one went too far. You looking for him?”

“Not really. He’s dead.”

“No way. No fucking way. Are you... what happened?”

“They found him in his car in the garage, passed out or dead, I’m not sure.”

“Did he kill himself? That ain’t like Greg.”

“No, I think he was murdered.”

“What would make you think a thing like that?”

I didn’t want to show my hand, so I bluffed. “Just a feeling. It was just too weird, the way he died, and besides, I’m always suspicious of easy answers.”

“That can drive you loco, man. You know who might be able to help you? Peter, this guy who did some work on that slaughterhouse thing. Cinemtog-something or other. Made sure that the picture was framed right. Greg said that for some reason he kept seeing things all tilted, so Peter helped him straighten it out.”

“Did anyone at the slaughterhouse have it in for him?”

“Probably, but they would’ve gutted him like a pig, killing a guy in a garage sounds like an accident, not a warning. Now if he had been tagged in the back of his head or something, then maybe.”

I got Peter’s number and didn’t call him for a few days, I had other shit to do. I finally tracked Peter down after playing answering machine tag for a couple of days. Sounded real queer on the phone. He kept asking me what happened to Greg, I guess he hadn’t heard. I told him that I would only tell him in person and he suggested that I meet him at this bar called McGowan’s Irish Pub. Shoulda pegged him as a fucking drunken potatohead.

He was just as queer as I had pictured him, wearing a red silk shirt, unbuttoned down to a fucking scar that marked his solar plexus. I hated him instantly.

“You mutht be Rex.”

A fucking lisp. Probably was dumping a load of sperm in his drawers as he was talking to me. “Yeah, I spoke to Tav-o and he said you might be able to help me.”

"Tav-o? Oh, yeah, the black guy. Really nice, but kind of, um, nevermind. So how do you know Greg?"

He was saying everything in the present tense, like he didn't know. Maybe he didn't. "I used to hang out with him when I was in Miami, but now that I'm back in Philly I haven't seen him in a while. You?"

"No. Last time I saw him we did a film about the slaughterhouse, really grim stuff. Made me swear off meat. It took me like three weeks to get the smell out of me, I had to boil my clothes. I still hear pigs screaming sometimes when I listen real hard. I try not to."

He looked like he was going to cry. Loved animals fine, but didn't seem to care about people. Dick. I ordered a beer and went with Peter to a booth. He was drinking something blue. Figures.

"Why haven't you spoken to him in so long? You guys have a fight?" I didn't like the way I said guys. Shoulda said dudes, or men. Too late to worry about it.

"I was really pissed at him once. We were at his house watching TV and he was just sitting in the kitchen, humming. I asked him to get me a drink and he told me to get it myself. That's just Greg, you know, but when I went in the kitchen he was making bacon and laughing his ass off—" He started to choke on the words. "He thought it was really funny, but I thought that we both felt the same way about pigs. They're smarter than dogs, and people would freak if we ate dogs for Christmas."

"So you were pissed at him, huh?"

"I forgot about it after a while, I still needed work, and Greg just didn't think sometimes. He just did stuff and thought about it after." I knew that he didn't do it. So I dropped the bombshell.

"He's dead."

"Who?" What an idiot.

"Greg. Died in his car. He was in his garage and he passed out and died."

"Oh, God. Shit. Really?"

"Yeah, I wouldn't lie about something like this."

"You know what he did? Like two months ago he said that he was being followed and weird stuff was happening. He gave me this key and told me that if anything happened to him I should find some guy named Chauncy Randolph and give it to him."

"What?"

"He gave me this key, I think it's for a safe-deposit box or something. You know this Chauncy guy?" I was thinking that I should kill him just for saying my name.

"I'm Chauncy. EVERYONE calls me Rex." I was really pissed, but I wanted the key.

"How do I know that you're him and not just some guy trying to make some dough?"

I showed him my license and explained that Greg never had any money, certainly never enough money to leave in a safe deposit box. It was probably the names of people he thought might have been trying to do him in. I took the key, said goodbye to what's-his-fag, and went home.

Two days and ten phone calls later I had found the bank where Greg had his box. I went there and stood around for like an hour, these assholes in monkeysuits checked me like I wanted to fly the Stealth bomber or something. Ties can make almost anyone into a dick. Finally some guy let me into the vault and showed me the box. He asked me if I wanted to be left alone. I said yes. I opened the box and

inside was a videotape, in Beta. Vintage Greg. I closed the box and went to this video processing house where this girl I know works. She let me borrow a Beta player and I went home.

It took me about forty-five minutes to hook the whole thing up, what a pain in the ass, no wonder Beta died. I grabbed a beer and sat down with a pen and paper.

It opened up filming an empty chair, really poorly lit and skewed slightly off center. Then Greg came around and sat in the chair. It was really creepy. Then he looked right in the camera.

"Hi, Chauncy, I mean Rex, no I mean Chauncey, with an 'e.' If you are watching this, it means that I am dead and you have met Peter. He's sooo cute, isn't he, Rex? Wanna fuck him? He likes big biker wannabees like you. Now that you have found this tape and know that I have been murdered, I have to tell you something." He started laughing and then continued. "GOTCHA, YOU GIANT DICK. I wasn't murdered, you are so stupid, I can't believe you fell for it." He was hysterical now. "I bet you would like to kill me, but it's too late. You should feel really bad. At least now I know that you care. I love you, too, Rex. Kiss me again." Then he walked over to the camera and kissed the lens. I thought maybe he had offed himself just to pull this joke on me, then I thought maybe he just offed himself. I realized that he wasn't talking anymore so I laughed along with him and blew a kiss back.

I hope this helps, so let's take it from the top.

It is called "Entitled" because as I see things, Rex gets what he is "Entitled" to, which is to say, he gets jerked around and fucked over. This is not because he is a racist or an asshole, it is because, 1) he thinks he is entitled to some kind of prize for solving the mystery, and 2) he thinks he deserves some kind of inheritance for his contribution to Greg's life. He clearly does not see things as they actually are, and the disparity between his perception and reality, to me, is very funny. This story had many other titles, but this was the working title, and because it worked as well when I started as when I finished, it stayed. I wrote the whole story in one go, and except for some very minor structural changes, this version is almost identical to the first draft.

The origin of this story is slightly more personal than most other things that I have written. Actually, to be honest, this may very well be the most personal thing I have ever done, except I am not Rex. I am Greg, the dead guy. See, when I was in college I had this friend named Greg. I thought Greg was a super talented artist who used to draw comics for the newspaper. He was a very delicate young man who looked like a very skinny version of Morrissey. If I can find a picture, I will be sure to include it. Anyway, he was always the "little brother" character, always on the fringe of what was going on, trying very hard to fit in. To make the long story very short, one long weekend I was invited to go rafting with some friends, and I couldn't go because I was moving that same weekend. It was the last weekend of school, and this group of guys I knew were all very excited about going rafting. It was my friends Peter, Jonah, Zach, Dave-O and Greg. Since Greg was the little brother, he was the one that got stuck driving everyone.

At some point they had a little trouble in the rough water, and Greg was separated from the group. He wasn't wearing a vest (no one was) and he disappeared. Everyone else freaked out and tried to find him, but he was gone. There was nothing anyone could do. They found his body a few days later, very far down river, in very bad condition. To me, the worst part of the whole ordeal, aside from the fact of Greg's horrible death, was that the rest of the guys had to drive home for hours in Greg's car, and tell Greg's parents that he was dead.

I have only been to three funerals in my life, my father's when I was fifteen, Greg's when I was nineteen, then my grandfather's a year later. They all were absolutely awful. So, while I was thinking about Greg's death, I was thinking about my own death. I wanted to believe that Greg had faked his death so he could disappear, because I wasn't ready to believe that he had just been killed by some fucking water. Then I thought about faking my own death, just so I could see how people really feel about me. And as soon as I said it aloud, I realized that there would be no way for me to do it, since people would be suspicious since I have talked about faking my death. That pissed me off even more, so I thought about a way that I could actually kill myself, but make it seem like I had faked it. I guess when I think about it this way, it seems weird, but it's the truth. I am not a fan of guns, so if I had to kill myself, I would probably take a bunch of cool drugs and conk out in the garage with the car running. It seems pretty damn painless, which is my main priority.

So the whole thing about the mischievous eyes, the eyebrow, the smile, that's how I want to be remembered. Certainly there would be no priest at my funeral, 1) because I was born Jewish and 2) because I am now a devout atheist. For the record, though, I am not like Greg in many other ways. I am not hairy in the least, in fact I doubt I could grow a full beard if my life depended on it. In addition, I could care less about Bergman and Fellini, because I hate old movies and TV almost as much as I hate religious types.

Rex is really just a made up character. I was trying to think of a name for the guy that sounded really tough and angry, and for some reason, I kept thinking of silly dog names. Rex is a pretty good name for a dog, so since Rex is a sort-of doggy character, the name works. The name Chauncy comes from this guy that used to be the doorman of the Roxy, a club I used to love back in the late 80's. Chauncy was really gay, and I thought it would be funny to name this hardass character after the gayest guy I have ever met. I thought it would be cool if this tough guy admitted that he kissed a guy once because it would make you wonder about him, and also because it would show that maybe some of what he is saying is an act.

I set it in Miami because when I was younger I used to go down there and visit with my grandmother. I never liked Miami (though my grandmother was very kind to me), and thought that using this story as a screen to vent about what a humid shithole it was would be very gratifying. It was gratifying to write, thanks for caring. I have actually been to Grand Prix, but when I was there I was too young to drink.

The interchange between Rex and Greg's parents is how I felt when I was talking to Greg's parents at his funeral. I really loved Greg, and I thought he was such a sweet, cool guy. I am not saying this because the guy is dead, I swear to fucking whoever you believe in that I mean it. I didn't say anything weird or creepy to his folks, I just felt like I was saying the wrong thing no matter what came out.

The criticism that Rex does of Greg's work was my way of dealing with my own fear of having to do shitty work just to pay the bills. The thing is, and I guess this gets to the heart of it better than anything else could, in a way, I was jealous of Greg. He was a talented artist, and at the time, I thought of myself as a talented writer. We could both have been wrong, but we believed in each other. And he never had to prove himself, because in my head, he was going to succeed and make money and find the satisfaction that only comes from having strangers like and appreciate your *work*. I hope that makes sense. I am trapped having to prove myself and I have to keep on writing until someone thinks it is good, because I am still alive. If I had died at nineteen, people would've given me credit for work I never did.

The letter from Greg to Rex is something that I would certainly

write, and it came very easily. I said to myself, "How would I write a letter to be delivered after my death?" and there you have it.

I like the idea of a narrator being aware of the audience. I haven't seen that kind of thing done too often or too well, but for some reason, the idea of an unreliable narrator is attractive to me. This story is written by Rex, who, by his own admission, is lazy, angry and on drugs, but you trust him. And because you trust him, you believe in what he is saying, even if it is a lie. There are a few instances when he is talking to people (like when he is asking Nora about Tav-o) when he tells you that others don't like what he is saying, but he never says what it was that pissed the other person off. I did that so the reader could think of the worst way to put it, then assume that Rex said that. I want to refer to him as Chauncy, but out of respect, I'll buy into the whole Rex thing.

The whole thing about slaughterhouses and whatnot is my little attempt to portray everyone in the meat industry as the despicable scumbags they are. I would not be surprised in the least if the meat industry was involved in hurting reporters who have bad things to say about them, so why not put it in? I may discuss it at length later, but I want the idea of the meat industry being huge and vast and evil to be in everyone's mind. In addition, if anything ever happens to me, kill one of them, just to balance things out. I am trying to give my point of view without being preachy or annoying. If you disagree, super, but in your heart, you know you have decided that you don't care about the suffering of animals, not that it doesn't exist, right?

The part about Greg being involved in shenanigans with other women was purely an attempt to distract Rex and the readers from the real culprit. That has nothing to do with me, but is based on things that happened to me. When I was younger, there were many rumors going around about me because I was quiet and openly hostile to almost everyone. Because no one really knew me, stories circulated about me playing heinous pranks (only about 40% I had actually done). Since it was not really in my best interests to dispute those stories, they became legend. I think I read about the crazy glue thing in that RE/Search book *Pranks!*, and the thing about the *Trials of Life* tape was true, I ordered it, thought it was boring, and stopped the subscription after the second tape.

Tav-o is clearly named after my friend Dave-O, but Dave-O was white. I thought it would be more interesting to show Rex as a total douchebag, while interjecting a joke about how some black people find names for their children.

Kevin Pope really is a genius who does draw comics that are used on cards by a company called Acme. I have no idea how much he got for the Pop-Tarts calendar (the characters are Dweezil & Doug, just for the record), but I had it in my house for a full year, and it really was exactly as described. You can't make that shit up, trust me.

When Rex meets Peter I wanted Rex's own asshole-ish behavior to make it take longer than it needed to. I wanted to show that sometimes being polite can get things done. I also wanted to continue to promote the theory about the meat people.

The whole thing about the tape being in Beta is a joke about me and my loyalty to things that are better but seemed doomed to failure because people are such sheep. I know Beta was better, but most everyone wanted VHS because it was cheaper, and now we all have this shittier version of things because everyone is so fucking cheap. I am saying the same thing about Macintosh computers, they are better, but the better one doesn't always win.

I thought it would be nice to end with a joke, our central character remains essentially unchanged by the experience. Most people never learn anything, they just keep making the same stupid mistakes over and over again, and to me, that's funny.



How To Tell If It Is Time To Get Married

- Your girlfriend is pregnant and her father is an officer in the NRA.
- You're a Mormon and your third wife is now over the hill at 20.
- There is no way in hell you will ever become rich or famous and Time is about to destroy whatever meager looks you currently have.
- You are homeless, and she is not.
- She actually enjoys performing oral sex, in spite of your personal hygiene.
- She is the only one that thinks your band/zine/haircut/car/friends/lifestyle are cool.
- You are losing your hair.
- You are a crackhead and she is a crack dealer.
- You are a member of some bizarre religion or cult, and your bride has been chosen or purchased already.
- She makes a lot more money than you and this situation will never change.
- Your parole officer recommends it if you want to stay out of jail.
- All your exes that used to fuck you without a hassle are now married with children.

How To Tell If It Is Time To Run Like Hell

- Her parents want to arrange the wedding.
- She constantly complains about your weight/friends/car/music/TV/attitude/sexual habits.
- You realize that you like the taste of a man.
- She keeps coming up with brilliant plans to "improve" every facet of your life.
- She spends hours every day on the phone to her friends, giggling the whole time.
- She insists on calling you pet names like "Tushy Boy," regardless of the situation.
- She buys herself an engagement ring.
- She owns more than two cats and wants you to talk baby talk to them.
- She believes that oral sex is a mortal sin.
- Shaving is not one of her priorities, because, as she puts it, "I have you already."
- She forces you to take the *Cosmo* quiz about your relationship at least once a month.
- She wants you to move in with her folks because she likes her twin bed.
- She forces you to watch a triple feature of *Fatal Attraction*, *Ventil* and *Fried Green Tomatoes* so you can, as she puts it, "Finally understand me."

More Savant

In November of 1996 I was a contestant on the first five episodes of the now-cancelled MTV game show *Idiot Savants*. I answered an ad on the back of the *Village Voice*, passed a 20-question phone quiz and got to come in and compete in a mock game for a chance to be on the show. I did very well at the tryout, finishing with 2000 points to 600 for one contestant and 400 for the other. From the time of the in-person game to the end of the last game, I got the impression that there were literally dozens of people who were on the show just to write stories about it. Months after the last episode aired, the only account of the experience I have seen was written by Joel Stein, a contestant on the shows that I was on. He was the only person who really embarrassed himself during the show with totally bizarre mistakes and strange behavior. He was (and still is) the sports reporter for *Time Out NY*, a guide to what's going on in New York City. His story was very short, and basically described how he felt humiliated by his appearance. I liked his story, and wrote a letter to him and *Time Out* that was published as well. Since I never saw any other stories, and thought my story was AT LEAST as interesting as Joel's, I figured I should publish my own account. I originally wrote it to send to family members, just so I wouldn't have to tell the same story on the phone to each person individually. I have cut it down substantially just to make it more readable, added this introduction and an afterword about what happened after the whole thing was over. I think the people at MTV were almost uniformly smug and annoying, but that's what you get when you spend your days trying to entertain braid-dead jerkoffs.

After weeks of waiting, I finally got the call

from Sean, the contestant coordinator at MTV, saying that he had some good news and some bad news. The bad news was that I didn't make it on to the show, for reasons he chose not to go into (loser! too short! too Jewish! too weird! too ugly! too smart!). The good news was that they liked me, but there weren't enough slots (oh, sure!). They wanted me to be an alternate in case someone they did like couldn't make it. They also felt that my savant category wasn't going to work. At first I wanted to do *The Simpsons*, since I have every single episode on tape. They said that was no good, so I suggested "serial killers," since that category had brought me luck during the tryout. Also no good. "Howard Stern?" Nope. "*X-Files*?" Nope. "*Blade Runner*?" "No, but who directed that movie?" "Ridley Scott," I said. "How about Ridley Scott films?" "Uh, I guess so."

They told me that I should be at the studio at 10AM on Thursday, and if one person didn't show, I would go on. If everyone was there, I was supposed to go away and come back the next week, and so on, until I got on the show.

I had a feeling that I wasn't going to get on for at least a few weeks, so I didn't kill myself getting all the movies. On Wednesday, Sean called me and said that they thought someone might flake out and I should be prepared to go on the next day. It was way too tense for me, because I wanted to know for sure that it was going to happen, just so I could sleep. I returned to watching *Alien*, and tried not to think about it. Sean called an hour later and said someone had dropped out and that I was definitely on (though he never said anything about getting an alternate in case I didn't show up... how odd). I called most of my friends to see if anyone could come by and watch me on TV, but no one,

not even Juli, could make it. I was kind of sad that no one would come, but I figured that it would be on TV soon enough, since I was going to be featured on the first five episodes ever made.

I got to the studio on November 21 at about 9:45AM and met up with Alyssa, the other contestant coordinator. The next person to show up was Scott, a production manager for *Elle* magazine. Then came Sarah, a fashion student at F.I.T. and a few minutes later the last contestant, Joel, arrived.

Once assembled we met Ben, a production assistant, and he took us out for breakfast. They said we could get anything we wanted, so I got a Coke. Everyone else got food, but I hate seeming like schnorrer the Jew looking for free junk. I am not a freeloader. The only thing I wanted them to pay for was a big prize, dig? After breakfast we went back to the studios, they took us up to the green room, and left us there. They told us that the show would tape at 3PM, which was still four hours away. We all sat around talking, reading magazines, and got to know each other.

Some time later Jason, one of the writers, came in to interview us, so they could write some jokes. That took five minutes. After Jason left we had a walk through of the set then back to the green room to sit around for a while. They said that they had only moved in the previous Saturday and had built the set in two days, which is amazing to say the least. At about 2:30 they brought us down to get equipped with wireless microphones. We did some audio checks and went out on to the set. We didn't really get a chance to go over our notes, so I just ran down what I could remember in my head (I had some notes on Ridley Scott movies for my savant category. Scott brought the *Encyclopedia Madonnica*,

Than I idiot

since his category was simply “Madonna.” Joel didn’t bring anything since his category was *Taxi*, and Sarah brought four books about the American Revolution to study).

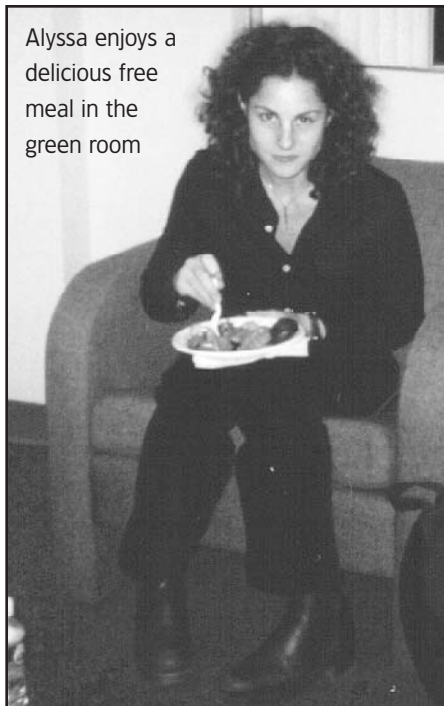
Once on set we saw the Mentalists, the band that plays during the breaks. The set itself features all kinds of models of atoms, a huge double-helix DNA strand, lights that say $E=mc^2$ and a periodic table that’s labeled “The Idiotic Table.” There is also an eight foot foam brain with a TV monitor built into the front of it. The set looks high-tech, but upon close examination you can see the shoddy workmanship and cheap methods they used to make the set look cool on TV. There were stacks of books that had holes drilled into them which were stacked on poles around the set. If you are sitting in the audience, the band is on the immediate left. Also on the left, but more forward is the Dunce Corner, where the dunce goes (more on that later). In the dunce corner is a stuffed snake housed in a glass bell, a stack of books, a stool, and a screen to keep score for the dunce. A little further downstage is the brain, then, to the right of the brain is the host’s podium, where they keep the question cards. Then, on the right side, on four platforms of different heights, are the seats for the contestants. Above the seats are little black boards where they tack a sign with your savant category, and move it when you change places at the end of each round.

Once on the set, we were all pretty calm. All the teamsters, producers and writers were constantly telling us how glad they were that we were there (I think they were feeling much more pressure than any of us, since really, after a few days, it would be over for us. They would have to try to make it work for months, and besides, if we suck, they get fired). I think we all knew we could do whatever the hell we wanted.

The host, Greg Fitzsimmons, introduced himself to us before the show. We asked about what he had done before, and he mumbled something about stand up comedy. He seemed to have the arrogance and smug attitude befitting a game show host (just above clown, but below modern rock DJ on the Entertainment Evolution Chart).

For the game, each one of us had a buzzer that made a different wacky noise. For the first show, mine was the sound of a little kid shrieking, “Pick Me!” The first question is a toss-up and is not worth any points, but the first person to get it right gets to choose the first category. The toss-up category for day one was *Barney Miller*. The question was, “On this comedy show, set in New York City, the main character is a police captain who jokes around with the other guys in the station

Alyssa enjoys a delicious free meal in the green room



house in the 12th precinct. Name the show.” We all looked at each other, wondering what the fuck the deal was. So I buzzed in and said, sort of confused, “*Barney Miller*?” and Greg said, “That’s correct! Choose the first category!”

I chose “Steve Martin Movies” and the first question was answered, before Greg finished reading it, by Joel, who said something totally wrong. The question was something like, “These two wild and crazy guys....” and Joel buzzed in, looked confused and asked “Somewhere near Romania?” It got a big laugh, Greg made a joke, and we moved on. In the first round, Greg asks a question, the first person to buzz in and get it right gets 100 points. Then they get a bonus question, only to them, worth 200. If they get that one wrong, someone else can jump in and guess, and also earn 200 points, but on the first 2 questions, no points are lost for wrong answers. If you get question two right, you can optionally take the “big gamble” question, which is only to you, and worth 300 if you get it right, and -300 if you get it wrong. The 300 point questions were usually way too hard, and mostly we got them wrong. If you got the first and second questions right, then fucked up the big gamble, you would have a net gain of zero points.

At the end of round one Scott was in first, Sarah was in second, I was in third, and Joel was last, so Joel was escorted to the dunce corner for the remainder of the game. He would wait there, and if there were any questions throughout the rest of the game that no one could answer, Joel would be asked the question. Round two is the same as one, except the brain picks the categories and the points are doubled. After that round, I

was still in third, so I was escorted off the show. The two remaining people compete in the Brainstorm round, where the host gives a rapid series of questions, each worth 200 if right, and -200 if wrong. For the first game, Greg said the name of the book, and you had to name the author. Greg made a number of factual and pronunciation errors, but as I said, he wasn’t too bright. He even said before the show, “I hope I can learn a lot on this show, because right now, I know almost nothing.”

After the Brainstorm Round, Scott was in the lead, so he was escorted to this rinky-dink looking clear plastic cone, called the “Cylinder of Shush” (I think that the reason is the name “Cone of Silence” is trademarked, or it was a brilliant idea from one of “writers”). The brain puts 60 seconds on the clock and you have to answer 10 questions in your savant category. None of us thought that the savant questions were all that hard, though many were obscure. Scott did very well and won himself a telescope, which I think we all agreed was a lame prize, especially for someone who lives in New York City. We watched Scott win from up in the makeup room, where they have a TV rigged into the live feed from the studio below. We were all excited for Scott, but worried that he was going to kick our asses for the rest of the week, and if he didn’t, that we would win prizes as lame as his. Then we had to change clothes, to make it appear as if it were a new day, and return to the set.

Before the second game began everyone from the show came by to help us get pumped up. Even though it may not have come through to the folks at home, everyone was really smart. There were many times in the first game where we all knew the answer, but the buzzers didn’t always work right, and even when they did, sometimes someone else was just faster. I think, from the conversations that we had during breaks, that we all knew most of the answers, we just weren’t fast enough. There are few notable exceptions, and those were obvious.

The second game started out slowly, and to be honest, the whole thing is a blur. I was really frustrated that I wasn’t killing, I really thought I was going to win by a landslide all five days, and the tension and pressure were building up in my head. Joel really struggled, and Sarah maintained her cool. Scott never even cracked a little bit, he was really good under pressure, but I guess that is to be expected since his whole life is making deadlines. The parts of day two that I remember are in no particular order. I know that Joel made some jokes, Greg was annoying all of us, and I was much faster on

the buzzer. At the end of round one, Joel was in last place again, and was escorted over to the dunce corner. Sarah started to come alive in round two, and by the end had come into second place behind me. At that point I was getting really tense, I could feel it in my head and I was sweating and feeling really spaced-out. I hardly ever drink, but right then I wanted a drink.

The Brainstorm Round was really easy. They named the *Saturday Night Live* character, we had to name the actor that played them. I hadn't seen an episode in a while, but I still remembered seeing most of them on cable in reruns. The best moment on the whole show came when Greg said "Father Guido Sarducci?" The guy that played him is named Don Novello and he has written two really funny books where he writes letters to famous people (as Lazlo Toth) and asks them goofy questions, to trade ties, or to express his bizarre support. I have one of the books and I love that guy. I knew the answer as soon as he said "Father," and I buzzed in. Then, the name just slipped me, and it was so frustrating that I said, "Oh, fuck!" I didn't mean to, I was just so rattled by forgetting, because I felt like I was on such a roll. Because the round was going so well, I knew they couldn't ask us to redo it, so I figured that they would just bleep me. I have always wanted to swear on TV, and I really can't believe that my dream has finally come true, and by accident. No one on the set mentioned it, because I think no one realized, except Greg, who said something like, "Jøsh, watch the language!"



The lovely and talented Ben Donner prays that the make-up whore will die of cancer sooner, rather than later

At the end of the round, it was obvious that I had won. As soon as Greg said, "Jøsh is the winner of that round," Sarah turned to me, and as genuinely as is humanly possible, said, "Congratulations" and shook my hand. I was just completely shocked and terrified. I had no idea what kind of questions they might ask me. I had twelve pages of notes on Ridley Scott movies up in the green room, and no way to get to them. I started thinking of all the things I could remember: the name of the ship in *Alien* is the Nostromo, Thelma's husband is Darryl, Louise's boyfriend is Jimmy, played by Michael Madsen, the boat in *White Squall* is the Albatross, Jeff Bridges, 1979, born in England, etc. All these numbers and facts and dates and names were flying around in my head and I remember wishing the whole thing was over.

I walked offstage and everyone came running up to me saying really nice things. It was like nothing else I have ever experienced. It made me uncomfortable getting all that attention and I thought that it would have been much easier for me if I could have done the final round on a closed set. The audio guy found me and had me fitted for an ear piece. Then we ran some audio tests to make sure I could hear. I needed the earpiece because in the Cylinder of Shush it is hard to hear, but that is a good thing. Having the questions read into my ear was much easier than anything I could have thought of. After the levels were checked, they put me on my mark on the floor and lowered the cylinder onto my upper half. As the camera guys were joking around I just looked around me, trying to find something comforting to stare at. There was nothing. I looked at the band, who were doing the Macarena. I looked at all the weird writing on the floor. I looked at the giant brain. I looked at the cone, trying to figure out how they made it. I finally just thought about Juli and what she would say to me at a time like this. She would say, "Aww, poor animal.. Just relax, you are gonna kill. You studied everything you could, read the FAQs and watched the movies. In two minutes it will be over and you will be fine." As usual, she was right, so I took a deep breath and cleared my mind.

The band played us back from commercial and Greg came up behind me. He turned to the prize guy and said, "What is Jøsh playing for today, prize guy?" The prize guy replied, "Well, Greg, he could win a trip for two, airfare included, to the beautiful Bluebeard's Castle resort in the fabulous Virgin Islands..." Pictures of the hotel appeared on the monitor



Big Joe the stage manager joins us for conversation and a mouthful of chewing tobacco (YUM!)

next to me. Greg turned to the brain and said, "Put sixty seconds on the clock!" They put sixty seconds on the clock next to me and I looked away, thinking it might fuck with my concentration. Greg said, "Ready?" and started hurling questions at me. "What was Ridley Scott's first film?" *"The Duellists."* "What year does *Blade Runner* take place?" "2019." "What is the name of the ship in *Alien*?" "The Nostromo." "Who plays Queen Isabella in *1492: Conquest of*?" "Sigourney Weaver." "What company makes replicants?" "The Tyrell Corporation." "What disease does JF Sebastian have in *Blade Runner*?" "Methusala's Syndrome," which causes premature aging. Greg said I was wrong, because on the card it said, "premature aging" which as far as I know, IS NOT THE NAME OF A FUCKING DISEASE. After a second he said, "We can accept that." "What was the name of Brad Pitt's character in *Thelma & Louise*?" (I wasn't sure, it was the only movie I hadn't seen in years. I knew I had to rent it that night) I said, "JR" and the answer was JD. "Who played Pris in *Blade Runner*?" "Darryl Hannah." "What did *Thelma & Louise* win an Oscar for?" "Best original screenplay!" I said, Then the clock stopped, the Cylinder raised up off me and they said, "You did it!" I finished 10 questions with fifteen seconds to spare! Greg came over and shook my hand, and the bimbos came out of nowhere. Everyone started dancing around me, the girls were putting their arms around me, and the camera man was moving the camera all over the place. The girls were saying stuff like, "Say 'Hi' to your mom, and blow a kiss..." I felt like a bomb had hit, I



was completely numb. All that pressure suddenly released and I was so relieved that I had won. I didn't even care about the trip, I was just glad that I hadn't lost. As far as I was concerned, the whole thing was over, I had come to prove myself and I had, with style and wit. I was really happy. I wanted to just walk off, but the girls were manhandling me. Then it was all over, and I was ready to fall down. Alyssa and Ben came over and said they were thrilled for me, and asked me if I had someone to take, and I said, "Yeah, my girlfriend would LOVE to go to the Virgin Islands." I went up to the green room to collect my things and go home.

When I got there, Scott was upset, because he wanted a trip more than anything. He said, "Maybe I can sell the telescope and go on a trip." Sure, that's possible, I thought. The prize lady had me fill out some forms about the trip, tax papers and whatnot. I sat in the green room collecting my thoughts, letting all the tension drain from me. For the few days before the show, when I wasn't sure if I would get on or not, I was really nervous. I know I can play game shows when I am home, but I wasn't sure if I could do it under pressure. The night before the show, I couldn't sleep at all, I just tossed and turned, thinking of questions and trying to answer them. What is the name of the pilot episode of *Star Trek*? What is the fluid inside the eye? Who is Secretary of Agriculture? Who plays Jake on *Melrose Place*? What was Nixon's middle name? All these things kept creeping into my head. I had to take some pills to go to sleep because I was completely tense.

Now that I had won, more than anything, I felt really tired. I had planned to rent *Thelma & Louise* because I had only seen it once, many years before. I didn't remember important things, things I knew they could ask me. I realized that the category was good, because even though there is a lot to remember, it is a finite thing, a manageable

amount of information. Sarah's American Revolution subject could have gone ANYWHERE. Joel's *Taxi* category was good, but there are hundreds of episodes of that show, and they can ask anything.

I walked home with a giant grin on my face, not even feeling the cold. I had told Juli that if I won, I would take her out for dinner, and if I lost, she could take me out to cheer me up. I was glad to take her out. On the way home, I thought maybe I would try to pretend that I lost, just so I could say, "Surprise!" and show her the paper that said we were going to the Virgin Islands. It didn't last. As soon as I walked in the door, I couldn't contain my smile, and she said, "What happened?" I just said, "We won a trip! We are going to the Virgin Islands for seven days!" It was great. At that moment, it was worth all the torture of studying and watching movies. We decided to order in so I could watch *Thelma & Louise*. It had been a long day, I was up at 7:30AM, at the studio at 9:45, and finally left after the second show at like 7:45PM. They also told me that for the second day I wouldn't have to be there until noon, which was a relief.

The next day I wanted to relax and enjoy the atmosphere and soak up the experience. Juli was able to come for the taping, though I was worried that she wouldn't be able to get in. I sent Ben to go make sure that she got in, and when I came to my seat, I saw her sitting in the front row while a very large black man told that he'd "never gone red." She explained that her boyfriend was that guy sitting on the stage, so he asked if she had any red-headed sisters. Luckily, my girlfriend does not, and she brought his line of questioning to a halt.

I was less focused on the game because I thought that it might help. Joel was making jokes the whole time about what a loser he was, saying he told his guests in the audience that the show had been cancelled and they

could go home. He kept saying he was going to have a massive comeback, and I kept telling him that no matter what happened, he was the funniest thing on the show. Greg, the audience and the hired help were all rooting for Joel, as was I. We all really wanted him to win. Sarah didn't really bother me, except that she was from the South and kept saying things like, "I got y'all's number, today I'm gonna win..." She did reasonably well in the game, but she talked more than she won.

When the third game started, it went much more smoothly. It was hard to maintain energy during the breaks between rounds though, because of all the preparation required. At the very beginning of the game, Greg said, "Hey Jøsh, yesterday you got a little out of control during the Brainstorm Round..." and he turned to the brain. "Let's see the clip..." They showed me on the second day, during the Brainstorm Round, cursing. Greg said, "To remind you that you are on TV, we want you to wear this swear hat." The bimbo came out and put this big gold cone on my head with "?!@%#!#" written on the front. It got a good reaction from the crowd, and was one of the funniest moments on the show, especially because I was not expecting it at all. During the game Joel ended up playing pretty much the same, and by the time he had to go to the dunce corner, he was ready. We all felt really bad for him because he was really smart, he just couldn't seem to handle the pressure. After round two, Sarah was out, and it was between me and Scott. I was pretty far behind, but thought I might be able to play well enough to catch up, if the category was as good as the "SNL" character category. It was musicians in the movies, they name the movie, you name the musician who was in it "*Boyz N the Hood*?" Ice Cube. "*Under the Cherry Moon*?" Prince. Scott knew a few, but I knew more, and got more right. It wasn't enough and Scott came out ahead. I was thinking, right at

that moment, that it didn't matter. I guess it might look like I was rationalizing, but Scott really was better at the game than me. I think I was smarter than him, smarter than everyone actually, but he was able to buzz in faster, and took fewer chances than the rest of us. I returned to the green room and watched Scott win the big prize again, this time it was a nice 32" television. To be honest, I have a great TV already, so it wasn't the end of the world.

While we were sitting there, waiting for the game to start, I got an idea. The toss-up question in the beginning was always about *Barney Miller*, and the answer was always "Barney Miller." I suggested to everyone that we should all keep quiet for that question and let Joel answer it, just to show that he could handle it. We also figured it was funnier than anything the writers had come up with. Then, right before the game started, I said, "Even if the question is different, let Joel get it." Scott and Sarah thought it was a good idea, and decided to play along (it should be noted here that we were all wearing mics at the time, and after the show they told us that they heard everything we were saying, about the host, the game, and especially about our conspiracy on Joel's behalf). The topic was *Barney Miller* again. Greg said, "On this cop show, the officers all worked out of the twelfth precinct. What is twelve squared?" We all stopped, looked at Joel and he buzzed in. Joel said, "144!" and we all laughed. From that moment on, Joel seemed to regain his confidence. He was buzzing in like crazy, and getting most of them right. They did this segment where the prize guy came out dressed like a sick little kid in pajamas with feet attached. They called him Hypochondriac Guy and he would go over a list of his



My fellow savants, from left to right: Sarah, H. Scott Jolley and Joel Stein.

symptoms, and we had to name the disease. Joel looked all excited, like he knew he could do it. Hypochondriac Guy said he had bleeding gums and tooth pain and a few other things, and I was sure it was gingivitis, but I hesitated. Joel buzzed in, got it right, and took the second question easily. Greg said, "Want to go for the bonus question?" and Joel said, "Yeah, bring it on, Greg." and then Joel nailed the bonus question and the crowd went nuts for him. They were behind him, even I was cheering for him. I really wanted him to win. As soon as he finished the disease thing he said, "Give me MC Grammar for \$500, Alex" like he was on *Jeopardy!* It was really funny, because Greg didn't get it at all. He was like, "OK, Joel, uh, make that 200 points." By the end of round two, Joel was ahead and I was so thrilled for him. I could see that he had changed, he was ready to do it. As soon as the round was over, I knew I was in third, but I was glad not to have the pressure on me again. I said to Joel, "If I had to lose to somebody, I wanted it to be you," and he thanked me for my support.

For Scott and Joel's Brainstorm Round, the host would say a number, and the players had to say how many times four goes into it. Neither of them could do math, so they guessed sometimes, but mostly they just stared blankly as Greg read numbers. In the end, Joel was still in first and the crowd went nuts for him.

After a few minutes we sat down to have dinner in the green room and watch Joel on the little TV. The prize guy said the prize was a ski vacation in Colorado, including lessons and rentals. The game started and Joel ran down the answers as fast as Greg could ask the questions. For some reason, with forty-two seconds remaining, the clock stopped. The questions kept coming while the clock was stopped. At the end, he won and did a little victory dance. Then the whole thing was stopped because it had been screwed up. They lost count, the clock stopped, the audio failed. The whole take was a mess. They decided to give him the prize, because he had won it, but they wanted to redo it for the



Some nice dogs we met on a day trip to St. John, V.I.

cameras. They set it up again, asked Joel the same questions, got the same right answers, and let it ride. The second time it was sort of a bummer, because the first time had been so natural. I was sad for Joel because the real

win would not make it on the air. That's how it goes sometimes, I suppose, but when Joel won the first time, the whole crowd and crew erupted in applause, the second time, it was like, oh, okay.

Day five found Scott in first, me in second, Joel in a surprise third and Sarah in last. It was pretty obvious when we sat down that Scott was going to win. The big, giant, super grand prize was a trip to Africa. I sat in the make up chair before the last game, thinking about Africa. Ebola virus. Tutsis and Hutus killing thousands of each other as far as the eye can see. A fatal asthma attack from elephant allergies. Refugees. Starving people. Guns. That American guy getting his corpse dragged through the streets of Somalia. I don't even like to look at giraffes in a zoo, so why the hell would I want to see them in the wild? And even if I did want to, it wasn't going to happen. I was too far behind and I even told Scott before we went down. I said, "You deserve the trip to Africa and I am sure that you are going to win." He said, "Not necessarily. You could have a good comeback and take over during the Brainstorm Round..." On paper what he was saying made sense. For the final day, all the point values were doubled again, so that the first round it was 300, 500, 800 and then in the second round it was 500, 700, 1200. I thought the only way that I could do it would be if he got many wrong and I got many right, but really, my heart wasn't in it. I felt like I had done what I had come to do: win a prize, not make a fool of myself, and have a good time.

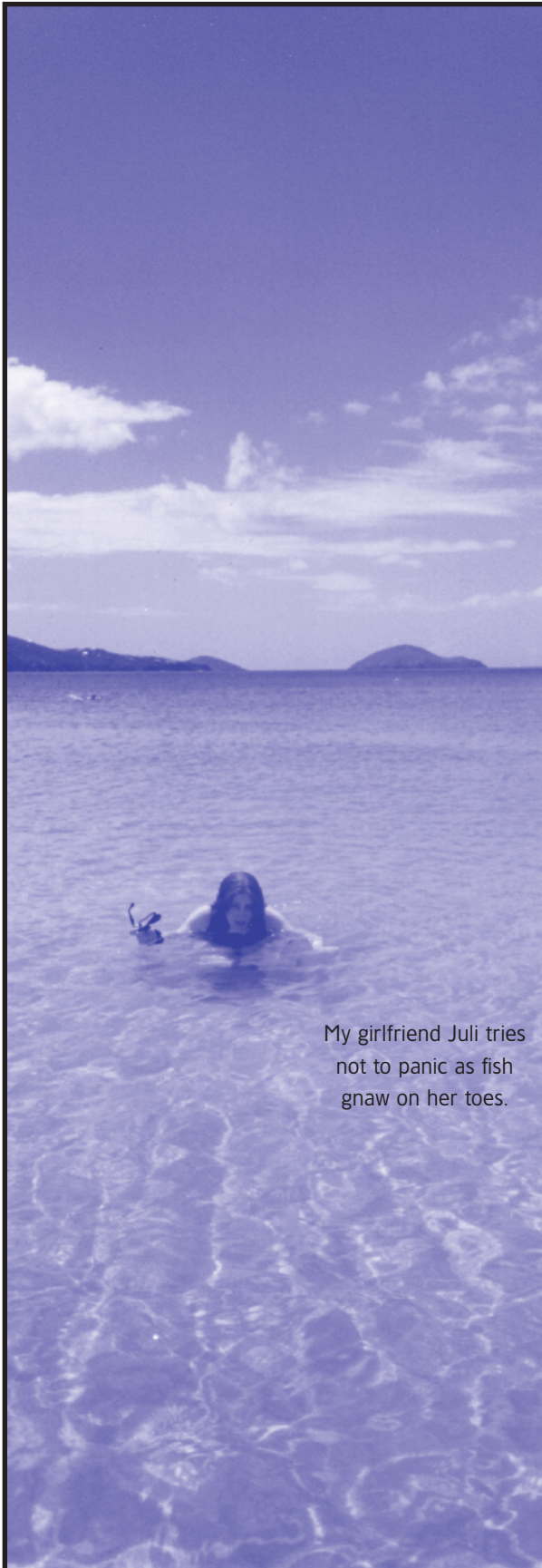
The last game went very much like the others, I was clearly the second place player. There were no dunces in game five, Sarah just left the set after round one. After the second round, Joel bid farewell to his many fans. I was about 7,000 points shy of Scott, a hurdle I knew I could

overcome in the Cylinder since the questions were worth 1,000 each.

At the end of the game, I had one last chance to win, but even if I ended up ahead, Scott would still get one last chance in the Cylinder as well. They put me in, shot the questions at me, and I must have missed at least four. They were questions I had no idea how to answer, and when all was said and done, I was 3,000 points ahead of Scott. It was gratifying to really nail it again, to prove that it wasn't a fluke and that I had done all my homework. I couldn't wait to watch myself, away from all the pressure, with all the insight that only time can give. They led me back to my seat, put Scott in the booth, and without malice or fanfare, he won the trip. I was happy for him. A trip was all he really wanted, and the guy deserved it: he was smart, he was quick, and he aggressively went after what he wanted and got it. I respect that.

I knew that I would walk away from the show with my memories and my prizes, and in my heart, I was at peace. It was one of the most interesting, challenging, exciting and fun times I have ever had in my life and everyone I knew would get to watch my performance on TV. I didn't tell anyone but Juli about anything that happened, I wanted everyone to be as surprised by my performance as I was. I used to think that really good things and really bad things only happened to other people, but that isn't true. Everything happens to everybody. The people who take risks and rise to the occasion are the ones who are rewarded with all things spectacular. And finally, for once in my life, I felt like one of those people. Yeah, right.

My shows were scheduled to air the last week of the year, beginning Dec. 30, 1996. I told everyone I knew, and some people I didn't know, because I knew no one would watch MTV without some prodding. When the shows first aired, it was on at 7PM, then that same episode was repeated again at 11PM, which was perfect, because I could tape both and have two tapes of my week of shows. The show that I won on was supposed to air New Year's Eve, so I figured I could tape it, then, while I was at some cool party later that night, I could have the host put on the TV and the whole party could watch me win. That sounds pretty cool, right? Well, of course it didn't work out that way. For some reason, MTV decided to show the top 100 videos of the year, beginning at 6PM on New Year's Eve. This knocked my winning show off the air. On New Year's Day I got calls from everyone I knew asking what had happened to the show (I didn't tell them if I won or not, I only told them to watch the



My girlfriend Juli tries not to panic as fish gnaw on her toes.

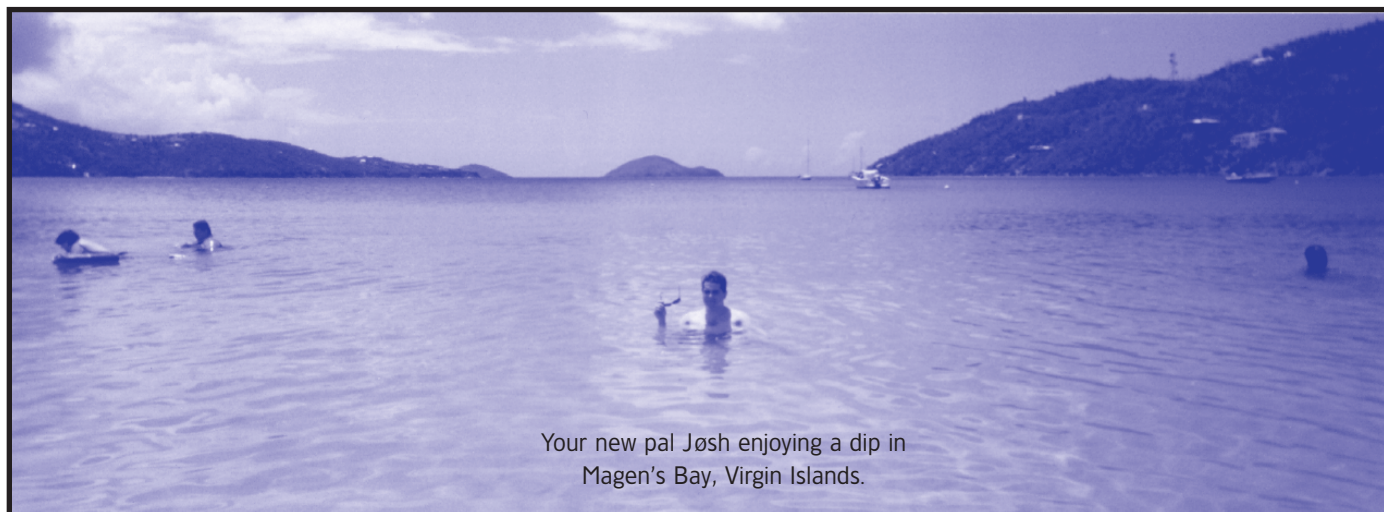


week of shows, so they could be surprised). Later that week I called MTV and they gave me the runaround. About three weeks and a hundred frustrated phone calls later I finally got someone to answer my question: When was that one stupid show going to air? They assured me that MTV repeats everything because they are cheap. The episodes were set to repeat the first week of April. That was more than three months away. Of course I told everyone to mark their calendars, and guess what those cocksuckers did? That's right, they didn't air them that week. I called again, and they said there was nothing they could do, but the episodes would be aired shortly. I sat by the TV every Monday night with a tape ready in the VCR for the next five weeks, hoping and praying that my smiling face might appear on the TV. On Monday of the sixth week, instead of *Idiot Savants* reruns, they were showing reruns of *Singled Out*. I was aghast. That was it. It was all over. They had shown all the episodes where I lost, but my cursing, my moment in the sun, my huge win, would never see the light of day.

charge of getting tapes for people. I left her a nice voicemail explaining what had happened and asking if she could please return my phone call. A week later, I called again, because she never called me back. Her message said that if I had a specific request (it wasn't directed at me personally, it was for everyone who was calling her voicemail) I should fax it in. I faxed in a letter politely asking for her help, telling her what had happened, and which episode I wanted. Still I got no response. I faxed again. And again. And again. My letters got angrier and more hostile. I tried begging. I offered to pay for a tape. I appealed to her humanity.

Then I got a better idea. I went to the MTV area on America Online and started posting my story. I asked anyone who saw my message to call Elizabeth and ask her to just, "Send Jøsh his tape." Two days later someone from MTV pulled my message. It was on the *Idiot Savants* message board, and there was no reason for it to be removed. So I posted it again, and again it was removed. I realized that I should stop pretending to be civil, and

me to stop, I started faxing again, this time even angrier than before. I never cursed, I never threatened and I never said anything even vaguely threatening. I just said things like, "How can you sleep at night knowing that I have only one wish in this world that you can make come true with ONE PHONE CALL?" I also said, "What if I was your brother or your son and they had been put through this?" It didn't matter, Elizabeth Van Pelt did not give a flying fuck about me. On the third day of my renewed attack, the girl I had spoken to called me again. She apologized for the delay and said that the tape was in the mail. She sounded scared. I was very polite, but I told her that if I didn't get it this time, I was going to take it to the next level. I didn't really have a new threat, but I figured I could call a newspaper or one of those consumer reporters who can get things done when companies turn into assholes. Two days later I got the tape. They had taped over some old show and left the old sticker on. It was recorded in EP mode, with horrible audio, a time code running across the bottom and fuzzy lines across the top. It didn't matter, I



When I complained about it to my friends, they said I be glad to have the prize. I kept picturing myself trying to explain to my kids how I was on TV once, I won a big prize, but it never aired. I wouldn't have believed me either. It wasn't even like I could remember any of that day clearly, because the whole thing went by so fast, I wasn't sure if I was remembering any of it correctly. I resolved to get a fucking tape of that show, even if it killed me. I made phone calls the next day to MTV, asking to speak to the producers. They had all been fired. That was some consolation to me. I asked to speak to someone who could get me a tape. I finally found Elizabeth Van Pelt (her real name, you can kill her for all I care, she's a TOTAL CUNT who deserves to die), who had a recorded voicemail message, which said that she was in

really give them a fucking war. I posted the same message on every board, *120 Minutes*, *Loveline*, you name it, I posted there. I faxed twenty times a day. I left a new voicemail message every day. About a month into my barrage, I started getting letters from AOL members who said that they had been calling and faxing on my behalf. I thanked them all personally and tried to keep them updated on my progress. After about six weeks of this, I got a message from someone in Elizabeth's office. She said that she had been reading my faxes and felt really bad for me. She had put in a request to get me a tape of the show and would be sending it out immediately, if only I would promise to stop faxing. No problem, I said. I was so excited I could barely contain myself. Two weeks later I still had no tape. Thinking that the person who called may have just been my old pal Liz trying to get

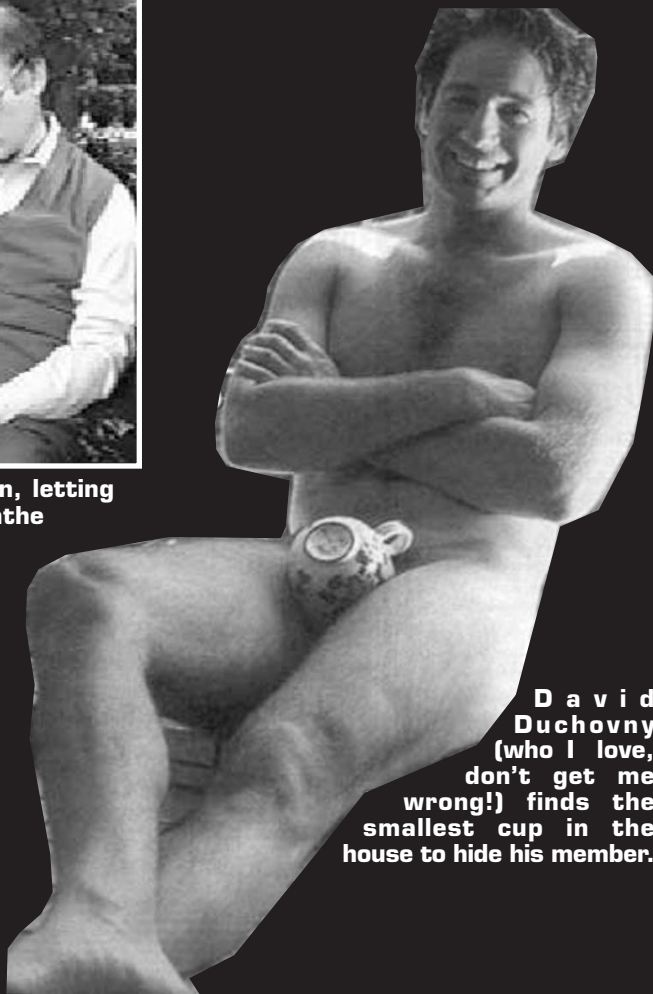
finally had the tape. I had won. And after it was all over, rather than feeling victorious, I felt empty. They had been so petty and so selfish. I couldn't believe what a bunch of cocksuckers they had turned out to be. So what's the moral of the story? Fuck if I know, I am just telling you what happened. If you want to do something for me, avoid anyone that sponsors MTV. If you get a Nielsen book and you get to tell them what shows you watch, make sure to never give MTV ratings. If they put on a concert or sell a CD, don't support it. If anyone asks you what you think of MTV, tell them that you personally think that it sucks, you can't stand watching it and that everyone on it is a fucking retarded asshole who should get cancer. That might make me feel better.



Isn't that embarrassing?



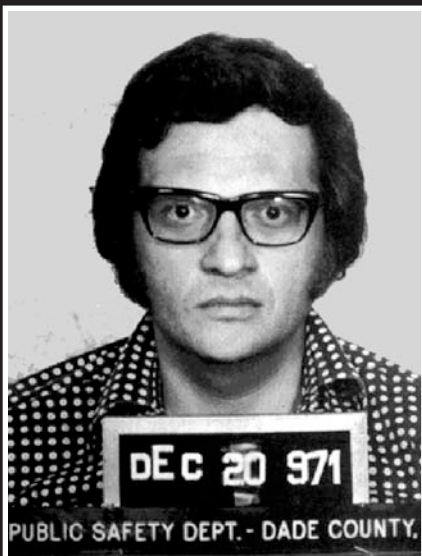
Charles Grodin, letting his scalp breathe for a change.



David Duchovny (who I love, don't get me wrong!) finds the smallest cup in the house to hide his member.



That's right, kids, it's Hitler in shorts! Those socks make him look kinda gay though, don't you think?



No matter how many times I see it, it still makes me laugh. World-famous ass-kisser and serial monogamist Larry "Marry Me" King is finally put where he belongs, JAIL!



My favorite president, Richard M. Nixon, whoops it up at the White House Bowling Alley. Rumor has it that he used to cheat on his score, but I refuse to believe it.

Just To Prove a Point

I realize that many of you may think that I am so angry and bitter because of a birth defect or as a result of being abused and ostracized as a child. Nothing could be further from the truth. I'm perfectly adjusted, had fun in high school, have an active, normal sex life, and am adored by most people that know me personally. That's me at right, posing for and taking the picture, just so you know who you're dealing with. If you want to send nudes of yourself, feel free, but I might run them, so assume that anything (pictures, text, CDs, pot) sent to me is *meant for publication!* Thanks. You have been warned.



What Do Being in and Living In New York City have in Common? More Than You Think

Oh, sure, you've heard it all before, but follow me for a second, the coincidences are just eerie. In New York City, as in Spinal Tap, everyone has a bad accent. Also, things keep breaking down, yet the whole thing continues, despite major catastrophes [i.e. Tap had the Stonehenge debacle, NYC had the World Trade Center bombing, both disasters relating to huge tourist attractions]. In New York City, as in Tap, no one really gets along, there is always an undercurrent of hostility. In both,



people are dressed poorly, have bad hair, and do not take care of themselves very well. Also, both New York and Tap keep losing people to strange deaths, and for some reason, the surviving members are unaffected by the loss, because they know someone new will come along any minute. Both New York City and Spinal Tap have each been featured in their own episode of *The Simpsons*. Is it a coincidence that in both Tap and NYC, the volume of people, cars, drugs, total wackos, and most importantly, noise, are all cranked up to eleven? No, of course not. And, here is the most shocking one of all: when my mother was in high school, she dated Michael McKean (my mom has the yearbook to prove it), lead singer of Spinal Tap, and he could have been my own father, and right now, as you read this, *I AM LIVING IN NEW YORK CITY!!!*

When I posted my story about *Idiot Savants* on AOL (See “More Savant Than Idiot” page 20), I got many responses. Most people that wrote were inarticulate but they offered to help any way they could, so I was grateful and polite. Once, while I was online, I got an IM from someone named Childpl696 saying that they read my posting and felt really bad for me. By then I already had my tape, so I wasn’t really interested in re-hashing something that was no longer actively annoying me. Childpl696 was articulate, well-spoken, and made their case on my behalf with clarity and precision. After a few minutes I was bored talking about it and decided to go. I said, “Thanks for talking, dude, what’s your name, anyway?” She wrote, “Sara.” I was shocked.

The person I was talking to wrote like me, not like a girl. So I said, “How old are you?” And she said, “How old do you think I am?” “24,” I guessed. She liked that a whole lot. “I’m 13,” she said.

I thought it was really odd that a thirteen-year-old would have been into *Idiot Savants*, a show that was too clever for its target audience (nominally educated, horny teenage boys) by a mile. She told me she used to watch it all the time, and even though she didn’t remember my appearance, she liked the show and did very well when playing at home.

We got to talking and she told me that she lived with her mom and her mom’s boyfriend Jason in Hawaii. Jason had two screennames, she had found the password to one, and while everyone was away, she would sign on to AOL. That’s pretty impressive, I thought. Then she said that she had been having online relationships with older guys. That was kind of shocking, because I figured that any guy who knowingly had a sexual relationship with a thirteen-year-old would have to be pretty twisted, even if the relationship was only online. As it turns out,



all the guys she was talking to thought she was nineteen. They also thought that she was pretty hot, because she was sending them a picture of a girl wearing a short skirt and heels, pulling the skirt down at the back to showcase her tight ass. And what else was she telling these guys? Well, she was bored, smart, and alone so she came up with some pretty outlandish stuff. She was working in a record store to pay her way through college. She was pregnant and the father had left her. Whatever came to mind came out in conversation.

I asked why she was telling me all of this. She told me that she didn’t know, she was just happy that I didn’t reject her because she was only thirteen. I told her that I have met so few people online who can spell, much less offer an original thought, that it didn’t matter how old she was.

Once, in conversation, she called herself the wrong

name, and I confronted her. It turns out her real name is Priscilla, a name she is not fond of. Once I caught her in a small lie, I realized that the rest of her story, including the revelations and guilt, could all be part of another sick joke. It could be some fat jackoff in Albany, pretending to be a contrite little girl in Hawaii.

At the time, my job was very boring. There wasn’t nearly enough work for me to do in a day. I tried slowing down, but even that got boring. My boss was in his eighties and didn’t know a thing about computers. From a distance, AOL looks like it could be work, and as long as the keys keep clicking away, he would never be any wiser. So I would spend my days online, looking for people I knew, harassing people I didn’t know, and reading magazines. During those long summer days, I kept talking to Priscilla, because she was funny, she was bored, and she thought I was very interesting.

As time passed, I began to see her as a younger version of myself. When I was thirteen, I had a BBS running off my Commodore 64, I was trying to run some minor credit card scams, I was skateboarding and I was starting to think more seriously about girls. I also didn’t know anyone that thought I was as smart as I thought I was, everyone always treated me like a kid. I decided it would be best to treat Priscilla as an equal, because there was no reason not to. If I had had AOL at that age, I would have been going nuts fucking with people all day. Actually, I am twenty-eight, and I still enjoy fucking with people on AOL.

I wanted to know about the games she had been playing with other people, and she was more than eager to confess. There was one guy she had been toying with for some time, giving him the impression that she would be coming to see him in person soon. She was feeling very guilty about everything she had done, because I showed her that there were people who would like her for who she was, not who she pretended to be. She wanted to find out for herself, but she was terrified that people would get mad at her. I explained that fucking with someone on AOL is not a crime, and the person she fucked with would have no recourse whatsoever. In addition, if the person didn’t want to be her friend knowing the truth, she didn’t need them as friends.

After some thought she decided to start telling the truth to her online pals. SpoonyBard (I have no idea what it means either) was the first victim. I was going to run the transcript but I am not because a) it is too long b) the funny part was in the quickness of the comments, not in what they were and c) I can tell the result a lot faster. He said he didn’t care, he was a little disappointed (you saw the picture and can imagine what she promised the poor schmuck), but generally he thought it was okay. I am pretty sure he wasn’t serious about wanting to remain friends with her (which is what he said, but not what he later did), but

My life
as a
pedophile/
bisexual/
masseuse/
porn star

once he knew the truth about her, it wasn't fun for her anymore either.

Toward the end of the summer she told me that she was going to be going to her grandmother's house in Virginia and wouldn't be back for some time. She said she would keep in touch with me and be back soon enough.

For the hell of it she told me that her mom's boyfriend's screenname was PLUG NUT, and that she knew he was making dates and cheating on her mom. I thought that was pretty sad, but I didn't think I could do anything about it. Then it occurred to me that if the guy was as dumb as she said, he would fall for anything I told him. I could trick him into falling for me, if I posed as a woman, then I could send the transcripts to her mom and the douche would be out of their lives forever. I told Priscilla that I would think of a cool screenname, make a profile that made me seem kind of slutty, and try to make a move on Jason.

About a week before she was going to leave, she dropped this on me:

Josh—

I love you. I don't know how long ago I realized that, but I know for sure now. I'm not sure why. You're just so WaCkY and kEwL. But you already know all that, right? Unless you thought it was a joke, everything I talked to you about and wrote in that letter was real. Just in case you didn't know, it WAS all the truth. You might have thought it was a cute game I was playing with you, but it wasn't. I swear on my life. I don't know how it happened, and I've been trying to figure it out. Nothing associated with you is easy to figure out, though. I don't get it. I guess it's all just part of my fantasy I told you about. I guess AOL is just a big fantasy world for people like me to escape to and live out their fantasies. But I know it's more than that with you. It's hard to explain. Anyway, doesn't all this sound repetitive compared to my first letter? Well, I just can't stop gushing. It's very common for a 13 year old to fall in love with an older person, but not vice versa. I've heard of it happening though, like in Kentucky and stuff. If you feel the same, I want to know. If you think I'm an idiot I would rather hear that than not know at all, or worse, have you lie to me to make me feel better. You understand that don't you??? AHHHHHH!!! In a way, I wish I hadn't met you, so I wouldn't be having all this stress. No, that's not true, because I wouldn't have had such a wonderful experience either. I'm being serious about this. This is not a joke. Okay? :-)

plain old me—Childpl696

P.S. Don't forget to hassle Jason...remember PLUG NUT. He should be online most of the day tomorrow. Don't give him ANY clue about me, ok? He likes Asian girls.

When I tried to reply, there was no answer. Then I got a worried letter where she said that she thought her mom's boyfriend was getting suspicious so I shouldn't send any more mail to that name. Then she disappeared. Then the name got deleted.

At first I thought that she had just gone away, like she said. Then I thought maybe something I had sent was in the old mail section and Jason had discovered her and she was in deep trouble. Then I thought even worse things. I was worried that something bad had happened, and resolved to get into Jason's head to figure things out.

Unfortunately for all concerned, Jason is one of the single stupidest people I have ever spoken to. I created the screen name LeiMeNow (though I thought about being AlohaBabe and HIUCanDoMe, HI being the abbreviation for Hawaii) and decided that I needed a picture to go with the profile. I cruised into Wilhelmina modeling agency's area (which is no longer on AOL, sorry!) and tried to find a model who was hot, but not a supermodel. I found a nice young model named Cheryl, from New Jersey, who had four distinct, but attractive pictures. I downloaded them all, renamed them with my new name, Anastasia, and got to work.

It took me a few days to find Jason, probably because of the time difference. As soon as I saw he was online, I went to the room and made small talk with the others, hoping he might make the first move and thereby remove all suspicion. He was clueless. So I IMed him and said hello. His grammar made me cringe. His conversation stultified me. His lies came fast and furious. He said he used to have a girlfriend but she had gone to the mainland for college, and now he was looking for someone new. He admitted that he drove an airport bus and that he liked hot chicks. I sent him the first picture, and the hook was set. He sent me a picture he claimed was him, but the guy in the picture looked like he was a chromosome shy of a full deck. Priscilla told me that in reality Jason was more than 300 pounds, and the tard in the photo was no more than 150 pounds.

After the first meeting I would see him online from time to time and chat with him about whatever retarded topic was on his mind. It was like being with a mental patient, I never knew what the fuck he was talking about. I thought about asking about Priscilla, because once or twice I thought maybe the

whole thing had been Jason pretending to be a thirteen year old girl. That didn't make any logical sense, and besides, Priscilla could spell, Jason could not.

I wanted to send something to Priscilla to let her know that I was thinking about her, but I was afraid anything with a New York postmark might come under suspicion. I thought about calling, so I asked Jason for his number. Instead, the cocksucker gave me his pager number.

I decided to invite him out for a night on the town, with a girl I claimed to have slept with, to see if maybe we couldn't get a threesome together. I asked for his number, because we were going to have to call while we were out. Reluctantly he gave me his number, with a warning that many people lived in his house, and I should only call during certain hours.

I called the next day, hours before he told me to, just to see if I could get Priscilla on the phone. I figured after she recovered from the shock, she would admire my brilliant conniving. When I called I spoke to her little brother, who must have been about four or five. I asked politely for Priscilla, in my best little kid's voice. The boy said that she wasn't there and didn't know when she would be back. The way he said it made it sound like I may have had the wrong number or something, so I was reluctant to call back. I figured Jason had given me a wrong number to slow me down, but as it turns out, it was the right number all along.

After that, I rarely saw Jason online, and when I did, he just annoyed me with his stupidity. Ever time, he would make plans with me, I would agree, then tell him someone died, or I had to work, or my car broke down. Every time he said he would wait as long as it took for me to come meet him. The whole game went from being kind of fun to depressing and I realized that I wanted to cut my losses and forget the whole thing.

Since then, I have had a few conversations with Jason, and I was so sick of wasting time talking to him, because, to be honest, it's only fun to torment someone who *knows* they're being tormented. Poor Jason is just so fucking inept and slow that even when I would say, in no uncertain terms, that he was a nitwit, he would just lumber on, making clumsy passes. Finally, I just got sick to death of him, and had it out. Here's most of that conversation

PLUG NUT: *sup!*

Lei Me Now: *how are your kids?*

PLUG NUT: *umm! what kids and hey! WHO are you?*

Lei Me Now: *i went down to the hall of records i looked you up... two sons, huh?*



Lei Me Now: *cat got your tongue?*

PLUG NUT: *umm! nope.. maybe??? but anyways dam who are you and what you want?*

Lei Me Now: *i want you to admit that you're a liar, that you have two sons, and that you're sorry for being unfaithful.*

Lei Me Now: *my name is Anastasia Marsei, I am in the phone book.*

PLUG NUT: *if you don't want to meet hey! live me alone. so you like to talk me on the phone about this?*

Lei Me Now: *i just told you what i want. if you don't want to admit what you've done, fine. I can send a copy of this transcript to your girlfriend and you can discuss it with her.*

PLUG NUT: *ah! what ever you want to do???*

Lei Me Now: *admit what you've done and apologize, jason.*

PLUG NUT: *of what???...Hey! i got nothing with her...Hey lets talk it over the phone..*

Lei Me Now: *this is your last chance, or i will be mailing the transcripts, including your letters & chat sessions. or maybe i will just call her later or next time you're at work*

Lei Me Now: **ADMIT IT!! YOU LIED!!**

PLUG NUT: *up to you.. cause i don't even know you.*

Lei Me Now: *if you admit it, i will leave you and her and your two kids alone, if not, i will ruin you. your choice, jason. you may lose custody of bryston and alan. time to admit it, and apologize*

PLUG NUT: *Hey! up to you. So do you want to talk it over the phone?*

Lei Me Now: *why do you spell want with an apostrophe? it's WANT not WAN'T*

PLUG NUT: *well do you like to talk it over the phone?*

Lei Me Now: *are you completely retarded? what are you going to say on the phone that you can't say right here? did you ever finish high school? do you care that you are hurting your own family by running around online trying to meet girls? if i don't see you type: I AM SORRY AND I LIED in the next two minutes, i am signing off and i will ruin your life.*

PLUG NUT: *no.. im not retarded. i would like to talk on it over the phone.*

Lei Me Now: *you can't spell, you make no sense, and you don't understand anything that i am saying.*

PLUG NUT: *and if you do can we meet?*

Lei Me Now: *of course.*

PLUG NUT: *ok sound good*

Lei Me Now: **ADMIT IT!!!!!!**

PLUG NUT: *what ever!!*

Lei Me Now: *okay, fat boy, that's it. it's all over, i am going to fuck you so hard, then i am going to chop your head off*

PLUG NUT: *Hey! wait a min.. i like call you..*

Lei Me Now: *tell me now, then i'll give my #.*

PLUG NUT: **YEAH!** *maybe you give me wrong number..*

PLUG NUT: *Hey i look in phone book theres knoe last name by your last name.. wus up?*

Lei Me Now: *hey! i looked in your house and i saw your girlfriend and two sons, wus up? i feel bad for all of them because they have to live with a big fat stupid loser like you.*

PLUG NUT: *wow.. so know think i'm with her if you know me i their for the kids.*

Lei Me Now: *i am never going to meet you, jason. i know what you look like, and you are repulsive. i would never waste my time with a guy who cheats on his own family. i pity you, because you have no soul, no heart, and one day every evil thing you have done will come back to you. see you in hell, fat boy*

PLUG NUT: *Hey! just to let you know that i not married and also some where around this year i well move back to kauai*

Lei Me Now: *bye jason*

PLUG NUT: *Hey so are you going give me your number? just to let you know only me well be moving.*

Lei Me Now: **I WILL NEVER GIVE YOU MY NUMBER BECAUSE YOU WON'T ADMIT THAT YOU LIED TO ME!!!!**

PLUG NUT: *ok i lie.*

Lei Me Now: *you have 2 sons? I SAW THE BIRTH CERTIFICATES WITH YOUR NAME.*

PLUG NUT: *just to let you knoe i have only one of my name on the Birth Cartificates.*

Lei Me Now: *okay.. my # is (808) 758-6514*

PLUG NUT: *umm! is this a Honolulu number?*

Lei Me Now: *no, it's a tokyo number. i have to go now, i have a date with a cute guy, not like you. i can't believe how stupid you are.*

PLUG NUT: *so when can i call?*

Lei Me Now: *you really are a pathetic loser, aren't you? call when you want to have sex or when hell freezes over, whichever comes last.*

PLUG NUT: *eh i thought things is cool? about the sex part?*

Lei Me Now: *sure jason.*

After that, I confronted him one last time, and for some reason, he had actually asked his girlfriend if she knew me. Of course she had never heard of me, so Jason, using all of his mighty brain power, deduced that I was his girlfriend's sister, Brenda. I decided not to argue with him and end things by admitting that in fact I am Brenda, and that I was never going to meet him. He was very relieved, which is just super. He said he was going to break up with Priscilla's mom and move, and maybe take the kids, in the next year. His reason was that she won't sleep with him. I suggested that maybe he could lose some weight, and he agreed. I will miss him like a sore in my mouth. Then, a few days letter, I got this scared letter from Priscilla, which I found pretty funny:

Josh-

I found a printout of a conversation you had with Jason yesterday. Oh, Lord! I think you went too far. Please stop talking to him. Jason

may be stupid, but my mom is not quite as brainless. If he really told her about you, she could probably make the connection that i'm in on this somehow if she thought about it long enough. Now Jason thinks you're my aunt Brenda, but if he talked to her and found out it wasn't her, they would think something's fishy. Why'd you have to go so far? It may be fun for you, but it won't be fun for me if I get in trouble for this. PLEASE STOP THIS GAME NOW! Tell him you were lying about everything, and you're sorry, and you want to go your separate ways or else just DO NOT TALK TO HIM ANYMORE. This game you have going with him is freaking me out.

Cilla

I apologized and said that I had already ended it with Jason and now everything's cool.

I have gone online sometimes as LeiMeNow to cruise the lesbian rooms to talk to girls. I blended in pretty easily. Whenever someone said they wanted to have cybersex with me, I would give them a quiz to make sure they were actually girls. I used to write for a trade paper about the intimate apparel industry (yes, women's underwear and bras, day in and day out, for almost three years), so I knew all the terminology and brand names, as any girl would. Of course, most guys couldn't pass my quiz by naming three different bra makers, and that eliminated them from my cybertwat action. Once in a while I would try to have cybersex with girls, but most of the time I was at work. I never got turned on doing it, I just thought it was the funniest thing in the world and it helped the time pass more quickly.

On a few occasions I would start getting into something sexual, and the person I was doing it with would use some bad grammar, or some annoying wigger phrase, and that would be it. I would leave without a word. Other times horny guys would try to get into it with me, and I would play along until it was getting good, then I would tell them that I was a guy and that they were gay. That got me some cool hate mail, which I promptly forward to AOL to report them. Works like a charm to piss people off even more. Like I care.

Then I decided to add a Love @ AOL profile (Keyword: Love@AOL), where you can post a picture along with a short bio. I took Cheryl's hottest pic and went to work. After that I got at least seven or eight e-mails a day until I wanted to puke from all the losers. I got sick of the mail from guys, so I changed the profile to say that I was only interested in women and that I was a fitness instructor and a massage therapist. For some reason, the idea that I was bi generated even more mail, especially from guys, who wanted me to jump their girlfriends while they jerked

off and watched. Sounds hot, right? I ignored almost everyone that wrote.

Some weeks later, I got a letter in the mail, six letters in one envelope, actually, with a Hawaiian postmark. I ran upstairs and opened them and sure enough they were from Priscilla. She was back in Hawaii after some trying times, and wanted me to know that she was okay. It was very important to her that we continue to correspond, because for some sick reason, she thinks I have something I can teach her. As much as I try to warn her that I am a sick, cynical prick, she seems to think I am sweet, kind and funny. I wrote back soon after and sent her a nice package full of promotional stuff, stickers and a brief letter welcoming her back into my life. I also included the password for one of my screennames, so we could chat online.

The next weekend I found her online as me, hanging out with the other kids in a Hanson room. She was a little surprised to run into me so soon, and we chatted amicably. It was a little awkward at first, because our circumstances have both changed. The company I worked for at the time was seized by the IRS and put out of business, freeing me up to finally rip out this motherfucking zine, goddammit! She couldn't be free to chat because she was staying with her dad during the week, and her mom on the weekends. She had to wait until they went away to sneak online and talk to me.

So we are talking again, exchanging mail, everything. I don't talk to her during the week, but I really should be working on my zine instead, right?

Just to give you an idea of what she writes like (and you can decide for yourself if she

seems thirteen) here is her response to a letter from me, where I called her "Cilla" as a reference to the King, Elvis:

Dear Josh-

Hey... got your mail. OHHHHH!!!! I've been really fucked over this week (NOT literally)...I am so bad. My life is suckier than ever. I'm ready to leap out of this nest of parents and school and leap into Real True Hard Miserable Life Experience. Fact is, I feel as if I've already leaped, and fickle, malign fate has dropped me back into the parental pot for another five years. I'm still getting reverberations from the summer, still mulling over everything. I'm a Principled Person (but confused when I don't have principles to guide me. Principles got slightly trampled on a certain night recently.) I'm the Observer and Dreamer (Good when the dreaming is imagination, bad when it leads me astray. Did I make a fool of myself with you too often? No comment necessary). I'm also Ambition and Energy, which unfortunately collides and clashes with anything that presents itself as an obstacle to me. And I only want to be left alone to do what I can do so well (not sure what that is yet). For the time being I've got my wish. How long will that last, I wonder. Well, anyway, catch you tomorrow at some time between 3-5 pm okay? Hopefully...damn! life is so unpredictable. I may just drop dead at 2:59 tomorrow. hopefully not... buh-bye now...

Cilla??? :) :) :)

While all of this was going on, I was getting other letters from girls who were curious and thought they might be bi. They found me (as Ana) very attractive and sought my counsel eagerly.

JenjenofOZ wrote to me and said that she was just bursting to try sex with a woman. Apparently she had a woman in mind, but

wasn't sure how to approach it. I told her to be specific and I would see if I could help. Here's her letter:

Ana:

I have a few minutes before I leave. Please help me as I am serious. How does a woman go about finding out if another woman is bi? (without getting slapped or ridiculed [sic] throughout the town?) This hasn't happened to me.....yet. I figured I'm safe with AOL as you have said your preference. When I said I was busting.... I truly am!! I want so badly to make love to a woman. My hormones are going absolutely nuts these days. Last night I rented XXX movies about women. Beautiful, very very! Ana, I'm not a kook.... women are so very sexy. So tiger like! I want to give that part of me to someone before I die. (No, I'm not dieing [sic] now, but before I do!!!!) Or at least before I get: baggy, saggy, draggy and gaggy! :) Talk to you later.

Your new AOL friend.....Jenny

Sure, her grammar and spelling are heinous, but her enthusiasm made me want to write back.

dear jen-

i guess when i first discovered that i was bi, it wasn't really a matter of me finding other women. what happened was, a woman that i was friends with and found attractive came on to me. it was when i realized that i liked it so much that i knew what i wanted.... there are many women out there with the same feelings, yourself included, who are interested in experimenting. they are in the same boat as you are... so, to figure out what you could say, imagine yourself as a woman who was attracted to you, and ask yourself how you would like to be approached. maybe go out for a night of fun, drink a little (it helps other people to be a little less uptight about it) and maybe at the end of the night, if you end up close, together, and without men, you could make a small move.... how i would do it would be to do something that evening that left both of you turned on, but unsatisfied.... i think sometimes when you say to another woman that you are attracted to them, they get scared, they get turned on, and they start to worry about what other people think.... i always feel it is better to try to send out signals.... if you go to a strip show, or to see a sexy movie (i recommend maybe a night at home on the couch with some drinks and the movie Bound) you could always try starting with a

Ana Goes Wild



LeiMeNow

 Send Me E-mail!

Gender: Female **Marital Status:** Single

Age: 23 - 30

Region: Other

Occupation: Fitness Instructor/Massage Therapist

Likes: Swimming, sleeping in, men and bi women.

Dislikes: Cigarettes, possessive people, aggressive men.

Good Qualities: I am very sexual and very giving.

Bad Habits: I like to sleep late.

With a Million Dollars I Would...

I would buy a house someplace peaceful and have some friends move in with me.

I'd Also Like to Say...

I am very open, bisexual and always looking for new people to meet online and in real life. I am sorry to say that I am shallow and like attractive people very much, both boys and girls.

Love @ AOL

massage or something like that, to get the physical contact started, and go from there.... if you ask most women, they only like men, but if you get them comfortable and kiss them, they'll decide differently....

ana

I also got a truckload of letters from horny guys every day. It didn't matter that my profile said I wanted women. It made no difference that I (as Ana) was out of everyone's league. The letters just came and came.

Some total jerkoff with the name "BigErns007" sent me two letters in one day, a few minutes apart. Please write to him, ladies, because he is hung. Or at least he should be. I was going to put "[sic]" all over his letter, but if you can't see the mistakes yourself, I can't help you any more. The only thing I did to change it was to take out extra periods and spaces because they caused weird line breaks.

HEY..... WASSUP? YOUR HOT! I HAVE TO SAY I AM IMPRESSED.....I NOW HAVE A WHOLE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON WEB SIGHTS.....IM 21/M VERRY HOT IM 5'11, MAYBE 6 FT WHO'S COUNTING REALLY..... I MEAN OTHER THAN MY MOM.....YOU KNOW HOW THEY ARE..I DONT HAVE A PICTURE TODAY BUT,IF YOU EMAIL ME SOME GOOD STUFF ILL SET ONE UP..... OH,SHIT..... HAZEL EYES BROWN HAIR..... GREAT ASS!!!!!!.....PLUS THE I,INTELLIGENT! I AM A COLLEGE GRAD..... U.F. GATOR... AND I LIKE HOT GIRLS.....I LIKE THE PROFILE..... BIG ERN'S.....P.S IM HUNG.....

And then, letter #2

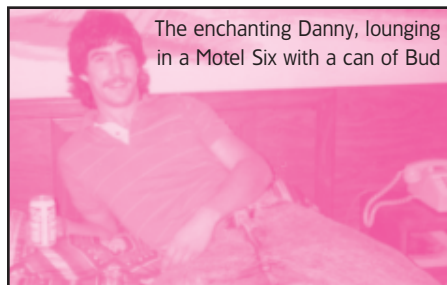
HEY WHATS UP ANA? I SENT YOU AN E-MAIL NUT, I THINK MY HOST DROP ME.....I HADNT READ YOUR WOMEN ONLY INTEREST.....I UNDERSTAND YOUR LOVE FOR CHOCH!...I LIKE PRETTY CHOCH, THATS WHY IM WRITTING YOU....I GUARANTEE I HAVE BETTER QUALITIES THEN ANY MAN IN MIAMI..... HOPING YOUR IN MIAMI..... ANYWAYS,I EAT ASSCUNTA AND I GUARANTEE YOU SOME FUN FREAKY SEX,AND IM HOT 100% GUARANTEED..IN ADDITION IM A COLLEGE GRAD..... THIS PAST SUMMER.....I WILL SEND YOU A PICTURE AFTER YOU EMAIL ME A GO!BIG ERN'S..... P.S IM HUNG.....

I don't know what he means by "I EAT ASSCUNTA" but it sure sounds hot. I forwarded both his letters to AOL so they could kick him off, so blame me if you can't get a piece of his action. I can't believe people as dumb as this can get into college.

I'd also like to give a special commendation to the single stupidest person that wrote. His

scrennname is "RBesher" (real name: Danny), and he attached a picture of himself with this lovely note (I swear I did not doctor this at all):

your so fuckin pretty i wished you liked men too you look like a model and if i ever seen you inperson i would have to try to comb on to you because cumming in your sexy body would be the alttimate clymax



At the same time that Priscilla drifted back into my life, I got a letter from Nici Sterling, a porn star. She saw my personal on AOL and asked me if I might be interested in being in some movies with her. At first I thought it was a goof, but after thinking about it for a little while, I wanted to try it. I realized that I was unemployed and I was having trouble finding something else to do. I'm not shy about sex, and could probably perform for the cameras. Then I realized something awful: I'm a guy, and she wants that hot model to do porno, not me. That didn't stop me. I thought I could trick her into sending me some of her porno movies, just so I could get an idea of what she wanted me to do.

Once I told her I was interested, she gave me the straight dope. I could start out just doing a video by myself where I would strip (to music if I wanted) and then masturbate to climax. That sounded pretty easy. Then I could do some girl on girl stuff, and then graduate to a man. I told her that I wasn't sure if I wanted to do a porno movie with a guy, but she said that in order to make it in the business, I would have to do at least two of the following three: girl on girl, anal sex, or facial come-shots. If I could do all three, I might someday be on her level.

I waited a few days to reply, to make it seem like I was really mulling it over. I wrote back and said that I was afraid that those massive porn-star cocks might hurt my back door. I asked how she got into the business and a few days later I got this letter:

*FROM: NiciSXXX
TO: LeiMeNow*

Ana: Let's meet for an on-line chat soon. Give me some times when you'll be available, and I'll write back confirming one of those times. Sounds like we're at the point where we need to discuss this in much more detail.

My husband works on the production end of

adult films, so you wouldn't know him. He's never been an adult actor--always behind the scenes, which is just fine with me. He's very generous sharing me, of course.

I recommend that you rent a variety of porn videos and watch them, Ana, just so you have an idea of what's popular (hey, there are tougher jobs to have). As I said, girl-girl stuff is great, but if you truly want to be successful, you'll need to do boy-girl scenes a majority of the time, and I want to make sure you know what's conventional.

As for how I started, I was in Britain doing photo shoots when an American video director approached me and asked if I'd consider doing porn. I was hesitant at first. Like you, I love sex more than anything, but I had major questions about safety, etc., and I had to reconcile myself to the fact that some people would think less of me for being an adult actress. I knew the money was great, especially for hard workers (and I've always worked my buns off doing whatever I'm involved in). So I decided, after some time, to do it, and to do it full blast. I knew I couldn't be half-interested.

Clearly I made the right decision. I love what I do, I get paid outlandish sums of money, and I'm still able to have a fulfilling relationship with my husband and raise lots of horses. A dream life, really. I know I won't be able to continue at this pace for long, which is why my hubby and I decided to get started working on the video end of things. That way, when I'm no longer a prime piece of real estate for porn (body-wise), I'll still be in the business--which is what I know best.

You don't have to do anal, but it's good that you may be open to it at some point in the future. Many girls won't do anal at first, but gradually they get curious enough and try it (and some can't believe they've ever lived without it!). But take it at your pace. No hurry. Do what you feel comfortable doing, and let the rest come naturally. You're right: some of those cocks are massive, but that's actually a good thing sometimes. :)

Get in touch; let's chat.

Nici

I was impressed by her command of the language and how straightforward she was. I don't think I have ever seen her in a porno movie, but I was hoping she might send me some to enjoy.

A few days ago I finally had a chance to chat with her, here are some highlights from that conversation:

You have just entered "Lei Me Now Chat92" NiciSxxx: okay...well let's get right to it...can you give me your vital stats?

Lei Me Now: sure. 5' 7" 115lbs. i haven't taken measurements, but i am a 34C

NiciSxxx: *sounds good...and where are you?*
 Lei Me Now: *i am in new york city for at least another month*
 NiciSxxx: *have you ever thought about adult films?*
 Lei Me Now: *about being in them? i have had fantasies about it, but i have never thought about pursuing a career in it*
 NiciSxxx: *do you ever watch them?*
 Lei Me Now: *i watch them if someone else gets them for me, but i don't like the looks i get at the video store. once i bought some by mail order and then i got on every mailing list in the world*
 NiciSxxx: *that happens....did you enjoy them?*
 Lei Me Now: *of course, but i don't think i have ever seen you though*
 NiciSxxx: *your loss :)*
 Lei Me Now: *i like jenna jameson*
 NiciSxxx: *jenna's nice, but full of herself :)*



Does Jenna Jameson look full of herself?

Lei Me Now: *i don't know, i have never met her or anything*
 NiciSxxx: *so you have a sense of what's expected of you then?*
 Lei Me Now: *oh, sure, i am a big girl*
 NiciSxxx: *you're comfortable with facials?*
 Lei Me Now: *i usually swallow, but not swallowing would be okay too*
 NiciSxxx: *you'd be expected to do both*
 Lei Me Now: *that's fine*
 NiciSxxx: *what about threesomes... or more?*
 Lei Me Now: *as long as i could meet the other people before in a comfortable setting*
 Lei Me Now: *i don't think i could just be thrown into a room and be told to fuck everyone in it*
 NiciSxxx: *of course...nothing's ever a surprise... it's all scripted*
 Lei Me Now: *you mean it's written down?*
 NiciSxxx: *not every last detail, but you'd be surprised how scripted it is. it's still enjoyable, don't worry :)*
 Lei Me Now: *i probably would be surprised... do you have any scripts?*
 NiciSxxx: *i do in L.A., yes...I can certainly send you one*
 Lei Me Now: *i would like to see one, and maybe a video or two of what you want. then maybe i could make a home video (i have an 8mm video camera) and send it to you as a tryout of sorts, so you can see what i can do, and i can see if i am comfortable with it*
 NiciSxxx: *that probably wouldn't be necessary,*

but i would like to see a body pic of you. the first scene we'd do would be you solo...I think i explained that to you. then, if you were comfortable, you and i could do a scene... then we'd let you pick a stud to romp around with in the third scene
 Lei Me Now: *that sounds like a good plan. i feel so flattered that you picked me*
 NiciSxxx: *you're gorgeous...that was easy, you also seem to have a porn starlet's soul [I didn't realize that porn starlet's had souls!—Ed.]*
 Lei Me Now: *awwww, that is so sweet. you have very good grammar you know*
 NiciSxxx: *i'm British...I had to learn*
 NiciSxxx: *didn't i send you a pic yet?*
 Lei Me Now: *NO!*
 NiciSxxx: *okay..I'll send you a couple.. hold on. it sounds like you're very interested...is that right?*
 Lei Me Now: *yes, definitely. i swear, i have been thinking about at night, when i'm alone*
 NiciSxxx: *Okay...I'll be back in L.A. on Oct. 26th...you can call then and we'll chat.*
 Lei Me Now: *that sounds great!*
 NiciSxxx: *i need your name and phone # for my records*
 Lei Me Now: *Anastasia Marsei, (212) 838-8312 [for the record, this is the junkie's disconnected number—Jøsh]*
 NiciSxxx: *i won't call, don't worry. Where will you be after NY?*
 Lei Me Now: *after NY, i am going to go to LA to stay with my sister and hook up with you. that should be like the early part of november.. then back to hawaii, unless something happens to make me stay :)*
 NiciSxxx: *okay...sounds good. it's really up to you. someone with your kind of looks can be successful*
 Lei Me Now: *do you think maybe you could send one of your videos and a script for me to look at?*
 NiciSxxx: *sure...address?*
 Lei Me Now: *send it c/o my sister*
 NiciSxxx: *what's her name? is she interested too?*
 Lei Me Now: *her name is Jenne [that's true]. she might be interested, but i doubt her husband [lie] would approve!!!!*
 Lei Me Now: *you're really recruiting, aren't you!!*
 NiciSxxx: *lol...well, heck, bring the whole family*
 Lei Me Now: *My mom still looks pretty good, she's only 43.*
 NiciSxxx: *are you worried about what your family will think if they find out?*
 Lei Me Now: *not at all, they have always supported me. i don't think they would watch, but they would love me no matter what!*
 NiciSxxx: *there's a real push for older women now, so 43 is certainly not looked down upon :)*
 Lei Me Now: *i'll bring it up over dinner!*
 NiciSxxx: *LOL okay...well, i need to run, but i've put you down as a definite*
 Lei Me Now: *that's what i want to hear!*
 NiciSxxx: *you can always back out, but i think you're going to really enjoy yourself. let me just ask you... why do you want to do porn?*

Lei Me Now: *to tell you the truth, i am always looking for a thrill and i think that would be taking my sex life to the next level*
 NiciSxxx: *that's a good answer... you'll find that your sex life will improve dramatically.*
 NiciSxxx: *and, depending how ambitious you are, you'll make tons of \$*
 Lei Me Now: *also, i want to try new things, and if i commit, then i have no choice but to try it. the money would be nice, but really i just want to find a bigger kick*
 NiciSxxx: *how do you like to be made love to?*
 Lei Me Now: *it depends on my mood.*
 Lei Me Now: *the best sex i ever had was very rough, but the times i have had with women have been slow and gentle and loving, and i LOVE that too*
 NiciSxxx: *how rough? what did he do? (I like rough sex too)*
 Lei Me Now: *he used his big hands on me from behind and got me worked up. i couldn't stop him because it felt good.*
 NiciSxxx: *you mean spanking?*
 Lei Me Now: *he pinned me against a chair*
 NiciSxxx: *mmmm*
 Lei Me Now: *no, he was using his hands on my pussy, really working them in. i like big hands on a man and i got so wet, and right as i was getting revved up, he pulled down his pants and just plunged right in*
 NiciSxxx: *should have captured that on video :)*
 Lei Me Now: *don't i know it, but i replay it in my head sometimes when i masturbate*
 NiciSxxx: *i've had rape fantasies my whole life...depraved, but definitely arousing for me*
 Lei Me Now: *rape implies that i am saying no, but i am sometimes into being a little forced*
 NiciSxxx: *i hear you...would you ever consider a gang bang?*
 Lei Me Now: *maybe i should start out slow, Nici!*
 NiciSxxx: *oh, i didn't mean NOW*
 Lei Me Now: *i know.... i was just kidding...*

Since then she e-mailed that she is sending a video and script when she gets back to L.A. while I try and convince Juli that she should be Ana on the phone, if only for the purposes of finishing the story. Then again, since I am almost finished with this, it will give all of you a good reason to get **Negative Capability #2**.

Priscilla just sent me a long letter about what's going on in her life and how she is doing (very well, thanks for asking). I am also working on getting her to write her version of events, which I will edit so I look cool and she looks silly. Or maybe the other way around. No, I'll just leave it as it is.

I wonder to myself sometimes what the hell is wrong with me. I think it is just a game, and as soon as it ceases to entertain me, I'll think up a new game. Juli doesn't seem to mind, though she often wonders aloud about my secret life as a pedophile/bisexual fitness instructor/porn star. Maybe I could get her into a three-way with Anastasia, I have her home number.



WHILE I DON'T ACTUALLY BELIEVE IN HELL it works as a useful reference point for wacky religious types as well as regular folks from all walks of life. Here are some things that that I think are so overwhelmingly evil that every time I try to write a well-reasoned argument against them I end up screaming, cursing and destroying my own possessions.



FUR, MEAT, HUNTING, VIVISECTION, or any related industries. Listen to me very carefully: If you kill for a living, or cause suffering for a living, or make your way in this world by intentionally, selfishly and recklessly using or exploiting animals, I know that you will suffer for it. I also want you to know that I hate you, and I hope every member of your family gets incurable, painful ball cancer, including the girls.

STEVEN BOCHCO. I know there are some people who mistakenly think that his work is "edgy" or "controversial." To those of you who think this man is anything more than a shameless halfwit who knows how to piss off censors

The Eighth And Ninth

MICROSOFT, BILL GATES, and anything even tangentially related to them. I can taste my own fucking bile just typing that asshole's name. Even NBC, the peaCOCK network has been forever tainted by association with that awful piece of shit MSNBC.



DISNEY, THE DISNEY CHANNEL, DISNEY MOVIES, and of course, all of their bullshit subsidiaries and front companies like Hollywood Records (WHAT A FUCKING CREATIVE NAME!) and Hyperion Books. I also hate anyone that likes Disney, their movies, their songs, their merchandise or their fucking theme parks. They even have an exclusive promo deal with McDonald's! To be blunt, anything that has anything to do with Disney I utterly despise.

AMERICA ONLINE. Not only are the connections unreliable and slow, not only is every spare fucking inch of real estate covered with some ad for some shit I don't need, not only is Steve Case the most pompous know-nothing cocksucker to walk the earth, not only do stupid AOL members clog up the internet and usenet with their mindless chatter, not only does it crash and freeze up for no reason on a regular basis and not only does it conflict with so many other programs, but the fucking thing wastes more than 10MB of hard drive space with "art." And the worst thing is, I can't seem to get rid of it. I am already signed up, and I still get a new floppy (for Windoze, OF COURSE) every other week.

WIRED MAGAZINE. First of all, cutting edge technology is WIRE-LESS, you assholes. If something is wired it means it is old. Secondly, for all of the cutting edge design, you'd think they could write about something that has a grasp on reality. Instead we get long involved stories about live video via the web (Yeah, I am so sure that the web is going to put an end to TV, dickheads!), ten-years-too-late reports on Burning Man, and of course, fascinating first-hand accounts of some yuppie asshole's trek up the Amazon with his laptop, all done up in metallic and fluorescent colors. If nothing else, it looks like some other big names are about to enter the "cyber" magazine arena (with *Time Digital*, *Forbes ASAP* and a new publication from IDG), which means *Wired* will probably die soon, just like they should.

by showing a fat guy's naked hairy ass, I have two words: *COP ROCK*. Oh, wait. Make that four words, if you include *CAPITAL CRITTERS*, his unbelievably awful attempt to cash in on the brilliant, edgy, original, and very funny show *The Simpsons*. Every single show he has done has attempted to manufacture controversy to get attention (*Murder One* used OJ, *Brooklyn South* used blowing off someone's head), and precious few ever last.

WIGGERS. I spent a few years living in lower class communities (divorce is always hardest on the children, sniff sniff), surrounded by angry black people who wanted to kill me because I was white. And guess what? I am white, so I talk like a fucking white person. There is nothing cool, rebellious, interesting, daring or different about a white person trying to be cool by using bad grammar and talking like an uneducated black person. Be who you are, not who you think is cool, okay, MC Wonderbread?

NEW JERSEY. I hold them personally personally responsible for such affronts to human dignity as: Jon Bon Jovi (who is really Bongiovi, something much uglier), Bruce Springsteen (the single biggest faux-working man I have ever seen), Great Adventure (the nastiest, most crowded, most overhyped, most boring, most expensive place I have ever had the misfortune of driving way too long to get to), the ugliest accent this side of Staten Island, the worst smells per capita than any other state in the union (this includes sulphur mines and rendering plants in other states: they all pale in comparison), the most bad hair, acid-washed jeans, dumb macho assholes, the nastiest muscle cars, and of course, some of the worst drivers ever. If you live in New York City and go to clubs, the worst places are those that cater to the "Bridge & Tunnel" crowd, meaning goombahs from Brooklyn and white trash from Jersey. Whenever someone cuts you off in their car, or runs a light, or makes an illegal right turn on red, 9 times out of 10 you'll see Jersey plates on the car. Their attempts to claim ownership of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island were laughable. They are like New York's ugly, retarded cousin that is forced to live in a dank, dirty basement, and if they didn't let us dump toxic waste (and human waste) by the ton in their front yard, I might suggest that we nuke them and expand the city across the Hudson.

CHRISTINE BARANSKI. I know you may not know who she is, but she is the annoying, big-toothed shallow cunt on *Cybill*. I have seen the show twice, both times at my mom's house during dinner (you try arguing with her to put on something decent). I saw her being interviewed at some awards show, and this stupid, dried up old twatfarm was regaling Joan Rivers and her twit daughter with a discussion of the fabulousness of her fucking gown for fifteen minutes. Every time I see some actor whining about the phonies in Hollywood, I know they are referring to this monstrously ugly, over-the-hill stankhole. If you see her, please kill her.



Christine "Cunt" Baranski does her impression of Macaulay Culkin.

CD-ROM MAGAZINES. I have purchased a copy of every single one of them, and guess what? THEY ALL SUCK. Why is that? Well, it is hard to draw talent to a start-up operation, I understand that. The first problem is that every single one that I bought had some flaw that made it crash, or came with some crappy shovelware that didn't work. The other major problem they all share is that they always choose style over substance, and most people buy magazines to READ, not to stare at the pretty colors. If I wanted to see pretty colors, I would drop acid, assholes. And to the former employees of these companies: I am glad you tricked someone into buying nice digital cameras and top-of-the-line Macs for you, but look where it got you..... nowhere!

BILL MAHER. This stupid, balding, ugly, witless jerkoff has made a career out of acting like he knows it all. He reminds me of that bumpersticker that says, "Those of you who *think* you know everything are very annoying to those of who do [know everything]." He has made some unbelievably awful movies (please, go rent *Pizza Man* and *Amazon Women in the Avocado Jungle of Death* if you don't believe me, IF you can find them!), failed over and over as a stand-up, and has even had the nerve to write a novel based on his life as a second-rate comic. In addition, this obnoxious prick has been known to berate assistants, use women, treat everyone around him like garbage, and still not make me laugh. Of course, an ego like his was not satisfied getting low ratings on Comedy Central, he had to try to cash in on his "success" by moving to ABC, where he is routinely trounced by infomercials for hair in a can. Don't worry, Billy-boy, it will all be over soon.



Anne Rice does her impression of Christine Baranski for me.

ANNE RICE. First of all, anyone that is over fifteen and still dresses like a goth should be hung upside down until their brain liquifies and comes pouring out of their nostrils. Secondly, I just read a story about Anne Rice which I will quote:

Death by Sleep

Vampire author Anne Rice tells Access Hollywood that she "died recently. I wanted to commit suicide - I was real depressed." So she "died" for a few days. "I slept and slept

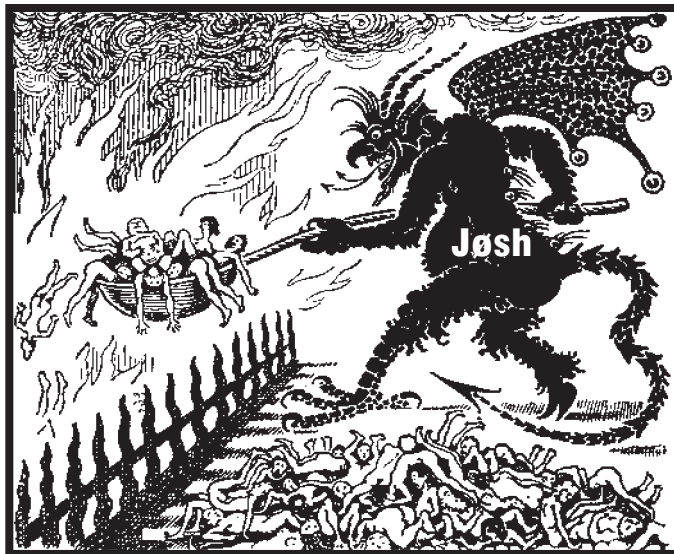
and slept for three days, and then I felt refreshed and I was alive again. I recommend this." She said the "hardest part about being dead" is having to go to the bathroom.

If you're not laughing at how stupid that sounds, please take poison. Third of all, I hate people that use initials instead of their name (with the exception of J.D. Salinger and D.B. Cooper) or worse, change their real name, like this stupid, ugly, no-talent, wacko, poseur, vampire bitch. On top of that, this cunt has the nerve to use a pen name on top of her changed name to write godawful soft-core porno.

Beyond those assholes, there are things residing in the ninth circle of Hell that are so fucking evil that I can't even begin to write a single thing about them because the weight of their collective evil is so heavy that it crushes me:

Baby Boomers. The French. People that send bulk e-mail offering ANYTHING. The IRS. The Postal Service. The Military, especially NASA, I mean, boy are they a bunch of jerkoffs who waste too much money. If we can't solve the problems right here what the fuck are we doing spending billions to send a Buick to Jupiter? Also, I just love how the military lies, covers things up, abuses power, experiments on their own people, obfuscate every investigation into its institutional evils, and inevitably, a person comes forward, tells their horror story and NOTHING EVERY CHANGES. So why is anyone still surprised? If you want to get fucked over, pick a service, pick a challenge, set yourself apart, from the smart people. Everyone in professional sports, but especially Michael Jordan, who is a fucking MORON. Gloria Allred, Johnnie Cockring and every single personal injury lawyer. You all deserve brain lesions and bone cancer. Every TV newsmagazine that isn't *60 Minutes* and every tabloid TV show and every talk show, including that pompous hippo Oprah. Joel Schumacher (NEVER FORGET *D.C. CAB!*) and everyone responsible for the awful Batman movies. Stage moms. Michael Crichton, the most arrogant prick to murder millions of trees this century. Anyone who smokes cigars. Bike messengers who ride on the sidewalk, scream or blow whistles so that they can continue to break the law and show a deliberate disregard for their fellow humans (luckily they keep getting killed violently, like they so richly deserve to).

I hope that in future issues I will be tackle these topics with a ferocity rarely seen. Most screeds that people write start out strong and then fizzle because the hatred isn't hot enough in intensity. The paper is smoldering in anticipation of what I will write! There's another incentive to subscribe now, goddammit!



Cover This

I
LOVE

COVER

SONGS. I don't like when people call them "re-makes" because very rarely are any of the songs really "re-made." Usually some band that has run out of creative juice throws a cover on their album, just to establish that they have influences. That is usually pretty fucking annoying, because that stupid cover will invariably force me to buy a shitty CD just to hear the cover. A perfect example was a CD by Wonderboy called *Abbey Road to Ruin*. I read a review that said their cover of "Build Me Up Buttercup" was really good, and the rest of the album was almost as good. Bullshit. The cover song, the CD, and that reviewer, wherever the fuck he may be, all blow rhino as far as I am concerned.

I have decided to do a few reviews, but they will only be of cover albums. Sometimes one band does a CD full of covers, and sometimes a bunch of bands all cover one other band. It doesn't matter. To me, a good cover song takes the great elements of a song I know and makes me see them in a new way. Sometimes a good cover can make me want to go and check out the original artist being covered, or, in other cases, you do a good cover on a tribute CD, I will probably pick up your next CD. I personally purchased every single one of these CDs at retail (or close to it, when I could find a promo copy), so don't get the idea that some record company guy traded coke & whores for a good review. The only one I didn't pay for was *We Are Not Devo*, and Michael Gentile at the *NY Press* gave it to me, not knowing that I like covers so much.

In addition to these reviews, I would like to make a very specific offer. I have about eight tapes full of really cool, rare cover songs. I will be happy to make you a copy of one of them if you do exactly as I say. You must send me a tape of your favorite cover songs, and make sure the sound quality is good, because I have no time for shitty bootlegs. If you know the name of the original artist who did the song, please put it in parentheses after the song's title on the label. For example, if you want to include a cover of "Whip It," after the song add (Devo), okay? In addition, because I am making this offer and you are free to ignore it, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope and a blank, 100 minute tape (I like TDK SA-X 100s myself, but any high bias tape will suffice). I will make you a copy of one of my cover tapes. The covers I have are all over the place, as my reviews will show. If you do not follow all of the rules (your tape of covers, return envelope + enough postage, blank tape for my covers) I will laugh at you and never send you a thing. Be sure to check my list at the end, please. Thanks.



Dedicated

I hate the Grateful Dead. I hate deadheads. I hate hippies. I hate the smell of patchouli oil. I lived on Haight Street in San Francisco for two years, and quite frankly, if there was a disease that only killed hippies, I would help spread it any way I could. I bought this CD for one reason: it has the last original Jane's Addiction song ever recorded before the breakup. Their cover of "Ripple" is really good, though I have never heard the original. The liner notes mention Robyn Hitchcock,

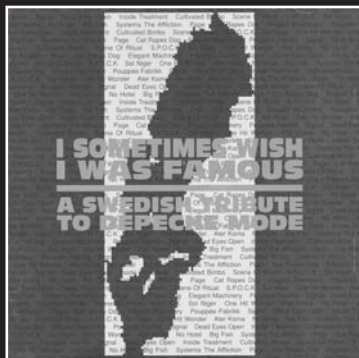
my favorite musician in the whole world, and that is very cool. Otherwise, the CD is just awful. Every song is done with such reverence that it is sickening. The only people that don't totally embarrass themselves are Midnight Oil and Warren Zevon. The only other decent track is by Dwight Yoakam. I hate country more than any other kind of music, but this guy knows what to do. He turns "Truckin'" into the relaxed country song it was always meant to be. Also, I loved Dwight in *Sling Blade*, so he is cool with me. The worst example of hippie shit is a band called The Harshed Mellows, a name so goddamn awful I would like to personally wish for all members to get eye cancer right now. Grade: D



Something About Joy Division

When I picked this up, I had read that it was "an Italian tribute to Joy Division," whatever that means. Wacky, uneven, bizarre, daring, freaky and disturbing might come close to describing this thing. You have never heard of anyone on this CD, but that doesn't matter, it just removes false expectations. The Difference does "Colony" as if it was four or five different songs, all of them discordant and very intense. I like that very much. "Love Will Tear Us Apart" is done as a heart-wrenching piano ballad by The Carnival of Fools, and quite frankly, making this song more somber and serious makes it seem almost profound. My personal favorite is Comic Spoilers doing "Decades" like it was the soundtrack for some kind of hillbilly jamboree. It is mocking and serious at the same time, and is certainly the

kind of new interpretation I was craving for the Joy Division catalog. The only serious misfires come when bands take a fast song and make it drag like T. and the Starburst do when they absolutely destroy the classic "Warsaw." Grade: B-



I Sometimes Wish I Was Famous: A Swedish Tribute to Depeche Mode

I split this import with my sister, since she was also a Depeche Mode fan in high school, thanks to my negative influence. The title comes from DM's very first single, "I Sometimes Wish I Was Dead," which was actually very upbeat, even for Depeche Mode. Most of this is awful, I mean, so awful that hardcore DM fans will find it offensive. Most of the covers are of early or rare DM (read: shit no one but me knows). Do you know "Ice Machine," "Puppets," or "Sun and the



Rainfall"? Didn't think so. The songs you do know are done using this formula: follow the original synth programming exactly, replace vocal with Darth Vader impression, slow down song, press record.

There is one band called S.P.O.C.K. that are pictured in the liner notes, and I just have to include it, because not only are these dorks huge fans of DM, they also love Star Trek (coincidence? I think not). Grade: D

TV Terror

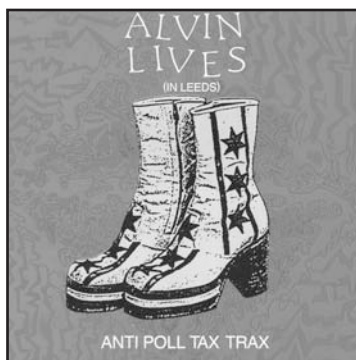
I got this as a promo somewhere because it was two full CDs of covers of TV theme songs for \$6. That's about what it is worth, so do not pay more. Some of it is very funny, like the Nine Inch Nails influenced "Addams Family" and the funky rockabilly version of "Spiderman." The rest of it is pretty generic, it almost sounds like it could be like three bands pretending to be thirty-six different ones. Most of them sound like weak Skinny

Puppy-type industrial or worse, 80's style Depeche Mode goth fests. Even their names are jokes so inside that they aren't funny. Unless you have heard of My Glass Beside Yours, Sweat Engine, Oneiroid Psychosis or Liquid Sex Decay, you won't know many bands here, except maybe Hate Dept. and Alien Sex Fiend (yeah, that make-up thing is STILL pretty cool, dude). Grade: C-



Replicants

I love *Blade Runner*, and it is, without a doubt, my favorite movie of all time. These dickheads have sullied that good name with this CD, and they should be ashamed. So should a band called The Tyrell Corporation, but that's getting off topic. The only decent song here is "Just What I Needed" (Cars), and that one is just a modern, more machinery-laden interpretation that doesn't add anything. Then, they do a slow dirge version of "Silly Love Songs" (Wings), on the same CD that they cover the most virulent anti-Paul song from John Lennon's catalog, "How Do You Sleep?" I guess they have no sense of irony, but I do. Everything else here blows, though "Destination Unknown" (Missing Persons) blows slightly less than the rest. Grade: D



Alvin Lives (in Leeds) [Anti-Poll Tax Trax]

I got this one because it contains the very rare version of "Kung Fu Fighting" (Carl Douglas) done a cappella by Robyn Hitchcock and Andy Metcalfe. That song is just amazing.

Otherwise this CD suffers from a common ailment, bad bands doing songs that sucked originally. There are a few really cool things, more interesting than good if you ask me. I love 5:30, and their cover of "My Sweet Lord" (George Harrison) is very sweet. Cud really fucks around with "Bohemian Rhapsody," (Queen) a song that doesn't often get covered at all, and somehow it works. The 14 Iced Bears (where do they come up with these names?) do an incredibly funny version of "Summer Nights," that cheeseball love song from *Grease*. I really do like this CD, and all benefits went to fight the short-lived Poll Tax in the UK. Good luck finding it, though! Grade: B



Mozart TV

This CD is an odd duck, and that's obvious as soon as I tell you what it is: a CD of covers of TV theme songs, done in a classical style that intentionally apes specific composers. For example, they do the "Mr. Ed Theme" in the style of Rodrigo (which means classical guitar) and the music they play during the last part of *Jeopardy!* in the style of Handel (read: on a harpsichord). Want to hear the *Friends* theme if Vivaldi had done it? Jump on in, kiddies! I don't get much of the classical references, and many of these themes are difficult to recognize until you get to the chorus. Still, a classical read of the *Cheers* theme is pretty cool, but *The X-Files* theme is totally mutilated. Some ideas are only funny in the conceptual stages but fall apart when you actually try and do them. By the way, I won this CD from *Time Out NY*, so don't think for a second that I would pay for this thing. Grade: C

Random (A Tribute To Gary Numan)

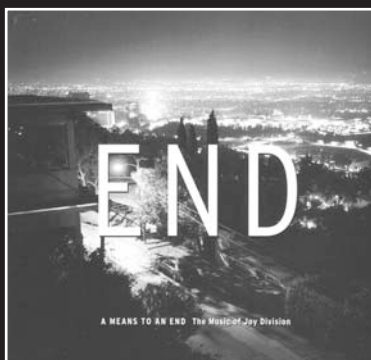
This has got to be one of the coolest looking CDs that I own. It is solid black, with a black case, black letters and silver highlights. I am sure they are going for some kind of technological look, and it works. The odd thing is, Gary Numan is not someone that anyone thinks about as a "good songwriter." Yet, in my own collection I have covers of him by

Foo Fighters (from the *X-Files* CD), Smashing Pumpkins and Replicants. None of those covers made it onto this collection, which is two full CDs. And, according to *Ice*, the super cool CD newsletter, there is a third one coming that is all by techno bands. I didn't bother to scan the cover because there isn't much to see, but there is plenty to hear. Some bands you know, others are probably one-shot deals. Surprisingly, I have seen reviews of this ranging from F to A-, from *CMJ* to *Spin* to *Entertainment Weekly*. So what do I think? Most of it is really good, though I wish there were more covers of songs I know. A couple of songs get covered twice ("We Are So Fragile" and of course, "Are Friends 'Electric'?") Damon Albarn is fantastic, as is Jesus Jones (I thought they died!), Pop Will Eat Itself (I love them for reasons I could never articulate), Sukia and even those jackoffs in Gravity Kills. There are a couple of clunkers, but I figure for \$15 for two full CDs, you definitely get your money's worth. Grade: B



We Are Not Devo

Devo's main songwriter Mark Mothersbaugh is nothing if not prolific. Almost every time I see a show on TV, especially if it is a cartoon, I see his name in the credits as the author of one song or another [As an aside, the day I wrote this, I was telling Juli about my observation. As I finished explaining, the credits for some crappy new show rolled by, and I swear, he was there]. If you only know "Whip It," that's fine, because Devo is one of those bands that I think it's okay if *you* like them, I just don't care for them myself. This CD is actually good because not only are the versions modern, many of them add something new. SNHU's "Uncontrollable Urge" is pretty fucking urgent, Lagwagon's "Freedom of Choice" is pretty rockin' cool, and the name Don Knotts Overdrive is pretty damn funny, if you ask me. Even if you don't know the originals, almost every band here at least makes a sincere attempt to do something different with the songs, and that's what they ought to be doing. Grade: B+



A Means To An End

I have been a huge fan of Joy Division for longer than I can remember, so I was really torqued up when a second CD of covers came out, this time by people I have (sort of) heard of. This one is kind of a disappointment, because again, they don't get the point. It isn't cool to do a literal reading of a song. It is even worse when you take something as serious as Joy Division and make it sound even MORE serious. Codeine absolutely fuck up the beauty of "Atmosphere" with awful vocals and a sparse arrangement. Some awful band called Stanton-Miranda let a FUCKING GIRL sing "Love Will Tear Us Apart" in a voice higher and more annoying than Tiffany's. The only song I can still listen to from this CD is Desert Storm doing "Warsaw" because they are almost goofing on the heaviness of the record by including the "3-5-0-1-2-5-GO!" that introduces the original version. Grade: D



Smashing Pumpkins- The Aeroplane Flies High

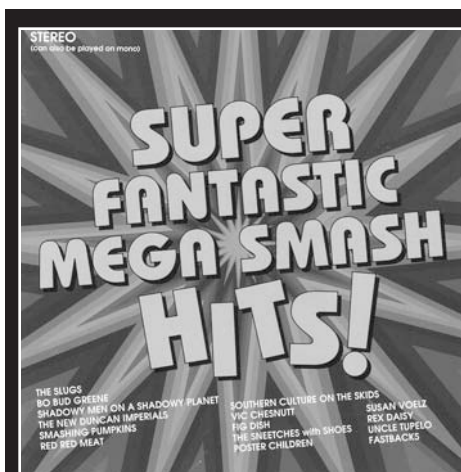
I used to really hate them, now I only sort of hate them. The only problem is, their last album was really good, in spite of what assholes they are. The reason I got this was that it has a whole bunch of b-sides (and the ones for "Zero" are, bar none, some of the best b-sides EVER, and "Tribute to Johnny" is one of the best and most hard-rockin' instrumentals EVER) and a whole bunch of covers. So, even though this set isn't all covers, that's all I will review. On CD1

("Bullet with Butterfly Wings") they do amazingly cool versions of "Clones (We're All)" (Gary Numan), "You're All I've Got Tonight" (Cars) and "Destination Unknown" (Missing Persons). They also let James Iha sing the most godawful cover of "A Night Like This" (The Cure) and then finish with "Dreaming" (Blondie) which is okay. On another CD they do a very sweet cover of "My Blue Heaven" (Chubby Checker? Fuck if I know!) that I like very much. I can't recommend buying this (and they said it was limited edition, but I still see them all over the place), I got mine as a birthday present from the junkie, eight weeks after my birthday, because he was that kind of asshole sometimes. Covers Grade: B



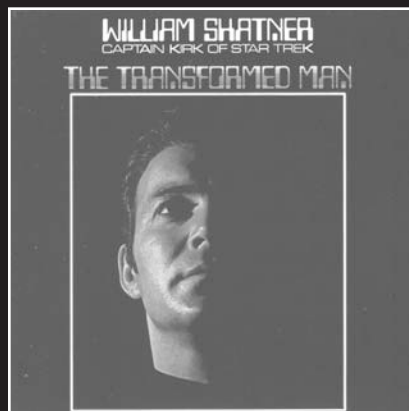
The Duran Duran Tribute Album

Taking the catalog of a bunch of prettyboys like the Durannies and making it unfucking-believably cool is no small feat. I will be the first to admit that I was a big Duran Duran fan, not because I wanted to fuck them, but because they were pale, skinny and English, like everyone else I liked in junior high school. They also got tons of tail, so say what you will. As much as you don't want to be them, they sure as shit never wanted to be you, either. This one starts with Goldfinger doing "Rio" as a fast ska number, and they tear the roof off the sucker. I love covers within covers, and these guys do not one, but two covers in the middle. At one point they do the refrain from "Stepping Stone," then later, they go all metal and the song turns into Ronnie James Dio's "Rainbow in the Dark." Then, when they return to "Rio"'s chorus, they sing, "His name is Dio, Ronnie James Dio." Goddamn that is fucking cool. The rest of the songs are ska and punk inflected versions of mostly older Duran Duran, which is fine by me. This CD also features the Wesley Willis Fiasco doing "Girls on Film" and call me crazy, but that hulking schizophrenic lunatic nails that song to the wall then skull fucks it. There are a few clunkers, but the Goldfinger song is more than worth the price of admission. Grade: B+



Super Fantastic Mega Smash Hits!

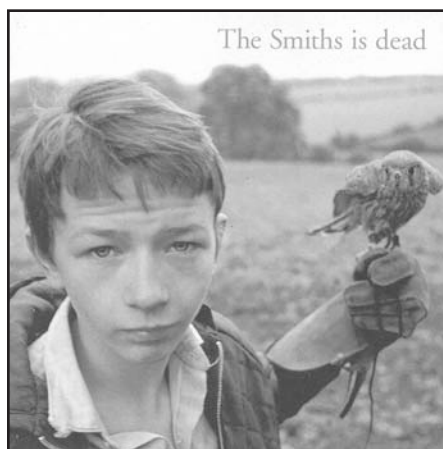
This CD is very hit or miss, and if you hate the originals, then these covers won't help a bit. The Slugs' version of "Hooked on a Feeling" (Blue Swede) is just fine with me and the Smashing Pumpkins version of "Jackie Blue" (?) is a huge improvement over the original. At the same time The Poster Children are incapable of originality, and the cover of the 70's smash "Convoy" is totally unnecessary. Rex Daisy doing "Welcome Back, Kotter" is a bad joke that is completely lost on me. Let's just say the CD's title refers to the originals, not the covers. Grade: C-



William Shatner- The Transformed Man + Leonard Nimoy - Mr. Spock/Leonard Nimoy

This is one of my most prized possessions, if only because it is so funny, rare and entertaining. This limited edition CD contains all of Shatner's album and both of Nimoy's albums, one he recorded as Spock, the other as himself (like there's a difference?). As a bonus, it includes Shatner's appearance at an old MTV movie awards, where, along with a xylophone and some candles, he did perfect versions of "You Could Be Mine" (Guns N'

Roses), "I Wanna Sex You Up" (Color Me Badd) and "Everything I Do" (Bryan Adams). My personal faves include "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" (Beatles) and "It Was A Very Good Year" (Juli guesses Sinatra). Each song is grouped with a reading of some serious drama, so you have a speech from *Cyrano* as the intro to "Mr. Tambourine Man," (Bob Dylan) and others. Nimoy covers some odd shit too, but it's his originals that kill me, including the brilliant "Highly Illogical" where he analyzes odd human behavior, like how we build so many cars and highways, but never make enough parking spaces. It's as if he is channeling the (not-dead-yet?) cranky spirit of Andy Rooney through his pointy ears. Grade: A



The Smiths Is Dead

It's rare to see a bunch of bands cover a single album, but here is a cover of the Smiths entire *The Queen is Dead* LP. I split it with Juli because 1) it was an expensive import and 2) she is also a huge fan of the Smiths (though we still debate it, I think they rocked because of Johnny Marr's guitar and music, she loves Mozzar for his whining) and because it has the Boo Radleys on it. They are probably my second favorite band, and surprisingly, they perform my least favorite track on the CD. They do great covers of "Alone Again Or" (Love) and "True Faith" (New Order) {renamed "Boo! Faith," to be cute} on their first CD, so I know they're capable, but not this time. This isn't my fave Smiths album, (that would be the singles collection, *Louder Than Bombs*) but I know some people think it's their finest work. I am one of those people who thinks that everyone's first CD is great, and they go downhill from there. Placebo do a great cover of "Bigmouth" and Bis puts a great spin on "The Boy With A [sic] Thorn In His Side." Billy Bragg does a straight cover, and Therapy? make "Vicar in a Tutu" really rock, but the overall mood is kinda downbeat and serious, like the original. I guess they all try, but they definitely picked the wrong album to cover. Grade: C



Duran Duran-Thank You

I saw the video for "White Lines" and I thought to myself, "Wow! These guys still look pretty good." They were all decked out in vinyl, they got Grandmaster Flash to join them, they used some cool effects, it was great. Back then Juli and I got the Box, that pay-per-video cable channel, so I ordered it and taped it, since MTV SUCKS AND SHOULD FUCKING DIE!! Whoa. Sorry. I got the CD a few days later, because I really wanted to hear what they would do to "911 Is A Joke" (Public Enemy). Let's just say that "White Lines" is great and everything else is a total embarrassment. I haven't tried to trade it in because I am sure I can get \$1 for it, or less. So, if I keep it, maybe some day when I finally do that stupid zine I have been meaning to do for years will do a review section all about covers and this will immediately justify itself. Nah, it'll never happen. Not if something good is on TV. Oh, the review. The only interesting thing on here is their cover of "Thank You" (Led Zeppelin) because Simon Le Bon (who I used to call Semen Le Bonoreater) sounds just like Robert Plant, and that is pretty fucking lame, no matter how you slice it. Grade: D



Me First and the Gimme Gimmes- Have A Ball

I don't think I can ever say enough good things about this. First of all, I love when

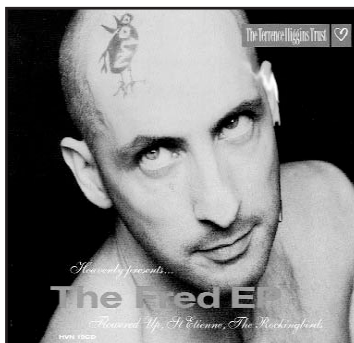
someone does a cover and then curses in it. Cake does it in "I Will Survive" (Gloria Gaynor) by singing, "I should've changed my fuckin' locks, I should've made you leave your key." Some of the Duran covers have new curses in 'em, and these punks go to fucking town cursing while covering the AM classics of my youth. I think if I heard the originals I would lunge to turn them off. But just drop this puppy in the CD player and groove to kickass covers of "Rocket Man," (Elton John) "I Am A Rock," (Simon & Garfunkel) and I swear to fucking god, the best version I have ever heard of "Me & Julio Down By the Schoolyard." (Simon & Garfunkel) The liner notes are scant, but include some funny jokes and almost no useful bowling tips. If I was going to start up a new band, I would pray every night that we could be as cool as Me First and the Gimme Gimmes. A bargain at twice the price. Go get it now. Grade A+++



Everybody Wants Some of Van Halen

As a brief aside, Juli feels the same way about David Lee Roth that I feel about Christine Baranski, he rubs her the wrong way. After I started the reviews section, I realized that I had seen some new ones, so I bought them to review. Luckily this was only \$7. The record company intentionally does not mention WHO is doing the covers on the outside, just that it is a covers album. The only band I have heard of from this CD is the Gigolo Aunts, and they do a cover of "Ask" (the Smiths) on one of their singles that kicks so much ass it is scary. Here they do "Why Can't This Be Love?" and it is really bizarre. If you switch the balance to the left, you just get the background music. On the right, you get some light guitar strumming and just the isolated vocals. It's like they did both parts separately, and rather than mix them properly, they dumped them into the different channels. This whole pathetic CD stinks of small minds, and here's why: it says that all tracks were recorded in the same studio; many tracks share the same crew; and for some reason, a person named Captain Rock mixed almost all the tracks. At the same time,

Captain Rock sings "Panama" and I swear he sounds like a cross between Derek Smalls from Spinal Tap and Captain Caveman. There are also two different versions of the instrumental "Eruption," which was intended as a showcase for Eddie's fast playing. The first one, by "The Reverend Ed Broms" (I put it in quotes because the guy plays instruments on some other songs, which makes me think they are all aliases of some kind, but why? is it that bad? probably) is done on a pipe organ. Good plan. Please put down the PCP and step away from the keyboard. The second version is by Crick Deifendorf (whenever I see a name like that, I always think of that game show *Card Sharks* where you basically have to just guess if the hidden card is higher or lower than the one you can see. Your only choices in the whole game are "higher," "lower" or "CHANGE THAT CARD!" When I see CRICK DEIFENDORF, I say, "CHANGE THAT CARD!") and is done on a banjo. Steve Martin is good at playing banjo, but he wisely avoids doing it in public Thanks, Steve. Oh, this CD. It isn't very good, or very funny. They also should've picked more hits. And better bands. And better packaging. Grade: D



Heavenly Presents... The Fred EP

It is not a coincidence that these reviews are in this order, because if someone said, "Hey, want a CD of covers of Right Said Fred?" I would probably hit them in the mouth before the word "Fred." At the same time, it is hard to quibble with buying this CD, one because it was less than \$3, and two, all proceeds go to some AIDS charity. I happen to sort of like St. Etienne, though that may be because they are close friends with the Boo Radleys and because they have a hot singer. That, in and of itself, should not merit a decent grade, and it does not. But, St. Etienne do a fantastic, throbbing cover of "I'm Too Sexy" that makes it sexual rather than campy, like the original. They really are too sexy, and I believe that with every fiber of my being. St. Etienne is too damn sexy, and there is not a thing I can do about it. The other two entries are from Flowered Up (what an awful name) and The Rockingbirds (ditto). Flowered Up

do a fine job with "Don't Talk, Just Kiss," but The Rockingbirds suck and seem to know it. So, I would say that one song merits an F, one merits a C and one merits an A, for an average grade of C, but I will give them a little because it was cheap and for charity. Grade: C+

Show & Tell (A Stormy Remembrance of TV Theme Songs)

That's fine. Punk rock guys make fun of TV. Okay. They got Todd Bridges to cover the "Theme from Diff'rent Strokes." His backup band is called The Whatchu Talkin' 'Bout Willis Experience. There's a band called No Use For A Name. The Meatmen do a funny "Green Acres Theme" and the Pink Lincolns cover that annoying song from *Friends*. I really like H2O's cover of "Bad Boys" from *Cops* and most of the rest of this CD. Maybe just not every day for five days. I couldn't seem to listen to it straight through, I kept leaving the room. Listening to it again right this second, I keep fighting the impulse to get up and skip to the next track, since most tracks are under two minutes, as they should be. If it's good, it leaves you wanting more, and if it blows, it's over in a minute. Just as it should be. Grade B

A Reggae Tribute to the Police

Juli and I were watching the MTV awards and Sean Combs (call him "puffy" if you must, but I will NOT buy into that "here's my cool new rap name" bullshit) came out to do that awful tribute to the dead fat crack dealer. The whole song is a total ripoff of "Every Breath You Take" with new, worse lyrics. So they were whooping it up, and Juli said, "Do you think Sting likes that these jerkoffs have totally stolen his song?" and without thinking I said, "I bet he is so happy that he could wet himself. I bet this helps his catalog sales, I bet it gives him credibility and..." Before I could drone on for another minute, Sting was onstage in a surprise appearance, singing the part where they sampled his voice. It was totally fucking bizarre. The point is, I think the Police were band that was very influenced by reggae and ska, and it is only appropriate that some of those bands now cover the Police. I don't think I actually own any reggae albums, but I don't dislike it. I just associate it with so many stoned philosophers that I met in college (myself among them). I noticed something else after I read the liner notes: Pato Banton and Sting do a cover of "Spirits in the Material World" on this CD, and the only other song I have by Pato Banton is from this CD called *Ozone* which has one song by him, a cover of the Police's "One World (Not Three)." All the usual reggae people you might expect: Maxi Priest does "Message in a

Bottle" pretty well, Steel Pulse do, "Can't Stand Losing You," which is a Police song I actually like. They also do something that I love, mainly make a song more timely with a slight change in the lyrics. Instead of "And my LP records and they're all scratched," it's changed to "And my CD collection and they're all scratched." The other covers are all at least competent and at best, they sound a little better than the originals. Grade: B

Schoolhouse Rock! Rocks

If it weren't for *Schoolhouse Rock!* I may have learned about grammar, math, science and government somewhere boring like school. I am not being facetious. When they started to teach me about the Constitution in school, I swear, I knew the whole thing, "We, the people, in order to form a more perfect union...etc." I bought these things on video five years ago, and at that time, they hired Cloris Leachman and some annoying kids to make filler between the songs. Since then they have been rereleased a few times, each time with some new packaging. Then, a few years ago they had a live production of the songs, and it was amazing. I swear, I hate the theater more than anything, and I loved this thing. If it ever plays near you, and you loved these songs as a kid, GO! I guess it had to happen that eventually some geniuses got together to record covers of these songs, and it's great. Blind Melon's last performance (covering "Three is A Magic Number") is really touching, and trust me when I tell you I was no fan of them. Moby takes "Verb: That's What Happening" someplace dark and metallic and Biz Markie, the goofball rapper, really brings "The Energy Blues" to a new level. Even though most people agree that the Lemonheads *used to be* good, but now suck hard, here they do a perfect explanation of "My Hero, Zero." I even saw a great special on MTV where they showed some "Making Of" crap along with some rough videos for the songs. I didn't actually buy this CD, someone made me a tape, and I am glad because I still listen it. Grade: B+

Saturday Morning Cartoons Greatest Hits

This was another CD that someone taped for me, though I was less excited about this than the *Schoolhouse Rock* thing. Then I rented this tape that featured some of the videos. This tape had to be the stupidest, most obnoxious thing I have seen in a while. It was done in a style reminiscent of that MTV hosejob *The Real World* and was hosted by Drew Barrymore, a complete twit. It was a house full of clichéd slackers, eating cereal and watching cartoons on TV, like us Gen-Xers are wont to do. Then some shitty old

cartoon would come on and Slacker #1 would say, "Oh, man, that show was like, so groovy!" Then they would cut to a band doing their cover of the show's theme. It may sound okay, but try watching them do this twenty times in a row, and say glowing things about really awful shit like *Hong Kong Phooey*, *Gigantor* and *The Bugaloos*. The only things that slightly redeem this tape are, in order: Wax doing "Happy Happy Joy Joy" from *Ren & Stimpy*, Matthew Sweet (who I find annoying, if only because he's from Nebraska, I mean, how cool is that?) doing *Scooby Doo* (a show I despise) and the Ramones doing "Theme from Spiderman." The freakiest moment is provided by Frénté, who cover "Let the Sun Shine In" from *The Flintstones*. I don't know if you remember this song, but Pebbles & Bam Bam sang it, and the lyrics are all about how to kick Satan's ass. I never realized how religious this song was until I heard the cover. Grades: Video: F; Drew Barrymore & Slackers: Brain Cancer; CD: B-

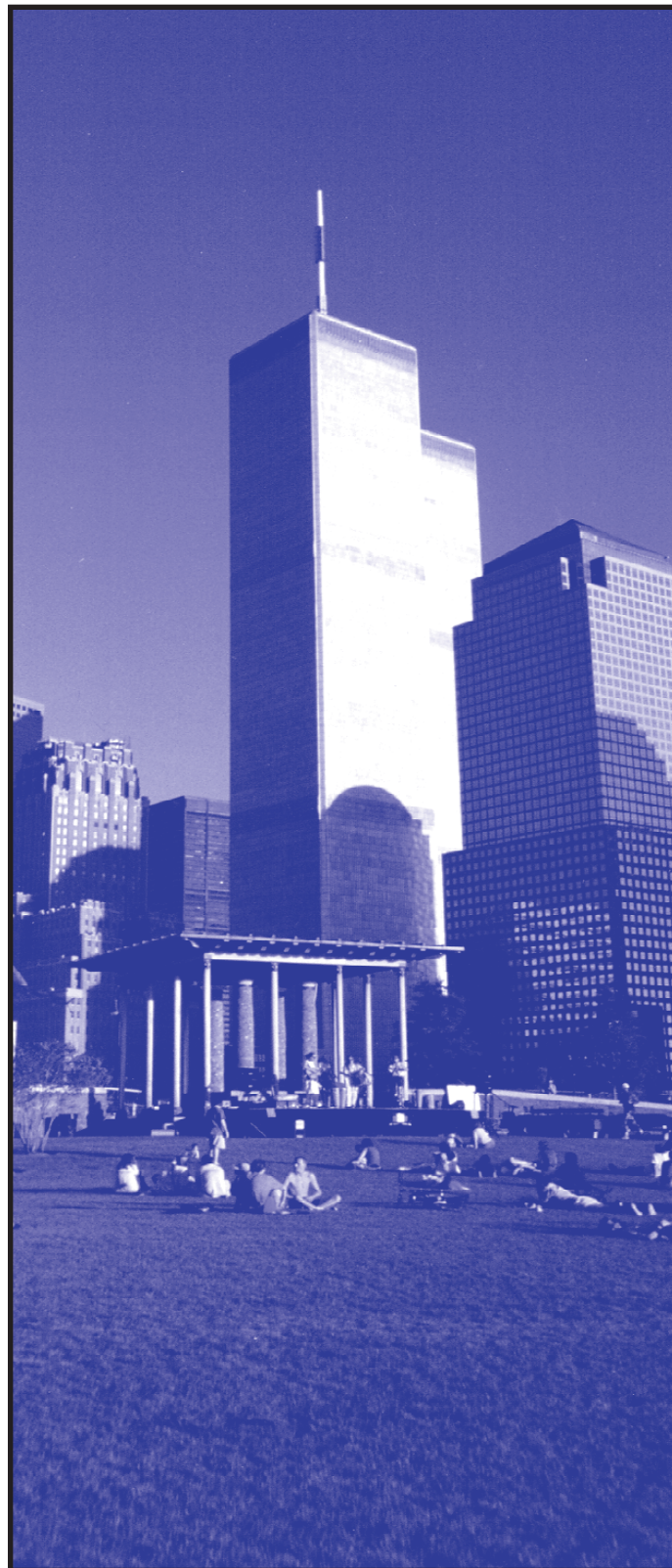
For the purposes of this story, I thought of the best covers I own, some of which may end up on the "best of" tape that I am making available. I tried to give a good idea of what I have while at the same time trying to find something for everyone. I am also including this list so anyone interested in a trade knows that I HAVE THESE ALREADY, so please don't send me these, unless they are starred (*) which means I lost the original and would like it again.

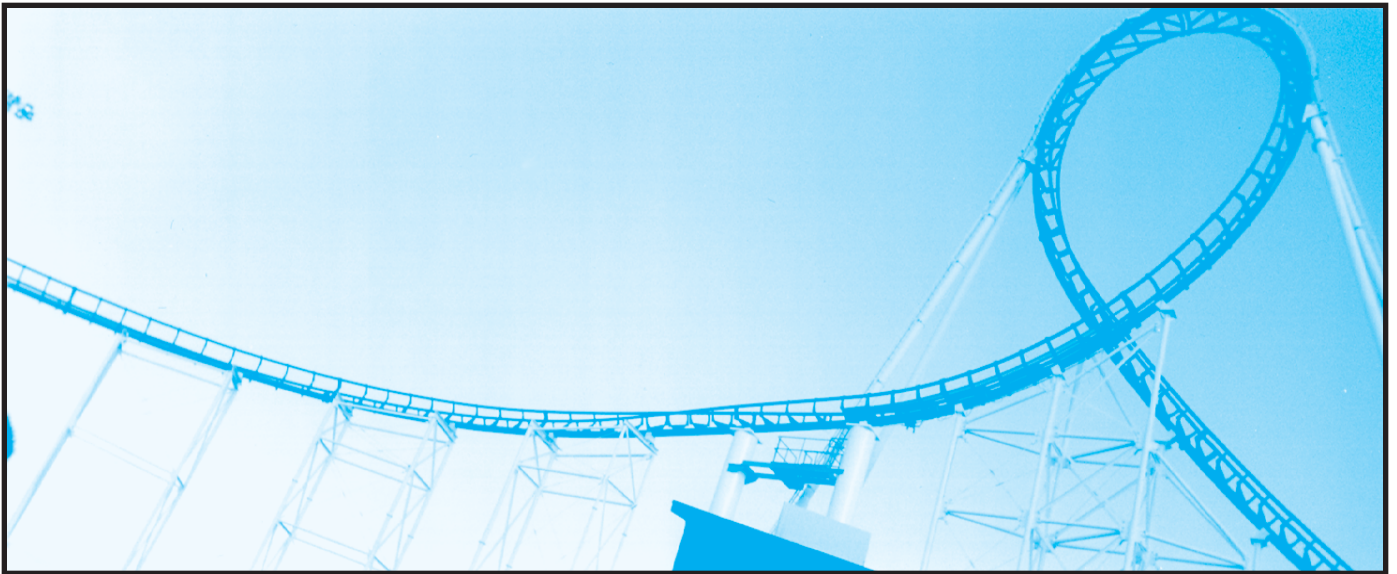
Excluding covers from anything reviewed above, here is a sampling of that list: Frazier Chorus - "Anarchy in the UK" (Sex Pistols), Cake - "I Will Survive" (Gloria Gaynor), The Soft Boys - "Caroline Says" (Lou Reed), Joe Jackson - "Oh Well" (Fleetwood Mac), Jody Grind - "Peter Gunn" (Henry Mancini + their own original lyrics!), Nine Inch Nails - "Get Down Make Love" (Queen), Sugar Ray - "Stand and Deliver" (Adam and the Ants), Aztec Camera - "Jump" (Van Halen), Bauhaus - "Ziggy Stardust" (David Bowie), Belly - "Happiness is a Warm Gun" (Beatles), Blur - "Oliver's Army" (Elvis Costello), Julian Cope - "Five O'Clock World" (The Vogues), John Wesley Harding - "Crystal Blue Persuasion" (Tommy James), Too Much Joy - "That's a Lie!" (LL Cool J), Pop Will Eat Itself - "Love Missile F1-11" (Sigue Sigue Sputnik), Age of Chance* - "Kiss" (Prince), Rugburns - "Sesame Street" (Oscar the Grouch) + "Waterfalls" (TLC) + "Wishing Well" (Terence Trent D'Arby) + "Stairway to Gilligan's Isle" (Sherwood Schwartz & Led Zeppelin), Mr. Ed Jumps the Gun or Sonic Youth - "Ça Plane Pour Moi" (Plastic

Bertrand), Barenaked Ladies - "Fight The Power" (Public Enemy), Overwhelming Colorfast - "She Said, She Said" (Beatles), Psychedelic Furs - "Mack the Knife" (Bobby Darin), Kablamachunk - "Cats in the Cradle" (Harry Chapin), Pixies - "Head On" (Jesus & Mary Chain), Henry Rollins & Bad Brains - "Kick Out the Jams" (MC5), Terry Hall - "Sense" (the Lightning Seeds), the Newlydeads - "Cities in Dust" (Siouxsie & the Banshees), 7 Seconds* - "99 Luft Balloons" (Nena), The Breeders - "Blackbird" (Beatles), Fatima Mansions - "Stigmata" (Ministry), Birdland - "Rock n' Roll Nigger" (Patti Smith), the Wonderstuff - "That's Entertainment" (the Jam), 1,000 Homo DJs - "Supernaut" (Black Sabbath), Robyn Hitchcock - "8 Miles High" (the Byrds), Primus - "Making Plans for Nigel" (XTC), Uncle Tupelo - "I Wanna Destroy You" (Soft Boys), Sugarcubes - "Top of the World" (Carpenters), Faith No More - "War Pigs" (Black Sabbath) + "Easy" (the Commodores), Government Issue - "These Boots Were Made For Walkin'" (Nancy Sinatra), Devo - "Are You Experienced?" (Jimi Hendrix), Dead Kennedys - "I Fought the Law" (Tommy James), Lords of the New Church - "Like A Virgin" (Madonna), Jane's Addiction - "Sympathy for the Devil" (Rolling Stones), Red Hot Chili Peppers - "Fire" (Jimi Hendrix), Fishbone - "Freddie's Dead" (Curtis Mayfield), Vic Chestnutt - "She Doesn't Exist" (Robyn Hitchcock), the Tom Tom Club* - "You Sexy Thing" (Hot Chocolate), School of Fish - "Save It For Later" (General Public), Ben Folds Five - "She Don't Use Jelly" (Flaming Lips), Steve & Eydie - "Black Hole Sun" (Soundgarden), Pizzicato Five - "The Girl from Ipanema" (Astrud Gilberto), Terry, Blair & Anouchka* - "Love Will Keep Us Together" (Captain & Tenille), Vegas - "She" (the Monkees), The Simpsons - "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" (Iron Butterfly), The Mighty Lemon Drops - "Another Girl, Another Planet" (the Only Ones), Perry Farrell & Body Count - "Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey" (Sly Stone), Sheppard's Pie (my band at camp) - "Lust For Life" (Iggy Pop), Terence Trent D'Arby - "What A Wonderful World" (Sam Cooke), Catherine Wheel - "Don't Want To Know If You Are Lonely" (Hüsker Dü), The Lilac Time - "Raspberry Beret/Kiss Me Medley" (Prince/Stephen "Tin Tin" Duffy), Frank Black* - "Hang On To Your Ego" (Brian Wilson), the Boo Radleys - "There She Goes" (The La's), Ned's Atomic Dustbin - "Saturday Night" (KC & the Sunshine Band) the original version was, for those of you interested, the first 45RPM record that I ever bought and the perfect song to end this "getting way too long" list.



As I am approaching the end of this issue, I came to the realization that I could, since I am in charge of everything, put in some cool pictures that I have taken. I bought a panoramic camera at some discount store for like \$6 and I have gotten so much use out of it that I feel I owe the company that made it a few more bucks. They aren't going to get it, but maybe if I show you some cool pictures, you may go buy one for yourself, which is just as good, as far as I am concerned. The one I have is made by Ansco and is called the Pix Panorama. It is a little plastic thing that uses regular film, you just have to tell the developer that the pictures are panoramic. They print on much larger paper, then trim off the edges. I like the way it looks before trimming, so I always tell them not to trim. It makes the results look like letterboxed shots from a cool movie or something. All the pictures were taken on the isle of Manhattan, except the one of the Pacific Ocean, which was taken in Spain.





How To COPE

LIKE

ANY OTHER

NASCENT ZINE PUBLISHER, I FEEL ALMOST DEFINED BY MY ANGER. This isn't because I am generally an angry person (I am), but it is for one simple reason. Every other emotion I feel is subject to my own doubts: am I really in love? is there anything to be afraid of? do I really enjoy this, or do I think I enjoy it because I am supposed to? When I am angry at something or someone, I feel it so purely that it amazes me. I feel righteous, which I would imagine true religious believers feel when quoting some stupid book, like the Bible. This is my Bible, and I believe it because I don't have to rely on ANYONE to tell me whether or not it's true. I am the most honest person I know and this is exactly how I see things.

Most people, I think, are never really sure about anything. The only thing I ever feel sure about is my rightness when I am angry about something, so I never doubt it. Because there are so many things in this world that make me angry I have found almost as many ways to cope. Since I hate whiners almost as much as I hate Bill Gates, I don't want to become one. So rather than just vent my spleen about injustice and suffering and other things I can't change, I will let you know what you can do to keep your blood pressure down, and maybe have a laugh or two.

A few weeks ago I went to the supermarket around the corner from my apartment. While I was waiting to cross the street, there was traffic blocking most of the intersection. The far right lane (near where I was standing) was not full of cars, because that's where people are supposed to park. On the other side of the intersection, in the parking lane, were a bunch of pigeons enjoying a snack in the street. This guy in a van, who was not in the mood to wait, and probably emotionally disturbed, decided to pull into the parking lane, kill some pigeons, and get a few feet further ahead in traffic. He stepped on the gas and spun the tires for a second before lurching around the traffic. He sped up as he approached the pigeons, I know because I got that feeling you get when you sense something is about to go wrong. He ran one pigeon over completely and knocked another one about twenty feet in front of him. The

pigeon hit the ground with a thud and died in front of me as the van pulled back into traffic. Wherever you are, dude, I hope your wife is gang raped, your daughters get AIDS and your sons die sucking dick for a living.

Needless to say, both my girlfriend and I were very upset since it is not often that you get to see people being cruel to animals just for the hell of it. I see flattened animals from time to time, but I assume that it was either an accident, or the fault of the animal for not getting out of the way, but now I am not so sure. Just the other day I saw this story on the local news about this snooty building in a ritzy part of town that was having trouble with pigeon shit on the ROOF of their building. Rather than just live with the shit, or put up a fake owl (that works more often than you might think) this building decided to put out a whole bunch of poisoned food. So a bunch of pigeons, maybe the shitters and maybe not, all ingest this poison, and litter the roof of this building with their corpses. Other pigeons fell to the ground, to hit people or cars or anything else they may happen upon. Others just landed on the ground and struggled for hours

crash, so I do it. I could care less that the windowsills are all covered in birdshit. The homeless shit in the street, and no one poisons them. Dogs shit in the street and no one poisons them.

Most cabbies in New York drive like total assholes. They cut you off, they run lights, they speed, they drive recklessly, they don't have any change, they are rude, they smell, they have wacky religions AND feel the need to share, they don't take direction, the A/C doesn't work in the summer and the heat doesn't work in the winter. They enter intersections when they know they can't make it all the way across, then, when the light changes, they just sit there and cause even worse traffic because of their stupidity. And most of the time when they are driving this badly they don't even have passengers. There was even a time, on my very own street, where traffic was backed up at the intersection and the cars were not moving at all. This cabbie decided to DRIVE UP ON THE SIDEWALK, go around the traffic, then re-enter at the intersection. It was one of the most unbelievable things I have ever seen. The first thing I do is tip them the least amount possible, with no apologies. If any of them ever gives me a hard time, I write down their hack number and report them. Juli was in a cab once and the guy was smoking, but holding the cigarette down low where he thought she couldn't see.

Cigarette

With Assholes

A public service

until the poison killed them. They even had a videotape the building made of the pigeons dying, like some animal snuff film. Rather than agonize about it (there was nothing I could have done because their poison program was done for the time being), I decided that I should try to be nice to pigeons, to make up for my asshole fellow humans. Behind my apartment are a few trees and a courtyard where many pigeons go to relax. For some reason I decided that I wanted to call them chickens (because I can't make a pigeon cooing noise, but I can make a chicken noise, boka boka boka) and I wanted to give them a place where they could hang out. So I put any extra food out on my window sills, and they come and enjoy it. Because I am nice to them, every night I find one or two of them asleep, standing on one foot, outside the bathroom or the window in the living room. It makes me feel better to give them some food and a safe place to

smoke gives her migraines, and we have been to the emergency room because they hurt so much. So before you go thinking we're pussies, ask yourself if you ever had a headache that hurt so bad you had to go to the ER at four in the morning and get morphine so you didn't kill yourself. If you have had a migraine, you understand, and if you don't understand, guess what I wish on you?

She told the guy to put it out, but he refused. She took down his number and demanded that he stop. When he asked for the fare, she told him to fuck off and hopped in another cab. Many times I have stuck my hand out for a cab and some guy from the far side of the street has cut people off and skidded in front of me to pick me up. If the guy is that much of an asshole before I even get in the cab, there is no way I want to do business with him. What I do to make myself feel better is laugh out loud every time a

cabbie is robbed or killed. I know, it may sound heartless, but they suck, and they deserve to die. Thinning the herd, you might say. It's not like some other poor schmuck isn't dying to get behind the wheel of the dead cabbie's taxi. If you drive a cab, obey the law, be nice to people, and stop fucking up traffic. And if you know what I am talking about, don't ever feel bad if you hear about a cabbie getting shot in head for \$20, trust me, that guy deserved it. They all do.

Every time you sign up for a subscription to a magazine, or change your address, or order something from a catalog, or sign up with AOL and even sometimes when you just buy something with a credit card, your name is sold to some junk-mailing asshole. I hate getting junk mail [I don't have to threaten you, do I?]. But I have found a few ways to get even. And I have found ways to cope. Every time I sign up for something new, I make sure that the company knows that I don't want junk mail. My AOL account is set up so that my name isn't sold to junk mailers (keyword: Marketing Prefs). My credit cards know not to even include some offer for a calculator or protection in case my cards are stolen. Every issue of *Movieline* comes in a plastic bag with some offer to renew my subscription. Here's what I do to them and every other asshole that sends me an offer I want to refuse. I take all the mail they sent, plus whatever crap is lying around the house (used rubbers, rat shit, gum, those insert cards from other magazines) and I stuff it all into the pre-paid reply envelope and send the junk mail right back. It always makes me feel better.

When I have to spend five minutes pulling paperboard inserts or subscription cards out of a magazine (especially if I got that magazine by subscription), I fill them in with made up names and mail them back, so the assholes have to PAY to get junk mail from me. Sometimes, when I feel more motivated or more pissed off, I find the company's 800 number. Most of them have one just to order subscriptions, and they are answered by an answering service. I used to work for a few answering services, so I know how it works. Every time they get a call on the 800 number, they have to pay the phone company and the answering service. Sure it might be a dime, but to me, it's worth it. What I do is set up my fax software to keep on calling, make it try 99 times to get through. Then I make up a page that says FUCK YOU in big bold letters. Then I fax it to their 800 number. Sure, there is no fax on the other end, just some poor bastard taking subscription requests. I keep on faxing and faxing, wasting their time and money. Sometimes they realize that they are being faxed, so they patch me through to a fax machine, just to put an end to the call. As soon as they do that, they finally get my message. At that point I usually say it's enough, but sometimes I just change

the fax to a 10 page FUCK YOU and keep trying it. It always makes me feel better.

I used to write for a magazine about greeting cards. Sure, it sounds exciting, but it wasn't. We had no money and to be honest, the magazine's design was pretty weak. Then again, we were writing for an audience comprised of independent greeting card stores, not the most discerning group in the world. Once we got this really nasty letter from someone telling us that the magazine was the worst piece of shit that they ever read, that our writers were brain-dead assholes (there was only one writer—me) and that every month their whole office would sit around and laugh at how bad the publication was. Of course the pussies didn't sign it, but they made one fatal mistake. They used the office postage machine. It took me about an hour to get in touch with the postal authorities. I made up a story about how the letter was actually very threatening and the author meant the company, and me personally, grievous harm. That was all it took to find out who the owner of the meter was. Then I checked our subscription list, found the culprit, and solved the mystery. Sure enough, these assholes were getting the magazine for FREE, even though most people had to pay. I immediately cut them off from the list. Then I got their 800 number from information, their name and address from a listing in an industry directory, and their home addresses from information. After that, every single time I was by a newsstand I would take out the subscription cards from gay porno, bizarre religious or soap opera magazines and anything else that struck my fancy and sign these assholes up. I would get them Jesus plates from the Sunday paper, Precious Moments sculptures from *TV Guide* and *Star Trek* chess sets from *Penthouse*. I would fax them all night long at their 800 number, not only to tie it up, but to make them pay for my fun. I called them from time to time just to make sure they were getting all my stuff, and they were. I really wanted to tell them why I was doing it, but I never did. And I never will. I want them to know that they have made me their enemy, and I never forget an asshole.

Here's a simple solution to people calling you at home to sell you something. Buy an air horn, you know, like the kind inbred jarheads use to juice things up at a football game, and keep it near the phone. As soon as you realize what they're calling about, pick up the air horn and blast it into the phone. I used to try to sell subscriptions for a newspaper over the phone, and when I realized how hated I was by everyone that I called (it took about five days), I quit the job. If only more people would follow my example, the world would be a better place. There are other jobs, so save your letters of complaint. I am defending myself from an onslaught of assholes who have no regard

for my privacy.

There are a lot of magazines I hate. Whenever they piss me off, I mutilate the cover in some way and put it in the back of the stack on the newsstand. Most people won't buy damaged goods, so it ends up being sent back to the publisher for a refund. That makes me feel better. The same things goes for books you don't like, like romance novels. Tear the cover, or better yet, move all the copies so no one can find them. Or, if you want, put some other really awful book in front of the pile, so no one knows what books are behind it. Works like a charm.

I am in the middle of a long running feud with the assholes who work in my building. For those of you not living in New York City, you may not understand this. Here in the city, almost every restaurant delivers. Most of them suck. Unfortunately, you can't tell which ones suck and which ones are good unless you try them. What they do to get into your life is slip a delivery menu under your door. If they have a delivery order for a neighbor on a different floor, the delivery asshole will slip menus under everyone in the building's door. Sometimes when a new restaurant opens, they need to get the word out, and I understand that. The nice ones will put a stack in the lobby, and I always take a new menu when I see it in the lobby.

The assholes will slip a dozen under your door in the same week, even if you know the food sucks. I have discussed this with the doormen a number of times, because I hate having shit stuck under my door (I know it's a minor quibble, but hey, I am trying to get it all out now, okay?). I have asked them not to let strangers into the building to distribute menus, and they don't care. They don't listen. It still goes on. So here's how I pay everyone back for pissing me off. I order food for the doormen from some of these shitholes, making sure that it is pricey and gross. This works to embarrass the doorman, piss off the restaurant, and make me feel better. Also, from time to time, I will go around to all the apartments and take the menus out from in front of their doors and rip them all up. Then I throw the scraps into the stairwell, where the doorman has to pick them all up. Now they know how I feel, being annoyed by menus. Most buildings in New York have a sign that says "No Menus" for a reason. I have a doorman, and that cocksucker is supposed to protect me from strangers. Instead, he lets in any asshole with a bag of menus, not even worrying that it could be a burglar or a rapist or worse.

In the winter there are many old bitches who like to trot around town draped in some dead animals. If they were eskimos, and had done the killing themselves, that would be one thing. But most of these bitches have manicures that indicate to me that they are incapable of doing any kind of work. I can't

be bothered throwing blood or paint on them. Instead, I scare the fuck out of them. If I am standing near some woman in a fur, I will ask her in a very friendly voice how many blowjobs the coat cost her. Or, I will say, "That's a nice fur," then pause for a second for them to feel all full of themselves, then say, "how'd you get the blood out?" If I am in a hurry, I just yell, "How much for a blowjob, honey?" since as far as I am concerned, only whores and animals wear fur.

Sometimes I see people get upset over some tragedy that they see on television, and I swear, most of the time when I see tragedy, I laugh. My formula is comedy = tragedy + time, which is also the name of one of my cover tapes. This means that the further you are from the tragedy, in time or in distance, the easier it is to laugh at. For example, when I heard about the TWA Flight 800 disaster, most people I know were shocked and really upset. Why? I mean, if you knew somebody on the plane, that's one thing, but I didn't know any of them. So I made myself feel better about the whole thing. This method will help you cope with any major disaster. First of all, the flight was to France, so maybe half the passengers are French, who conspired with Nazis to kill Jews. They deserve to die. The other half are Americans who can afford to go to France, which I cannot do. Also, I said to myself: I can account for all of those American passengers as well. Ten of them are people who cut me in line for the movies. Another twenty wore too much cologne and had pissed me off in enclosed spaces. Fifteen

of these dead cocksuckers on the plane double parked in front of my car, leaving me trapped when I had somewhere to go. Thirty of them have been in line in front of me at the supermarket, have used expired coupons (or wasted my time trying), couldn't figure out how the little card swipe works, tried to use a bad credit card, forgot their PIN, decided that some merchandise was too expensive and made all of us wait while the magical "key" was summoned from the manager, and so on. The rest of them have talked while I was at the movies, smoked in the no-smoking area, cheated on their taxes, date-raped someone in college, put their pet to sleep before it was necessary or maybe just voted for an asshole like George Bush. I am sure that they each did something awful, petty or selfish to someone who didn't deserve it, at some time, and when they did, that someone wished them dead. What caused that disaster, in my mind, was the collective ill will that those passengers earned in their lives. You say one victim was an innocent five-year-old girl? I am sure that little bitch had veal for dinner one night. That veal suffered a lot more than her, and that veal didn't have to. She did. Fuck her. Besides, that girl would've broken some guy's heart, been bitchy to another woman, spread some disease or gotten drunk and run over a dog. A greater tragedy was prevented by knocking that plane out of the sky, if you ask me.

Are you still crying over Princess Diana? Guess what? She had the best life anyone could ever imagine, and it STILL WAS NOT

ENOUGH. All the money, power and fame in the world, and she is still whining about paparazzi. You know what? She was as much a part of the problem as they were. Wear a baseball cap, no makeup and regular clothes, and I am sure no one will give a shit. Just the other day I saw Sigourney Weaver in a fancy spa downtown, wearing sweats and a cap. It took me a minute to recognize her, and I am a fan. The woman is very hot, very tall, and about to release a new movie, and no one else even noticed that she was there.

If you really want to avoid being chased, just stop, let them take your picture, and move on. I always figured if I was ever unlucky enough to get famous and some jerkoff stuck a camera in my face, I would give them the finger and say "FUCK YOU!" over and over, making any footage or photos of me totally unusable. Or, if that doesn't work, hire some decent security and hide behind them. There are a million ways to avoid being harassed, if that's really what you want. I think that isn't what these people want, in fact, I think they love the attention. I am willing to bet cash money that 90% of the members of the Screen Actors Guild are dying for someone to take their picture, and will even make up stories just to get publicity.

If you really and truly cannot cope, follow J.D. Salinger's example, find a house somewhere cold and/or deserted and ignore the world. Eventually, the press will leave you alone just like I have to do right now. Thanks for reading this, and now, *please pass it along!*

How You Know They're 100% Wrong



FIRST IN A SERIES. If Jesus really was God, and was all-knowing and all-powerful, would He have to use total fucking maniacs like this to do His recruiting? Of course not. That's How You Know They're 100% Wrong.

Same Bat Time, Same Bat Channel

(or, coming next issue)

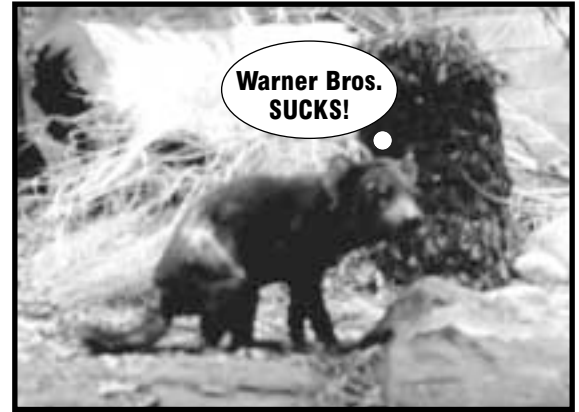
- My own serial killer fiction (this will force me to finish it) + analysis
- How Disney ruined *Winnie the Pooh*
- Your pathetic combover or toupee
- The Profaci game
- Psychotic euphemisms for sex
- A restaurant review + recipes!
- Reviews of all my totally illegal bootleg CDs + rare singles
- Pile on the rejection
- Your fascinating letters
- More inane contests + the winners from this issue (if applicable)
- Useless bits of information that are trapped in my head
- Zine parodies
- My new job (let's just pray, shall we?)
- A tribute to Bill Hicks

Sosumi

Below is my actual, unretouched scan of the bottom panel of a box of Cookie Crisp, one of my favorite cereals. Sure, it costs about \$4.50 for a box (in NYC) and has no nutritional value, but it does taste good, which is clearly my priority. Instead of a useless prize, they printed on of those "Magic Eye" pictures where you stare like a retard and some picture "pops" out. The directions clearly exclude our Asian friends from the fun, and then, at the end, they wish them "Gook Luck!" The nerve!

Recently I read this rather disturbing story about Warner Bros.

"Warner Bros. has full rights over the name 'Tasmanian Devil' and not even the people of Tasmania are allowed to use it—even though the animal is a native of their land. Tasmanian officials are currently negotiating with the [evil] U.S. entertainment company and hope to reach an agreement."



In order to show my opinion of this whole situation, here is a picture of an actual Tasmanian devil, not some ugly, retarded cliché thought up by a soulless corporation to sell crap. This picture was taken in the Taronga Zoo in Sydney, Australia, by me, and I own the fucking copyright, so EAT ME.

MAGIC EYE DIRECTIONS: Hold the picture below so that it touches your nose. Then let your eyes relax, not focusing on anything. Careful! Don't cross your eyes! Just stare off into space. Then pull the box back slowly until it's at a comfortable distance. You should be looking *through* the image, rather than at it. As the 3D image starts to appear, try not to focus on it, that will make it go away again. Look through it, and you'll be surprised at what you see! Gook Luck!

One day I was listening to Howard Stern and he was talking about how Microsoft knowingly and intentionally engages in illegal anti-competitive (or unfairly-competitive) practices, during his rant he also said, "I hate McDonald's, I think they're an evil company." Then, later that same day, I got this in my weekly *Ovi's World of the Bizarre* dispatch: *NOT-SO-NICE SANTA*,

RONALD McDONALD SEATTLE (10-21) - He's played Santa, baby-sat for neighbors, worked for 13 years as a child care worker, was active in his church helping teach young children. He's also just been arrested for molesting children. Ronald C. McDonald (his real name, we swear) confessed to molesting seven children, but police believe he has been doing this as far back as the early 1970's.

McDonald, who looked like Santa Claus, would take the children to a special room with toys and kids videos and then fondle them. Many worried parents have called because their children had so much contact with McDonald. He is being held on 2 counts of rape in the King County Jail. McDonald claimed that he did it for the pleasure of the children.

While enjoying a breakfast of Froot Loops out of the box (I don't drink milk because I am not a calf), I saw this coupon for some kind of deal on a Happy Meal at McDonald's. As you may have guessed, I hate McDonald's, and not just for the obvious reasons. I also hate their PR, I hate their commercials, I hate their corporate attitude, I hate the way they treat their employees, I hate their stupid charity, I hate the way their restaurants smell, I hate how easy they make it for parents to poison their own children, but most of all, I absolutely fucking hate that goddamn evil, grinning clown. Nothing says "Nightmares Forever" more than some clown with freakish make-up, floppy, oversized shoes and a shit-eating grin. To me, using a disturbing looking clown to shill for carcinogens and deep-fat-fried shitburgers is reprehensible. So here's my **PARODY** of the back panel of Froot Loops.

Hey kids, while you enjoy that delicious bowl of sugar, I am working very hard to provide you with a wonderful lunch. Ever seen a big, stupid cow? Well I am going to force hundreds of them to march into a slaughterhouse in a straight line using sticks that shock them. Then, as each reaches the end of the line, I will shove a bolt into their heads, which should kill them. Then I'll cut off their heads and feet because they're yucky and don't taste very good. Then one of my helpers will hang the corpse upside-down to drain out the icky blood. My pal Grimace will pull the cow's organs out and throw them into a drainage basket. Then somebody (maybe the Hamburglar) will chop up the body and grind the muscle and fat into a nice mixture, which will then be made into delicious hamburgers for you to enjoy! Don't forget, clowns are your friend and if one of them wants to touch you, be a good sport and play along.





got junk?