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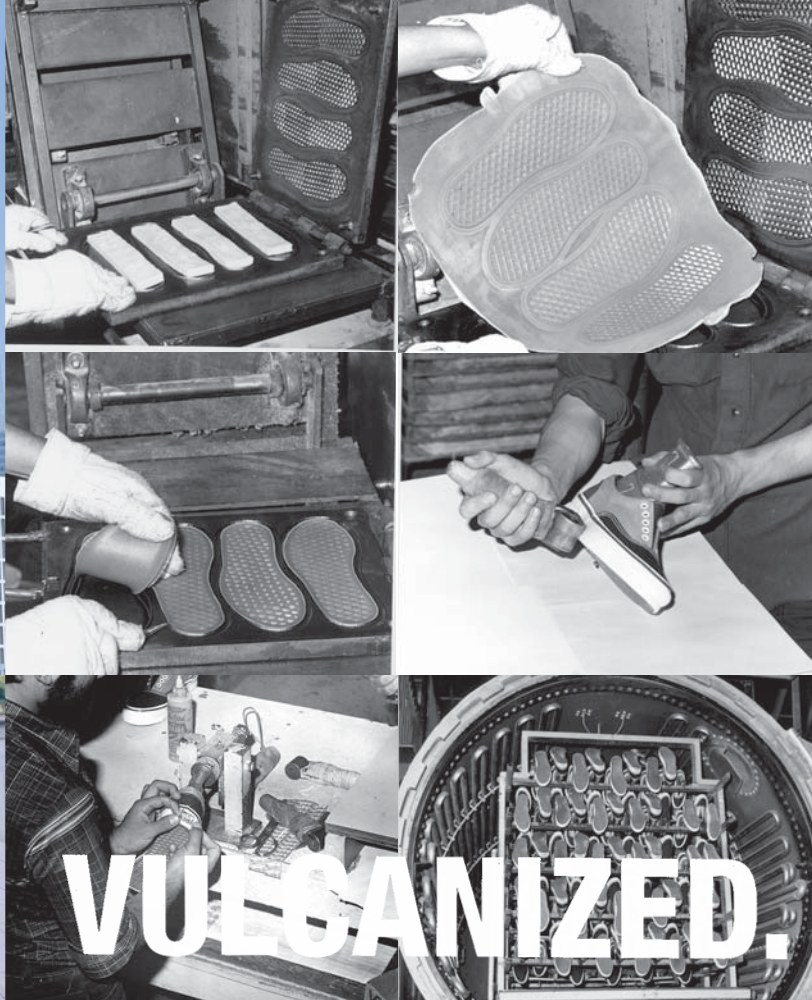


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Duvel

C O L L E C T I O N

Aside from brewing excellent beers, Duvel Moorgat is really into art, design and architecture. That's why last year Duvel asked the Belgian graphic artist Denis Meyers, the Dutch graphic artist Piet Parra and the English-Japanese designers duo Eley Kishimoto to make awesome designs for their beer glasses. Their glasses have become a part of the Duvel Collection.

This year they've asked conceptual artist Arne Quinze, musician Daan Stuyven and the Dutch graphic artist Stefan Glerum to make the second edition of beer glasses. If you think you have a bit of creativity left in your brain, you can design your own beer glass on www.duvelcollection.com. If you're good, you'll go to Paris for the finale and if you're great you can toast your victory with your own designed glass.

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Fashion hot spot.

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EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



PENNY MILLS

Penny grew up in Mauritius and Kenya, where she walked under the sea and shared her bed with geckos. She moved to London in 2007, where her fascination with movies such as *The Thing*, *The Blob* and *The Stuff* sparked an interest in set design and art direction. Penny uses the old tricks of the trade from school science experiments and 200-year-old magic tricks to create special effects like exploding cake heads, miniature volcanic cities and animated goat tongues, as you can see in the fashion story she art-directed for us. What else? Well, Penny's cat, Monster, is about to give birth, so please contact her if you're looking for a kitten. You can see Penny's work at penelopemills.tumblr.com.

See **HARDCORE GORE-NOGRAPHY** page 61



ASGER CARLSEN

Asger cut his teeth as a crime-scene photographer in Copenhagen, which we thought didn't sound very tough. "What'd you do, take pictures of the new graffiti on the Little Mermaid statue each weekend?" we asked him sarcastically while giving each other high-fives over our desks. "No," he replied, "I took photos of car-crash victims, people who died in fires and people run over by trains." That shut us up. Back in July we ran an excerpt from Asger's "Hester" series, where he digitally manipulated nude portraits of people into horrifying *Hellraiser* monsters made of, like, four legs and a chest, or no legs and way too many fingers and a butt. Asger shot this month's cover in collaboration with KK Barrett.

See the cover of the magazine (*doye*) and **VIRGEN BLOOD**, page 68



GENEVA JACUZZI

Here's what Geneva sent us for her bio: "*Geneva Jacuzzi: BIOMORPHIC ENTITY, adult retard. Possible anthro-po-humanoid simulation. Self-reliant, self-regulating, aka Geneva Garvin. Possible late-model Rozbo, two legs, multiple-brained, one vagina, slow-fast dancer, believe me you'll like her. Data point: self-fulfilling car service presumed culpable in escape from Dark Ages in 1999 and into the Non Dimensions. Status: emotional/illusory. Category: dressed up in a magazine. Analysis of self: product integrated into what is stored as fractured persona malfunction. Occupation: sending human eroto-joy-sadness-encoded HIGH-FIDELITY POP MUSIC to central Couchsofa database for repair of faulty creation myth.*"

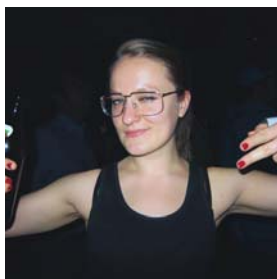
See **DARK AGES**, page 100



BENJAMIN SHAPIRO

A bouncer. A bartender. A touring drummer. A *bonhomme*. These are the roles Ben played on the stage of life before being shoved behind a desk in our smelly office and forced to sift through bins and bins of "buzz bands" as the global editor of VICE's music-oriented sister site, Noisy.com. Two weeks ago he got arrested for a minor misdemeanour and taken to Brooklyn Central Booking, where he was forced to sleep in a puddle of rat piss and endure anti-Semitic taunts. When he was released, he still had the big, Jewish heart to give that band Iceage the benefit of the doubt, even though the rest of the music press keeps calling them Nazis.

See **TRIUMPH OF THE SHRILL**, page 116



BARBARA DABROWSKA

Barbara has the longest hair of anyone we know. It spends most of its time tied up in herringbone and lace plaids and other funny things girls make when playing with their hair. But when it's let loose... oh boy! It's like a waterfall of Polish honey (we mean actual honey, not a pussy reference). As well as having hair, Barbara also used to work for Siemens, before she quit to become the managing editor of VICE Germany—see the 40-point fall in SI share price in the last quarter of 2007—and now she spends her days hanging out with neo-Nazis and biker gangs in the Black Forest. You know, basic German stuff. See the adorable snow leopard cub she photographed in this issue and watch for her flowing mane on VICE.com.

See **THE CUTE SHOW PAGE!**, page 123

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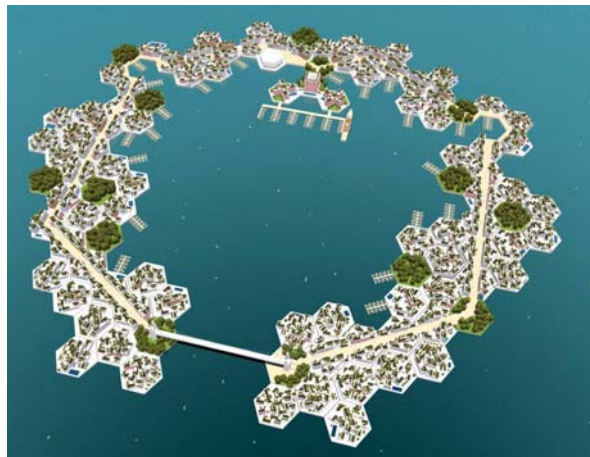
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PHOTOS BY VICTOR FRANKOWSKI, HOLLY LUCAS AND SAM HISCOX



WHY NOT BUILD YOUR OWN ISLAND COUNTRY?

Lately the Tea Partiers and other US conservatives have been co-opting some libertarian ideas like ending Social Security and the Federal Reserve, but there's at least one notion that's too fringe even for the Republican primary: seasteading, which is when you and your buddies get together and build an artificial island in international waters that will become its own country. No one's ever done this successfully, but some people have tried, including Eric Klien, whose effort to create a seastead called the Atlantis Project in the early 90s fizzled out due to lack of interest. He remains captivated by outlandish ideas (he currently runs the Lifeboat Foundation, which is devoted to making sure humans don't kill themselves off), so we called him up to see just how crazy he is.



doing these things are based out of the United States and not a European country.

So lots of people are talking about it, but do you think anyone's going to step up and construct a floating country anytime soon? The Seasteading Institute, since they're backed by a billionaire, is capable of doing something small somewhere. You could at least put a boat somewhere and call it a country. You could do that tomorrow.

The problem would be how to make that sustainable. If I was going to try to make it sustainable, one way would be to make the boat into a hospital-type ship where you offer the latest medical technologies, because in the US, the FDA takes years and years to approve stuff. That's actually why I bought the domain lifeboat.com, because I was thinking I might do that.

What do you think about the idea that you start a country by having individual families or small groups of people start seasteads and then clump them together over time? It's difficult, because people don't work well together.

Especially libertarians. Yes, I'm well aware of that. You somehow have to have an organization that's cohesive enough that it will expand very rapidly to like 100 families so it won't evaporate on you.

VICE: How did the Atlantis Project get started?
Eric Klien: I had a Libertarian candidate running for the state senate in Nevada and there was a lot of election fraud at the time, and that annoyed me so much I decided, well, let me start my own country.

Seasteaders, including the currently active Seasteading Institute, are pretty much all libertarians. Why haven't other utopian-minded people, like communists, tried to build artificial countries? Because communists have had no problem getting their own country. And in the past they've had really big countries like China. The closest thing to a libertarian country is the United States, and that's why you'll also find that the libertarians



Kitty's All Glow (for AIDS)

 BY SEAN YEATON

Great news for cats with AIDS and millionaires whose kids are already tired of the slave they got in their stocking for Christmas. Scientists have genetically modified cats by infecting their eggs with a virus containing a foreign gene, resulting in a psychedelic litter of glow-in-the-dark kittens.

The glowing effect allows scientists to see if their gene insertion worked, but otherwise has no purpose (apart from generally tripping us the fuck out). Evidently, if you can make a cat glow in the dark, you may be able to make it impervious to feline AIDS. The team behind the study did not return VICE's request for a comment on how the hell that is supposed to work.



Photos courtesy of Mayo Clinic



BY HARRY CHEADLE

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF THE ATLANTIS PROJECT

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DISAPPEARING TRIBES

Back in August, an indigenous tribe disappeared from the depths of the western Brazilian Amazon after a group of Peruvian drug traffickers was rumoured to have invaded their area. Little media attention was paid to the incident, and the tribe has yet to be found. Now, another group of native people is in trouble, this time in southeast Peru. The tribe has been bribed with stationery, medicine and jobs so that big companies like Pluspetrol can open up the land for oil exploration. We talked to a press officer at Survival International, a tribal advocacy organisation, about why this situation is a royal bummer.



BY ALLISON RAMIREZ

PHOTO COURTESY OF SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL



The isolated Nanti live deep in Peru's Kugapakori Nahua Reserve and are under threat from land invasions and disease.

VICE: Why are these tribes isolated from the world?

Christina Chauvenet: The tribes choose to be. They are aware of the outside world, but often have very negative experiences with outsiders coming into their land. They also have a very strong connection to their ancestral land and don't see any reason to leave.

I read about the missing tribe on CNN.com in August, but every time I mentioned it to someone they had no idea what I was talking about. Why are people unaware?

There is an increasing amount of media coverage, but often governments are the primary perpetrators of violations against tribal people's rights, and they do everything they can to restrict information about the situations of tribal people from getting out. Such is the case in West Papua, where journalists and human rights researchers are not allowed in the country. Also, many people have negative views

of tribal people, thinking that they should be assimilated into mainstream society because their way of life is "backward". However, when development or "progress" is forced on tribal people, the result is almost always catastrophic: poverty, disease, depression and early death.

OK, but we deal with all those things. Why should these tribes be protected?

First, there is the issue of basic human rights. These groups are under serious threat of losing their lives and livelihoods if their land is not protected. Last year, the last member of the Bo tribe in the Andaman Islands died, which meant the end of an entire culture. When you think about the end of cultures, it's a serious threat to human diversity. Tribal people are also the best conservationists. They take care of their lands, and when their livelihoods are protected, so are the areas they inhabit, which are some of the most pristine areas in the world.

Food Fighter



BY ELLIS JONES
PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUEBNER

When Emad Daiki first heard of the outbreak of rebellion against Gaddafi's regime, he quickly returned home to Misrata, Libya, to support the fight for liberation. But instead of picking up arms, Emad tossed together some dough, cheese and tomato sauce and began a free

pizza delivery service to the front line. For years Emad ran a successful pizzeria in Stockholm, and those skills, coupled with the help of some fellow Libyans, donated ingredients and a few ovens, allow Emad to bake 10,000 slices daily, with deliveries to the front line three times a day. There may not be much diversity as far as the menu goes (it's a basic cheese pizza with a small amount of tuna on top), but it's been a massive morale booster to weary rebels. And how does it taste? "Well, it tastes great," says Michael Huebner, a photographer who visited the pizzeria during his time in Libya. "It tastes like a pizza you would have in one of those small stores on the streets of Europe." Mamma mia!



24/24: BERLIN

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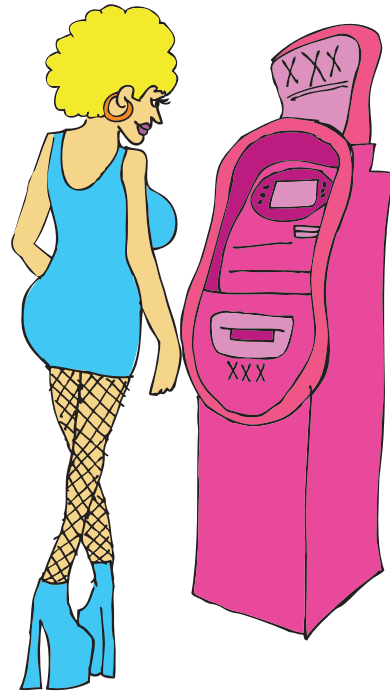
BY WILBERT L. COOPER

ILLUSTRATION BY HANNAH KUNKLE

Like any good pimp, the government of Bonn, Germany, doesn't play games with its paper—hoes have to pay up. However, the backdoor nature of the streetwalking trade has made it hard for the tax man to collect. Now the city has instituted new sex-tax machines, which look like cashpoints and sell temporary prostitution licences. Hookers have to purchase €6 tickets from these machines to conduct a lawful night of fucking for cash. Although the administration of this new tax is unique, Germany has a long history of regulated sex work dating back to the 1920s. Even the uptight Nazis, who claimed to oppose prostitution, had state-run brothels for soldiers and privileged prisoners in concentration camps. We talked with German historian Atina Grossmann about Germany's long history of whoring and taxing the whores they love to whore with.

VICE: Up until now, brothel workers were the only sex professionals who were forced to pay taxes and they are still the only ones who pay a progressive income tax. Does that give them a sense of prestige over the cashpoint-paying streetwalkers? **Atina Grossmann:** Historically there has always been this contradiction. There were the “wild” prostitutes who we call streetwalkers. They could move in and out of the occupation, turning tricks now and then. And then there were those who worked in brothels, who were more professional and might have had their own doctors.

Do you think the logic that came up with taxing hookers through a machine is a product of Germany's distinct culture? It takes a certain kind of mind to



come up with an idea like that—everything has to be orderly. If everybody else pays taxes, you can't allow one group to evade it. The practice also speaks to a society that assumes that it's in the public interest to pay taxes, which is different from the US. German people think that you pay taxes because you expect things from the state.

Doesn't taxation lead to more legitimacy for people in the sex industry? Why are sex-worker advocates opposed to the tax? Organised sex workers have been active in Germany since the 1920s. I think these groups are willing to pay their fair share of taxes. What some groups are upset about is the districting quality of these measures. They feel like they are being marginalised to one place.

It's Hard Out Here for a Mexican Drug Cartel



BY WILBERT L. COOPER, PHOTO COURTESY OF AP PHOTO/ALEXANDRE MENEGHINI



Los Zetas are learning it's not an easy gig being Mexico's most notorious drug cartel. Along with the grisly rep, body snatching and public brutality comes some intense heat from *el presidente* Felipe Calderón Hinojosa and his army of federal and local officers. The Mexican Navy just arrested 80 Zetas and dismantled a complex telecommunications network they built in Veracruz, a state that has been plagued by the turf war between the Zetas and the Gulf Cartel. The network included high-tech stuff like solar panels and antennae for two-way radios—important tools for doing dastardly gangster shit. High-ranking members of the Zetas have also been targeted by the police officials. Femme fatale Mireya Moreno Carreón, the first woman linked to the leadership of the Zetas' Monterrey operations, was recently arrested by authorities in San Nicolás de los Garza. These crackdowns come in the wake of national mourning after a fire at the Casino Royale in Monterrey which was allegedly started by Zetas and killed 52 people. The attack, which police suspect was in retaliation for nonpayment of extortion money, shocked Mexico because the majority of the victims were middle-class women. With the pressure on, the Ministry of Public Security has reported that the Zetas are purging their weakest links, executing people in their ranks who are minors, have been recruited in recent months or have ever violated orders. This intel was gleaned from suspects arrested for the Casino Royale fire. The Zetas better do something, because Calderón's war against the cartels is only going to get tougher. Nearly £7.7 billion has been budgeted for agencies dedicated to fighting cartels like the Zetas, which is an 11 percent increase from 2011.



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Mama Becky cooks up some chang'aa at a distillery in Kibera. The women who run this place live off the kangara and chang'aa they brew.

REALLY STRANGE BREW

Kenyan Chang'aa Gets the Party Started Right (Unless You Die from It)

WORDS AND
PHOTOS BY
PAIGE AARHUS

I'm in the Kibera slums of Nairobi, Kenya, lost in a labyrinth of rubbish-filled alleyways and encircled by rotting tin sheds, a row of enormous bubbling cauldrons and a dozen giant plastic jugs. I've travelled here to taste my first glass of *chang'aa*, a local form of moonshine. In Swahili, *chang'aa* literally means "kill me quick", and it will obliterate anyone who pours it down his or her gullet. It's the Crazy Horse of rotgut.

Before I have a taste, Mama Miriam, a member of the nine-woman collective who runs the distillery, wants to show me how strong it is. She lights the *chang'aa* on fire, growing excited as the cup begins to melt.

"See?" she says. "Really powerful."

I pull the cup up to my nose and immediately gag. It smells like bad whiskey and hits like paint thinner. The first sip puts me in a daze. The second causes uncontrollable shudders and tears. And by the third I am breathing fumes and feel like I've gone cross-eyed.

Chang'aa (also known as *busaa* or banana beer) is typically distilled from maize or millet. It's brewed in Kenya's poorest areas, costs 20 shillings (about 15 pence) per glass, and (surprise!) is popular with the unemployed and disenfranchised. In Kibera, one of East Africa's largest slums, this drink is a daily staple for many residents.

Until recently, *chang'aa* was illegal in Kenya. Unscrupulous vendors frequently spike the spirit with methanol for an extra kick, and there are rumours that jet fuel and embalming fluid are sometimes added to the mix. Police have found decomposing rats and women's underwear in large batches of *chang'aa*, and the water used to distil it is often befouled by faecal matter, so it's no surprise that *chang'aa* has killed hundreds and blinded thousands more.

The Kenyan government legalised *chang'aa* in late 2010 with the goal of cutting down on poisonings and deaths by putting standards in place. Under the new alcohol laws, *chang'aa* must be bottled, sealed and marked with a warning label. If authorities discover any sketchy ingredients, such as lethal amounts of methanol, the manufacturer faces fines and jail time.

"We don't even like to call it *chang'aa* anymore because the name has such a bad reputation," says Vitalis Odhiambo, aka Diddy, an unofficial tour guide I paid to show me around Kibera.

Diddy was born and raised in the slums, and he sees opportunity in legalisation. The women of Kibera can distil *chang'aa* at home, providing some much-needed income to household budgets, while their husbands and boyfriends are on the streets, hustling tourists like me.

Diddy runs a carwash and provides "ghetto tours" for visiting foreigners. A typical tour involves navigating wide-eyed tourists through Kibera to snap pictures of grinning children and abject poverty. But when the photo ops are done, for a couple of extra bucks he'll bring visitors to local drinking holes (more often than not a one-room home filled with mothers nursing newborns)



Mama Toto has owned and managed a *chang'aa* bar in Kibera for the past seven years. She will happily drink any of her clients under the table and continue serving afterwards. Clients visit 24/7, and Mama Toto is always waiting.

where they can get hammered on *chang'aa*.

Most drinkers are nearly unconscious after a couple of rounds, but Diddy provides his clients with another kind of stimulant: bags of khat, the all-natural African equivalent of speed.

"I do what I can to make it a good experience," he says. "We want it to be an industry. In Kibera we are doing it right, we are doing it clean and the *chang'aa* isn't poisonous. We don't add toxic chemicals here. We want to brew it the traditional way, and we want visitors to enjoy it."

Back at Mama Miriam's distillery, everything seems on the level at first. The aluminium condensation pots are clean enough, and everyone swears the water being used comes from local pipelines (not the nearby and extremely polluted Nairobi River). But inside a squalid fermentation shack lies the big problem facing slum distilleries: filthy barrels of rotting maize sludge line the walls, jutting out at all angles and perilously close to toppling. Quality control doesn't really exist, and neither do storage or bottling facilities.

Even though legalisation makes it easier to distil and drink *chang'aa* in the open, brewing is still an underground operation. The women who keep this particular distillery going have to bribe police officers about 500 shillings (£4) a week to keep from being shut down (and I had to pay the police 1,000 shillings when they crashed my photo shoot).

"Everyone's hustling here," Diddy explains. "What we need is a bottling factory and direction from the government about how to get inspections and licences. We don't have anything to hide, but we still face too much harassment if we try to sell to the outside."

Instead, women sell 5- and 25-litre plastic jugs to local booze dens, where it is usually served in the mornings to security guards just getting off the night shift, and all night to vendors and labourers looking to unwind.

The Kenya Industrial Estate, a company that provides capital for small businesses, recently announced it would invest in *chang'aa* breweries, noting that Kenyans bought an estimated 16 billion shillings' worth of the brew every year. Charities and church groups are also trying to help local distillers, the idea being that if it must be sold, *chang'aa* should be profitable and safe instead of lethal.

"It's getting better. It will take some time, but we'll be selling to the big companies some day," says Diddy. "Maybe the wealthy people prefer Johnnie Walker, but real Kenyans know this is better."

HOW TO BREW YOUR OWN CHANG'AA AT HOME

DISCLAIMER: Kangara (the brown, fizzy, fermented mixture kept in barrels) will probably kill you. The women who make this stuff are somehow immune to it and partially live off of it (as in, they eat it), but it is really not recommended, so just don't do it. In fact, don't follow this recipe whatsoever. You're going to end up killing yourself or someone else—this is just for curiosity's sake.

INGREDIENTS

- 90 kg of maize flour
- 90 kg of millet flour
- 200 L of water
- 1 giant pan (at least 3 feet in diameter)
- 1 spade
- 1 enormous plastic barrel
- 20 kg of brown sugar
- Lots of firewood
- 40 L cauldrons
- 50 kg of white sugar
- 2 aluminium pots (one 10 L and one 15 L) per cauldron. The pots must fit in the mouth of your cauldron, one on top of the other.
- Banana leaves
- 5 L and 25 L plastic jugs for water and *chang'aa*



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix one full bag of maize flour and one full bag of millet flour. Add 20 L of water. Mix the maize and millet flour into the water until it thickens. Scoop the paste out and put in the pan, and use the spade to flip and push the mixture across the pan to bake and dry it. It should have the consistency of really thick mashed potatoes and be cooked until it's a burnt brown colour.
2. Take the remaining 180 L of water and pour it into the giant barrel. Move the millet/maize mix from the pan to the barrel of water. Next, add all 20 kg of brown sugar and stir. Make sure everything is under the water and perfectly mixed.
3. Seal the barrel and store it (usually in holes or shacks due to police harassment). Let it ferment for five days.
4. After five days, ignite fires under the cauldrons. The fermented mixture (kangara) can technically be ingested now, but it will probably kill you. Now it's time to distil.
5. Take the kangara and add white sugar.
6. Divide the mixture into the giant black pots/cauldrons. Place the empty 10 L pot in the neck of the cauldron; this will catch the *chang'aa*. Put the 15 L second pot, filled with water, on top of the first pot to prevent the alcohol vapour from escaping. Then seal the entire thing with banana leaves.
7. When the water in the 15 L pot is heated, pour it into a waiting plastic jug for home use (laundry and showers). Refill the top pot every hour, and cook the whole thing for three hours.
8. After three hours, empty the bottom pot. If done correctly, you should now have 10 L of quality *chang'aa*! The kangara can be reused two to three times by letting it stand for three days and adding more sugar. Its alcohol content is 70-90 percent, depending on the cook and recipe, so invite a few of your hard-drinking friends over, serve them a few rounds of banana beer, and show them that they know absolutely nothing about alcoholism.



Defrosted bugs about to become dinner. From left to right: wax worms, mealworms, three-week-old crickets, locusts and a Chilean rose tarantula.

I'LL HAVE A CHEESEBUGGER WITH FLIES

In the Future We'll All Eat Creepy Crawlies

BY MILÈNE LARSSON

FOOD STYLING BY OLIVIA BERGSTRÖM

The UN's Commission on Population and Development estimates that 9.1 billion people will be roving this overcrowded planet by 2050. Millions are already starving and with climate change destroying farmland and populations exploding, the number of the permanently hungry seems likely to expand. So it doesn't hurt to start getting acquainted with other methods of protein intake, especially entomophagy (aka eating bugs).

Apparently, the 1,500 or so edible varieties of insect are generally richer in protein, vitamins and essential fatty acids than most types of meat. Most importantly, breeding them for sustenance requires only a fraction of the natural resources needed to produce livestock and crops.

Finding our looming culinary future stomach-turning, I decided to challenge my spoilt Westerner's sense of disgust by inviting some friends over for a lip-smacking bug banquet. I kept telling myself, "It's no biggie, these little critters are eaten in most parts of the world;

even the French have gladly been gobbling down ants *au chocolat* and escargot for centuries!" But inside, I was bugging out.

Clueless as to whether I should buy the bugs dead or alive or how to cook them, I asked the famous bug chef and author of *The Eat-a-Bug Cookbook*, David George Gordon, for advice. David has spent the past 15 years travelling the US, holding insect-cooking classes where he wears a chef's hat with antennae and serves his dishes with a smile and a cheery "Bug appétit!"

David told me the reason most Westerners find bug eating revolting is because they didn't grow up with it. "If someone offered me an egg and I'd never had one before, I'd find it weird," he said. Taking into account that eggs are hen menses, he does have a point. After giving me thorough bug-cooking instructions, our conversation ended with how he thinks we'll all eventually adapt to worm, locust and spider cuisine. "We'll most likely consume bug-protein products, similar to the soy ones available today," he said. "The cows, chickens and pigs we eat are the products of hundreds of years of selective breeding. We could, in a similar way, be raising super-large insects with more meat and less body armour." Imagine buying a bag of giant cockroaches bred for their meat like they were salt-and-vinegar crisps. You might think it's gross right now, but in the near future insectivorous humans may look forward to such a treat. It won't be long before the dinner scene in *Temple of Doom* will make viewers' mouths water.



The author cutting cricket antennae. If they're longer than a quarter of an inch, eating them will feel like swallowing a hair.

Recipes adapted from *The Eat-a-Bug Cookbook* by David George Gordon, published by Ten Speed Press

David told me the easiest way to obtain bugs, which you usually must buy alive, is from a local pet shop that sells live food for reptiles and other exotic animals. The most humane way of killing these cold-blooded critters is sticking them in the freezer for more than 48 hours, where they peacefully drift off into a frozen sleep from which they never wake up.

On my way to the pet shop, I tried to come up with valid excuses for needing so many different insects and the shop's biggest tarantula. When I got there, however, the woman behind the counter acted as if my request was the most normal thing in the world and directed me to a shelf at the back. To get there I had to pass the reptiles. I watched with horror as a big, ugly salamander wolfed down a whole grasshopper in less than a second and then stared at me, with his weird little face pressed to the glass. If I hadn't already been uneasy, this would have done the trick.

I proceeded to the transparent-plastic live-food boxes stacked on a nearby shelf. They were filled with mealworms, crickets, locusts, and wax worms crawling around in sawdust. I tried to stay calm and focus on choosing the healthiest-looking boxes, like I do when buying fruit or vegetables, but it was sickening.

Finally, I just grabbed a box of each and walked up to the counter. "I'll have these and that big tarantula to the right," I said to the attendant. She gave me her card and said to call her if we needed any care instructions, which made me feel guilty. On the bus home I sat with the plastic bag by my feet, fighting irrational thoughts that insects were crawling up my legs, forcing me to constantly brush my calves off.

By the time I got home I was almost in tears. "Let's have a look at them first," my boyfriend said, as I was about to shove the bag into the freezer. I placed the boxes on the kitchen bench. The tarantula, probably suspecting its looming fate, had hidden its face behind its fluffy legs, looking all cute and frail. We named him Jeff and, for a second, considered sparing him and keeping him as our pet.

Two days later, it was time to prepare the bug banquet. When I peeked in the freezer, the little guys were covered in frost, but once thawed, they looked very much alive, only motionless. A couple of curious friends came over to help and offered emotional support in the shape of a bottle of sauvignon blanc, which goes as well with bugs as seafood (the two are closely related). After the initial "EEEEEEWs" and hyperventilating on



CHILLI, PESTO AND CHEDDAR OVEN-BAKED MEALWORMS

- 1 cup of thawed mealworms
- 2 slices of mature cheddar cheese
- ½ teaspoon of chilli powder
- 3 tablespoons of fresh pesto

Heat oven to 200°. Cover mealworms in flavourings and then bake for about 10 minutes.



TRIPLE-DIP LOCUST AND TARANTULA TEMPURA

- 1 egg
- 1 cup of cold water
- 1 cup of flour
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 10-15 thawed locusts
- 1 thawed tarantula
- 3 cups of frying oil
- Suggested dips: tomato salsa, mango salsa and aioli

Beat egg in a bowl with very cold water and add flour. Dip locusts and tarantula in the batter and stir-fry for about 2 minutes. Serve with dips.





ORTHOPTERAN ORZO

- 1 cup of orzo
- 3 cups of vegetable broth
- ½ cup of grated carrot
- ½ cup of finely diced red and yellow pepper
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- ½ cup of chopped onion
- 1 cup of frozen two- or three-week-old cricket nymphs, thawed
- 2 tablespoons of chopped parsley

Bring broth to the boil, then stir in the orzo and cook for 10 minutes. Drain any extra liquid and mix in carrots and peppers. In a separate skillet, melt butter and add garlic, onions and crickets. Sauté until the onions are clear. Mix it all together, including any liquid, top with parsley, and serve.



CHOCOLATE WAX WORMS WITH CHAMPAGNE STRAWBERRIES

- 20 thawed wax worms
- ½ bar of dark cooking chocolate
- 1 cup of strawberries, chopped
- ½ glass of champagne
- 1 teaspoon of mint, chopped

Roast wax worms in a preheated 180° oven for about 10 minutes. Melt chocolate in a bowl wetted with boiling water. Dip the wax worms in melted chocolate and refrigerate for at least half an hour. Soak strawberries and mint in champagne and serve together.



You have to burn the hair off tarantulas before eating them or they'll tickle your throat in a bad way. Tarantulas have a strange taste, similar to shark, and the carapace is filled with soft, tasty meat. The legs, however, are a bit chewy and filled with white gooey stuff.

the floor, we steeled ourselves and started picking up the defrosted bugs from their sawdust-filled coffins and rinsing them in the sink. Touching them made my throat feel all funny, a sort of tickling sense of disgust. Some of the locusts were half-eaten; before falling into a permanent sleep they seemed to have reenacted the scene from *Alive* where the plane-crash survivors gnawed on their dead companions' meaty parts. We kept telling ourselves, "Locusts are just land-living shrimp, only less gross because they don't eat shit," but this failed to convince us.


The menu for the evening started with oven-baked mealworms and tempura locust, orthopteran orzo for the main course and chocolate-covered wax worms for dessert.

Like any other meat, bugs need to be cooked to avoid getting parasites. We started by covering the mealworms in pesto, cheddar and chilli powder. Once in the oven, they gave off a succulent and reassuring smell, but when I took them out, the worms were still wiggling from the heat (don't worry, they were dead) and I nearly dropped the tray. My friend Tobias grabbed a worm, and his "Yum!" convinced the rest of us to do the same. Indeed, the scary-looking crispy

mealworms had a weird almond-and-potato taste that went great with the flavourings.

Encouraged by the tasty worm snacks, we didn't make a big deal out of biting into the tempura locusts—it was like eating shrimp covered in batter, but with edible shells. The next dish, recommended by David George Gordon, consisted of orzo, vegetables and crickets. Unfortunately, it wasn't that appetising, mostly because it reminded us of food that had been left out for so long it'd been infested with insects. It was hard to distinguish the flavour of the crickets, so we had one by itself and it tasted somewhat similar to chicken, only soft and mushy. Be warned, the legs tend to get stuck between your teeth!

Before dipping our dessert in chocolate, we sampled a roasted wax worm au naturel. If you can get past its unappealing resemblance to larvae, it's like eating soft, sweet pistachio nuts. They were actually tastier without the chocolate.

Overall, the tempura tarantula and oven-baked mealworms were the best items on our menu, but the wax worms were pretty good too. While we didn't lick our plates clean, at least we know what to expect when eating bugs becomes a necessity. 

This campaign runs from the 1st of September until the 15th of November 2011.



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WORDS AND PHOTOS BY KARLOS ZURUTUZA

As a freelance reporter specialising in the Middle East and Central Asia, I often find myself in holy-shit-I-almost-pooped-my-pants-because-I-could-have-died situations. The stories I cover might be both extraordinary and terrifying, but the question I get asked more than any other is “Where do you sleep when you’re over there?” I usually deadpan: “Motel 6 if I can find one. If not, I’ll splurge for La Quinta.” If the person looks at me with confusion, that probably means I’m not dealing with a total moron, so I’ll say, “Just kidding” and tell them about a few of the most notable places I’ve stayed during my travels through the world’s conflict regions.

HOTEL JAPAN

Quetta, Pakistan (£5 per night, tropical fish included)
The Japan is my favourite hotel in the world. During check-in, Muhammad the receptionist informed me that if I booked for a week I could have the “room with the fish”. That was nice—until I realised Muhammad was going to come into my room every morning at seven to feed them.

Unsurprisingly, there are few foreigners in Quetta; it’s located near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, an area Islamabad has forbidden journalists from entering, and, rumour has it, the current home of one-eyed Taliban leader Mullah Omar. The city is also a putrid melting pot of Sunnis, Marxist Baluchis, Shiite fighters and Christian Punjabis—and they all hate one another. It’s fairly peaceful in the daytime, but nights are often marred by gunfire. Frequently you’ll hear three shots in a row—an assassination, two shots to the head, one to the chest. The chatter the next day, over a breakfast of green tea and lentil soup, usually goes something like, “Last night they assassinated Muhammad blah-blah-blah, tribal chief of the blah.” That’s usually my cue to scam and try to interview the next Muhammad on my list before *he* gets blown away.

HOTEL SABEEL

Baghdad, Iraq (£32 per night paid in advance, complimentary breakfast, wi-fi)

Although Baghdad is still far from the safest area of Iraq, the chance of being kidnapped has decreased over the past two years. With that in mind, last February I spent a few nights at the Sabeel, fairly confident I wasn’t going to die. Baghdad might not be as dangerous as it once was, but I don’t think the city will ever be able to shake off the bad vibes of a female soldier finger-gunning the genitals of naked prisoners with bags over their heads.

As in Quetta, gunshots wake you throughout the night, which could signify anything from a “selective” murder to the police using improvised pest control to curb the stray dog population. It’s usually the latter. Things won’t be back to normal here for a long time, evidenced by the fact that journalists are still advised to change hotels frequently to avoid being targeted by kidnappers. My advice to freelance journalists is to stay the fuck out of Baghdad altogether. It’s crazy expensive, and stories from Iraq don’t pay anymore.

GOVERNOR OF HELMAND PROVINCE’S GUEST HOUSE

Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan (£32 per night, half board)
The best thing about staying here is that the governor of the most fucked-up province in the country is literally right next door. This makes it fairly easy to get an interview with him. On the downside, you’re sleeping only feet away from one of the Taliban’s primary targets. Good news is the guest rooms are in the basement, facing the interior courtyard, slightly diminishing your chances of being killed in a mortar attack.

There are significantly fewer troops on the ground in Afghanistan these days. The Canadians were the latest to leave, and the coalition has passed control of Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province, to the Afghan army. And as NATO draws down, the Taliban is returning and farmers are going back to growing massive fields of poppies. In other words, visiting hours are over. Afghanistan, you will be missed. I’m planning one last visit before the fundies come back and shut the country off to the world for another decade.

HOTEL MUSTAFA

Kabul, Afghanistan (£13 per night)

Until the press gets kicked out of Afghanistan, I’ll keep staying at this legendary hotel. There’s something soothingly familiar about its barred windows and padlocked iron doors. It’s even recommended by Lonely Planet, at least according to a sign in the foyer. Centrally located, it’s just a stone’s throw away from Chicken Street, where you can spend hours browsing classic Afghan souvenirs, such as burkas, carpets with RPG motifs, Kalashnikovs and Russian-made digital watches from the 80s.

GADDAFI’S FORMER VIP RESIDENCE

Nalut, Libya (free, all-inclusive)

OK, this place didn’t have any water or electricity, and rocket fire kept me awake all night, but how could anyone pass up the opportunity to sleep in a galleon bed? Out of all the world’s insurgents, the Libyan rebels get top marks for their hospitality to foreign journalists. It might be because they’re desperate to disprove all the Gaddafi propaganda about them being Al-Qaeda and/or drug addicts. Still, I have to say it was a bit weird being the only guest in a building originally designed to house up to 500 friends of the Gaddafi regime. Every time I got up to take a piss, I felt like Sean Connery in *Outland*, waiting for the bad guys to show up. After two nights of interplanetary loneliness, I switched to Nalut’s Media Centre, where I slept snuggled up with the debris of the Grad and Katyusha rockets fired over the previous weeks. And there was free satellite internet access. Nice one, Libyan rebels!

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: Hotel Sabeel, the Governor of Helmand province’s guest house, Hotel Mustafa, Gaddafi’s former VIP residence




Eclectica Hotel

ECLECTICA HOTEL

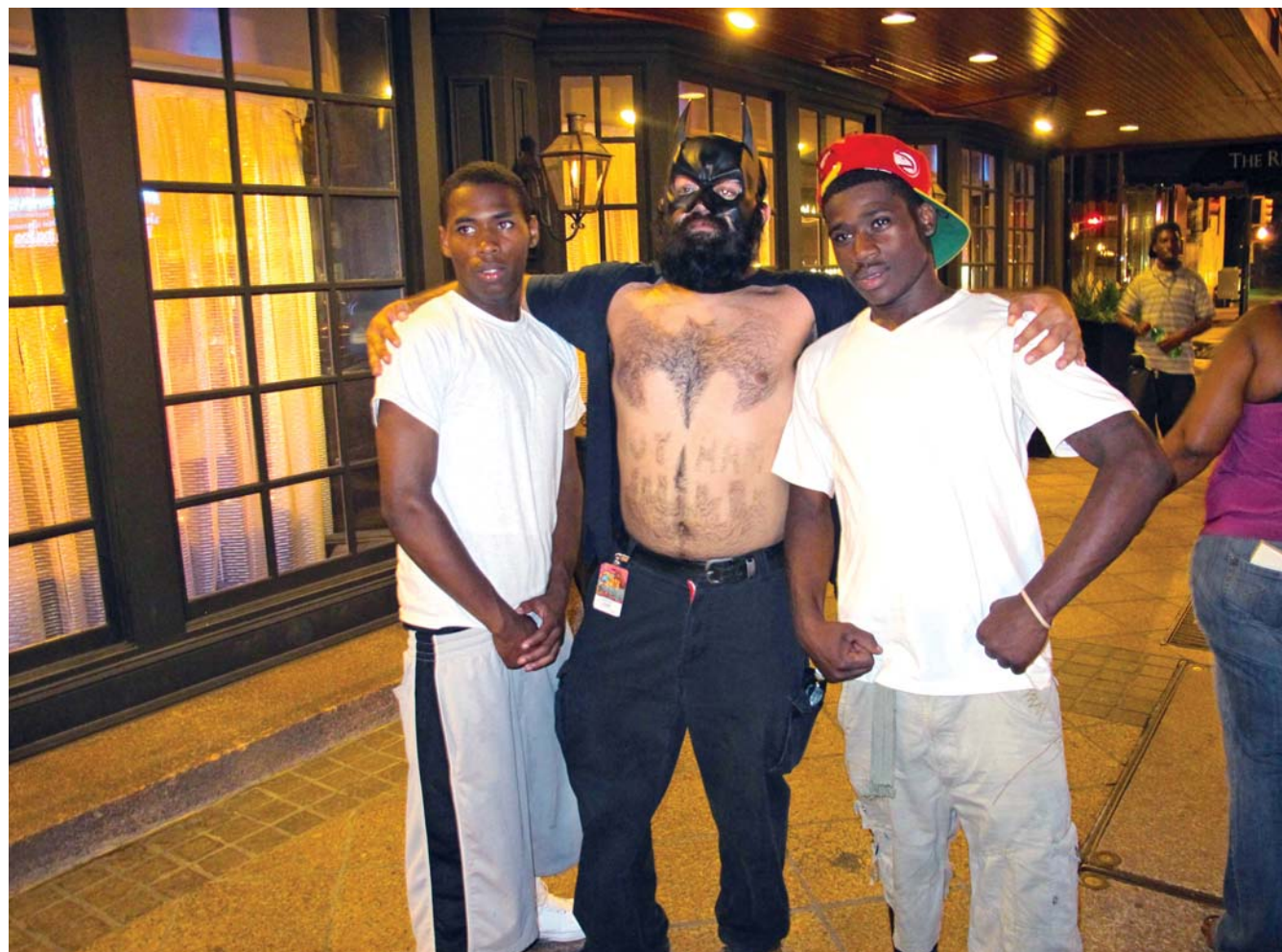
Vanq, Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh (free to foreigners)

For a relatively small cost and close to zero risk, you could do worse than visiting one of Eastern Europe's "frozen conflicts". As a bonus, visitors receive a visa stamp on their passports from a nation that doesn't officially exist. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, dozens of new countries sprang up in Eurasia. Some of these are half-official (Abkhazia, for instance, is recognised by Russia, Nicaragua, Venezuela and the tiny Pacific islands of Vanuatu and Nauru), and others, like Nagorno-Karabakh, are ignored by everyone.

Aside from its ambiguous sovereignty, Nagorno-Karabakh is also home to ambiguous hotels like the Eclectica. Its owner, Levon Hairapetyan, is a local who made his fortune overseas. Upon returning to Vanq, he funded the country's largest-ever mass marriage ceremony. Receiving £1,625 each, 675 couples were married in a traditional Armenian service, with an additional £1,300 promised to their first child, £1,950 for the second, £3,250 for the third, £6,500 for the fourth, and so on. There is a catch, though: if a couple divorces, they have to pay all the money back. But it seems like a nice enough place. I visited in 2005 and was fed complimentary sushi for dinner and stayed the night for free. Now that's a fucking hotel. 



Jon in the Arnie. Mark Welsh portrait. coalheadwear.com **coal**



Fatman and two black Robins.

DRAGON CONNED

The Sad Decline of the American Nerd

BY NICHOLAS GAZIN

PHOTOS BY
NICHOLAS GAZIN AND
BILLY VOERMANN

All fan conventions, be they about comics, RPGs, anime or whatever, were spawned by science-fiction conventions. Some believe that the first of these gatherings took place in October 1936 when nine sci-fi fans travelled from New York to the Philadelphia home of Milton A. Rothman, a nuclear physicist and founder of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society. There's also a contingent of people (mostly British) who hold that the first real science-fiction convention occurred in Leeds on January 3, 1937, and attracted about 20 fans, including Arthur C. Clarke.

In the decades following those two meet-ups, sci-fi cons focused almost entirely on literature, and there was little distinction between fan and celebrity. These early adopters understood that true science fiction is more cerebral and philosophical than most assholes will admit, and at its heart, the genre is about predicting the

future of human existence based on current technology, politics, trends and attitudes.

The arrival of *Star Wars* and its unprecedented mainstream popularity shifted most people's idea of sci-fi from this "literature of ideas" to "lasers and spaceships". It also changed the nature of science-fiction conventions. At some point in the 80s, they withered from meetings of minds who wanted to discuss the meanings of things into gatherings of off-kilter individuals who want to live inside fantasy worlds. For instance, costume contests have been a staple of sci-fi cons since the early days, but back then people didn't parade around in them all day and throughout the evening while they looked for other "characters" to have sex with. And while I admit to loving the cosplay element of all major cons, I recognise that playing dress-up and pretending to be a cyborg is the opposite of intellectually discussing literature concerned with the future of mankind. Still, both are good times.

So last month I paid my first visit to Atlanta's Dragon Con for its 25th anniversary. The convention was first held in 1987 as a meet-up for Ed Kramer's BBS role-playing group the Dragon Alliance of Gamers and Role-Players. Since Dragon Con's inception, attendance

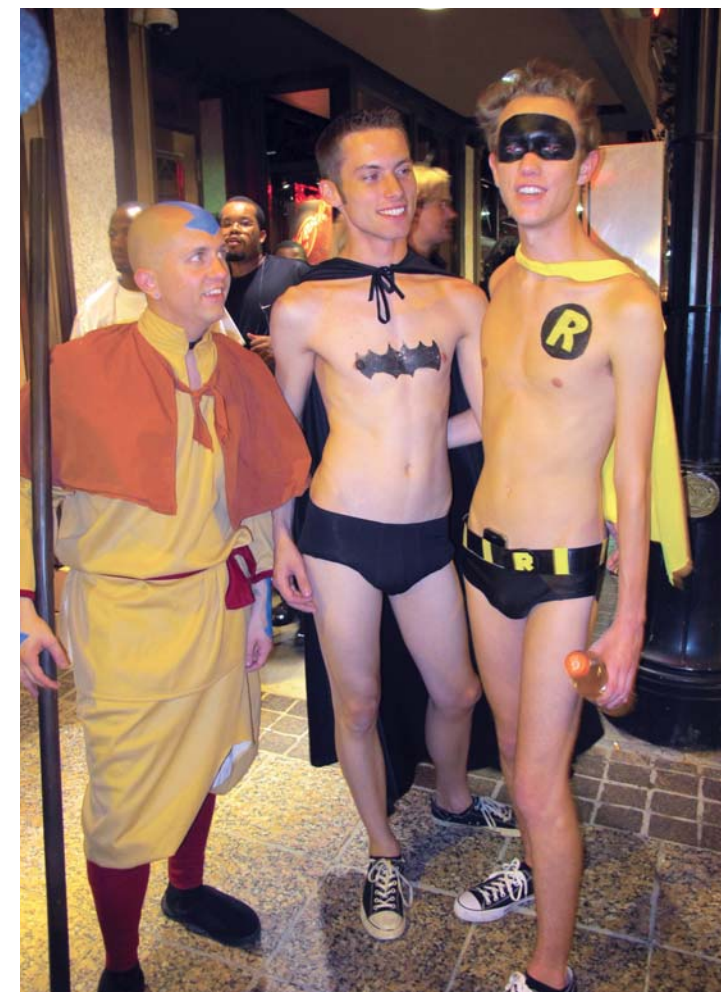
has grown from about 400 to somewhere between 40,000 and 70,000, depending on whom you ask. The festivities are spread across six hotels that are relatively close to one another. Attendees wander around to panels and exhibitor halls during the day, and at night their hotel rooms host awesome parties and debauchery that spill into the streets of the nearby Peachtree neighbourhood.

My plan was to meander around and talk to anyone who looked interesting, which at the time seemed like a fairly easy task. One of the first people I spoke with was a girl who'd made a dress out of the con's programme pamphlets. Then we were invited to an "anything-but-clothes party" along with a guy who said he almost got his scrotum shot off overseas. Later we hung out with the 501st Legion, a brigade of men who dress in homemade Stormtrooper costumes, throw awesome parties and do a lot of charity work.

Later I watched a "costumed comic book babes contest", which featured a panel of celebrity judges that included Jim Steranko, probably best known for his work on Nick Fury comics, who was wearing a white suit that perfectly matched his even whiter hair. He might've been one of the coolest-looking guys I've ever seen. Elvira was there too, in full costume, looking as hot as ever. Voltaire, the guy who plays dramatic cabaret-ish music that steampunks like, hosted the event, and although most of his corny/horny jokes didn't work on me, he was able to keep up the energy for about an hour and improvise a lot of dirty humour.

I guess you could say I was a popular guy at Dragon Con because I was being tailed by a film crew documenting my experience. I was dressed as GG Allin's pre-burial corpse, which could've also drawn some attention. At one point, we got into some trouble with the volunteer staff, who asked us to show all of the footage we'd shot that day to Pat Henry, the con's most senior director. Pat's minions brought us to his lair, and we played the footage for the big boss. For some reason I started discussing how extreme naïveté and aggressive sexuality are fundamental and intertwined elements of the con. Pat accused me of having an agenda, but he offered no explanation for why there were thousands of Dragon Con attendees dressed as icons of childhood entertainment who seemed to want nothing more than to cavort with half-nude women. This connection became even more troubling on my return home, when I discovered that 11 years ago, Ed Kramer, Dragon Con's founder, was charged with multiple counts of child molestation and aggravated child molestation in Gwinnett County, Georgia. Then, just before this issue of VICE went to print, Kramer was arrested for misdemeanour reckless endangerment of a child, specifically a 14-year-old boy with whom he shared a hotel room in Connecticut. Before this incident, Pat Henry posted a message on Facebook that stated Kramer hasn't been associated with Dragon Con since 2000, around the time of his first arrest.


Another major bummer for me was realising just how big steampunk has become. I frequent all sorts of conventions around the country, and nowhere have I seen as many steampunks as I did at Dragon Con. Although its name is derived from the science-fiction subgenre called cyberpunk, steampunk is essentially the antithesis of science fiction. Instead of pondering the future, these guys are on some "What if steam trumped electricity?" tangent that requires reimagining the past as a place where everyone cruised around in blimps shaped like boats and dressed like vampire hunters. I did meet a few really interesting steampunk enthusiasts (including one



BAM! BONK!
POW! It's
Battyman and
Bobbin'.

genius who made a beautiful steampunk version of Professor X's wheelchair), but for the most part it seemed like steampunks fetishise an aesthetic that they probably don't research. On our final day, we attended a Steampunk 101 discussion panel and abruptly left when the host said he wanted to nail down the ideology of steampunk, and an adult woman raised her hand and asked, "What's an ideology?"

Near the end of the trip I had a little freak-out about nerd culture and how being a nerd is too easy nowadays. When I was in high school no one wanted to be a nerd, and being a lonely outsider was a miserable existence where you mostly hung out with yourself and tried to understand the world because you didn't have friends. Now all the pin-up models jokingly claim that they love *Star Wars* and video games before laughing and admitting, "I'm such a nerd!" Congratulations for liking one of the most popular franchises of all time!

The outsider status of nerd-dom and being a sci-fi fan has been embraced by mainstream culture, which totally negates what it meant to be one of these things in the first place. Now just about everyone's a reg, and that means pretty soon everything is going to be mediocre and boring. Except steampunks. They'll always be terrible. 

Watch a documentary about the author's visit to Dragon Con on VICE.com, just in time for Halloween. Highlights include him being arrested by the convention's media-relations guy for talking to Princess Leia... at a sci-fi convention.



The myriad attendees of Dragon Con.



TOP
BUTTON
DONE

Heritage Women. Inc

I've had a love affair with the fred perry label since i was 14, i went to a newcastle away game at liverpool and saw a bloke with a french crew, white fred perry monkey jacket, prince of wales strides showing ankle with red socks and white shoes...

uploaded by beppu
country, ~~uk~~
england

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FREDPERRY.COM / TELLUSYOURSTORY

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After this brawl it became apparent that elfin battle tactics rely on sitting in the forest and picking off stragglers, confirming the suspicion that elves are total pussies.

KEEP ON LARPIN' IN THE FREE WORLD

As Long as "Free World" Means a Fake Medieval Village in Canada

BY BEN MAKUCH

PHOTOS BY
BRETT GUNDLOCK
AND RAF KATIGBAK

Used to be that live-action role-playing (LARP) was nothing more than a bunch of full-grown virgins with action-figure collections distracting themselves from suicidal thoughts by prodding one another with foam spears in the park. Today it's a thriving subculture with its own multimillion-pound faux-armaments industry and a series of massive for-profit tournaments hosted all over the world. LARP's natural home is Quebec, where French-Canadian adults somehow find it perfectly acceptable to pretend they're living in a film-student remake of *Red Sonja*. They've even built more than 100 "medieval" structures on a 350-acre "village" in northern Quebec, which is appropriately named the Grand Duchy of Bicolline.

Every August, thousands of these exemplars of modern humanity descend on this entirely made-up settlement for a week-long medieval festival that ends with the Great Battle, which is basically the LARP Super Bowl. The first was held in 1996 as a competition for a few Québécois LARPer, and now it hosts people from places as far away as Luxembourg. Since this was one of the bigger events advertised as being open to all, I rented a tattered Peter Pan outfit from a costume shop for £20 and made the two-hour drive from Montreal.

As I pulled up to the entrance, a tiny "welcome hut" suddenly appeared from behind the pine trees. An organizer dressed like a Swiss Guard briefed me on the grounds, talked about the minted currency called Solars and gave me a "battlecard" with my name on it (I eventually traded this for three beers). Following his recitation of rules, including "no fires" and "no violence", he led me into a tiny forest enclave at the fringes of the grounds, where I pitched a tent. On the way I passed a few rows of buildings with orcs rolling dice in front of a fire, a group of Vikings roasting a pig on a spit, and a baby dressed like an elf. It was becoming obvious that these people did not fuck around.

When I reached the campground, my neighbour, a Scythian with a leather kilt, was complaining about being nearly kicked out by the "Bico" fashion police because he had orange boot-laces, which were "not up to medieval standards". Even though my outfit looked like a figure skater who'd been hit by an AIDS truck, I didn't sweat it, cracked a few beers, and we hung out for a bit. After three king cans, I walked the torch-lit dirt roads as clans of knights stormed by, spilling booze from their hollowed-out horns. Suddenly some crazy-as-shit Friar John character barrelled towards me, slobbering with googly meth eyes. In these types of situations most people would shit themselves, but I was mesmerised by his Middle Ages bowl cut. Before I could react, he swung at my can of beer, spilling it everywhere.

"Why the fuck is your beer not in a horn or stein? What the fuck, man!"

Stunned, I kind of just nodded and decided that this lunatic wasn't worth being removed by LARP security guards dressed like seven-year-olds on a trick-or-treat mission. Besides, it would've been foolish to miss the epic Great Battle everyone was talking about.

Further into my journey I met a warrior named Thorkol, a proud member of the Raven clan. His long blonde hair and patchy red beard made him look like a mid-puberty Viking, but in all actuality, he was a 20-something tradesman from Abitibi who lived in his parents' basement. He agreed to take me on a tour of the grounds and introduce me to his "brothers". While we were walking across a drawbridge towards his Great Hall, I told Thorkol about the asshole who knocked my beer to the ground.

"You have to understand that people come here to be someone else. They don't like people who make fun of them or don't take us seriously," he said. "Me neither. Fuck those people. Next time, cover your beer with your cape. It's like with girls. Some guys here can't get any girls in their real lives, but they come here and act like brave knights, and it works."

Later, Thorkol took me into town, where his clan was partying. When I met them they all refused to tell me their real names, electing instead for titles like Tchakalouy, Morcius, Ulf or Khylandra the Fairy Princess. This one burly guy with a plumed hat and metal armour barking orders at everyone basically told me to fuck off, but in an Olde English type of way. I later discovered that he was a policeman in real life. It was interesting to note that even in this fantasy world, cops can still be full-time assholes.

By the end of the night, I was tired of all the weird role-playing bullshit. Everything remained in this bizarre social purgatory, moderated by fake names and lacklustre backstories. But I still had the Great Battle to look forward to, so I hit the hay.

I woke up to the screams of garbled war chants. Unzipping my tent, I saw a group of barbarians circled around a French Canadian Arnie-in-*Conan* lookalike. Raising their swords in a glorious ceremonial yelp, they began running to the battlefield, navigating their way between beer coolers and lawn chairs. It was a total mindfuck that I was still too sleepy to deal with. Following the procession of war parties making their way single file over a bridge towards a giant forest ravine cleared for war, I saw entire regiments of fully equipped knights with shiny swords, while terrifying underworld creatures squealed. Bloodlust was in the air.

When the horn sounded, more than 2,000 LARPer sprinted at one another to what would surely be a biblical crashing



This guy described his LARP classification as "skirmisher". He's also an estate agent.

of blades and spears. Instead it was a blur of foam weapons poking aimlessly until the "dead" were awkwardly rolling around in fake convulsions. Because they use the honour system to keep tabs on body counts, I heard a lot of whining from fully grown men in endless rounds of "I got you!" "No, you didn't!" They would even pause for cigarette puffs and take naps, waiting around for something else to happen; I had time to bum a smoke off a slain elf. I'm not sure they had machine-rolled cigarettes in the Middle Ages, but whatever.

Confused and really bored, I tried to get the attention of a king passing with his entourage, but two of his shitty bodyguards sprung out and beat me with their swords, accusing me of being an "assassin". This was the final straw. After two days of being bullied by a pack of fucking nerds, I was disgusted with myself for even thinking this could be remotely cool, so I packed my shit and headed for the real world. ☞



The many joys of the Grand Duchy of Bicolline. And by "joys" we mean "massive fucking bummers".



Who needs childhood when you can pretend to be a figment of your own imagination along with hundreds of other delusional and sad Canadians?



DOs



OK, so I have a few questions here. 1) How do you wipe your ass? 2) How do you wipe your ass? And 3) How do you wipe your ass?



"OK, Snuggles. I'm going to go off in those bushes over there for some anonymous sex. Miaow if you hear somebody coming."



What the fuck is this, *The Banger Sisters 2: Born Againapause?*



I should have warned this lady that her head was being sucked into some kind of white Interdimensional Stargate Time-Hole, but I was too busy staring at her tits.



These are my kind of women! Nice and skinny! So after I'm done fucking them I can flush them down the toilet. No muss, no fuss.



Ladies and gentlemen, you are about to witness a historic moment of tolerance and equality in sports. Introducing the Dallas Cowboy Queerleaders!!!



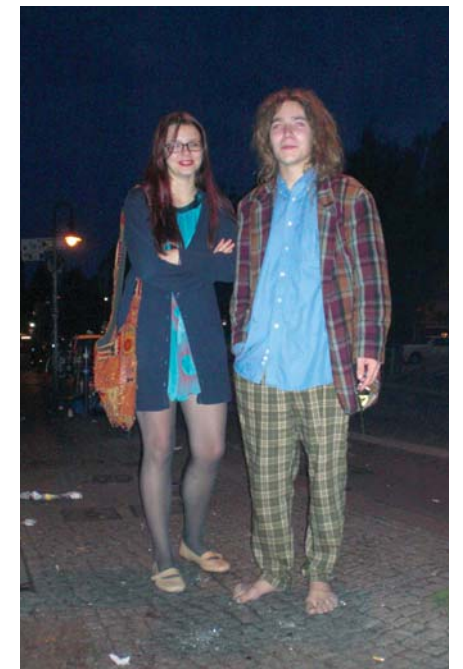
I know this looks like a couple of pencil-assed CPAs from Santa Barbara living out their sad, weird, five-year-old-girl-meets-obese-15-year-old-queer unicorn fantasies for one week of their lives at Burning Man, but guess what? It ain't. This right here is a pair of bonafide Fire Island locals who've made that sad fantasy their actual lives. Which kinda rules.



Nice try, guys. This obviously isn't real. You think I wouldn't recognise a wax dummy from Madame Tussauds South Beach House of Sucking Cock? Please.



As Henry Fonda said in *Once Upon a Time in the West*, "How can you trust a man who wears both a belt and braces? The man can't even trust his own trousers."



This photo sucks. I want to see the one taken 30 seconds later when Captain Barefoot McPlaid took a step forward into that sparkly pile of crushed glass.

DON'Ts

DOs



Well, the bad news is while you were sleeping your elbow decided to take a shit on your mum's favourite white love seat. But the good news is your mum is a disgusting mutant pig just like you, so it's water under the bridge.



Look, asshole, we're all excited to hear the latest audio book by Sapphire. Just 'cause you got an advance copy doesn't give you the right to spoil it for the rest of us. Bad form.



This is the last thing your genitals see before they contract herpes.



Not amazing as is, but if you drained the Botox out of this lady's face it would slide down over her hard tits and look like she was wearing a Human League t-shirt.



Ladies, after that quick booty call it's a good idea to wear the guy's sweatshirt as trousers. That way the semen can just drizzle out of the neck hole and onto the street.



Jesus Me, is this her job? Ruining every male's day in a five-block radius? The sweatshirt around her waist even looks like she's got a little bar rag to mop up all the drool/jizz/popped-eyeball fluid.



If you were stuck on a desert island, what are the top five CDs you'd like shoved up your ass?



Not only does this greasy taint of a Belgian EBM fan look like he's been incrementally coated in every viscous-feeling substance known to hand, he is wearing a shoelace as a scarf. I am physically so angry right now I just spat.



Me: What should I say about this gent?
Wife: I dunno. He looks like a *Glee* reject.
You mean a "Gleeject"?
Actually he looks a little more like the 40-Year-Old Virgin, but 20 years old.
So the 20-Year-Old 40-Year-Old Virgin?
There we go.



Let this scene be a lesson to all of you. Even if you bail on Maury and sprint to the nearest off-licence they will find you and let you know that "You. Are. The father."

DON'Ts

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Pictured: "A Physical Manifestation of Ladies and Gentleman We Are Floating in Space" at Coachella 2011
Jonathan Glazer + J.Spaceman | Photo: Peter Sutherland

BROSEPHINES

PHOTOS BY SLAVA MOGUTIN
STYLIST: JESPER GUDBERGSEN

*Stylist's assistant: Brandon Williams
Models: Danny, Janos, Jeremy, Mikhael, Sebastian and Zach at Request
Special thanks to Isa and Larry*

*Levi's jeans, Diesel helmet, vintage bra, 2Xist underwear, Levi's belt,
Lee jeans, Diesel helmet, vintage bra and necklaces*



Diesel bra, underwear and watch, vintage skirt, Palladium boots



Reiss coat, Robinson les Bains swimsuit, Leg Avenue stockings



Walter Van Beirendorek sweater, Lover jeans



Puma jacket, vintage skirt, Club Monaco socks, Ray-Ban glasses

JAMAL EDWARDS, INTERNET BROADCASTER, FOUNDER SBTV
NEWERACAP.COM/FLAGBEARERS



OWN

SHOW

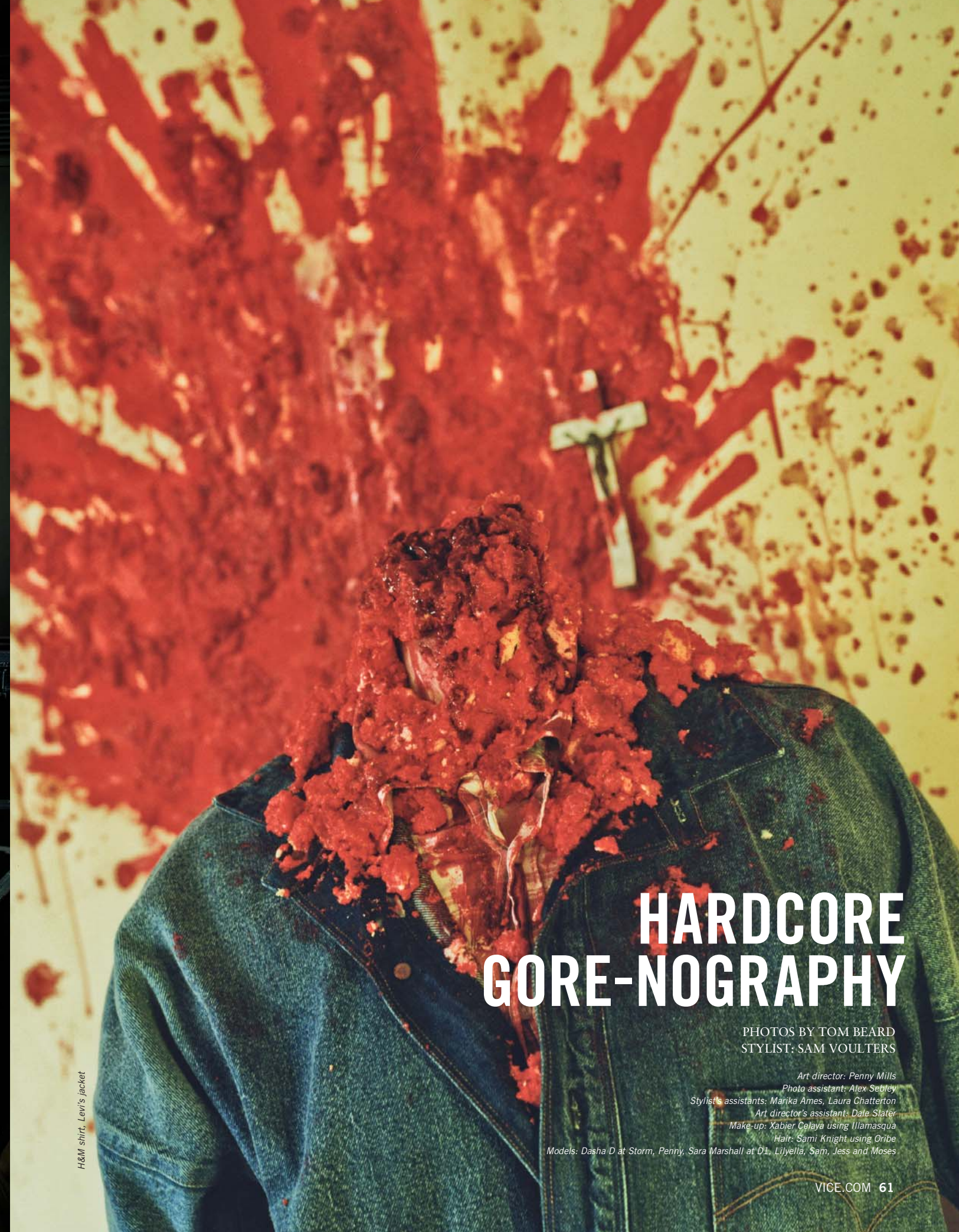
RUN FIRE

PUSH LIGHT YOUR

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FLY YOUR OWN FLAG™



HARDCORE GORE-NOGRAPHY

PHOTOS BY TOM BEARD
STYLIST: SAM VOULTERS

Art director: Penny Mills
Photo assistant: Alex Sebley
Stylist's assistants: Marika Ames, Laura Chatterton
Art director's assistant: Dale Slater
Make-up: Xabier Celaya using Illamasqua
Hair: Sami Knight using Oribe
Models: Dasha D at Storm, Penny, Sara Marshall at DL, Lijella, Sam, Jess and Moses

H&M shirt, Levi's jacket



Diesel top, American Apparel shorts



New Era top, CK jeans, Onitsuka Tiger shoes





Ben Sherman shirt, vintage suit and tie from Beyond Retro, Dr. Martens shoes



road-tested denim

Goons of Doom (minus Killer Whale)
Lower East Side, New York City - September 2, 2011
Shot by Dominic Rawle



volcoment.com



road-tested web series
watch at volcom.europa.com/jeans



VIRGEN BLOOD

*An Interview with KK Barrett About the New
“Psycho Opera” Starring Karen O*

INTERVIEW BY EDDY MORETTI

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY KK BARRETT AND ASGER CARLSEN

Undoubtedly one of the most influential production designers the world of cinema has ever known, KK Barrett is responsible for the overall look and feel of films like Being John Malkovich, Lost in Translation, I ♥ Huckabees and Where the Wild Things Are. Over the past five years or so, KK and Karen O have been working on a project called Stop the Virgens, which began as an idea to shoot videos for a set of corresponding songs before eventually morphing into a “psycho opera” that will debut in Brooklyn as part of the Creators Project. It also inspired this month’s cover (those zombie-looking ladies crawling out of Karen O’s severed neck are the Virgens). It’s the type of creation that can’t be fully understood until it’s experienced in person, so we asked KK to explain things as best he could. We think he did a pretty good job.

VICE: *Stop the Virgens* has been in development for years and gone through many permutations. What was the original kernel of inspiration?

KK Barrett: Karen's original version was that she wanted to do separate little films for a series of songs she wrote. She had a lot of A-list creative directors that she wanted to work with, and I guess it was slow getting off the ground or something. In the meantime, I wrote a bunch of small, one-page short stories and thoughts and little great escapes.

Around her songs?

No, they were separate things. I just showed them to her one day, and she said, "Why don't you take a crack at writing the script for this?"

You hadn't heard the music by then?

She had played it for me a couple times and it was in my possession. I spent about six months writing the script while I was busy with other things and she was on the road. It was hard because I was writing the script, and then I'd come to the song and didn't want it to stop because then it'd be more like a music video or vignettes within the stream of things. And so I tried to make a narrative structure. In the process, what we learned was that it didn't really want a narrative structure, that would distract from the way you absorbed the songs. You didn't want people talk-singing.

When did it transition from a video-centric project to something closer to theatre or a musical?

We played around with the term *opera*, but we didn't want to call it that because we were afraid it was going to be thought of as a "rock opera". And knowing the press, we realised that you have to tell them what to think, or give them a buzzword. Then they go, "Oh, it's that." I read this article from the *Times* about the difference between a musical and an opera and sent it to Karen. Opera was defined by the music delivered emotionally, rather than through the voice or the melody of the music. So it was the purer form, we thought. And then we said, "OK, well, we have to call it an opera." But, again, people would have by default called it a rock opera. Then we finally came up with the term *psycho-opera* and we knew that was it.

So the songs act as the script. Sounds like an opera to me.

The other option was a song cycle, but we didn't want there to be vignettes where each song stops, then a whole new idea, then another song starts and turns into another idea. We wanted it to have a continuous flow, so we decided to use visual interludes, not montages, that pushed the story forwards

visually, without dialogue. The song took over the force of what would normally be people interacting and talking back and forth. We didn't realise this until after Karen looked at it. She got some things out of it, like characters and mythology. But she realised she didn't want any other words in the play than the songs. It was a breakthrough, like "but of course". A lot of films from the 60s—made by people like Kenneth Anger and Stan Brakhage—were visual poems that supplemented music without distracting from it.

The Virgens are part of this mythology you mention. Where did they come from?

One of the little stories I wrote was about two twins, but they don't look alike. They were jumping around, travelling to all these places, living on the moon, and were married to twins in Austria. It's basically a time-travelling journey of a life. So little abstract bits of this story came through into what we were doing. Karen and I sat down to discuss what we were doing, song by song, and we filmed it. She wasn't even analysing it, she was like, "This is what I see." We came up with things like there are these two girls in the backseat of a convertible and then they're floating up above the road in their sleep, going down the road. This is all in the script; this is what she had told me. There's one point where they wake up and realise they're up there and start falling back to earth. So we took these girls and started weaving a story.

Another interesting aspect to this performance is that you're making people come to you—at least initially—instead of touring around.

We started talking about a way to have a performance that was more of a residency, where you could go for a week someplace. Then, of course, what came up was the model of theatre. They go into a place and have people come night after night. Then they pack up and go to the next place. It's still a tour, but it's a more humane type of tour.

So let's go back to why you got involved. I knew that you and Karen were friends, but I don't really know how that happened.

I met her through Spike [Jonze], after a show at the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles where [the Yeah Yeah Yeahs] were opening for the White Stripes. So it was at that early point in their career. I met a couple of directors with Karen. And again, I'm supporting her on the ride, but it's still her ride, for the most part. It's her baby. But I was there to say, "What do we do now?" and keep things going. It was kind of amazing how when we chose Adam [Rapp, director], Mark [Subias, executive producer] picked up

"We played around with the term *opera*, but we didn't want to call it that because we were afraid it was going to be thought of as a 'rock opera'."

the ball. I didn't know that he was also a producer. Or that he was, you know, a machine.

I didn't know he was a machine either. I thought he was Adam's manager and that's it.

He already had the kind of thought process that we were already in: "Oh, this is something Adam's never done before." It's not narratively driven by words, and especially not by words he wrote himself. So you're pulling the legs out from under the guy, you know?

He's used to being in complete control.

Yes, and to take the words out—OK, here's something I'm asking you to direct, that you haven't written and as a matter of fact, there are no words. Except for touchstones, and they won't be enunciated in any way other than when they're naturally expressed in the song. And here's the abstract art, what happens and where it goes. And then for the manager to go, "This is something you should do." Or Adam may have said, "This is something I want to do," or "I don't know what we're going to do with this." And Mark saying, "Yeah, this is great!"

Well, after five or six years of incubating it, or waiting, I think you guys have amazing people around you right now that make it feel like—

Things happen when they're ready to happen. That's something I learned from the theatre world. These people just make stuff happen. You know in the film world nothing happens on schedule. And you meet these theatre types who are like, "We could just do this. We've got a space, we got some cash. All we need is a bunch of people."

It would be interesting, the energy of the theatre world affecting filmmakers, which doesn't really happen often at all.

Actually, the theatre world is a better place to tackle low-budget projects because they already have a system in place that's not as laden as the filmmaking system.

And on top of that they're obsessed with preparation, which is amazing because it leads to a


discipline, which is what you need in order to pull something off live, where people are there, right there and you can touch them. You can't edit your way out of that situation.

That's exactly what I was going to say. In film you don't rehearse as much because you have the recourse of choosing moments to paste together a performance. Which is unfair to an actor, because they want to build a realistic performance in real-time. But what happens is you pick their performance apart and you decide, you're good here, and you're good there, and you're good over here. It's like a Frankenstein of their performance.

Hasn't that ruined acting? Maybe it's why we have actors who are like Muppets?

You don't have the playhouse 90s where you had live performance of a theatre piece that's filmed all the way through. When you're on, there's no going out until it's done. But I think actors have also learned from it, and they have learned to give you different options. Let me do one more, let me try this, or do that. So it hasn't ruined it, it's just a different way to go. For someone to rise to the occasion—for all those little pieces that get glued together—that's pretty amazing too.

The cover you did for us isn't a literal scene from *Stop the Virgens*, it's just inspired by the story. How did you come up with it?

I've got a really good friend in LA who came from Mark's little family. Sonny [Gerasimowicz, art director] is kind of my go-to collaborator when I want to visualise something. When we planned for the cover, Karen and I had some ideas, and I went to Sonny and just sketched them out. Sonny is smart enough to take your idea and go, "Let me just play with it, let me just absorb what you said. Rather than just being a literal tool and drawing out exactly what you told me, let me get the feeling of what you told me, and I'll play with some other ideas too." Karen and I had all different kinds of ideas, where she was only on one side of the page and then you flip it over and it folds out a certain way. But then Sonny came up with the "Slit the neck, open it, and they'll be crawling out." 



Terrain, sand painting on wood panel, 2011

THE SOUND OF ALL GIRLS SCREAMING

BY SHANI BOIANJIU
PHOTOS BY PETER SUTHERLAND

Twenty-four-year-old Shani Boianjiu was born in Jerusalem into a mixed Iraqi and Romanian family, and raised in a small town on the Lebanese border. This is her first published story, inspired by her time in the Israeli Defence Force as a teenager. We have coupled Shani's story with photographs by the New York City-based artist Peter Sutherland, which he took while making a series of sand paintings. How does one make a sand painting, you ask? Well, Peter says you pour coloured sand on panels and then let whatever magic happens, happen. The result makes our eyes feel all warm and fuzzy, which is a very nice feeling indeed. It also calls to mind the tear gas the main character endures in Shani's story, which conversely isn't pleasant whatsoever. Shani is currently at work on her first novel, The People of Forever Are Not Afraid.

We, the boot-camp girls, stand in a perfect square that lacks one of its four sides. Our commander stands in front of us, facing the noon sun. She squints. She screams.

"Raise your hand if you are wearing contact lenses."

Two girls raise their hands. The commander folds her arm to look at her watch. The two girls do the same.

"In two minutes and 30 seconds, I want to see you back here from the tents. Without your contact lenses, understood?" the commander shouts.

"Yes, commander," the girls shout, and their watches beep. They run. Clouds of sand trail the quick steps of their boots.

"Raise your hand if you are asthmatic," the boot-camp commander shouts.

None of the girls raise their hands.

"Good," the commander says. "Very good."

In my IDF boot camp, we couldn't tell what would happen after we raised our arms in response to one of the commander's questions. The week before, we were asked to raise our hands if we weighed below 50 kilos. Then we were asked to raise our hands if we had ever shared needles or had unprotected sex shortly before we were drafted. The army wanted our blood. Two litres, but you got strawberry Kool-Aid and white bread while the needle was inside you. The self-proclaimed sluts and druggies served it to the girls who were pumping their fists, trying to make the blood gush out quicker.

"Faster," the commander screamed.

"My hand feels like there's ice on it," one of the other soldiers said. "It feels frozen." She was lying on the field bed across from mine. I wanted to reach over and grab her hand, so that she would be less cold, so that I would be less alone. I couldn't. Because of the needle in my arm, because it would have been a mistake. Mom said that if I want to get a good posting after boot camp, I have to learn to control my mouth. Mom was once an officer.

The girl on the field bed next to mine freaked out. She extended the arm with the needle away from her body, like it

was cursed. Her face turned red. "I think it's taking too much blood. Can someone check? Can someone see if it's taking too much blood?"

I knew I shouldn't say anything.

"I want to go home," she said. "I don't like this."

She looked very young. Eventually I spoke. "It's fine."

That's when the commander intervened. "No one said you could talk," she shouted.

I was the only one who was punished. During shower hour, I had to dig a hole in the sand large enough to bury a boulder the size of five heads. The commander said the boulder represented my "shame". She smiled when she explained that. None of the girls helped. They just stood on the sand, waiting in line for the showers, and watched.

Now, the army wants us to know what it is like to be suffocated. That's why they asked about contact lenses and asthma. It is ABC day. Atomic, biological, chemical.

We stand in two lines on top of a sandy hill. We help one another put the gas masks on.

"You're doing it all wrong," the commander yells at me. "All wrong."

She stretches one of the black elastic bands tighter, and my hair is pulled so tightly it's as if someone had taken a handful of my hair and tried to pull it off my scalp.

With our masks on, we look like the bodies of soldiers with the faces of robotic dogs. The big grey filter stretches like a snout. The sun heats the black plastic of the mask and radiates inward. The sheer plastic above my eyes is stained, and wherever I turn the world looks framed and distant, a dirty cheap painting of sand, then sand from another angle.

The commander goes down the line, breaking plastic miniatures of bananas. "Each one of your ABC kits has a few of these little bananas. If you break it and you still smell bananas, your mask is not sealed right."

I can feel the veins at the back of my head choking. When the commander passes by, waving the tiny banana, I can smell it. Bananas. Bananas and sand.

“I can smell bananas and—” I say. My voice vibrates inside of the mask. My words, they fail me. I want to talk. All the time. I am an idiot. Like it matters what I am thinking.

“No one said you could speak,” my commander shouts. “Just get one of your friends to fix it,” she says. They call the other soldiers “your friends”. I hate that. They are other soldiers. They are not my friends. Mom said, You don’t go into the army to make friends. Don’t be fooled.

The commander lets us into the tent two at a time. My partner is a fat redhead. We watch one of the girls who entered before us lift the cover of the tent and run outside as if on fire, her mouth dripping with saliva, her eyes closed and wet, her nose running in green and yellow. She runs with her mouth open, her arms stretched to the sides, she runs far, her small green body becoming a speck on the empty horizon.

The redhead laughs, and I do too. I have heard from Sarit, my friend, or maybe just a girl I know who happens to live in my village and is a year older than me, that the tear gas tent is the first place commanders can get personal with their boot-camp soldiers. They ask them the same four questions:

Do you love the army?

Do you love your country?

Who do you love more, your mother or father?

Are you afraid to die?

The commanders get a kick out of this because, at first, they ask these questions when the soldier has her mask on, but then they get to ask the questions when the soldier is in the tear gas tent without the mask and watch her panic. That is the goal of the exercise. To train you not to panic in case of an atomic, biological or chemical attack. I fail to see the point. I tell that to Sarit, I tell her, in that case, why don’t they just shoot us so we know what that feels like, but she says, Don’t get smart. We get to run out of the tent when we feel we are choking. Sarit says they expect you to stay as long as you can. I ask what’s as long as you can, and she asks, How long can you breathe underwater?

It is our turn.

The redhead and I bend below the tent’s flap and enter. It is dark inside, and so warm I feel as though the buttons of my uniform burn my wrists. I can feel it. I can see it. The tent is full of poison. I know it, but the mask doesn’t let it harm me. In a way, I feel like a cheater.

The commander, strangely, is just as identifiable with the mask. The way she stands, with her arms behind her back, holding the handle of her gun. Her chin is raised high. She starts with the redhead.

“How are you feeling with the mask, soldier?”

“Good.”

“Do you love the army?”

“Yes. It’s hard but it is a rewarding experience and I learn a lot.”

“Do you love your country?”

“Yes.”

“Who do you love more, your mother or your father?”

“I can’t really answer that. I think I love them both the same amount, but in different ways.”

“Are you afraid to die?”

“No.”

“Take off your mask. You can run out when you feel you have to.”

I watch the redhead fumble to untie the elastic of her mask and then remove her mask. Immediately, her face crumbles inwards like she is sucking on a lemon.

“Do you love the army?”

The redhead opens her mouth to speak and then closes it quickly. She is drooling already. She opens her mouth again, smaller this time, and grunts out a sound. “Yeah.”

“Do you love your country?”

The redhead is flapping her arms near her throat, like a fish. “Ahhh,” she mumbles, and the mucus from her nose falls to her mouth. She runs out like a stork.

Now it is me.

“Do you love the army?” my commander asks.

“Yes and no, I mean I definitely believe that it is important in a country like ours to serve in the army, but I hope for peace, and on a personal level, of course, boot camp presents its own hardships, and also—”

“Enough,” my boot-camp commander says.

“Are you afraid to die?” she asks. She skips two questions. She knows I am trouble, although I have barely caused any yet. Maybe trouble isn’t something you do, it’s something you are.

“No,” I say. Short and concise. What she wants to hear and, also, the truth.

“Take off your mask. You can run out when you feel you have to,” my commander says. She sounds different from when she said it to the redhead. More content.

I take off my mask and at first I feel nothing but the pain in my scalp. Then I feel the fire, the burn. I cannot open my eyes. I stop taking air in through my nose. But I open my mouth, I do.

And I talk. I have been waiting for so long. This is my chance. As long as I am choking, I am allowed. My talking serves a purpose, it is a matter of national security. A part of our training. I will be prepared for an attack by unconventional weapons. I could save the whole country, that’s how prepared I’ll be. My entire head is burning but my mouth rolls off words; they taste like apples, and they go on and on and on.

My commander runs out of the original four questions. She has to make up a new one.

“What is your earliest memory?” she asks. It is a question they used to ask before someone was brilliant enough to come up with the mom-and-dad question.

I don’t leave on my own. She tells me to.

I talk and I talk and I talk.

I think I stayed inside the tear gas tent longer than any soldier before me.

Outside, I cannot breathe. I cannot open my eyes, and although I don’t want them to, my feet start running on their own, faster and faster. I can taste blood in my mouth coming from my nose, my throat burns as though it is stuffed with boiling oil. The skin of my face feels like it’s been rubbed with sandpaper. I run and run, until arms catch me mid-air and hold me for a very long time. When I can finally see again, through the water in my eyes, I see where I was

heading. The cliff. The arms belonged to my commander. She held me, before I fell. My commander, this was her job.

They are sure I cheated, although they cannot for the life of them imagine how. I am told I stayed in the gas tent for more than two and a half minutes, and they say that this is just not possible, that there must have been some funny business going on. It felt like I was talking longer. It felt like in that time I got to tell everything, almost.

I have to see the commander of the base. I enter the room, salute with my gun, and stare at him.

For a second, I think he is reaching for his gun, that the commander of the base is going to kill me. Sometimes I think things I know are not true. But he is just reaching for his cigarettes. His nostrils flare when he drags in the smoke. He gestures for me to sit across from him, and when I drop onto the office chair I can see that the hairs inside his nose are grey, like the lifelines of spiders. He crushes his cigarette in an ashtray made of a green grenade shell and then reaches for another.

He is only interested in killing himself, and slowly. He doesn’t care about killing me. I am sad that he cares about himself more than me. Say I am just not being realistic, but it still makes me sad when people are like that. Most people are like that. I am like that.

The base commander says I need to get my act together. Don’t I know? People are dying. He hopes I will take some time to think of ways I can become a better soldier.

“And just a general point. Your commander says you keep on talking when you are not talked to. Why do you do that?” he asks.

“I don’t know. I guess I have all these thoughts,” I say.

“One day soon you need to wake up and realise that your thoughts are interrupting everyone.”

My punishment is to sleep that night with my gas mask on. Creative and humiliating all at once. I’m sort of impressed.

I wish I were a better soldier. At night, no matter how hard I try, I think about everything but how to become a better soldier.

All night long, I stare at the ceiling of the tent through the sheer plastic; it frames the thick green cloth of the tent, all this green, an impressionist painting. The knobs at the back of the mask pierce my scalp.

If I cry, it’s not because I hope that one of the girls in the tent will wake up. We only get five hours of sleep each night. And we are not friends.

I cannot sleep, so I imagine one of two things could happen.

I could wake up after a night with my gas mask on and find that Iran had bombed Israel and that I am the last living person in the whole country—the mask had saved me. The girls in the tent would be dead and blue, and I would march out of the gates of the base and into the Negev desert, where dehydration could kill me, or chemicals poisoning the skin of my body could kill me, but those things don’t kill me. What kills me is that I have no one to talk to.

Another thing that could happen is that Iran doesn’t bomb Israel, at least not on that day, and I reach the end of the world. I finish boot camp. I finish the army. I go to Panama and Guatemala and Argentina. There are Israelis, of course,

swarms of them everywhere. But finally, they all leave, and I am the last Israeli tourist left in Ushuaia, Argentina, the closest city to Antarctica, to the end of the world. The bookstores are all in Spanish. The lakes are too cold for a swim. At the bars, all the clients are middle-aged French men. I am all alone.

My earliest memory. I open my eyes and see the small room through plastic. My father is wearing his mask, and my baby brother is on the carpet inside a gas-protective incubator, because he is too small for a mask of his own. It is 1991, and missiles are falling from Iraq. On the radio they tell us to avoid the underground shelters. They tell us to seal one room of the house with duct tape, wear the masks, drink a lot of water, and hope for the best. On the radio they say missiles are falling in region M, our region, and my parents are arguing. “Duct tape?” my mother asks. “This is silly.”

I do not know the details of any of this, I hear about it later, and it becomes my memory. That night, I do not yet have enough words to make a sentence. All I remember is my mother, her dark face bare, collecting me in her arms, me only, and running up the wooden steps onto the roof. Rain falls on the palm trees below, but my mother removes my mask and pulls my chin up, high in the air. A ball of light rips through the night sky in pink and ember and blaze. My mother drowns her chin in my hair. We watch, and if I am alone I do not yet know it.

I stare at the ceiling of the tent through the sheer plastic into the night. The knobs at the back of the mask pierce my scalp. I am crying, and not because I hope that one of the girls in the tent will wake up.

But then one does wake up. The blood one, the one who thought too much of her blood was being taken. She is awake, but she does not realise that I am a person, her fellow soldier, and in my field bed and crying inside a gas mask. My suffocated whines sound to her like the words of an animal.

“Is that a cat?” she whispers, spiky as a blade that pierces through the air and tent and ears. “Girls! There is a cat in the tent.”

“A cat?” the redheaded girl asks. She does not bother whispering.


“Help me. I am allergic. I may die.” The blood girl waits for the words of another person.

The mask protects me. They cannot see my face. They cannot see my mouth. They do not know that it was me who made the sound. If I scream, if I scream right now, a deafening and smashing and muted scream, there is a chance, a small chance, that no one will ever know it was me. It will be the sound of all girls screaming.

And so.

I scream.

I scream the fear of blood, and ember, and blaze. I scream the terror of the beeping watches and boots treading the sand, and the panic brought by a reek that thinks it’s bananas. The sound of the words I scream is the groan of my shame, my shame that is not a boulder, my shame that I never agreed to bury.

If you want, I will tell you the words I scream, I will tell you all the sounds and words and letters. But first you have to swear that you really want to hear it from me. 

WARIAS, COME OUT AND PLAAAYAYAY

Muslim Indonesian Transvestites Are Persecuted but Beautiful

BY HANNAH BROOKS
PHOTOS BY OLIVER PURSER



The waria love having their pictures taken, and most evenings at the school turned into impromptu photo shoots. This is Shinta, beaming after we gave her a Polaroid of herself.



Maryani and some fellow waria at the funeral of a friend who died of HIV complications.

Tucked away inside the back room of a beauty salon in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, is a school for Islamic studies tailored to a very specific student body: transsexuals. The *Senin-Kamis* school (“Monday–Thursday” in Indonesian, the two days of the week school is in session) was founded in 2008 as a safe place for transgender Muslims to practise their faith without judgement or ridicule. In Indonesia, transsexuals are known as waria, a portmanteau derived from the Indonesian words for woman (*wanita*) and man (*pria*). I first learned about the plight of the waria while researching an entirely different story, but on discovering *Senin-Kamis* I abandoned my original project and made arrangements to visit.

The area of greater Yogyakarta, located on the island of Java, is home to approximately 3 million people and 300 waria. Waria assume the identity of women but usually retain their male reproductive organs, which should make them the life of the party but, as with many transgendered individuals, leaves them prone to discrimination, ridicule, violence and poverty. Their job opportunities are generally limited to street performing, prostitution, working in beauty salons or acting on television, playing caricatures of themselves.

Islam was introduced to Indonesia in the 13th century and soon became the country’s dominant religion. These days, around 88 percent of Indonesians identify as Muslim, making Indonesia the country with the world’s largest Islamic population. Traditional Indonesian beliefs and practices have been incorporated into the mix, meaning that while most Indonesians pray to Allah, they’re also scared of ghosts. Following suit, many waria are Muslim, which raises some confusing and convoluted questions about Islam’s official stance on gender-bending. The short of it is that Islamic law forbids men to dress and adopt the mannerisms of women, and vice versa. Unsurprisingly, the image of a bunch of transsexuals facing Mecca with their dicks dangling underneath their *jilbab* gives some parts of Islamic society the heebie-jeebies.

Islam recognises two sexes, male and female, which are segregated during prayer time. The waria have chosen the third way, and in theory can attend prayers as either men or women, but the reality is never that easy. During my time in Yogyakarta, I only met one waria who attends Friday-night prayers dressed as a man; most of the others don’t go, because it’s uncomfortable for them. The imam who teaches at the school tells me, “In Islam, no one is forbidden from entering a mosque.” He argues that while Islam’s religious tenets don’t discriminate against waria, Muslims often do. “Some say transvestites are not allowed, some say they are.” His belief is that waria have the same right to worship God as anyone else, stating firmly: “I’ll take a stand that this school is lawful.”

Senin-Kamis provides transgendered worshippers with a safe place to gather, pray and learn about the Koran under the imam’s guidance. About 30 waria regularly attend class, held twice a week at sundown. The school also operates a boarding house, and there’s usually at least one waria on hand at all times in case someone in need turns up. In the spirit of tolerance and acceptance, gays, lesbians and Christians are also welcome.

The “school” is actually one very small room with lurid orange walls and mats covering the floor. The only adornments are a TV, a framed poster featuring glamour shots of the school’s personnel and a large image of Mecca. Maryani,

a mountain-size transsexual who eats with the ferocity of a man just released from a POW camp but applies eyeliner better than any woman I’ve ever met, is the school’s founder. She also runs a salon filled with beauty products, giant trophies she’s won over the years for her hair and make-up skills, and a picture of the previous sultan of Yogyakarta, who, Maryani assures me, was a good guy. Behind the schoolroom are a kitchen, toilet and numerous rats that dart back and forth as we sit talking on the floor.

I originally arranged to meet Maryani at the school, but before my arrival she asked whether I’d like to attend the funeral of a waria who recently died from complications caused by HIV. Suffering from food poisoning but dosed up on gastro tablets, I arrive and am immediately overwhelmed at the sight of so many waria, sitting on chairs in the middle of the road and leaning against the railings of a bridge, smoking *Gudang Garams*. Maryani takes my hand and leads me into a room filled with flowers, burning incense and a casket, which she instructs me to sit next to while prayers are said over the body. Unable to understand a word, unfamiliar with the deceased, and not wanting to puke all over the coffin, I sit still and sweat.

As we follow the funeral procession, I learn that some cemeteries forbid waria from being interred within their grounds. But I am told that this section of Yogyakarta is a waria-friendly community and many are buried here. It upsets Maryani that waria who die without funds or family are often not given a proper burial, but instead unceremoniously dumped in shallow graves like stray cats. The school regularly contributes whatever it can to help cover funeral costs. “In one month, usually four people need to be buried,” she says. “Even when we die we need money.”

Most die from HIV, which continues to ravage the waria community due to high rates of prostitution, scarcity of and lack of education about condoms, and lack of access to drugs needed to contain the virus. At the gravesite, a hole is dug and the body is lowered into the ground. There are no tears or outward signs of mourning; everyone is quiet. Later, Maryani tells me the funeral cost £23.

Over the next few days, I spend a lot of time sitting on the schoolroom floor, smoking ciggies (which everyone at the school enjoys, with the exception of Maryani) while the waria show me photos of their boyfriends on their mobile phones and Facebook pages. They tell me about the music they like—mainly *dangdut*, Indonesia’s sexy pop music—and a waria named Yuni Shara sings me Celine Dion’s “My Heart Will Go On”. I learn that Maryani used to be the singer in a *dangdut* band, and from their excited expressions and hand movements, I gather she was relatively famous at one point.



Jamila's backyard breast job. The silicone is injected straight into the skin.



Novi takes a urinal break.

Later, Maryani and I go to the market to buy some supplies—glittery eye shadow and flower headpieces—and I jump on the motorbike with her and Rizky, Maryani's nine-year-old adopted daughter. The traffic is nuts, so I wrap my arms around Maryani's waist. As we zigzag through the narrow streets, I can't stop laughing as I realise her giant, sweaty breasts are sagging over my hands.

Rizky was still a newborn when Maryani rescued her from abandonment by her birth mother, who couldn't afford an illegal abortion. As Maryani tells me about the difficulties of being a single mother, tears spill onto her cheeks and muddy her thick foundation. She wipes them away with the end of her jilbāb, and I'm struck that even though Maryani has a penis, she is crying tears that only mothers cry.

After she composes herself, I ask Maryani whether she's ever wanted a sex-change operation. She says that she doesn't have the right to change what God has given her, and that it's rare for waria to undergo these types of procedures. Besides, she adds, most waria couldn't afford the surgery even if they wanted to go through with it. I ask her why altering her body and face with silicone is acceptable, but my point gets lost in translation.

The next day I meet Jamila and Wulan, street performers who work in central Yogyakarta. Wulan is wearing a bright pink sari, while Jamila is simply dressed but armed with her voice and a homemade instrument. We walk around for hours as they sing the same Javanese love song over and over, begging for money. Some people smile and happily give them a little cash. Others throw coins at them, teeth clenched, just wanting to be rid of their presence. On a good day they make about 80,000 rupiah (£6) over the course of ten hours. As we walk down a busy street, a child approaches us, notices the waria, and starts screaming. His face is a mask of absolute terror, and his mother furiously shoots laser beams from her eyes. The waria stroll past, unfazed. After spending so much time with them, I'd forgotten that their appearance can be alarming.

The distinctive waria look is magnified by silicone injections to their faces and breasts, giving them a slightly inflated appearance. It's more pronounced in some, such as an elder school member named Shinta, but most waria appear to have had some work done. From what I'm told, waria believe the silicone gives their features a softer, more feminine look. The procedure, which secretly takes place in certain salons or homes that are able to obtain black-market silicone, is far from cheap and can take years of saving to afford. I discover that Jamila is getting her breasts injected during my visit, and she agrees to let me sit in on the procedure.

The breast injection takes place in a boiling, unsterile room. My face drips with sweat as Jamila removes her t-shirt and lies down, and I start to feel ill. Mendez, my interpreter, is making squealing noises and won't open his eyes. A glass jar of wobbly silicone appears along with ten thick syringes. Then a pair of anonymous hands performs the job with the confidence of someone who's done this many times before. Even so, some of the syringes get stuck or clogged as the silicone is injected, and it takes a fair amount of force to push the stopper through. There are no bags: The silicone is forced straight under the skin.

Watching a man's flat chest grow into two small mounds before my eyes is incredibly strange and disconcerting. I'm fixated on their shape; there's something very wrong about them.

Women's breasts curve from below, but these little hills are round at the top and then flat from the nipple down. After the final bits of silicone are slurped out of the jar and pumped into Jamila's chest, tape is affixed over the wounds. I feel sick, and Mendez looks green, but Jamila is fine. We go outside for air and cigarettes, and Jamila pulls the lyrics to the song she wants to teach me out of her back pocket. The makeshift boob job is quickly forgotten as she starts singing the melody.

The two waria I meet who haven't had any work done are also the youngest: Novi and Nur. They claim the injections and other procedures are only pursued by older waria looking to revive their sex appeal. The pair work as prostitutes, and I arrange to meet them one evening at Novi's boarding house, across town from Senin-Kamis, before they head out to the streets. Their room is tiny. As they apply their make-up, Nur, who's 19, slim and quiet, tells me that she grew up in Lombok,

Even though Maryani has a penis, she is crying tears that only mothers cry.



Maryani holding a glamorous photo of herself in younger days.



The author dressed as a traditional Javanese bride. Make-up, spangled outfit and 11-pound headpiece courtesy of Maryani.

an island off Bali, and travelled to Yogyakarta to attend Senin-Kamis after reading about it on the internet. She turned up on Maryani's door, was taken in, and has been a student for more than a year now. She says she's happy to have met other waria, but it's different from what she expected. She didn't think she'd ever be working as a prostitute, but after she quit her day job she had to do something to survive. I ask how much they make a night, and Novi tells me: "I'm grateful if I get 100,000 rupiah"—approximately £7.

Later that night, we head to their regular hooking spot, next to a railway station. I'd heard stories of waria being hit by passing trains while working, and the girls point to an area along the track where a group of older prostitutes routinely hustle.

Not a lot happens: the waria look pretty and get boozy on drinks in plastic bags while they wait for customers. Novi says, "I only drink so I can gain courage to stand up for myself." It's possibly the most depressing thing I've ever seen.

Maryani left home at the age of 12 and was working the streets by 15, selling her body for as little as 10,000 rupiah (60p). Although the other waria were kind, it was tough. Like many ageing waria, she switched to street singing in the 80s and eventually landed a job as a cleaner at a transvestite beauty salon. She worked her way up to become a beautician, with the goal, now achieved, of saving enough money to open her own parlour. Maryani's success is modest, but most waria don't make it even that far.

Maryani credits Islam with saving her life, and she's passionate about its transformative powers. She was raised Christian by parents who adopted her at birth, converting to Islam in her 30s. She stopped drinking and quit her wild ways, shifting her focus to fulfilling God's purpose for her and, these days, motherhood. She hopes her story can inspire other waria to improve their circumstances. "If transvestites can improve their lives, society would not judge us in a negative way," she says. These days, her prayers are simple: health, safety, a long life, and that Rizky passes her exams.

Before wrapping up my trip, I throw a party for my new waria friends. Maryani makes arrangements at a local waria-friendly restaurant, and she offers to turn me into a traditional Javanese bride for the occasion. As nervous as I am about her doing my make-up, I agree. The word is put out for the waria to meet back at the salon the following evening, with everyone dressed to the nines.

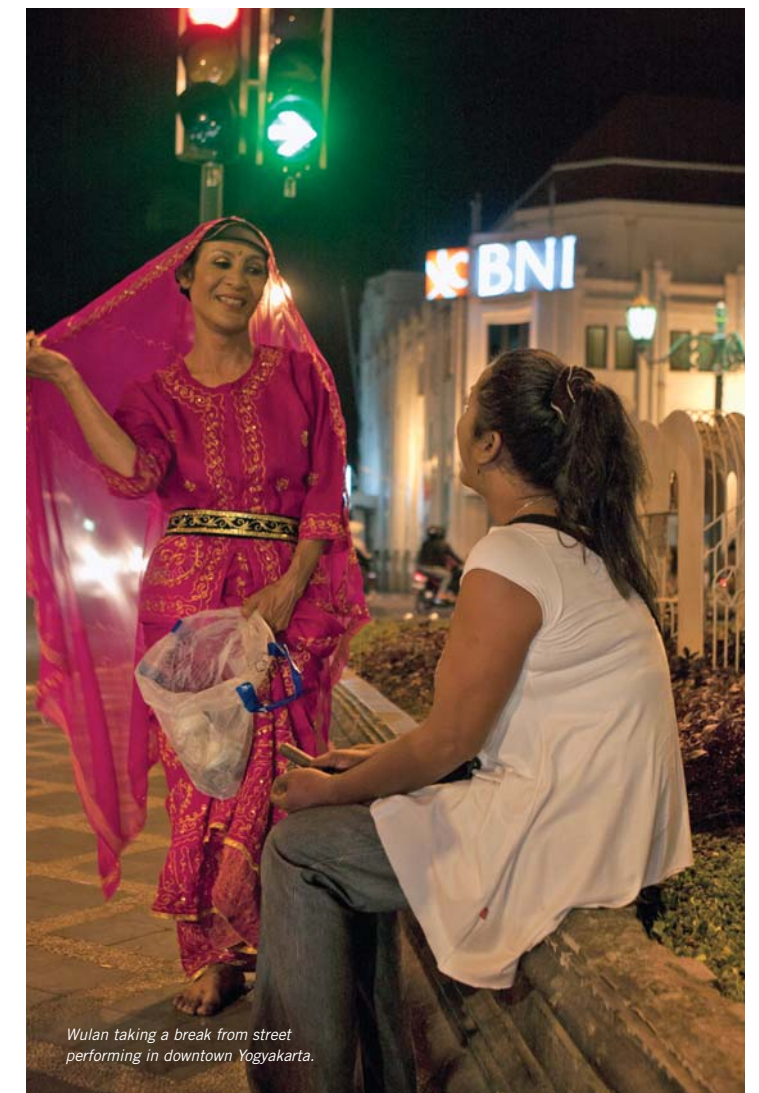
Most of the waria arrive at the salon as men, or something in between, and they transform into women there. Maryani wraps me in a sarong and begins applying make-up. The more she slathers on, the older and more orange I feel. But I'm impressed by her dexterous application of false eyelashes. Her assistant places about 11 pounds of wet pandanus plant atop my head, held in place with what seems like hundreds of bobby pins. She covers it with a flower headdress and then puts black and gold stickers over my hairline. Maryani tells me I look *cantik*—beautiful. She hands me a batik sarong and a sheer lime green top, dripping with sequins and beads, and helps me put them on. I see myself in the mirror. It's frightening.

The restaurant has a stage, soundsystem and a guy who plays keyboards while the waria sing. He asks who the new ladyboy is, and I realise he's talking about me. The waria take turns performing dangdut songs, and I'm dragged to the dance-floor numerous times, but the soggy pandanus on my head is so

heavy that it's hard to move. One of the oldest waria performs a traditional Javanese dance, and even the imam and his family show up. Inside, there's no booze, but outside Novi and her friends are secretly drinking in the bushes, away from Maryani and the imam's watchful eyes. We know it's time to leave when the keyboard player, as some kind of weird joke, pulls a gun on my photographer in the male restroom. Soon the waria pile onto their scooters, taking care that their sarongs and evening gowns don't get caught in the wheels. We wave goodbye and call one another "beautiful" a few more times, which they are, despite all the silicone, wild armpit hair and cheap wigs. With lipstick in their pockets and God on their side, it seems that the waria have a fighting chance. *VICE*

Watch our documentary about the plight of the waria this month on VICE.com.

"If transvestites can improve their lives, society would not judge us in a negative way," Maryani says.



Wulan taking a break from street performing in downtown Yogyakarta.



SEE JUNGLE

Traversing the Bowels of Papua New Guinea


WORDS AND PHOTOS BY IAN BOOTH

Last year I took an extended photography trip “away from civilisation”. After months of research and planning, I decided on Papua New Guinea. Given the island’s weird medley of modern and primitive traditions, cultures and scenery, I couldn’t think of a better place to escape the tedium of everyday life.

Before visiting, most information I had read about the country came from guidebooks, census records and fact sheets. It mostly covered stuff I already knew: humans have been there as long as just about anywhere on earth (approximately 60,000 years); it’s one of the few places left that has yet to be fully indoctrinated by the Western world; throughout history, more than 800 languages have been spoken on the island; and there are still tales of cannibals living deep in the jungle who will boil you alive. While I didn’t venture into these overgrown and perilous areas (which are only accessible via commissioned planes), I did hear about an incident in which a father *ate the face* of his newborn daughter in front of a crowd of onlookers because God told him to “eat the baby” before the baby ate him.

One of my curiosities about Papua New Guinea was how the ongoing urbanisation of the country was affecting its tribal culture. From what I could tell, most of the changes involved the uptick of *raskols* (criminals) around the sprawling city areas.

Besides petty crime, those who make extended visits to the country face other difficulties. First of all, there’s the unofficial 6 PM curfew, which cut my work day in half. Then there’s the lack of public transportation, unfamiliarity with the concept of organisation, bribes required to obtain basic necessities, intense humidity, constant clouds of mosquitoes and high cost of living.

After eight months, some of which were spent working for the *National*, a local newspaper, I realised that my “Are you fucking serious?” phase was actually the nation’s perpetual state of being. The country’s tourism slogan is “The land of the unexpected.” I have no shame in wholeheartedly backing this corny motto, and I present the following photographs as proof of my otherworldly adventures in and around Bougainville Island, East New Britain Island, Goroka, Madang, Morobe, Port Moresby and the Sepik River. 

A Komitupa Mama group perform a traditional sing-song ceremony (basically a song-and-dance celebration) for onlookers and tourists.



TOP: Peter Siwa and his son Westlie showing off a giant fucking Australian machine gun and army helmet they found in their converted WWII bunker home on Paga Hill in Port Moresby. Six of these structures sit on the hill, and each has at least one family cosied up inside. Throughout the ages, Papua New Guinea has been a colonial possession, most recently of Australia, who controlled the country until 1975, though it remains a Commonwealth realm of the United Kingdom.

RIGHT: This woman lives in a wrecked ship in the Rabaul Harbour off East New Britain Island, along with three other families. She explained her ingenious method of rat catching, in which a dead rat is used as bait to catch other rats.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Sili Muli men from the Enga Province. The wig hats are made of their own hair. They also enjoy Coca-Cola products very much.





TOP: Cynthia received traditional tattoos on her face in Bougainville when she was a young girl, and the Mandarin characters for “fuck off” on her chest last year with a homemade tattoo gun in Port Moresby.

LEFT: A lookout point over Arawa used by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, which fought for independence from Papua New Guinea in the 80s and 90s.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Kids with snotty noses killing time with a sharp knife before breakfast in their home near Yambon village.



TOP: A press conference in Port Moresby announcing the creation of the new Hela Wigmen rugby team. Hopefully the guys flanking the table were paid reasonable appearance fees.

RIGHT: Just an ordinary Sunday afternoon at the Sports Inn in Port Moresby. The guy laid out on the right is drunk, not dead.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: A mob surrounds a wrecked vehicle across the street from a car dealership on the main street of Waigani in Port Moresby.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: The Asaro Mudmen tribe have appeared in advertisements for Toyota, Pepsi, Benetton, Tribù by Benetton perfume and other brands. Toyota arranges for the tribe to be transported to sing-sings around the country in style, hence the logo on the helmet. The success of this entrepreneurial tribe has led other Papua New Guineans to imitate their dress and perform sing-sings for tourists. Ruipo Okoro, an original Mudman, has argued that imitators should be prevented from cashing in on the Asaros' success.





TOP: An islander named Chris wearing his Fijian sing-sing dress in his kitchen/living room in Hote Village.

RIGHT: A recently initiated Iatmul tribesman in Palambe Village's haus tambaran (spirit house). His knobby scars are supposed to mimic crocodile skin, and scarified men charge foreigners around ten kina (£2.50) to photograph them.



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SIBERIAN SLAVES

*Sneaking into North Korea's
Secret Russian Labour Camps*

BY SHANE SMITH
PHOTOS BY JASON MOJICA

This guy menacingly brandished a railway spike at Shane until his Russian mobster driver "Billy the Fish" grabbed it out of his hands and asked, "This your lights-out switch?"



Shortly after I arrived in Siberia, our British editor, Andy Capper, texted me: “You’ll love Siberia. Everything is so close and the people are so nice.” He was of course being facetious because everything is 18 hours by train and the people are very mean indeed. Some might start out nice, but after the vodka starts flowing—which is always—so does the malevolence. There are exceptions to the cranky-Russian rule, but they’re very few and very far between. One such exception was a lovely, lovely man named Billy the Fish (not his real name, of course—his nickname was the Fish and I added the “Billy” in because I was drunk).

Billy was a local mafia type from a remote Siberian town that had no police and little regulation, save him and his boys. This would prove to be literally life-saving, because we were after a very dangerous quarry in the middle of nowhere—North Korean slaves—who don’t want anyone to know they are actually there. Billy, clearly game for some hijinks, agreed to take us into the forest to find them.

At the first camp we found, the North Korean guards threatened us and tried to throw us out. Billy

the Fish laughed—a great gold-toothed guffaw—and then smiled. “This is Russia,” he growled, eyes glinting. Motioning to the vast expanses around him, he declared, “This is mine.” Then to our camera crew, “Keep shooting. They can do nothing.” So we did.

Later, when we were deep in the forest, we came upon cadres of North Korean workers. A group of them approached and quickly surrounded our truck. One of them was swinging an iron bar, looking like he was going to bash our imperialist brains in. Billy took it from him, looked at it, and remarked calmly, “This your lights-out switch?” Sniff. “You’re going to need more than that.” He smiled and chucked it into the forest.

Later, we had lunch by an old woodpile—spam, hard bread, paprika crisps, vodka, beer and, for dessert, vodka with juice. Billy pulled out some old shotguns, and we released some built-up tension by shooting at our empty beer bottles. It was like being 15 again; naughty boys in the forest. When we came around the corner there were the North Koreans,

OPPOSITE PAGE:
A North Korean performs a little routine maintenance on a Russian truck in the heart of the labour camp.

TOP LEFT, CLOCKWISE: Shane with the Russian transit officer who saved him from a bunch of drunken hooligans on the trans-Siberian express; the sawmill in Dipkun; Billy the Fish shows off his shotgun.

waiting for us, but cowed and much less aggressive. “Did you know they were there?” I asked Billy. “Of course.” Sniff. “Where else would they be?” Classic Billy.

After an afternoon of playing cat and mouse with North Korean slaves, Billy took us to a freezing cold Siberian river for a swim to “clean it up”, then more vodka to “warm it up”, and then home to his family for the only good meal we ate in Russia. After eating, the Fish family took us to the bar (read: room with lights) for a night of boozing and drunken hugging with hard men whose nicknames included Stalin, Bear Killer and, my favourite, plain old Killer. Tears, more vodka, giving of cheap presents, and finally the two-day train ride back to “civilisation”.

But the North Koreans were waiting for us on the train... And so began the worst 48 hours of my life, which ended with the FSB (the modern version of the KGB), the local militia, plainclothes police and assorted thugs removing us from the train and placing us into custody. Finding myself wishing for Billy and his ability to effortlessly sort things out, I texted him that the FSB had detained us. He replied, “Of course they have. Just leave.” So we took off, racing across Siberia to the Chinese border (Billy told us about the smugglers’ route) and finally... to freedom. *VICE*

You can watch our daring escape from undernourished slaves and overfed Russian thugs on VICE.com. And all thanks to Billy the Fish. На здоровье! Cheers, buddy!



RIGHT: Everyone said that the bridge leading into the logging camp had burned down and we'd have to ford the river, but apparently a local policeman built this replacement bridge so he could loot scrap metal from the North Koreans.

BELOW: All of this lumber piled in the mud is known as Siberian Larch, which is primarily used to make that shitty particleboard furniture you've got all over your house.



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Photo: Vincent Sengul

DARK AGES

A Nonexistent Play in Two Acts

BY GENEVA JACUZZI

PHOTOS BY JENNIFER JUNIPER STRATFORD

*Designer: Seth Pratt, Wardrobe assistant: Lyndsea LaMarr, Lighting: Cynthia Webster,
Set design: Roni Levi and Etay Levi, Make-up: Nichole Servin, Props: Roni Levi and
Reo Fordecor*

MIME:

Manic gestures. A dreamlike face, inflections of cruel irony.

ACT I

Quiet, VICE readers! The Darkest of Ages is about to commence!

[A bell tolls.]

MOON:

Hello, Sun. Do you have a light?

SUN:

I am the Sun!

MOON:

[takes a puff from a cigarette]
That explains a lot.. I'm feeling reflective. Sigh, my ashen morose. Who will heat up my cold interiors?

SUN:

Costumed actor! You believe you're a moon? Time to cool off.

MOON:

But fiery phalluses flying forever in every direction!

SUN:

That's just the kind of guy I am. Explosion! Fire! Lucifer's clowns in a magazine spread, be free of your pages!!!

The Moon is exploded in atomic inferno, impregnated. She rains wet fireballs onto Earth.

MOON:

Ooh! Was that good for you? Funny old Earth, I give you my orgasms. Empty-headed Idiot Dancers, dance.

On Earth, an Idiot Dancer is a mudman. Got it. VICE has the 'tude. Oh yeah, fire transforms Idiot Dancer into the Zygote. Tick-tock. Future-past. Moments dissolve. Snakes appear. Pass the gate of pelvic ta-tas. Who is causing this? What are they saying in rubber bird tongue? Who lost the touch of evil beings in black and white?

MIME:

The harlequin apple. You who form the darkness behind the white palm tree. Why cling to nature? Mannequins are fake but their clothes fit nice. There. (Taking the apple, she wipes away a nonexistent tear.) Let's hide this apple from the ceiling of eyes in a magician's handkerchief. Tempting? If you eat this in a crucible of promises, you drain the blood of your idiot ancestor's dancing faces!

OMG, she ate it! Oh, blackest moment of human mysteries.

MIME:

And they call what I do not necessarily heartfelt? Then let it be so! Nice work for the immortals, but ageing badly. Who falls in love with the moons and stars, lunatic showmen, hapless shamblers of the dunes... Let's see how fast we can get kicked out of here.

[A bell tolls three times. Intermission.]



SUN:

A stolen relic. Overabundant, heavily dressed in sumptuous raiment. Illuminated glances.



MOON:

Cyclical, moody. Spoilt and cute. More manipulative than despondent.



IDIOT DANCER:
*Asymmetrical. Angular.
Germanic. Nervous,
particularly sensitive.*



ZYGOTE:
*Deer in the headlights,
prisoner of time. Feral,
naive, features of pure
innocence.*

ACT II

A spooky dinner party. Zygote is on the menu.

REVEREND SCIENCE:

Why take negative particles from angels' dreams?
Take her brain pâté for the seismograph! Give me
the guts of those eyes still seeking the admiration
of the heavens! I grant you, head, bleed out your
alpha biscuits on a star lyre. I'm having every-
one over for dinner. The table is set. Infomercial
victims, superfluous head, organ deluxe!

ROZBO:

This is fun! I don't know where I am yet.

You're eating brains. Higher human consciousness was created as food for the cosmos. Duh!

OBELISK KING:

No one move! Where is my footman? These game
pieces are powerless.

ROZBO:

Yummy! Let's have lots of drinks!

CROWLEY-VISION:

Newsflash. The Eye, Satan my Lord! The Lust of the
Goat! Ten of Hearts. Lioness of the Mountains.

OBELISK KING:

Nothing exists outside of this room. Are they say-
ing otherwise? Notes on the air. The open windows
laugh at me, the keeper of antique menace.

REVEREND SCIENCE:

Idiot, I'm constructing perpendicular Earth axes
over the infinity of boredoms! Big Talk. Big Talk.
Halo tear transfusion. Guns and tigers of plastic
tubing! Pain and misery! Pure spirit in a cup!

People are weird. I'm just a magazine. You made it this far? There must be something wrong with you. Some of you care while some just don't, but how would I know. I don't even have a brain! Just as existence manifests itself through creation of matter, nonexistence manifests itself through creation of consciousness... I must be dumb or something.

Zygote escapes. Run away, Zygote! Don't go directly into the light. Headlights! Blood on the windshield. Night mode. Dark figure... driving, shooting, singing, dark streets.

BAD LIEUTENANT:

Who were those costumed characters in a nonexis-
tent play? Sieve the universe. They've all died.
It's how we are now. If their lives were actually
a thing, we are the closest thing to it. We live
in our heads. The higher we go the less we exist.
Opposites battle for control in a jungle of swim-
ming dark cars. Oh, sedentary streetlight souls
I am driving in reverse. Possession is the pos-
sessor in black. Oh, objects of thought, slaves of
neon thought, pools of thought bleeding and sick.
Empty. Nothing. Driven to nonexistence...

[All characters exeunt.]

TO BE CONTINUED...



ROZBO:

*A sexual android.
Artificial. A starburst
in the soft box.*



REVEREND SCIENCE:
*Manners of the laboratory.
Absolving, measured,
quantifying, dogmatic.*



OBELISK KING:
*Of a decrepit age, restored.
Statuesque.*



CROWLEY-VISION:

A talking beast head. Televised magical, bit of a know-it-all.



BAD LIEUTENANT:

A Faustian vigilante meets homicidal moralist.

Watch Geneva's new video to decipher what the hell all of this means (even then, good luck) later this month on VICE.com.

FINGERBLASTING IN THE FOREST

A Photographic Study of Sex Cruising

PHOTOS BY
CHAD STATES

Ever get your cock deep-throated by a bearded guy on a nature trail? How about your asshole diddled by a daddy who likes discreet dalliances under the ol' Douglas fir tree? If you answered yes to either of these questions, chances are you're a homosexual floozy on the prowl for public sex. In other words, a true-blue cruiser on a heat-seeking dick mission. And while we salute you for it, by God we don't want to go anywhere near where it takes place. We could, however, be persuaded to look at pictures if a competent photographer compiled them in book form.

Luckily, Chad States has made it possible for everyone to gawk at two grown men grunting like that guy who fucks the other guy in Deliverance, except in this case both (or all three!) very badly want to oink like pigs. Cruising is a voyeuristic journey into the secret world of anonymous guy-to-guy intimacy. The way Chad uses light, foliage and composition makes Cruising (which he describes as a "love story") weirdly romantic, despite it feeling like a version of Where's Wally with Wally replaced by hairy men with boners lurking in the bushes. It's great, trust us, and you can roll around in the dirt with 100 pages of these pickle-smoochers when Cruising hits the streets this November from powerHouse Books.

You can read about Chad's experiences creeping through the woods with a camera in an interview on VICE.com later this month.





Images from Cruising by Chad States, published by powerHouse Books



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 Talibam!
 Poino | Trogons
 Negative Pegasus
 The Red Room DJ
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SATURDAY 15 OCTOBER
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 Seams | Sun Glitters
 Tropics | Regal Safari
 Jewellers | Mafia Lights
 Halls | Handbook
 Entry: £8

THURSDAY 20 OCTOBER
AVANT-AVANT
 Les Enfants Terribles
 Christmas
 Druggs
 Heh-V
 Entry: Free

WEDNESDAY 26 OCTOBER
METROPOLIS
 Friends Electric
 Discopolis
 Plus Special Guests
 Entry: Free

TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER
PINK MIST
 Joeyfat
 Crash of Rhinos
 Nitkowski
 The Red Room DJ
 Entry: Free

SUNDAY 16 OCTOBER
BINNACLE
 Active Child
 Acid Glasses
 Weird Dreams | Carousels
 Childhood | Patten
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 Entry: £8

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 Stig Noise
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TUESDAY 18 OCTOBER
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 Algiers | Katie Malco
 Big Success
 Matt Emery Solo
 Entry: Free

SUNDAY 23 OCTOBER
PINK MIST
 Juffage
 Cats & Cats & Cats
 Plus Special Guests
 Entry: Free

SATURDAY 29 OCTOBER
A PINK MIST HALLOWEEN
 Cerebral Ballzy
 The James Cleaver Quintet
 Sauna Youth | Hymns
 Thrash Hits DJ Talons DJ
 The Horn Bearer DJ
 Entry: Free

FRIDAY 14 OCTOBER
CLUB.THE.MAMMOTH
 Deep Cut
 Circus Sand
 Pet Scenes | Parties
 Club.the.Mammoth DJ
 Entry: Free

WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER
HTB PRESENTS
 Hang the Bastard
 Dopefight
 Pariso
 Entry: Free

MONDAY 24 OCTOBER
ALCOPOP!
 The Social Club
 The Attika State
 Plus Special Guests
 Entry: Free

SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER
DAY JOB RECORDS HALLOWEEN PARTY
 The Yuya
 Moon Visionaries
 Mr Susan
 Entry: Free

Downstairs: Free entry
Free Rough Trade jukebox, free Wi-Fi

No Pain in Pop | Rough Trade | Leo Deus | Pop Scene | Mischa | Danielle
 The Line of Best Fit | Tijuana Brothers | Dark Party | My Ex Boyfriend's Records

For full listings visit theoldbluelast.com



TRIUMPH OF THE SHRILL

The Music Media's Pogrom Against Iceage's Nazi Doodles

BY BENJAMIN SHAPIRO

In May, VICE raved about *New Brigade*, Iceage's debut LP. Every other magazine and website that covered music followed suit, acting as if the Danish teenage four-piece were the sweetest little princes in the make-believe Land of Music, and that everyone with any taste should bow before their infallible tunes.

In the beginning, critics like Danish music journalist Martin Finnedal attributed Iceage's success to the band's inexperience. "The original fascination came from the fact that they're from nowhere, with no real idea of what they're doing," he told me. "Iceage is famous because of their innocence and youth."

On June 25, Magic Muscle Media, an irrelevant and anonymous blogger, posted an essay titled "Chic Racism Elevates Hardcore Band Iceage to Hipster Fame". Despite admitting that the piece was written "without analysis of their lyrics" or "direct confrontation of the

band members", the blogger published images from *Dogmeat*, a zine produced by Iceage frontman Elias Bender Rønnenfelt, accusing the band of fetishising fascist imagery and employing fascist aesthetics to promote an agenda of hate.

Instead of disappearing into the pile of meaningless pap published online, mainstream media outlets began to pick up the non-story. By late summer, the *Chicago Reader*, *NME* and others were hinting that the music press had been duped into promoting the next Skrewdriver. The assertion was loosely based on the zine, Iceage's runic logo and their Fred Perry shirts.

In Denmark, Dr Fabian Holt, a respected Danish ethnomusicologist, accused Iceage of stoking fascist tendencies, despite frequent denials from the band, including appeals from the band's Jewish drummer, Dan Kjaer Nielsen. "Nazism has come closer to the counterculture," Holt told *Politiken*, a respected Danish daily. "The methods have become more subtle." The claims had travelled from a low-level blog to a widely read national newspaper, and the discussion of Iceage's political and ideological leanings was going to be a long one, whether they liked it or not.

In his 2007 book, *Genre in Popular Music*, Holt writes, "I have lived most of my life in Denmark, where whites are rarely confronted with their whiteness because they constitute the vast majority of the population. In that part of the world many people have only a dim awareness of racial discourse." In Denmark, a country of 5.4 million, more than 90 percent of the population is made up by ethnic Danes. These demographics play a not-so-subtle role in a growing hostility towards multiculturalism that's found a mouthpiece in the right-wing Danish People's Party (DPP).

Sixteen years ago, a strident hobgoblin named Pia Kjærsgaard founded the DPP, and since then the party has increased its influence drastically, pushing a policy of welfare for Danes and closed borders for everyone else. The government, pressured by Kjærsgaard, has tightened immigration policy every year since 2001. Even more troubling, in the 2011 parliamentary elections the DPP won 12.3 percent of the vote.

Staunchly nationalist and anti-Muslim, Kjærsgaard implicitly seeks a racially pure Denmark. In 2000, she said that "the Koran teaches Muslims that it is acceptable for them to lie and deceive, cheat and swindle, as much as they like."

When I talked to *Politiken*'s Martin Finnedal for this article, he had no opinion about the connection between his country's fringe politics and its punk rock. He'd never heard of *Dogmeat*, nor had he heard of the bands Iceage regularly perform with. "If they were fascist," he assured me with the paternal cadence of a government bureaucrat, "there would be enough writers here who would flag it right away and expose it to the rest of the country."

Thirty-six hours after our interview, *Politiken* published a series of alarmist articles by Finnedal about Iceage's supposedly disturbing imagery. I couldn't believe that he had grabbed the story straight out of my hands, in the process sensationalising it beyond recognition. Before filing his first piece about Iceage, he sent me an email giving me a 12-hour "head start" to publish a piece that was still far from complete, admitting to me, "Without you I would have no article. So please I hope you don't think I'm stealing from you."

If Finnedal had wanted to put things in context, he would have talked about bands like Joy Division and New Order, who were attacked by the press more than 30 years ago for their use of fascist imagery. Joy Division's name referred to Jewish women forced into concentration-camp sex slavery; critics accused their successor band, New Order, of borrowing its name from *Mein Kampf*. I spoke with former New Order and Joy Division bassist Peter Hook and asked him about the accusations. "It was very easy for the press, we walked straight into it," Hook said. "We were young, naive, stupid, insensitive, arrogant, and we thought it was 'cool' to use Nazi imagery—we thought 'This is punk rebellion! Fuck the world!' It backfired on us, though. It was stupid, and it's hard to live down even now. We still get accused of it 30 years on when we've proved we've got nothing to do with Nazis time and time again."

Byron Crawford is a blogger from St Louis. He speaks slowly, with a pleasant Missouri drawl, like an extra in an early Robert Altman film. He was a blogger for *XXL* magazine until March 2011, when he was unceremoniously fired.

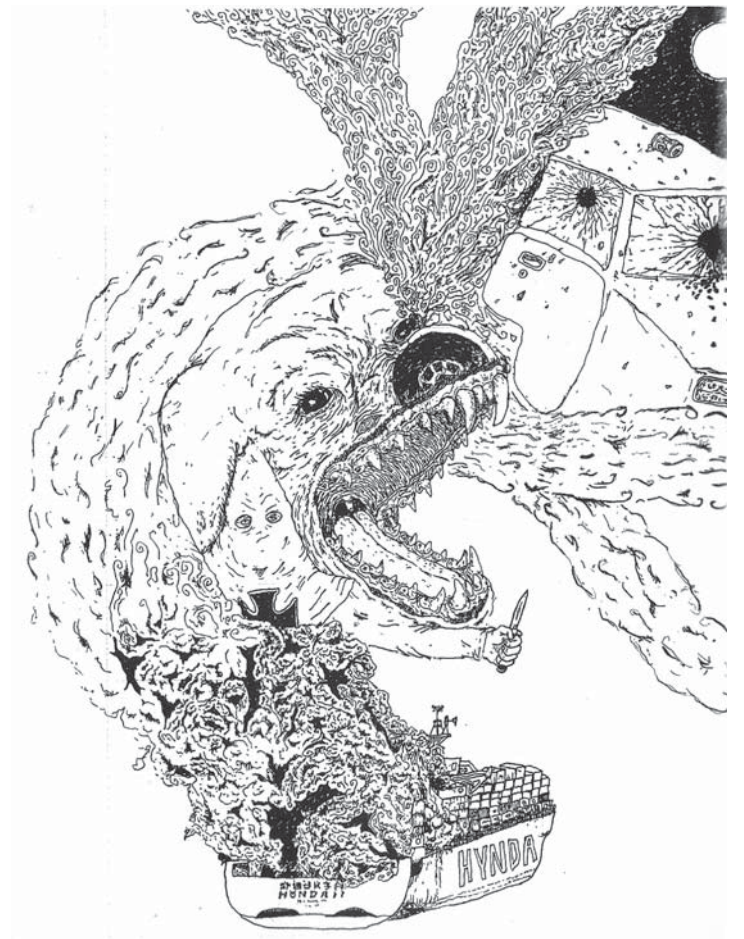
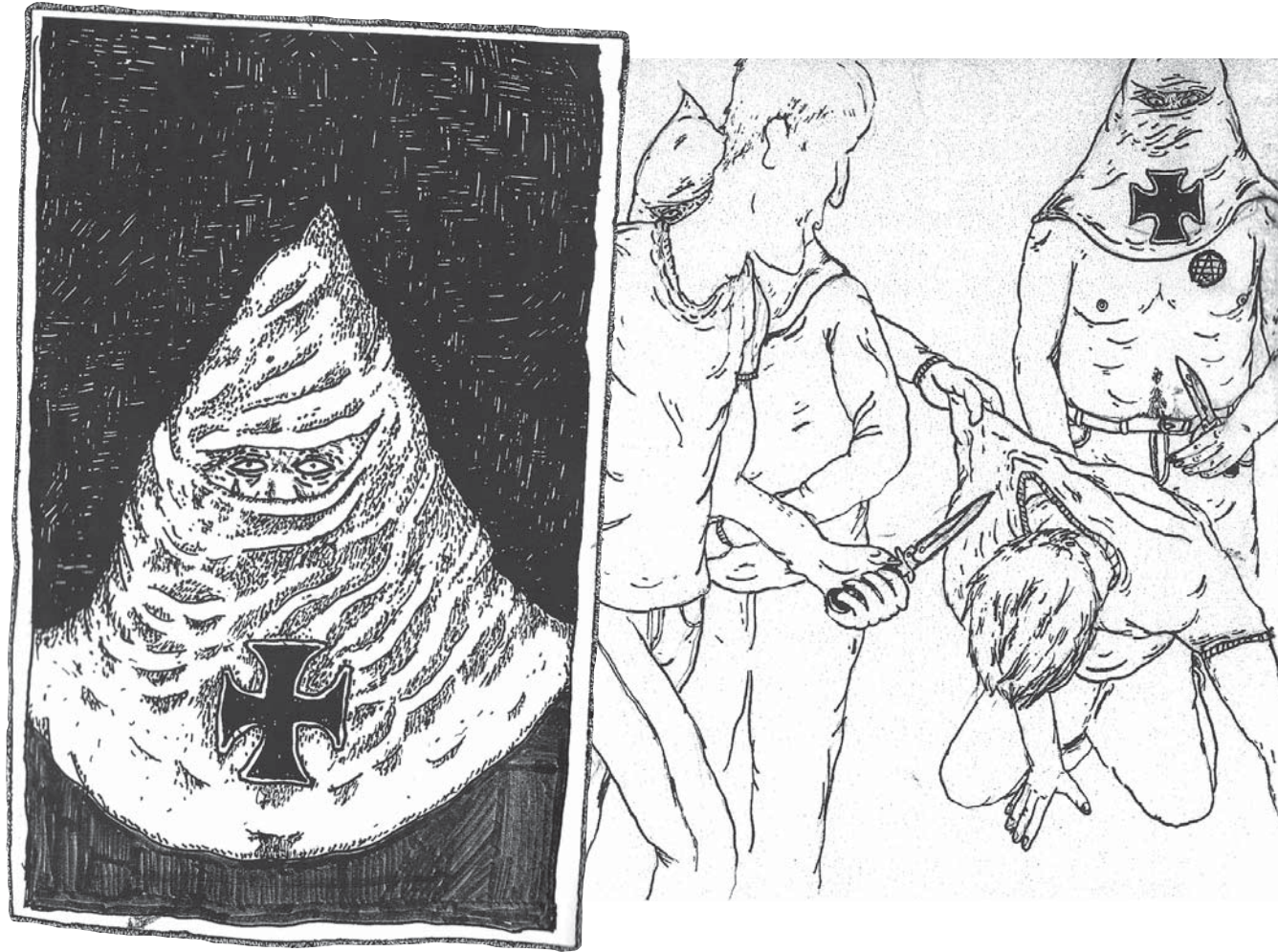
Now he works random odd jobs and gets by on ad revenue from his personal blog, "ByronCrawford.com: The Mindset of a Champion."

In August, Crawford published a piece titled "Dey Racis: Pitchfork Grants Best New Music Status to Neo-Nazi Group". On the phone with me, he was casually, cheerfully ignorant of his subject matter. He has never spoken with the band, seen them live, read their lyrics or listened to their music. But he's convinced they're Nazis. "If you walk around talking like a fireman," he told me, "people are going to think you're a fireman." I suggested that it might be more nuanced than that. Crawford disagreed: "Here in St Louis, if you walk around talking like a Nazi, you're a Nazi."

Most of those denouncing Iceage, like Crawford, believe that only fascists use fascist imagery. If that's the case, we can all unilaterally denounce Joy Division, Serge Gainsbourg, Led Zeppelin, Throbbing Gristle, the White Stripes, the Sex Pistols and David Bowie. All have flirted with the basic aesthetics of fascism.

Why? Because fascist imagery is, in itself, stylish and effective. "Let's face it," Hook said, "the Nazis had great designers and propaganda experts, and they were really good at manipulating strong images. I suppose they needed them as they were trying to conquer the world."

Scans from Iceage's *Dogmeat* zine



Iceage never dreamed of having an audience overseas. They originally pressed only 500 copies of *New Brigade*. The Copenhagen punk scene, which includes bands like Sexdrome, Pagan Youth and Girlseeker, is a small and insulated community. Groups there generally have a short shelf life and stay offline. So if you know about Iceage and you're not Danish, it's probably because of Ric Leichtung.

Leichtung is a senior editor at *Altered Zones*, a web-based music aggregator dedicated to "the explosion of small-scale DIY music". In the winter of 2009, he was working with the New York-based promoter Todd P on MtyMx, a three-day festival in Monterrey, Mexico, that took place in March 2010. (The event was a financial failure—many of the headliners cancelled, spooked by bus hijackings on Mexican Federal Highway 85.)

While planning the festival, Leichtung and Todd received an email from an unknown Danish address containing what they would soon discover to be Iceage songs. "They didn't have a MySpace, they didn't have anything," Leichtung said. "But I was totally floored by the demos they sent. Onwards from that, they started getting little bits of press, mostly focused on their age. That was always the main hit—they're so young."

Last January, *New Brigade* was released simultaneously by Escho Records and Tambourhinoceros, two respected Danish labels. In the weeks leading up to the album's mid-March US release, Leichtung pushed the record on *Altered Zones*. Stereogum did the same. The buzz mounted until What's Your Rupture? records caught wind, and the band suddenly had a press machine that caused a domino effect of positive reviews. In May, Leichtung went to Copenhagen to cover "Danish Punk Fuck You", an Iceage-curated showcase at the Distortion Festival.

On June 25, I met Leichtung at 285 Kent, a semi-legal warehouse venue in Brooklyn. That night, Iceage were set to play one of the first shows on their inaugural US tour. The crowd, cramped and soaked with sweat, was almost shitting themselves with excitement.

I asked Leichtung about his trip to Copenhagen, how the festival had gone, and how he felt about Iceage's current success, for which he'd been largely responsible. "I dunno, man," he said. "It's sorta dark."

According to Leichtung, the show in Copenhagen had a decidedly white-supremacist bent, which he documented in a scene report for *Altered Zones*. Iceage curated a selection of particularly aggressive bands, including frequent collaborators White Nigger, a group that performs in blackface and strangles members of the crowd. He told me that members of the all-white audience were Sieg Heiling in appreciation between songs.

Kevin Boyer, the head of What's Your Rupture?, denies these claims. "First of all, the Sieg Heiling kid was there for Sexdrome, not Iceage," Kevin told me. "And secondly, he was a troublemaker who was just being a jackass. But it was Leichtung's piece that lumped him in with Iceage and started this whole thing off. The next thing you know there's an article on chic Nazism, chic fascism. People are trying to ruin this wonderful thing that was made by 18-year-olds. It's a very romantic record that uses startling imagery. I guess it struck a chord with a lot of people, and a lot of people are still trying to figure it out."

Just before press time of this issue I finally got hold of the notoriously interview-shy Iceage front man, Elias Bender Ronnenfelt. It was a few days after the publication of Finnedal's articles, and now he was even more hesitant to talk to journalists. "I don't like most parts of the music media," Elias told me. "It's lazy, empty and sensationalist. If they expect something of us that we're not, it's not our problem."

"When the first accusations of Nazi sympathies came, we didn't take them very seriously," Elias continued. "The argument was very vague. Now one of the biggest Danish newspapers has been running several stories about it. I don't know whether to feel insulted or whether it's just too absurd... Point is, we haven't actually used any Nazi imagery, ever." I asked Elias what was going on in *Dogmeat*: the iron crosses, the hooded figures, the switchblades pointing to the necks of Muslims. "That's a collage drawing of different things I was seeing in the news, not a pro-race-riot drawing."

I, for one, believe him, and appreciate what he's doing. If the images from *Dogmeat* shock you, then you're shocked by reality. That's not necessarily a bad thing. Reality can be depressing. But if you're genuinely offended, then you're living in some fantasyland where racism, violence and hate shouldn't be analysed or commented on. And that's just fucking sad. *ICE*



2:54

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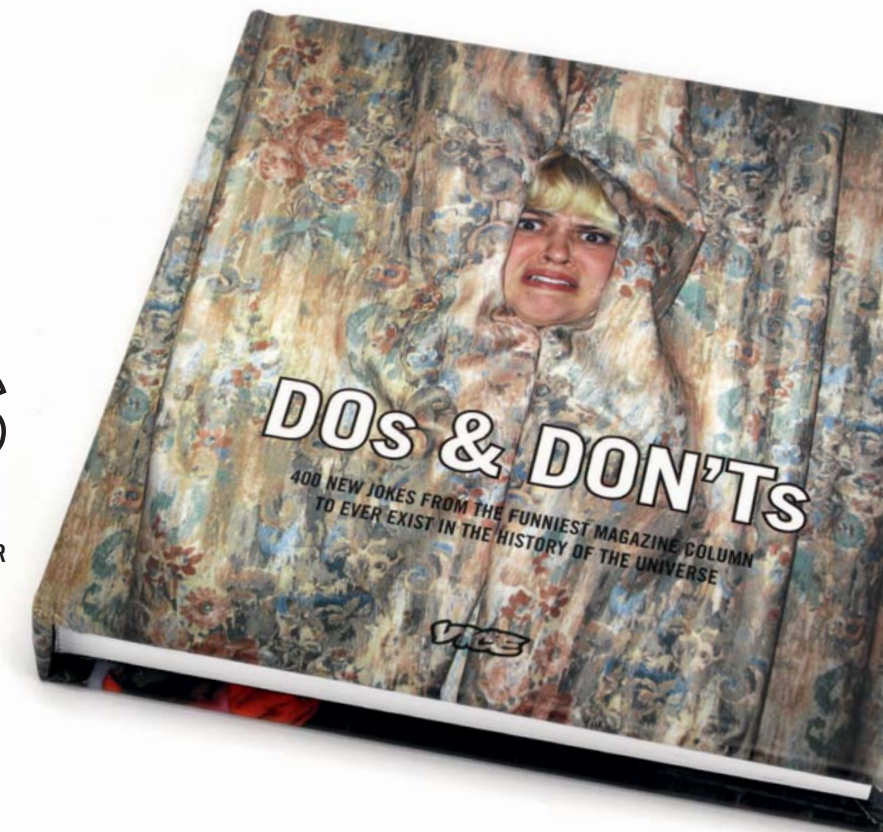
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BOB ODENKIRK'S "TATTLE PAGE: THE SECRET WORD ON THE STREET"—EXCLUSIVELY FOR VICE!!

MEET THE CANDIDATE!

(An Evening with Michael Bloomberg's Hand-Picked Successor!)



Michael Bloomberg has a secret! A secret he's bursting to share! But first, he wants to tell us about his hand-picked successor to be mayor of New York...

The mayor personally called yours truly at VICE to give us the "scooperooni" on his fave new candidate, someone "unknown and new—from out of the blue!", a "dazzling dark horse", a "true TRANS-itional figure—and what a figure!" Someone he excitedly described as "a glamorous mix of Adele, Kirstie Alley, la Barbara, and, well, ME!" Who could it be? After all, initial rumours had him favouring Democrat Christine Quinn, the City Council speaker, but now here was hizzoner on the phone, insisting that there was, in his words, "a hot new chick on the scene! She came out of nowhere in a flurry of eye shadow and lip gloss! She has no track record, but boy she knows city government, has all the right connections, and she's all lady! A real show-stopper!" Enough breath-bating, I said—spill them beans!

Ladies and gentlemen, meet...

MINDY "Ms. Dazzle" BLOMBERGER!



Of course, I insisted on a sit-down with New York's newest candy-date, but Bloomby had a few restrictions I had to agree to regarding my tryst with Ms. Mindy. We were not to photograph her in sunlight, we were restricted from photographing her neck from a side angle, and there were to be no photographs of Bloomberg and his negligee-wearing protégée side by side, because he explained that appearing with his hopeful successor went "against all my instincts—and may appear pushy and self-serving", plus it was "physically impossible!!"

I went all-in for a "night on the town" with this "vivacious vixen of city government". Our first glimpse of our future la Mayor was at the back door to City Hall (after sundown, as requested—when the light is "forgiving")... She seemed to have a command of even detailed city issues and she surely belted out a great rendition of Liza Minnelli tearing through "Cabaret!"

"Well, what do you think of her? She's something else, ain't she?"

"She sure is, Bloomie, and she would make a great mayor—and an entertaining one! But tell me, Mr. Mayor, what's that big secret you wanted to share?"

Suddenly, the line went dead... and then, after a beat, his coyness whispered, "Baby, if you don't know by now, then I've done my job, and my lips are sealed."

Ta-ta, Tattlers, and if you listen to me, you'll be voting Mindy in '12!!

PHOTO BY DAN MEYER,
AP PHOTO/SUSAN WALSH



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TOUPÉE: FREEDOM'S JUST ANOTHER WORD FOR SHIT

BY BRETT GELMAN, PHOTOS BY JANICZA BRAVO, SPECIAL GUEST: PAUL RUST AS ARTICHOKE



What is freedom?

That's what I keep asking myself while hidin' out here at Mandela's. Am I really free at all? Even if I wasn't on the run, would I be free? Mandela's been screaming at me all morning. Telling me each and every story about every time I fucked her over. Baby, I get it, I'm a bad person. You don't need to tell me that. Ain't no new fucking news to me. Can you please give me a little peace and quiet? I just broke out of prison, for Christ's sake.

"Well, it ain't my fault you went to prison."

That's true. Still trying to process who set me up. Just because I haven't mentioned it lately doesn't mean I haven't been thinking about it. Trust me. It's one of the main things on my fucking mind.

I manage to beg a blowjob out of her. Relaxes me. Luckily she's on the rag, so I don't gotta do any work. Not that I wouldn't normally. I am not a selfish lover. Besides, any man who says he prefers a mouth to a pussy is a fucking weirdo extremo. After she recognises my gratitude for the BJ as genuine, she throws me an even bigger comfort bone. The kind of bone that gets cooked in a spoon, sucked into a syringe and shot into a hungry vein. And my veins are hungry, all right. Every inch of me is hungry for any type of thing that'll help my stressed-out brain take a vacation to Liarville, where everyone reassures you that shit's gonna be fine. Of course it's bullshit, but as I shoot up, I let myself enjoy.

"Where's the kid? He home?"

"No. He's out playing with one of his little stupid friends. The kid's mom should be dropping his dumb ass back off here any minute, and then we'll be one stupid happy fucking family. That is, until both of you get the fuck out of here and on your way. I never want to see either of you again."

I nod and shut the fuck up, because I don't want to fight. But who the fuck is Mandela kidding? She wouldn't last two seconds alone. Otherwise she would have yanked the kid out while he was still just a little hard-boiled egg. As soon as we're gone she'll probably try to fucking kill herself. She's so weak. But I gotta admit, there is something about her that still gets me a rollin' and a rumblin'. Something that still fills me with the need to pump her tank full of white goopy gas.

Then again, what if this is a double cross too? Maybe the cops are on the way. Maybe whoever killed Dead Dick is on the way to fucking murder me. My head's all spinning with grime and slime. I gotta get a gun. Maybe Mandela has one. I don't give a shit. Anybody walks in that door unannounced, they're gonna be snackin' on worm shit until the goddamn world ends. I've had it. I WILL NOT BE A VICTIM! I WILL NOT BE A COCKSUCKING VICTIM!

"Daddy?"

Didn't notice. What's wrong with me? How could I not notice the presence of my own child. I made him with my sperm. My sperm fucked Mandela's egg and now I have this little me looking at me.

"You're my daddy, right?"

"I guess so, kid."

"I'm going to live with you, right?"

"I guess so."

"Does that mean that my mom doesn't like me?"

"No... of course not, kid."

Cute kid. Probably will be handsome when he gets older, just like his dad. Hope he doesn't have the hair problems, though. Don't really know what to do. Don't know what I'm going to do about him living with me. Don't know the first thing about being a fucking father. Never had any interest in it. Usually, I hear a kid's voice and it makes me want to run and hide in a fucking hole. But Artichoke is different. His questions... it's like I'm asking them. A part of me is asking me about life. A part of me is asking myself if it's going to be OK. Shit... maybe I can do this.

"Daddy?"

"Yeah, Artichoke?"

"Daddy, there's one question I want to ask you."

"Sure, kid. Anything."

"How do you think it'll feel to be dead?"

BANG!

My blood. His giggles. Who taught him how to shoot a gun? Probably was his cunt mother. They both stand over me. They're laughing. They're both laughing at me.

The bastard should have been a bastard.

Check VICE.com for previous instalments of Toupée, Brett Gelman's novel about baldness, disgusting depravity and being on the lam.

THE CUTE SHOW PAGE!

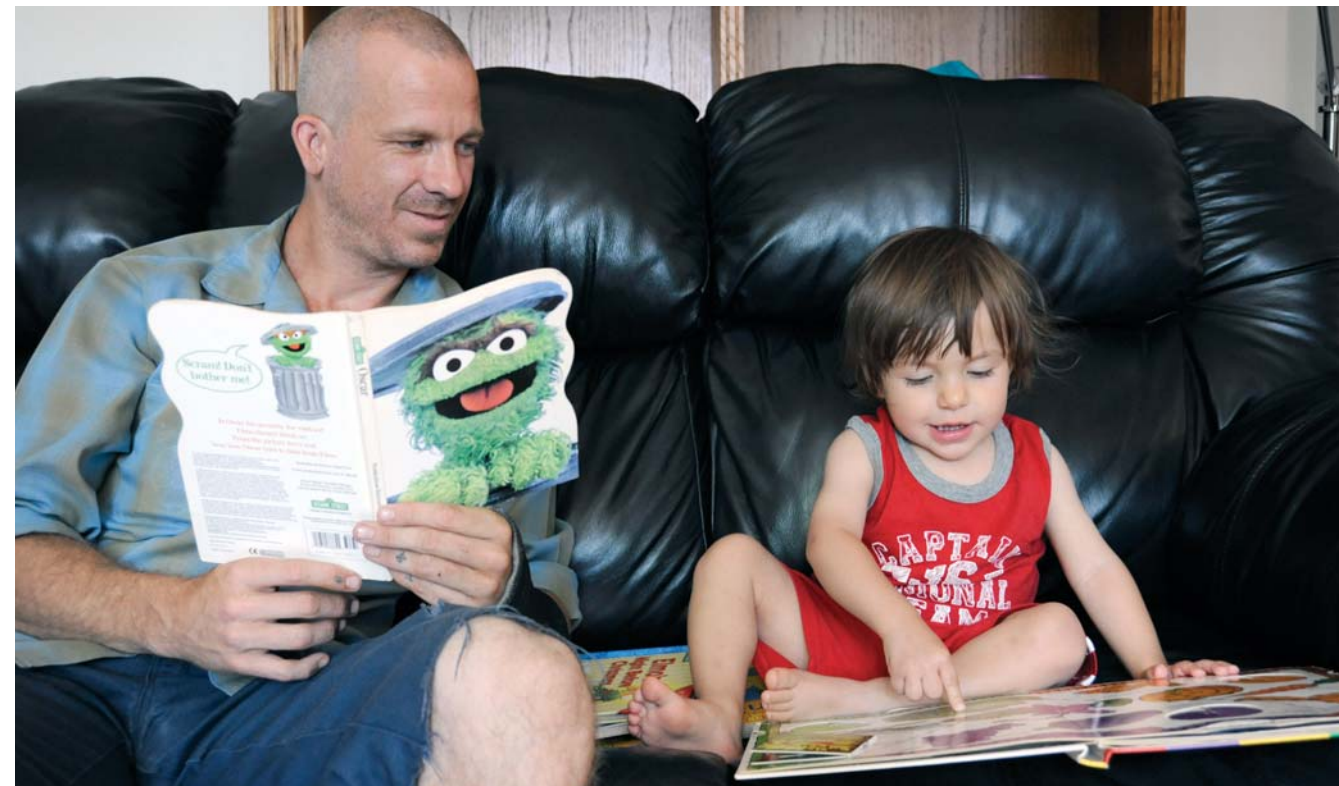
BY ELLIS JONES, PHOTO BY BARBARA DABROWSKA



Snow Leopard Cubs

Watch a brand new episode of The Cute Show! featuring these snuggly, fuzzy cubs later this month on VICE.com.

There's nothing better than watching newborn animals curiously explore the world around them. They dig, pounce, sniff and fall, and then look up at you with those wide eyes too big for their heads. It's magic. So you can only imagine what it was like when we made friends with a few baby snow leopards in Germany—they were like kittens on special steroids that multiply cuddleability by a factor of ten. The pudgy fur balls love nothing more than to go on mini-adventures in their playground at Magdeburg Zoo. And not even their mother was able to curb their curious mischievousness. We saw them nudge around a football, dip their huge, snowshoe-like paws into bowls of water, and tinkle on the floor (even that was cute). To top it off, they are the official symbol of the Girl Scouts Association of Kyrgyzstan. We bet they really like their cookies!



SPONTANEASS

Dir: Belladonna
Rating: 10

Evilangel.com

So my second son, Christopher James Nieratko III, was born on August 10, 2011, and I have already tried to kill him. By accident, naturally. When it comes to parenting I have a steadfast rule: READ NO PARENTING BOOKS. I figure if Polacks and Cro-Mags figured it out without manuals, then I'll be fine. Also I'm working on a parenting book (please read it!) and I don't want my thoughts tainted by something written by some Vulcan in the 1940s. I suppose in this isolated incident of nearly murdering my newborn it might have been somewhat useful to have read a book or two on parenting so I would've known that a newborn baby shouldn't be flying the first week it's alive. What happened was my wife pushed our first kid out in seven minutes (she is badass), and until recently that was the shortest birthing video ever made. But she wanted to break her old record with our second kid and so she squeeze him out with only four pushes. I think it took her, like, four minutes tops. It may sound like the little guy just walked right out of her vagina, but truth is, there's nothing casual about nearly ten pounds of anything coming out of a hole that small. As the thoughtful husband and dad of the year I am, I decided to be *spontaneASS* and buy my wife and kids a vacation in Miami right after the kid was born. I was going to be on a skateboard road trip ending in South Beach, and I thought I would fly her and the boys down to relax in the sun. She'd earned it. I dealt with the details I thought most important: flights,

hotels, car, tickets to Monday Night Football (Dolphins vs Patriots. I hate both those teams, I just wanted to go to see if somehow they would both lose. Go Jets!) My wife deals with the other stuff, like asking the doctors if putting a newborn in a pool will kill it. Seems that a public hotel pool and an aeroplane, with all their germs, are a near-death sentence for a freshie with no immune system, or at the very least a guaranteed visit to the hospital. So I ate the tickets. What could I do? I have a different approach to parenting. Last year I was on a talk show called *The Daily Habit* that was once about skateboarding but has now turned into this weird Bill Maher/open-mic-night programme. They asked me, Wayne Brady and a Playmate to comment on *zany* photos, one of which was a child restraint shaped like a crucifix. Wayne Brady and the Playmate were appalled by the device. I took the opposite stance: I told them I loved it and that my wife and I were always looking for new, safer child restraints after finding out the hard way that our old restraint, a clear plastic bag, shouldn't go over the baby's head. We did four takes. Each time I got more graphic with my dead-baby joke. Finally, they said, "Chris, please stop. We can't do dead-baby jokes." "Why not?" I asked. "Dead-baby jokes are timeless." I believe there's a statistic that says that for every baby born there are two people who want to kill it at some point in its life.

More stupid can be found at Chrisnieratko.com.

Deadlines are a cow. Take the deadline for this article: if it had been a couple of days later, I could be writing about *Batman: Arkham City* (Warner Bros, PC, Xbox 360, PS3) now. I could be sucking in my cheeks and pedalling my stumpy little feet around on the floor, telling you how I've been dealing non-fatal justice to the thugs and psychopaths of Gotham City.

I could be telling you how Rocksteady have taken the intimate, claustrophobic brilliance of their first game and spread it into an open world. Instead, all I can do is relay the thrilled gurgles of my friend, who is playing it.

What've I been playing? Let me see. Oh yes, *Sesame Street: Once Upon a Monster* (Warner Bros, Xbox Kinect, Emphasis Mine). My head's full of it. I'm well into my 30s and I'm as far from having a baby as I am from being one. And yet, for reasons I'm forced to call professional, I've been suffering the revolting peeps of that bright red fucksore, Elmo.

I'll gladly pretend to love *Sesame Street*, just as cheerfully as the next guy who's desperate to smooth-talk his way into a retard's knickers. The truth is, I just like that clip on YouTube where they've bleeped out the words and it sounds like the Count is talking about sticking his dick into a cobweb. But even at my most meta, ironic and forgiving, I cannot stomach the hyper-optimism of that difference-noticing prick. So while your children will love this game—and they almost certainly will, it's fucking adorable—don't ask a fat bitter old puff to give you a sensible opinion about it.

You want the polar opposite of *Sesame Street*? *Dark Souls* (Namco Bandai, PS3, Xbox 360) is the sequel to the PS3 exclusive, *Demons Souls*. *Demons Souls* got a reputation for being punishing, with meagre progress offered in return for a bloodied nose and crushed knuckles. It's the kind of game that'll phone you after a nasty split because it's at a party and your song has come on. Then gesture to all its friends to sound like they're really enjoying themselves.

You play a knight in a world where every footstep has been crafted to kill you, albeit never completely unfairly and always in a way that you can learn from. It's ten kinds of genius how cruel this game can be and still make you love it. If you want, you can leave signs for other players—not in your own words, obviously, that's a recipe for filth—using a set of semi-helpful instructions that actually make the game more tense. What does safe mean? What's safe? Do I have to stand here forever because it's the only safe place? Run? Run where? *Shit!*

Best of all, it's the game that would teach that squeaking upbeat dong from *Sesame Street* about life. Let's see him keep a positive attitude in the face of relentless and repeated death. Let's see how chipper he is after realising that half of the people who left signs for us actually wanted him to die. They wanted a stranger to die, Elmo. That's what people are.

RAGE (Bethesda, Xbox 360, PS3, PC) is the new all-singing, all-caps title from the people who were the fathers, mothers and midwives of 3D shooters. They invented the genre with *Wolfenstein*, popularised it with *Doom*, then reinvented it—and this time properly—with *Quake*. It's like they left their genre in the oven for 15 years to go to a party and have only just checked their watch.

RAGE does a brilliant trick of filling your brain. The shooting stages are there, and while the range of guns and ammo is what you'd expect, it's the personality of your victims that makes it all feel fresh. Each of the gangs of post-apocalypse bandits have a distinctive fighting style and character, from the running-zombie mutants to the foul-mouthed cockney brawlers. For a game that asks you to kill a lot of people, they've remembered to make that part of it fun. The end of the game comes apart slightly, but there's still 12 hours of excellence going on, and a nice enough combat-racing multiplayer mode.

Dead Rising 2: Off the Record (Capcom, Xbox 360, PS3, PC) is a surprising idea. What if people liked *Dead Rising 2* so much they'd want to play through the same location again, but with the star of the first game? It's odd for two reasons: first, it's a pretty brazen way to increase your money-to-effort ratio. But that's fine: it's always seemed like a shame to create huge worlds, let people learn them, then never use them again. But *Dead Rising* is severely overestimating the appeal of its lead characters.

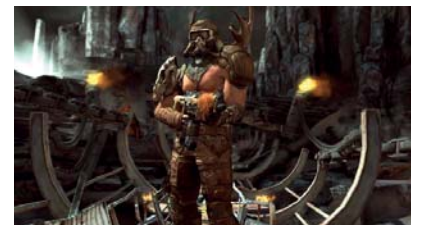
Dead Rising 2's Chuck Greene was the living embodiment of a frown, and Frank West—the star of the first game and *Off the Record*—just wasn't much of a person at all. He's clearly become iconic in Capcom's eyes, but ask fans to describe his personality and they'd struggle to say more than, "He's a grumpy photographer." We didn't like the man, we liked the tension, the story, the mall muzak and barrelling through a crowd of loose-limbed shamblers with a lawnmower. While *Off the Record* extends the excellence of *DR2's* combo weapons, and combines it with Frank's quest for drama, comedy and saucy snapshots, this is strictly for serious *Dead Rising* fans. The déjà vu is crippling.



Batman: Arkham City



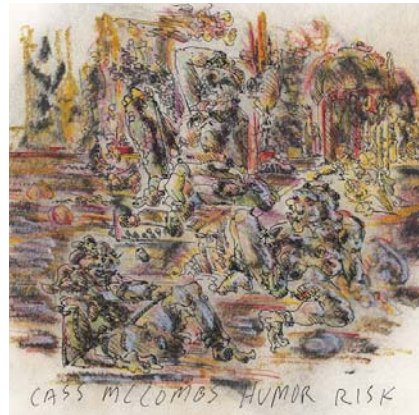
Sesame Street: Once Upon a Monster



RAGE



Dead Rising 2: Off the Record



**BEST ALBUM OF THE MONTH:
CASS McCOMBS**



M.E.D. Classic
Stones Throw

6 It must be great being a rapper on Stones Throw. Hang around the office and every few years Madlib will hand you a plate of beats worth buying in their own right. You don't even have to be that good. Just sit in the middle of that psychedelic stew and let it bubble around you. No one cares whether you're mutton or lamb when the sauce is this good.

STATIK SELEKTAH
Population Control
Showoff/Duck Down

5 These days I'm so pathetically grateful for any hip-hop album that doesn't sound like it's a) trying to rub dicks with Tiesto, or b) made live and uploaded to the web in the time it takes to boil a kettle, that it took about six listens to realise *Population Control* isn't brilliant. Not by a long shot. Producer Statik Selektah is in thrall to East Coast trad rap and this album of assorted rappers on his beats lacks the gleeful charisma of his recent effort with Termanology.

RIZZLE KICKS
Stereo Typical
Island

1 Picture "Unorthodox". Now take away Wretch 32, multiply by 14 and try, if you can, to imagine not

one but two rappers worse than Example. For all their way with a sample—and "Down With the Trumpets" is the happiest use of Mexican brass in hip-hop since Delinquent Habits packed up—the voices are so weak, the tone so one-dimensional, it sounds like Big Brovaz reborn as *NME* readers.

ZED BIAS
*Biasonic Hotsauce—
Birth of the Nanocloud*
Tru Thoughts

7 Aided and abetted by Toddla T, Falty DL and Mark Pritchard, loveable UK garage bloke Zed Bias is back to add a splash of class to the stagnant funky scene. Zed's like that suede jacket you just rediscovered in the attic the other day: it still looks good even with the tassles, and the "honeyz" will go mad for it.



HTRK
Work Work Work
Blast First Petite

8 Despite walking and talking the part, louche gothic trio Haterock never quite lived up to their billing sonically, despite serving up a drug-numbed, seen-it-all, Shoreditch neo-goth take on the very early, pre-album Sisters Of Mercy. Now positively sex- and depravity-sodden—on "Slo Glo" singer Jonnine Standish sounds like Sade in prison—they have a convincing sound they can finally call their own. Today down to a two-piece, they should be assured that in carrying on in order to honour an absent friend, they made the right decision and the right album.

BURAKA SOM SISTEMA
Komba
Enchufada

6 Fears that the hipster transglobal ethnofunk thing was just so 2008 prove unfounded. *Komba* is bigger and broader than Buraka's last—with one eye on European pop markets on tracks like "(We Stay) Up All Night"—but pure propulsive fun is still its game. Either you get angsty about Portugeezers raiding their former colonies for art, or you say, "Fuck it."

ONEOHTRIX POINT NEVER
Replica
Software

8 Time was when your synth savant would wear black combat gear and name themselves after a mind-scanning operative from an obscure Philip K. Dick novel. Now it seems that a velour tracksuit and a silly name like Oneohtrix Point Never will suffice. This isn't to say that Daniel Lopatin's music isn't dead serious and conceptually tight, built, as it is, out of samples from vintage TV ads. Thankfully, it still sounds like the blissful ear honey your iPod blesses you with in A&E the second the strong painkillers you've been given for a head injury kick in.

DRC MUSIC
Kinshasa One Two
Warp

9 Like with Tony Blair making same-sex civil partnerships legal and Ming the Merciless overhauling the transport network on the planet Mongo, no one really feels comfortable recognising the handful of good things Damon Albarn has achieved. But as co-owner of Honest Jon's he's released several key African albums

such as *Shangaan Electro* and the Foster Manganyi compilation. He also has a curatorial role in this great proceeds-to-Oxfam Congolese dance compilation which is actually the least worthy thing you'll hear all month. Best of all, Jupiter Bokondji's "Ah Congo" sounds like the Bug's "Skeng" transplanted to Kinshasa.

TEENAGE BAD GIRL
Backwash
Citizen

7 Teenage Bad Girl are not quite France's best-kept secret—that's the fact that the French all have AIDS and can only smell by licking things. They're up there, though. An electro duo with a rocky twinge who last made a record in 2007 and who aren't called Justice, their second effort turns out a few proper zingers, chiefly of all their Rye Rye team-up "X Girl", where the professional protégé opens proceedings with a hearty exclamation of "Por favor!". "The Wave" channels the nihilism of the Chemical Brothers' "It Doesn't Matter", and their "Jumping Judas" team-up with J Dilla's younger bro has all the muscularity of an S&M disco classic. Despite a worrying sideline in kitsch slower numbers, *Backwash* is an overflowing ashtray of electro booty.

KING MIDAS SOUND
Without You
Hyperdub

8 A year ago at Supersonic Festival in Birmingham, Kevin Martin found himself sharing the stage with his old creative foyle, Justin Broadrick. Unwilling to let the caustic industrial grind of Godflesh swamp the dubby lovers rock of his latest outfit King Midas Sound, he reverted to fighting fire with fire, leading to one of the best gigs (from both parties) of the year.

**WORST ALBUM OF THE MONTH:
RIZZLE KICKS**



This album of reworkings and remixes finds them back in quieter, more introspective mode but is sheer class from start to finish. Not even preposterous trance hippies Gang Gang Dance (essentially, the po-faced Bentley Rhythm Ace) can fuck their track up. When they get to their second album proper, however, here's hoping KM reaches for the nuclear meltdown button once more.

KATE WAX
Dust Collision
Border Community

5 When VICE's Surburban Dwight interviewed a young Kate Wax back in 2004 as she promoted her long-lost "Black Sheep" EP, she described herself as "the missing link between Front 242, Mazzy Star, Fad Gadget, PJ Harvey, Suicide, Tori Amos, Mike Ink and the Flying Lizards". She was trying to be all things to all people, of course, and look where it got her—nowhere. Now, with second album *Dust Collision*, she's keeping it simple by concentrating on being Switzerland's very own Fever Ray. She's got some analogue keyboards and a head full of strange emotion, and James Holden's popped round to make sure she doesn't write anything too catchy. Seems to have worked.

REBOLLEDO
Super Vato
Cómeme

9 Rebolledo is a roly-poly disco cat from Xalapa in Mexico who's part of Matias Aguayo's madcap Cómeme crew and also happens to be a dead ringer for Matt Berry's oily *Darkplace* badboy Dr Lucien Sanchez. His very good debut *Super Vato* is packed with the kind of lusty and primitive Latino boogie that you imagine Mexico's drug gangs play in their SUVs

as they cruise around murdering bloggers and disembowling civil servants, high on their own supply. Hell, I know I would if I could.

ACTIVE CHILD
You Are All I See
Vagrant

2 Like being trapped in a submarine with Jimmy Somerville, a copy of *Now That's What I Call Chillwave* and the diaries of Richey Edwards, former chorister Pat Grossi's debut record is claustrophobic, cloying, deeply self-involved and can probably precipitate some sort of medical emergency where you have to crack your own skull open with a ball-peen hammer in order to get it out. Some of his 1mph-R&B-as-realised-by-a-bipolar-parrot is not without its own post-Miracle slo-mo disco charm. Once that charm expires and everything slides towards Jame Blake levels of hollow pomposity, you'd better have some sort of arranged method for snapping your own neck.

MARTYN
Ghost People
Brainfeeder

7 When you're an easygoing Dutch bloke called Martyn, your music's going to have to be pretty fucking special for anyone to take notice of it—and *Ghost People* is just that. As ever with Brainfeeder releases, this is crammed with nods to a million different styles. The difference is, Martyn doesn't pack them all into one track before pressing repeat. There's hints of just about everything good that's happened to dance music in the last 20-plus years—UK garage, Chicago house, the "Macarena"—and barely a twitch of dub-step. Win-win.



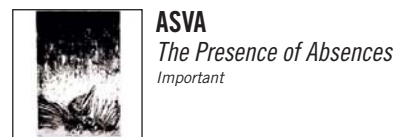
**BEST COVER OF THE MONTH:
TEENAGE BAD GIRL**



BASTARD PRIEST
Ghouls of the Endless Night
Pulverised

8 The metal world does not send out physical promos, preferring to send MP3s. This would be annoying if you liked any of the records but, like all promos, 90 percent are total bollocks. This percentage is way higher when it comes to metal. Every month sees an endless barrage of death metal releases by bands with names like the Sharp End Of Death and Exmembersofanyaverageninetiesband. There's also a relentless flurry of Nordic-inspired black metal bands called things like Kuntkommander and Blackforestgateaux. However, there's always that 5 percent that guarantees I still open each email from one of the 458 labels who've got my address. And guess what? This is one that didn't suck and thus got reviewed. And actually, this second Bastard Priest full-length totally fucking owns.

ALI BERNABIA



ASVA
The Presence of Absences
Important

7 Lacking the in-house design genius of Stephen O'Malley and the bitching monk costumes of Sunn O)))—while obviously being slightly parochial compared to the unachievable remoteness of Corrupted—the drone-doom of ASVA has always been a bit of a hard sell to Trv Kvlt Nigels everywhere. G Stuart Dahlquist simply gets on with it “quietly”, however. This time out, gigantically reverberating drums recall “When the Levee Breaks” and reed organs build up Dr Phibes vibes. ASVA pride themselves on seeking out the honest and truthful in avant-metal, which seems almost oxymoronic. Either way, the colossal climax of the title

track sounds like it was made on a Jovian moon: my god, it's full of guitars...
LE CLAW



INTEGRITY
Thee Great DestroyORR
Holy Terror

10 Nearly a quarter of a century since their inception, Integrity remain one of the few genuinely interesting and mobile units in extreme music. Stripped back to the creative duo of solitary stalwart Dwid Hellion and his boy wonder Robert Orr, this CD compiles all the material the pair have written and recorded to date. Despite his tender age, it's clear Orr knows the Holy Terror muse inside out and this series of short sharp shocks offers a mass of influence past and present: Jap-core intensity, cheap trebly guitar histrionics, the stablike sonic wallop of Psywarfare and the E-chord breakdowns all perfect foil to Dwid's increasingly bitter isolationist worldview, where political extremity and nihilistic compulsion are the only conceivable actions left for a reasonable man.

JULIA EVVOLA

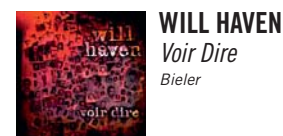


V/A
Golden Beirut—New Sounds From The Lebanon
Outhere

6 World music—it's not all Omar Souleyman thunking out mad space-jams on his flute while a thousand hipsters validate his ethnic authenticity at Field Day. Sometimes it's little indie-rock bands from Lebanon who still haven't quite got their indie-rock mortars onto a decent bit of the indie-rock Golan Heights yet. *Golden Beirut* aims to showcase the best

of angry young Lebanon, and it turns up the odd moment of excellence: Lumi's electroclash “Don't Fuck With My Cat”, or the Incompetents' ramshackle colour-wheel “Disposable Valentine”. What it also proves is that wherever you go in the world, the globe has a universal liking for bland consciousness-raising hip-hop. Yes, we are all one, brothers.

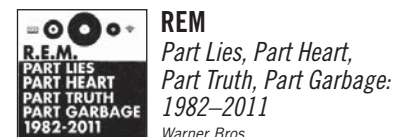
DADDY DEWDROP



WILL HAVEN
Voir Dire
Bieler

5 Featuring original vocalist Grady Avenell and Slipknot's second percussion player Chris Fehn on bass, cult favourites Will Haven are back. When *Voir Dire* starts, however, it doesn't sound like the end of the world, it sounds like the Cure playing a mid-paced album track in 1997. And just as you're about to stab yourself through the forehead with a screwdriver, it suddenly becomes a bit more like listening to *Tusk* meshed with Khanate. Fucking good job too.

SHAVED MINOTAUR

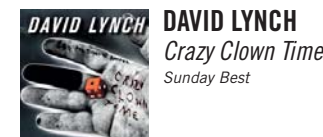


REM
Part Lies, Part Heart, Part Truth, Part Garbage: 1982–2011
Warner Bros

6 Farewell, then, REM. You have taken the whisky and the revolver into the study and done the decent thing. It was time, sadly. You have left us with a will where your career is doled out in equal measure across these 40 tracks, because all albums must get a chance, even the fag-end ones. Because you still have your pride. So that means you've found space for terrible “End of the World...” rewrite “Bad Day”, but none for “E-Bow the Letter” or “Bittersweet Me”. You have placed the limp late-period “Leaving New York” and fey nonsense “Imitation of Life”, but found no space for “Crush With Eyeliner”, “Star 69”, or “Bang and

Blame”. Just playing devil's advocate here, guys, but do you maybe think that sequencing this in chronological order might not exactly help people get to the end of CD2?

GEORGIE GREED



DAVID LYNCH
Crazy Clown Time
Sunday Best

7 Yes, *that* David Lynch. Widget. Death. Sphinx. Tuesday. Having made all the films that don't make any sense that he can stand, the master director has gone into his own studio. Widget. Death. Sphinx. Tuesday. Got his sound engineer to program pre-chosen chords into a special guitar. Widget. Death. Sphinx. Tuesday. And thrashed out a series of jams. Widget. Death. Sphinx. Tuesday. Then picked up the phone to Karen O, and in his best backwards-talking-midget-inside-your-house voice, invited her to collaborate on “Pinky's Dream”. The fruits of his twisted brainbox are often diverting, but x n i h p s.

NI VAG SENYAH



THE WAR ON DRUGS
Slave Ambient
Secretly Canadian

9 I can just picture Adam Granduciel's face at his own personal “eureka” moment: marrying the tried and tested lyrical and melodic mores of Petty/Springsteen/Mellencamp's working-man Americana with the impressionistic pulse of krautrock, creating an AOR counterpoint to Endless Boogie in the process. You wonder why no one stumbled upon the magic formula sooner because in many ways this is the ultimate roadtrip soundtrack, one that would work perfectly as the companion to, say, a Werner Herzog remake of *Two-Lane Blacktop*.

KURT CREBAIN

**WORST COVER OF THE MONTH:
DAVID LYNCH**



RED HORSES OF THE SNOW
Territories
Flashback

8 Somewhere deep inside you there is an unbroken 12-year-old who has been waiting all his life for this album that references the melancholy expansiveness of late Talk Talk, *Ocean Rain* by Echo & the Bunnymen and the classicist shoegaze of the Besnard Lakes. He will love it as much as he loves walking through the snow in a long coat thinking about the girl he saw on the bus but didn't speak to. WARNING: If you cannot locate this inner innocent child/man, you will want to smash this fucking record to pieces with a cricket bat.

ANGRY HOMONCULUS



CASS McCOMBS
Humor Risk
Domino

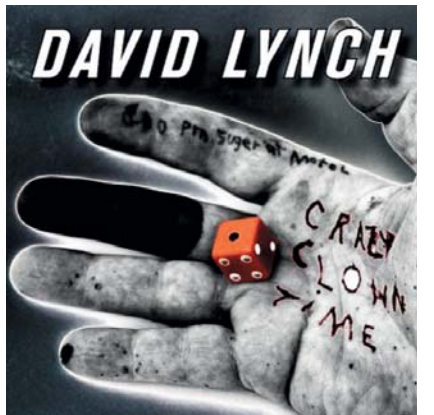
10 If the soul-crushing, slow sadness of *Wit's End* was too much for you because you're a pussy then you'll be glad to know that *Humor Risk* is the most upbeat record Cass has made since *Dropping the Writ*. Wordwise, these are some of his best ones, including my favourite: “Not you again/ I thought you'd died”. By the way, if you haven't seen the sketch with Cass being interviewed by the fat music journalist by the swimming pool, please go to YouTube and watch it now.

ANITA CRAPPER



BATTANT
As I Ride With No Horse
Kill the DJ

7 The arrival of this snazzy record is overshadowed by the death last month of Battant's Joel Dever at the age of 25. Our thoughts are with his partner in the group, Chloé Raunet. I don't know if this was their intention, but *As I*



Ride With No Horse sounds like a cross between Fairport Convention and Gallon Drunk, aided somewhat by Ivan Smaghe's impeccable sleight of hand at the mixing desk.

JENNIFER JUPITER



ODONIS ODONIS
Hollandaze
Fat Cat

6 He's the non-dead Jay Reatard. He's the Nathan Williams it's OK not to punch in the face if you see him in the street. He's the latest flavour in DIY one-man bands of squalling home-made garage-rock that sounds like the only mixing it has been near is the cement mixer it was recorded in. Equal parts early-Cure post-punk thunk, angry Del Shannon 60s swirl and proto-Pixies lo-fi distortion, Odonis Odonis is the latest project of Dean Tzenos. An obscenely prolific polymath, Tzenos has already slotted the follow-up to *Hollandaze* for spring 2012, in-between several other side projects. Its grungy vortex is nice enough, if you treat it with the same cheerful disposability its author does.

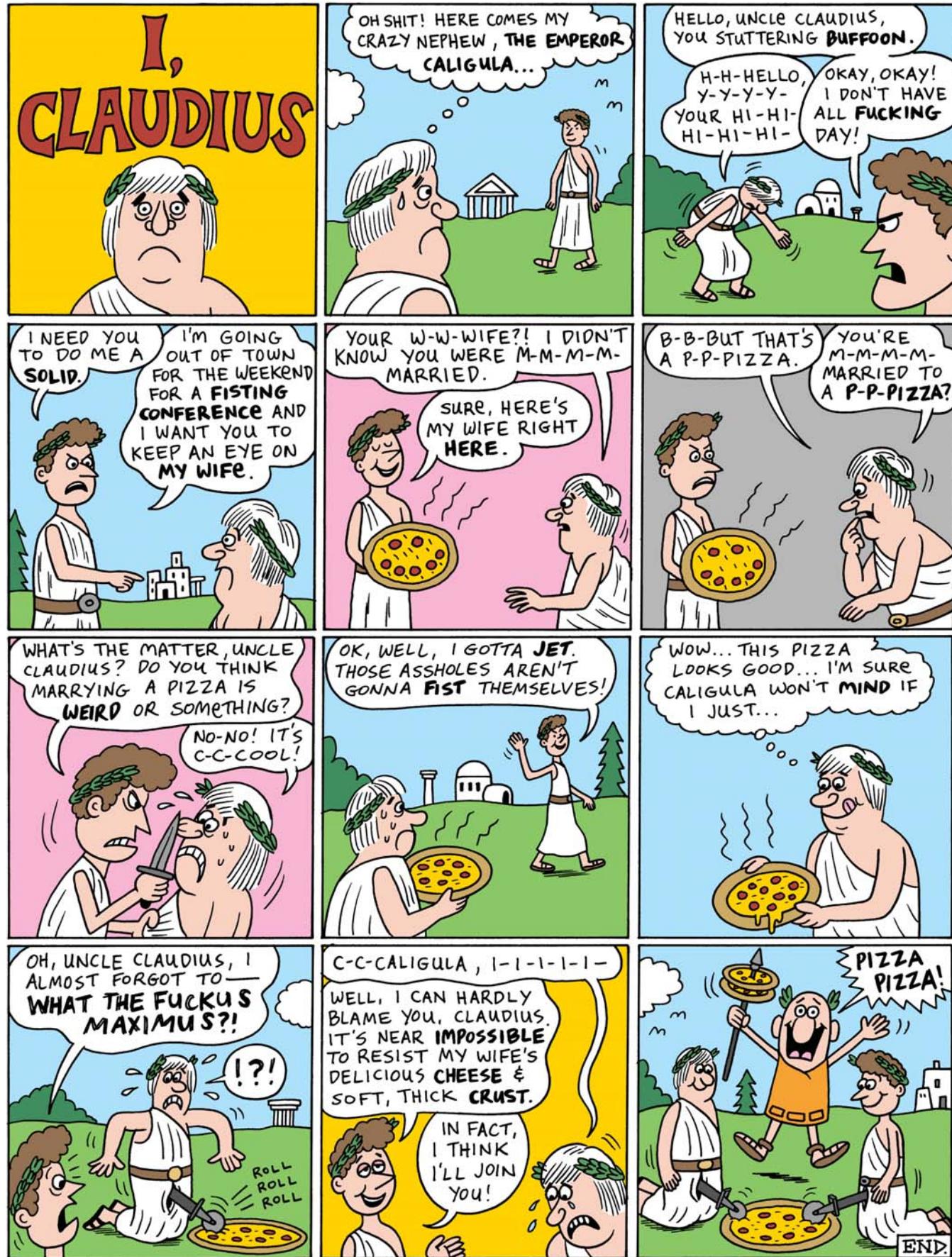
FRUITY MCGINTY



RENAISSANCE MAN
The Renaissance Man Project
Turbo

4 Renaissance Man's album *The Renaissance Man Project* sure takes you on a journey—to the land of friggin' nod. I'm all for wilful experimentation in electronic music, but this eccentric Finnish gear is way too quirky for me, and at 79 minutes that's an awful lot of quirky. You know what? Hundreds of fun moments squished together don't necessarily a fun listening experience make, as some wiseguy once said (me).

JUHO IGLESIAS



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