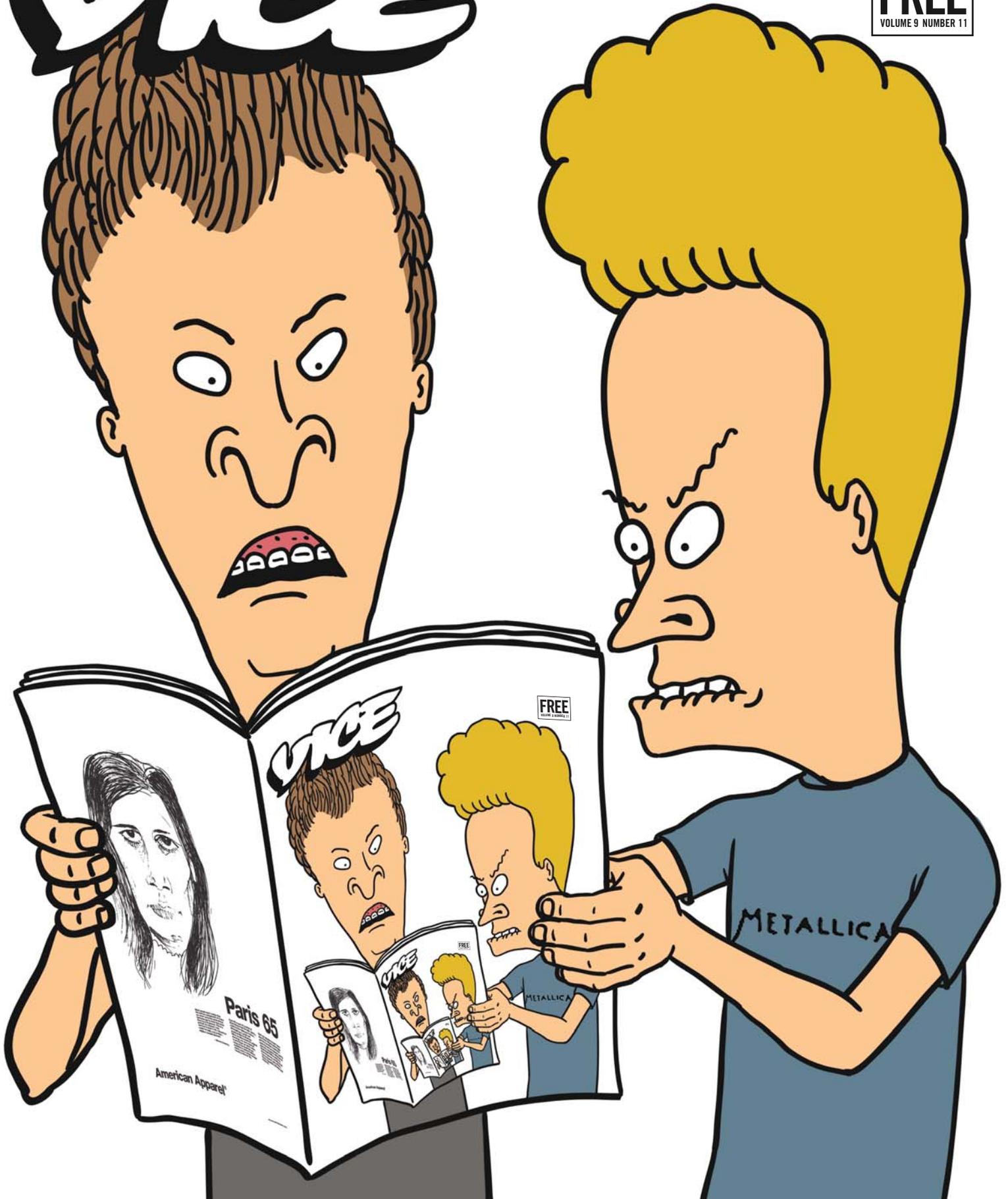


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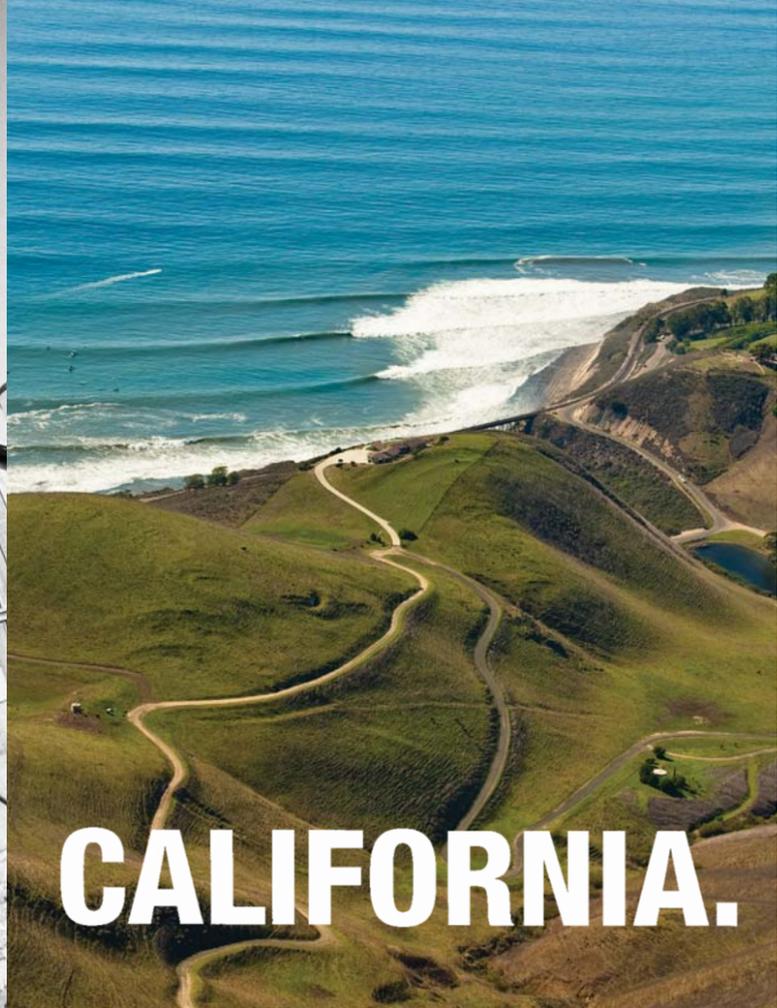
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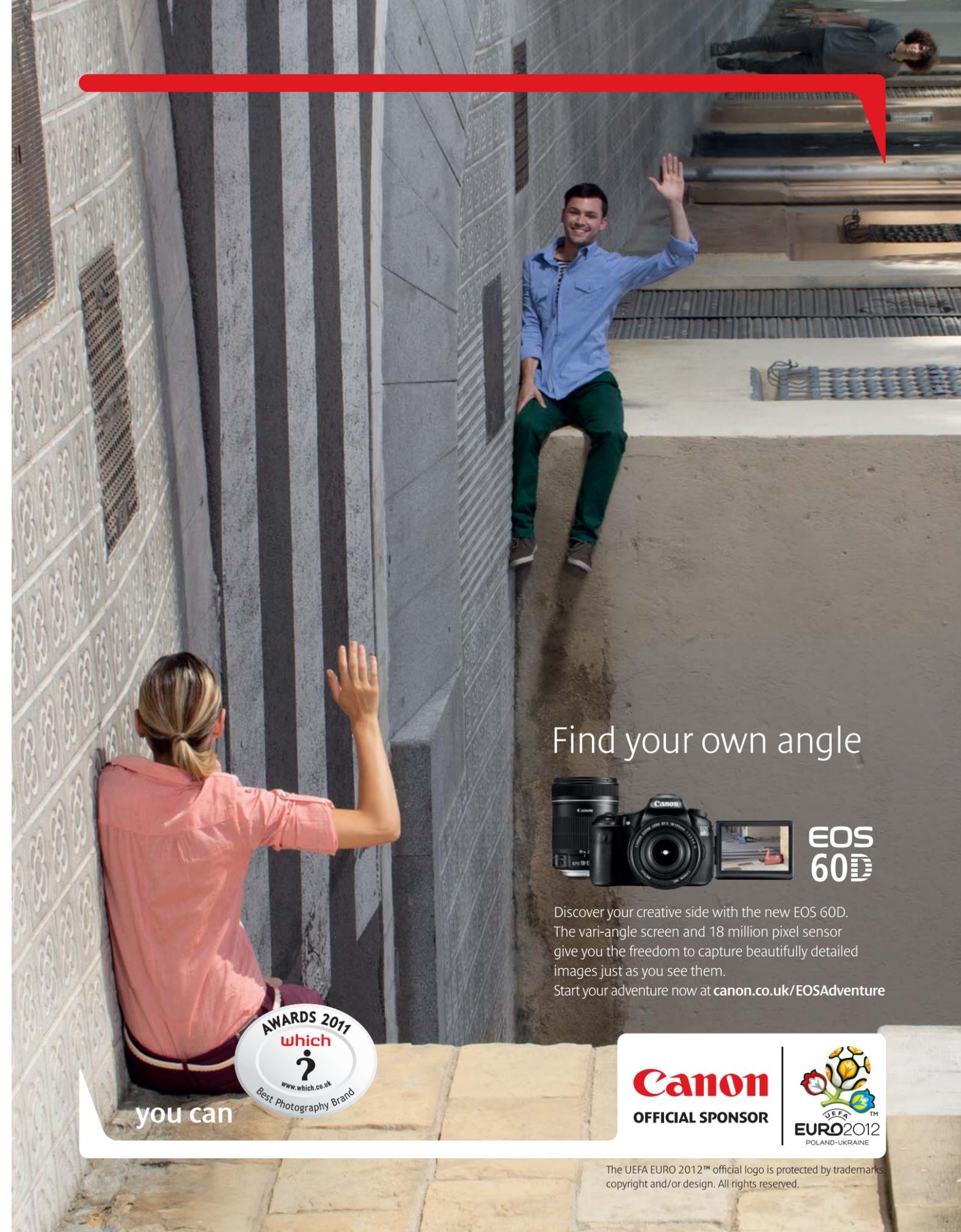


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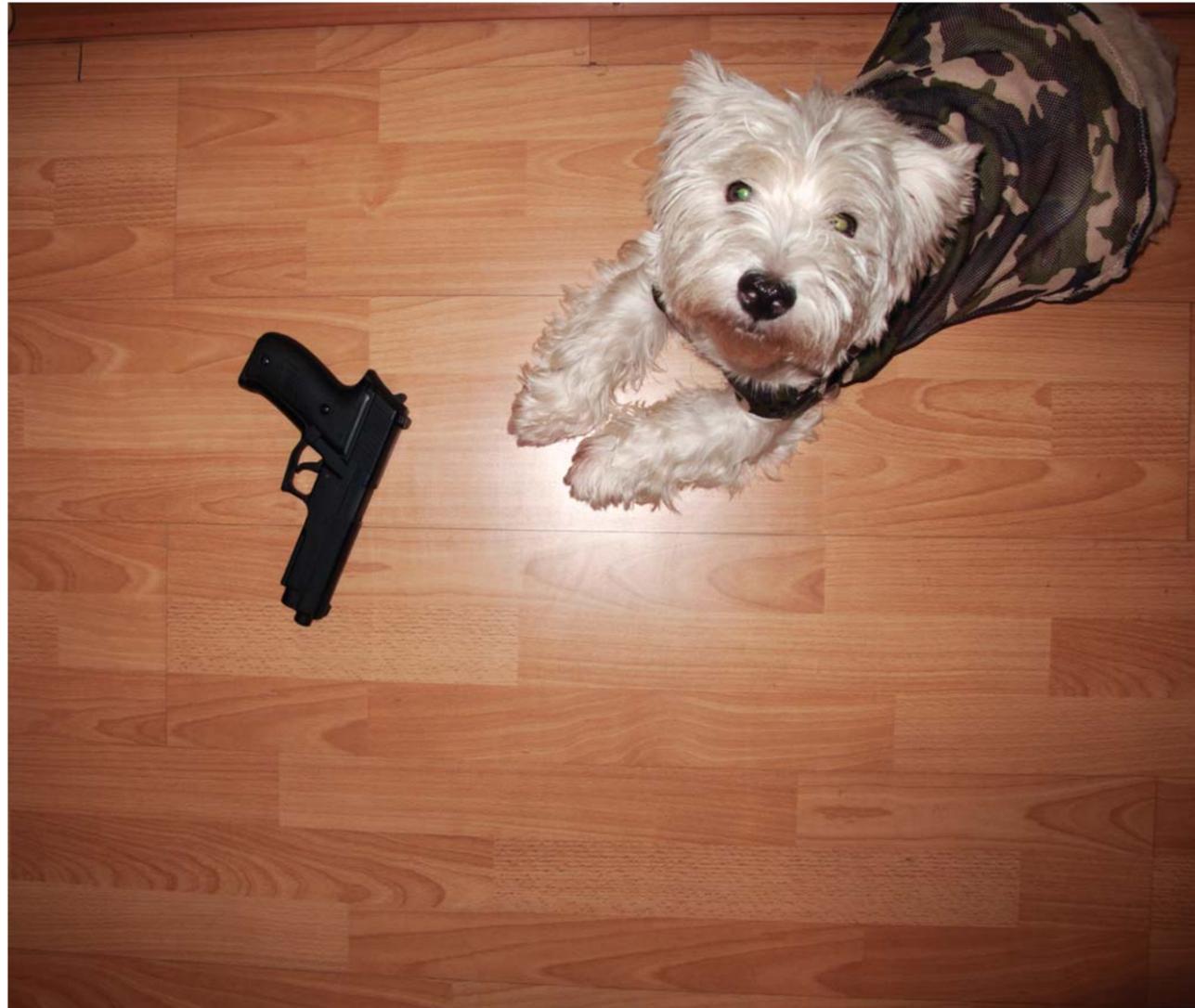
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VICE magazine is published twelve times a year.

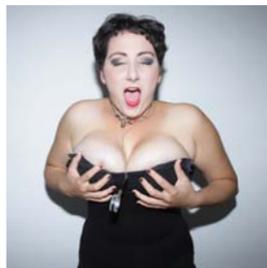
EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



SYNCHRODOGS

Tania Shcheglova and Roman Noven are Synchronodogs, a pair of lovers who photograph all sorts of wacky shit in Ukraine. We tried to write a short bio about them, but just threw up our hands and said, “What do you do, you fucking weirdos?” This is a small portion of what they sent: “We didn’t start as a photography duo; we just fell in love, and hanging out together made ‘us’. It was simpler a year ago, taking pictures on the trees (hell knows why). We have no shame and are stupid enough to shoot anything strange or naked, trying to make this modern fashion area go underground—become a little bit more trashy than people are used to seeing. We have no favourite things, just favourite people.”

See *ORDURE-À-PORTER*, page 84



NADJA SAYEJ

Nadja is a Canadian journalist who lives in Berlin and hosts *ArtStars**, an internet show about artists and art and artiness. She also writes about artistic and cultural endeavours for the *New York Times*, the *Globe and Mail* and other fine publications, which we guess makes her some sort of expert. Nadja got in touch with us out of the blue, stating she had already completed an interview with R. Crumb about a gay-marriage-themed cover he did for the *New Yorker* that was rejected by David Remnick for reasons unknown. Crumb was particularly enthralled with Nadja after she explained just how large her breasts are (double-Ds), going so far as to ask her to snail mail a nude photo of her to his residence in France.

See *THE GAYEST STORY EVER TOLD*, page 76



ESRA GÜRMEŦ

We first met Esra when she was interning with our friends at Ditto Press. Having noticed that she speaks many languages and is good with words, as well as being alarmingly diligent, we thought we would get her to help us out. After working with us for months, Esra is now firmly ensconced in the office, subs every issue of the mag, and has a tendency to spill beer all over the place while climbing up random ladders at parties. What else? She keeps herself to herself, gets on with the job in hand, loves reading books (but can’t stand her Kindle) and is very good at drawing matchstick men. She also set up and co-produced *Inside Syria*, which you can watch on VICE.com.

See *THIS MAGAZINE*



CAMERON ALEXANDER

We asked Cameron for a mini-bio and this is what came back: “Cameron Alexander is a northern lad living in London. He’s 20 years old and depressed that he isn’t a teenager anymore. He’s one of five nippers from a single mum, second youngest, most popular. He lives primarily off Dr Pepper and chewing the plastic canisters that film comes in, and spends most of his time dancing and singing like a 12-year-old to music on YouTube. Taking pictures is really all he does—he keeps his photography fairly laid-back and relaxed, not thinking about it too much. He shoots a lot of personal work as well as editorials and commercial stuff. Furthermore, he has one hell of a crush on Cilla Black. The end.” Covers all the bases, right?

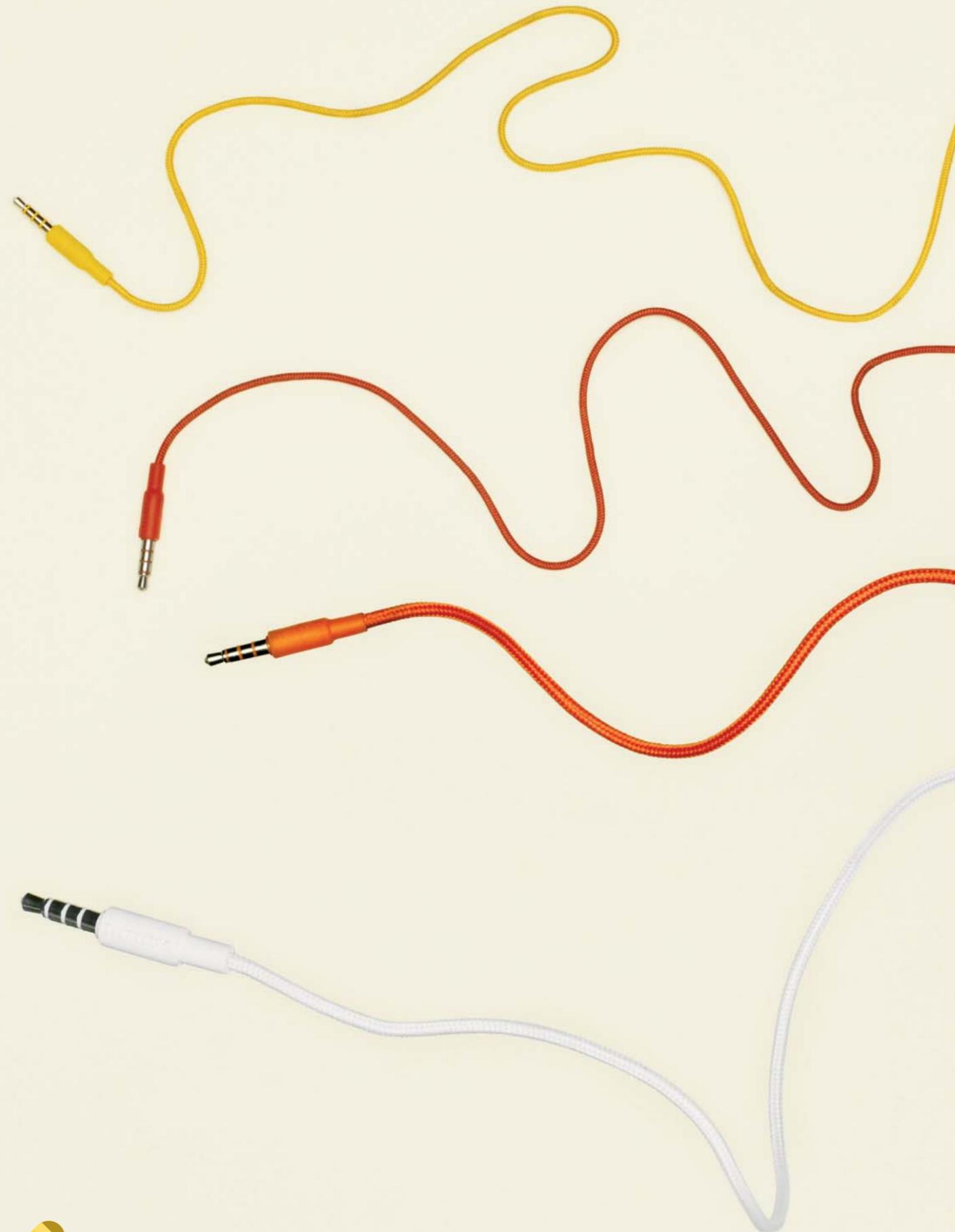
See *SCORCHIO!!*, page 54



THIS MOTHERFUCKING CHAINSAW

We’re sure people who use chainsaws in their professional lives treat them very responsibly and respectfully, as tools to perform a given task. But for us, it was a real treat to hold this whirring carnage-creator in our hands. What if we just fucking revved it up and started running through the office, righting all the wrongs that are inflicted on us on a daily basis? HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT EDITORIAL NOW, AD SALES GUY? SAY WHAT YOU SAID IN THAT EMAIL TO OUR FACES, WHILE WE HOLD THIS PETROL-POWERED DEATH BLADE AGAINST YOUR THIGH! Then we got hold of ourselves and just used it as a prop for an A\$AP crew album-cover shoot.

See *A\$AP PLAYLI\$T MANIFE\$TED*, page 92





BEAR-B-Q

In the early 90s a group of ambitious and wildly hand-gesturing Northern Italians said vaffanculo to Rome's centralised government and formed Lega Nord (Northern League). The somewhat volatile political party promotes federalism and autonomy for regions around the Po Valley, which its members refer to as Padania because they want to feel special. No stranger to controversy, Lega made headlines in July when they staged a protest against the reintroduction of brown bears into the nearby woods of Trentino. The gathering was promptly interrupted by the Italian authorities who seized 110 pounds of (very illegal) bear meat, acquired from a butcher in Slovenia. It's been a few months now, and while the controversy hasn't died down, we were finally able to track down Senator Erminio Boso, an old-school member of the Northern League and elected representative of the Italian Republic, to ask him a few questions about the controversy.



BY GIORGIO
VISCARDINI

VICE: Seriously, dude? A bear barbecue? What were you thinking?

Senator Erminio Boso: It's simple. We're still fighting a battle against the reintroduction of bears in Trentino. The plan to eat bear meat was a provocation—what matters to us is the situation in the North. Instead, it was reported as a barbaric, uncivilised idea. I live in Trentino, and I find it perplexing that some city folk should tell me how to live in my mountains.

Agreed. When the fascists start saying, "You can't eat bears," it's time to put your foot down.

The fault lies with this fake environmentalism that's taken hold of the Italian people. It's fake because it's not based on loving nature and game, but on hating mankind. How can these environmentalists talk to me about hunting? They'd rather animals went extinct than be hunted.

In this case it also seems like they were pretty wasteful. They seized everything. We couldn't have our party, and we had to throw out hundreds of pounds of perfectly good food. It was a phony ideological coup. What really disturbs me is that it was a fellow member of Lega Nord, Senator Martini, who sent the police to stop our party.

How was the bear? Did you try it?

Yes, it's delicious! A friend of mine hunted bears in Canada. He brought me a piece of grizzly meat and a piece of black bear meat. He'd learned how to cook it on the grill from some Canadians. I tell you, these people don't even know how wonderful that meat is. They're the real animals. I always say, these environmentalists are like watermelons: green on the outside, red within, with a few specks of black floating around.

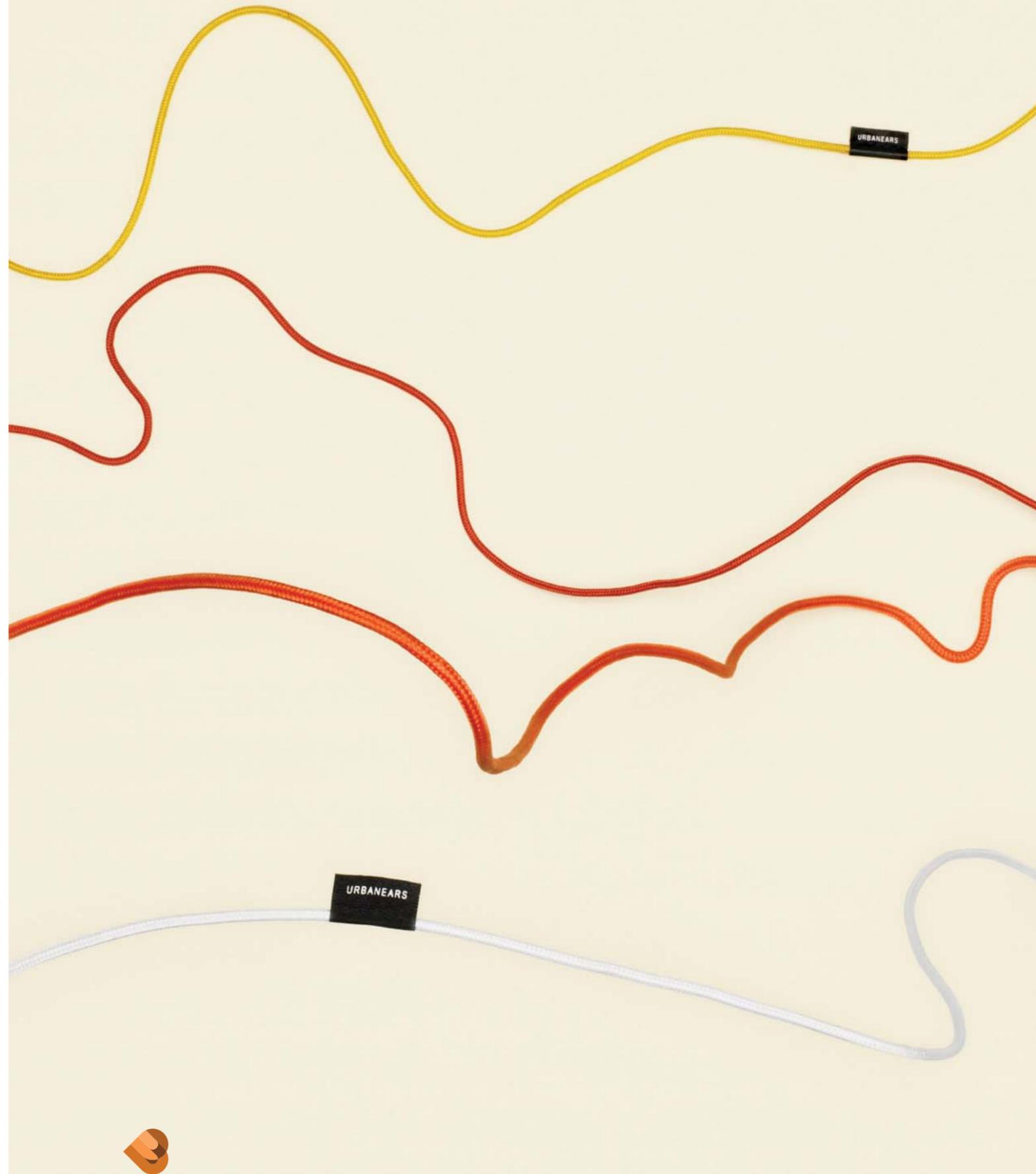
Good one.
Thanks.

They Made an Arnold Schwarzenegger Museum



BY MATTHEW UHLMANN
PHOTO COURTESY OF ARNIE'S LIFE

We think everyone can agree: Schwarzenegger was long overdue to get his own museum (Planet Hollywood didn't count). This glaring cultural oversight was rectified on July 30—Arnold's birthday, obviously—when the aptly named Arnie's Life opened its myriad historical offerings to the public. The downside for most of the world is that they put the damn thing in his hometown of Thal, Austria. Scheduling conflicts prevented him from christening the building until October. Its curators rejoiced when the man himself was finally able to conduct a firsthand inspection of the museum's display of priceless memorabilia, including an eight-foot-tall bronze sculpture of Arnold from his bodybuilding days, complete with steroidal vein protrusions and a bulging package. Randy Jennings, president of thearnoldfans.com, told us: "This is a time for great celebration among Arnold fans, like myself. Not only are we getting a Schwarzenegger museum, a project years in the making, but that opening ceremony also kicked off the official rebirth of Arnold's much-anticipated comeback... This museum was not developed to promote Arnold. It's not for the star or for his image; this museum is for his fans. There's just no denying that Arnold is forever." We agree, Randy, but instead of another *Terminator* sequel can you please get him and Danny DeVito in a room and convince them to make a follow-up to *Twins? Junior* was bullshit.



HAPPY CAMPERS

The Occupy Wall Street protests started in September with some vague inspiration from the Arab Spring and what, on the surface, seems like a pretty dumb and misguided premise: let's all go hang out in a park in New York's Financial District and see if that topples capitalism. To pretty much everyone's surprise, the idea caught on, and there are now "Occupy" protests happening in cities all over the world, with people—many of them young—sleeping outdoors, waving signs and shouting stuff like "Rich people are assholes and the world is fucked!"



BY HARRY CHEADLE
PHOTO BY TAJI AMEEN



In the first few weeks of the Occupy Wall Street protest, talking heads and other people who like to think they're important made a big deal about how nebulous the goals of the occupiers were and how they lacked "specific demands". And for the most part that's still true. Obviously, they want the poor to be less poor and tighter restrictions on the financial system, but how all that is supposed to happen isn't any clearer now than it was at the protest's inception.

In my visits to Zuccotti Park, a privately owned patch of grass and trees that serves as the movement's base of operations, I found that pretty much the only concrete thing the protesters agreed on is that they would like to stay there. More than a month after the genesis of Occupy Wall Street, the goal still seems to be simply continuing the protest to see what will happen next. And on this front, they're actually doing a pretty good job.

On October 12, for instance, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced that the NYPD would kick the occupiers out of the park so that it could be cleaned. The occupiers responded by distributing brooms and bin bags, staying up all night to sweep up rubbish and scrub the pavement in the rain, and letting out whoops of joy whenever the drizzle turned into a downpour.

It might not have been the most effective cleaning job, and Bloomberg was arguably less concerned about cleanliness and more interested in finding a backdoor excuse to kick the protesters out, but try making those cynical points to a guy with a sign around his neck who is on his hands and knees scraping paint off the ground.

Ann Coulter—who is still being paid by someone to say and type things—called Occupy Wall Street a "mob" and compared it to the French and Russian revolutions, which is one of the stupidest fucking things anyone has said about the entire ordeal. Compared with the violent protests that spread across the Middle East, the occupation in New York looks like a mid-night breakfast in a college dorm lounge.

Even as the movement has spread its "message" across the internet, the corporeal version of Occupy Wall Street has turned into an organized, politically-minded tent city, with its own kitchen, security and occasional concerts (Jeff Mangum, Talib Kweli and others have played impromptu sets among the crowds). And while the occupation in Zuccotti Park has yet to sway elections or affect banking regulations, it has turned into a pleasant place to hang out even if you don't have Abbie Hoffman's face tattooed on your leg. I've met people who can barely form genuine political opinions but love sleeping in the square. "You wake up happy as shit because everyone else is happy as shit," one said. And he did look happy.

If waving signs and block-printing commie slogans on t-shirts and wrapping yourself in dirty tarps makes you happy, does it really matter if you're changing the world?

OCCUPY WALL STREET SLANG:

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

What occupiers call their daily meeting, where the group debates and votes on important issues such as "We want to keep staying here, right, guys?" and "Please do not poop on the ground." This meeting usually takes *hours*.

COMMITTEES

Like all lefties, the protesters love splitting off into "working groups", creating committees for things like sanitation (a big one), "direct action", media and security. These guys are generally way more committed and competent than the hangers-on who are usually getting wasted and yelling "Down with the man!" type of stuff.

THE 99 PERCENT

Poor people and the middle class, i.e., the protesters and pretty much everyone you know—unless you're a millionaire.

THE 1 PERCENT

Rich people—the bad guys. You can be part of the 1 Percent and not be a bad guy, provided you show up at the protests, like Alec Baldwin and Russell Simmons did. Even communists love celebrities.

PEOPLE'S MIC

The protesters aren't allowed to have microphones so they've improvised a system where the group repeats whatever a speaker says, row by row, so that everyone can hear it. Occasionally impressive when it works on a large scale; often unfortunately reminiscent of a poetry jam.

KETTLING

A police tactic that involves corralling protesters into small spaces, often by using orange nets so they can be arrested more easily.

THE 53 PERCENT

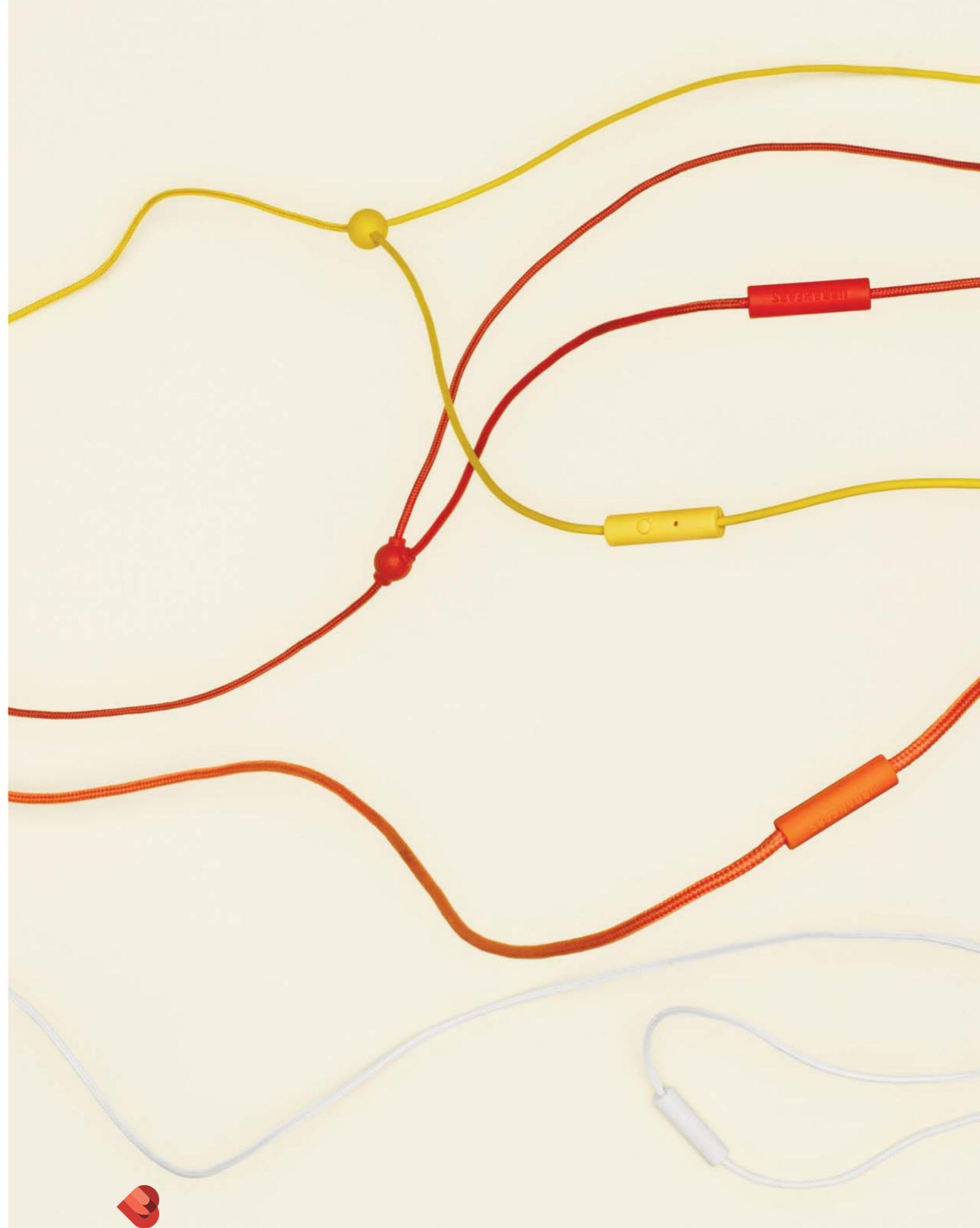
A righty Tumblr campaign response to the protests, made up of people who say, "I'm fucking poor and miserable just like you lazy hippies, but I'm not complaining about it. And this doesn't really count as complaining because I'm complaining about your stupid complaints."

#OCCUPYWALLSTREET, #OWS, ETC.

A bunch of tags people on Twitter—many of whom have never been anywhere near the actual protests—use so they can pretend to be involved.

THE CORPORATE-CONTROLLED MEDIA

People who write negative or lukewarm things about the protests.



THE OL' IN-AND-OUT-DONESIA

When it comes to sexual hang-ups, Indonesia seems to be stuck in an era when buying condoms was embarrassing. Perhaps this is because the country is home to the world's largest Muslim population, which means it's simultaneously one of the horniest and most sexually repressed places on the planet.



BY WILBERT
L. COOPER

PHOTO BY
RUDY WICAKSONO



Luckily there are people like Zoya Amirin, an intellectually gifted Indonesian Christian babe who knows that getting fucked real good is essential to human happiness and isn't afraid to spread the message. In fact, she's the country's only female sex therapist.

Last month, despite the risk of majorly pissing off Indonesia's extremist religious zealots, Zoya launched a sex-advice podcast called *In Bed with Zoya* that focuses on the topic of hardcore, cum-drenched fuck sessions. OK, it's actually far more educational than that, but it probably sounds like blasphemous porn to a populace whose sexual education includes lessons like "gecko spit cures AIDS" and "men enjoy having beads placed under their foreskins". Zoya calls bullshit on all that, and that's why we love her and want to spread her message.

VICE: Why are so many Indonesians offended by sex? Maybe they just need to have a lot more of it.
Zoya Amirin: Many people here believe they can solve all of the country's sex problems with more

religiosity. People try to coax me into talking about morals in my sex education, but I can't do that. My job is to give people all the information they need to make the right decision for themselves.

What kind of wacky shit do Indonesians do in bed?
Some women believe that they will feel younger and have tighter skin if they spread fresh sperm on their faces. Of course, the semen appears to work because when it dries it feels like a taut mask. But there's no scientific proof that sperm on your face makes you look younger.

Do you ever get naughty emails?
Yes, but when I receive them I get the same feeling I used to have when boys would tell me they had wet dreams about me in school. It's not that I am proud, but most likely these guys send me pictures of their penises because they think I am pretty and also happen to be a sexologist. I can't say I am truly offended, but I do think it is harassment.

What message do you think they're trying to communicate with their cock pics?
They don't want real medical advice; they want me to rate them. They write, "What did you think about my penis?" Listen, if you think something is wrong with your penis, you should go to a urologist. My friends joke all the time that we should make a website for all the pictures I'm sent, but it would probably get banned in Indonesia.

Rhinocide



BY HARRY CHEADLE



People are incredibly stupid, which is why things like religion and superstitions continue to endure despite modern science. Take, for instance, the centuries-old Asian practice of consuming ground-up rhinoceros horns as a cure for everything from headaches to possession by demons. The Vietnamese actually believe this shit can cure cancer, which has led to a recent and alarming spike in South African rhino poaching—324 as of mid-October, to be exact.

The way it works is simple: poachers shoot the innocent animal with a huge gun, saw off its horn, sell it for an estimated £650 an ounce on the black market and leave its two-ton corpse to rot in the hot sun. Apparently hunting rhinos as trophy animals is legal under the supervision of a South African conservation official, but there are so many loopholes in the system that the government is considering banning hunting altogether.

South Africa has retaliated by intensifying its enforcement methods. For instance, "Lucky" Maseko, a well-known horn hunter, was recently shot by police on his way to the Songimvelo Game Reserve. Another bright idea officials had was injecting poison into the rhinos' horns, which would (presumably) make anyone who consumes it very ill. But the practice was never implemented because, well, have you ever tried to inject something into a rhino's horn? It ain't easy.

The only real solution to the poaching dilemma, of course, lies in curbing the retarded demand for the horns. Thankfully, Vietnamese and South African diplomats are headed in the right direction. They met in September to discuss the problem, with one Vietnamese participant solemnly telling the press, "We need to get rid of the wrong understanding that rhino horn can cure cancer." No shit.



Photo by AP/Tawanda Mudimu



Getting surrounded by friendly raccoons who want to eat baguettes that you've duct-taped to your legs is almost like being the princess of your very own Disney film. Almost.

COON-SUIT RIOT

Snuggling Up with Feral Raccoons Is Easy and Fun

BY KARA CRABB

PHOTOS BY
KARA-LIS COVERDALE
AND ROSE ATHENA

Despite what the fashion industry says, manufacturing a suit of feral raccoons is not overly complicated. With a little dumpster diving, rotten food, duct tape and careful planning, almost anyone can attract enough disease-ridden wild mammals to cover his or her person for hours at a time. It's easy, fun, and presents only a slightly higher than average chance of contracting a terrible pathogenic infection!

1 First you'll need to procure a base layer of clothes sturdy and thick enough to protect against the coons' razor-sharp teeth and claws, which will likely infect you with rabies if they pierce your skin. Safety first! At this point you may be asking yourself, "Why am I about to affix discarded food to my body and let a bunch of shit-matted ringtails crawl all over me?" To which I answer: because they're fucking adorable (if you ignore the poop smell), and who wouldn't want to wear what basically amounts to a suit made of teddy bears (with infectious diseases)?

2 As the old saying goes, the best way to get raccoons to swarm over your body is to think like a raccoon. And since eating is on their mind 80 percent of the time (the other 20 percent is divided between sex and taking dumps), there's no better lure than food. The good news is that raccoons aren't picky eaters; their diet is extremely diverse and includes nuts, seeds, fruit, eggs, insects, frogs, crayfish and anything that happens to be lying—or crawling—around. Of course, city coons find decomposing human food to be mighty tasty, so open your fridge and look for nasty pizza, rotten fruit and veg and whatever else your lazy fucking flatmate forgot to throw out three months ago. Put the grossness in a well-sealed bag and head down to wherever the raccoons hang out in your town.

3 Just before entering coon HQ, duct-tape your bounty of trash food all over yourself. Raccoons' propensity to enjoy bin snacks, coupled with their shitty attitude and distinct facial markings, makes them the crust punks of the animal kingdom (without the heroin problem and terrible taste in music). And just like crusties, they'll approach without warning and snatch a turkey sub right



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out of your hands, so you can only imagine how appetising you're going to look with two-week-old baguettes for arms.

- 4 One comestible raccoons seem to find yucky, however, is broccoli. Use their aversion to your aesthetic and protective advantage by surrounding danger zones (i.e., your junk) with appropriate amounts of the leafy green stuff.
- 5 It may be prudent to conduct a bit of research before getting down to business, locating a spot where you are certain coons congregate—a particular set of picnic tables or that secluded and poorly lit corner of the park where tramps go to die. If you're going to all this effort, you want to be certain of the outcome. I chose Mount Royal in Montreal, which has quite the raccoon infestation.
- 6 It's totally normal to feel apprehensive when the first trash burglar comes in for a cautious nibble. If you're anxious about the possibility of contracting a horrible affliction, talk to a local medical practitioner specialising in treating such diseases. You will find that most health-care professionals say the chances of getting rabies are quite remote, and this should go a long way towards putting your mind at ease. It would, however, be irresponsible for me to imply that infectious-disease statisticians take raccoon suits into account. Still, you'll probably be fine, you fucking baby.
- 7 If you're really coon smitten and want to go the extra mile for your soon-to-be new best friends, find a fishmonger who will sell or give you a bag of discarded fish stewing in their own putrid juices (the raccoon equivalent of foie gras topped with caviar). Voilà! In a matter of seconds you will be up to your genitals in raccoons.
- 8 While you're at it, why not get creative *and* be fulfilled by encouraging a little coonilingus? If you find one that doesn't mind the broccoli, consider it a keeper.
- 9 Excellent work. Now you've settled on your new look for autumn, it's time to celebrate!
- 10 An important note: keep in mind that feeding wild animals is considered illegal in some areas, and partaking in activities like those mentioned above might result in a fine. But, really, how much would you pay for a suit of these cuddly little guys? It's priceless. *CC BY*

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Zé Cláudio and Maria at their house in the Alta Piranha Beach extractionist settlement, October 2010.

THE DEATH OF ZÉ CLÁUDIO AND MARIA

If a Bunch of Rainforest Activists Get Murdered in the Amazon, Does It Make Anyone Give a Shit?

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY FELIPE MILANEZ

The scene is like something out of a Sergio Leone movie. Zé Cláudio and his wife, Maria, on the way back from the funeral of Zé Cláudio's 96-year-old father, enter a small wooden bar off a dirt road. The bar's situated at the edge of a tiny Amazon village with houses bunched together and covered in dust. Inside is Jose Rodrigues, a farmer who's been threatening Zé Cláudio for the past month. Zé Rodrigues has spent the day drinking and telling everyone that he's getting ready to finish Zé Cláudio.

Zé Rodrigues couldn't even stomach the name of his enemy. Anytime someone else mentioned the 54-year-old nut collector or his wife, he would cut them off: "Don't ruin my day by saying that name." Zé Cláudio and Zé Rodrigues's eyes meet upon entering. It's the weekend, the sun is peaking and the air is dry and really fucking hot.

Zé Cláudio asks for two glasses of sugarcane juice. He leans up against the bar, never turning his back on his adversary. He tells a couple of jokes; everyone

laughs. Zé Rodrigues tries to play along and interact, but Zé Cláudio doesn't respond. The atmosphere is tense. Zé Rodrigues looks a bit out of sorts. His heart is beating visibly through his shirt. He tries not to make eye contact with the person he's already decided to kill. Thirteen days later, Zé Cláudio and Maria are dead, ambushed by Zé Rodrigues's brother and an accomplice on the road outside Zé Cláudio's house.

The grisly death of the couple—shot point-blank with a hunting rifle, and Zé Cláudio's ear cut off to prove the hit took place—harked back to other violent moments in the history of the Amazon, such as the assassinations of Father Josimo Tavares in 1986, Chico Mendes in 1988 and Sister Dorothy Stang in 2005. In the past 15 years, 212 people have been murdered in land conflict-related killings in the state of Pará.

The morning of their deaths, Zé Cláudio and Maria had been driving to Marabá, about 100 kilometres south of their settlement. Marabá is the biggest and most important city in Pará's interior. Once situated well within the rain forest, the city as well as its surrounding area now looks like Texas and is the capital of the state's cattle industry. It is also one of the most violent places in the world. The murder rate is a horrifying 125 per 100,000 people, second in the state only to nearby Itupiranga, with 160.6. By point of comparison, the same rate in New York City is 5.

When I met Zé Cláudio in October of 2010 and interviewed him for the Brazilian edition of VICE, he



was already receiving death threats. The threats were public and logged by the Comissão Pastoral da Terra (Pastoral Lands Commission), an ecumenical group that defends workers' rights out in the sticks. José Batista Afonso, a CPT lawyer, was Zé Cláudio and Maria's right hand in preparing charges against loggers who were encroaching on protected public land, and the man who had the dubious honour of alerting the couple whenever someone threatened to kill them. "Their situation is very serious," he said when he introduced me to Zé Cláudio. The CPT publishes an annual list of land-reform activists under threat; Zé Cláudio and Maria had been on the list since 2001.

In the days after the murder, the government of Pará said they didn't know anything about the threats. "How could we?" rhetorically José Humberto Melo, a delegate responsible for the investigation. "The police are neither omnipresent nor omniscient."

In addition to publicising death threats against agrarian reformers and community activists, the CPT also negotiates with the federal government to provide protection for the nearly 200 names on its list—the government currently does so for 30. But even after its protection has failed, making the officials get off their butts and lead an investigation is like trying to force a cow down stairs. Today, Batista is working with Zé Cláudio and Maria's family to bring their assassins to justice. "In crimes like this, the police of Pará rarely capture the gunmen. And as for those who order the hits, that's even rarer."

According to the local police report, the reason José Cláudio Ribeiro da Silva and Maria do Espírito Santo da Silva, both 54 years old, were murdered was because they had filed charges against José Rodrigues, accusing him of illegally purchasing land in federally protected area of Alta Piranha Beach. This settlement, where fruit gathering is the only form of industry permitted, is part of a programme of agrarian reform designated for poor families who depend on the land for survival.

Outside Brazil, the fight for the Amazon is seen largely as an ecological matter, but here it's a social issue. This is a country where 1 percent of the population owns more than half the property, a sickening proportion of it composed of large, completely unused tracts of farmland called *latifúndios*.

The former rainforest around Zé Cláudio and Maria's settlement is a prime example of such irresponsible land use. The majority of deforested land in the Amazon is used for cattle ranching. As ranchers and their supporters will point out, the beef industry is a major part of Brazil's economy and an increasingly important source of American meat. The problem is that

while clear-cutting sections of rainforest and burning out all the underbrush makes great soil for pastureland, it only does so for about three years. After that, the soil's fertility plunges, "invasive" jungle plants like the *babaçu* tree begin to grow again, and ranchers are forced to find another plot of rainforest to slash and burn for their cows.

Zé Cláudio and Maria didn't only have to worry about farmers pressuring residents to move so they could deforest the area and grow hay for their cattle—illegal timber loggers and charcoal producers regularly tried to poach trees from their settlement. Charcoal harvested from Amazon trees is used to produce pig iron, an essential ingredient in steel and another major export to the US.

Zé Cláudio had worked with chestnuts since he was seven, collecting them from the forest floor and using them to make nut pastes and oils. Maria was the daughter of small-time farmers, who also gathered chestnuts and produced nourishing foods in small fields. "My father never had cattle. We only lived off what the forest gave us," she told me.

The couple's involvement in environmentalism began with the creation of their settlement in 1997. They led the almost 200 poor families who live in the area in the fight to protect the forest. They became activists through practice, by defending their property the same way your dad would against drivers who clip his lawn. "The problems we have started with the creation of the settlement project. I didn't belong to any social movement. I lived in my own little corner," Zé Cláudio explained. "Zé Ribamar, a neighbour of mine, invited me to participate in the meetings, and I found out I was already an environmentalist without even knowing it. I didn't deforest; I only lived off the forest."

Throughout the years, six farmers who owned illegal titles were forced out by the settlement. During this same time, the federal government, via the Institute of Colonisation and Agricultural Reform, had promised to provide some form of basic infrastructure, but public support never materialised. With no alternatives, more and more of the settlers began to give up, and Zé Cláudio and Maria became increasingly isolated. "I don't blame the farmer. He doesn't know better. The businessman is to blame. The richer he is, the more destructive power he possesses," Maria told me. "The majority of farmers were just dupes of the rich."

In 2007, the logging industry began arriving in the settlement region in increasing numbers due to scarcity in surrounding forests—78 percent of nearby Nova Ipixuna had been deforested. And so began a war of attrition, poaching and deceit.

LEFT: Zé Cláudio confronting a truck driver hauling illegally harvested timber. Photo by Maria do Espírito Santo da Silva.

RIGHT: Police and medical personnel examining Zé Cláudio's body, May 24, 2011. Photo by AP.



LEFT:
A castanheiro tree Zé Cláudio nicknamed "Majestade" (Her Majesty) poking through the forest canopy on his property in the Alta Piranha settlement.

RIGHT:
A slashed-and-burned castanheiro trunk on a plot of former rainforest being converted to pastureland for cattle ranching.

Even Zé Ribamar, one of the original backers of the project, was accused of allowing his son to produce charcoal and had a chainsaw confiscated by IBAMA (the Brazilian federal agency in charge of environmental laws).

With pressure intensifying on his little parcel of forest, Zé Cláudio and Maria began to file charges. "I live in constant tension; I live with my ears perked. We are unable to sleep at night," Zé Cláudio lamented. "The businessmen are concentrating here in the settlement region. Something they aren't allowed to do. And so, I denounce them, I go all the way up, and I denounce them to the Public Ministry." He feared the outcome: "We were going to be in their sight lines."

The charges were effective. All the lumber that passed through the city was inspected by IBAMA. Since inspections began in 2007, the Tedesco *madeira* (sawmill) paid around R\$ 820,000 in fines (roughly £300,000). Madeira Eunapolis, also belonging to the Tedesco family, was hit for R\$ 180,000, and MP Torres, of the same damn family, paid more than R\$ 27,000 in 2010. While Zé Cláudio and Maria's actions were directed at the wallets of businessmen profiting from illegal logging and charcoal milling, the effects trickled down to the individual loggers, millworkers and small-time farmers who depended on this illegal work to make a living, and earned them a number of enemies, including Zé Rodrigues.

Following the death of Zé Cláudio's father, Zé Rodrigues's brother Lindonjonson Silva Rocha and Alberto Lopes do Nascimento, known as "Neguinho" (Darkie), passed by the settlement on a red motorcycle. "In southern Pará, when a hit is ordered, it's delivered. It might take time, but the job will get done," Maria's sister Laissa explained.

The morning of May 23, the two were seen near Villa Sapucaia, where Zé Cláudio had been drinking sugarcane juice when he last ran into Zé Rodrigues. They passed by the couple's lot and stopped at a bar for a beer. Then they waited for night and drove themselves to a bridge near Zé Cláudio's house. The bridge, which crossed a tiny stream in the middle of a stand of trees, was in horrible condition. To pass on his motorcycle, Zé Cláudio had to stop and walk the bike across. It was the perfect place for an ambush.

Around 7:30 the following morning, Zé Cláudio and Maria crossed the bridge. The gunmen came out of the trees and then fired the first shot from a .38-calibre hunting rifle. The bullet hit Maria's heart and passed through Zé Cláudio's hand and torso, sending them both off the motorcycle. They were each shot once more; then, according to the police report, Lindonjonson took off Zé Cláudio's helmet and cut off his ear

with a kitchen knife. The killers then threw the couple's bodies in the trees. Zé Cláudio's body lay near a *caju de janeiro*; Maria's next to an *andiroba*.

Just as they were preparing to leave, a man on another motorcycle pulled up and, seeing the wrecked bike and the bodies, took off to get help. Unsure whether or not they'd been spotted, the killers returned to their hiding spots, then escaped. A week later, the potential witness's bike was found on the edge of the forest, swarmed by vultures. His body was a few yards away.

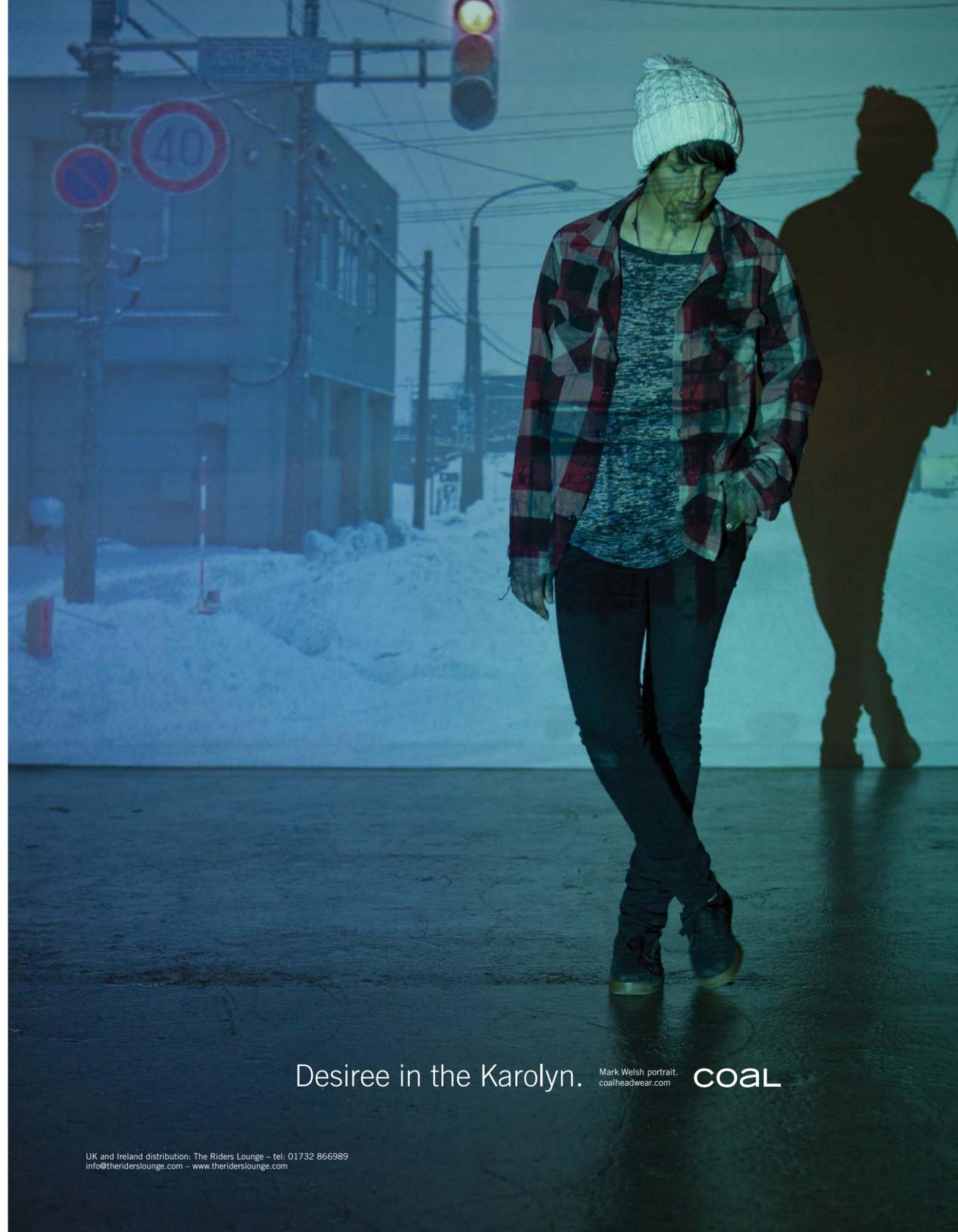
The same day as Zé Cláudio and Maria's deaths, at almost the same time, the National Congress in Brasilia was preparing to vote on a new forest code that would change environmental legislation and permit new areas to be deforested for agriculture. Learning of the murder only minutes before the vote, Deputy Senator Sarney Filho of the Green Party took the podium at the Chamber of Deputies and read part of my interview with Zé Cláudio in VICE. "I stand before this tribunal to talk about a tragedy that happened today," he said, announcing their deaths.

As he read Zé Cláudio's words from half a year before, defending the rights of the settlement dwellers and predicting his own assassination, the deputy was heckled by farmers in the chamber's gallery, who'd come to watch the pro-agricultural bill get passed. As the boos reached Sarney, his face tightened with rage and he shouted, "These were poor people who loved nature and who were brutally murdered *this morning*. Can we at least respect the memory of these people, *who were murdered?!*"

In the end the bill passed, but the deputy's outburst had drawn attention to the couple's death, and soon the murder of Zé Cláudio and Maria was a national story. President Dilma Rousseff ordered the police to investigate the case, and IBAMA launched a raid shutting down all the illegal sawmills in Nova Ipixuna, which is pretty much all of the sawmills, period.

It was a good-looking start, but six months down the line it's about all that's happened. Despite their capture by federal police in July, the Pará state judge has refused three requests to imprison the men accused of the assassination. At the same time, a federal judge recently decided that it was not the federal government's job to investigate the case and also ordered IBAMA to reopen the lumber factories. Frightened, the family of Zé Cláudio and Maria fear they'll be the next victims. Recently, somebody shot the guard dog at Laissa's house in the settlement, right across the street from Zé Cláudio and Maria's lot. It was the same warning given to the couple three days before they were murdered.

Watch our journey through the Brazilian Amazon to investigate the deaths of Zé Cláudio and Maria later this month on VICE.com.



Desiree in the Karolyn. Mark Welsh portrait. coalheadwear.com **coal**



Latter-day turbofolk star Goga playing a nightclub gig for Belgrade's criminal elite. Photo by Ana Kraš.

MAKE A DUMBFUL NOISE

The Rise and Fall of Serbian Turbofolk

BY BABY BALLS
AND IVA PROLIC

Remember at the beginning of the 90s when normal people got into Garth Brooks and *Time* magazine was running articles called things like “Has Country Gone City?” It was a tense moment, but thankfully it passed and within months the greater American herd was back to enjoying the fruits of the non-rural US music industry. Like Shai.

Yugoslavia’s flirtation with country music did not end so well. Rather than segueing peacefully into rap or La Bouche, their vox populi ripped the nation apart and led to unfathomable acts of violence that will permanently ruin your eyeballs if you YouTube them at three in the morning.

After liberating Yugoslavia at the end of World War II, Marshal Tito embarked on your standard communist programme of way-too-rapid modernisation. Part of this was basic necessity. The Balkans had been kept as a strategic backwater by Western Europe since Roman times and included regions that, by the mid-20th century, still hadn’t discovered the sanitary towel. But another part of it was fostering a new sense of national pride and proving to the outside world that his socialist Yugoslavians weren’t just a bunch of hillbillies with unpronounceable names and menses drizzling down their legs.

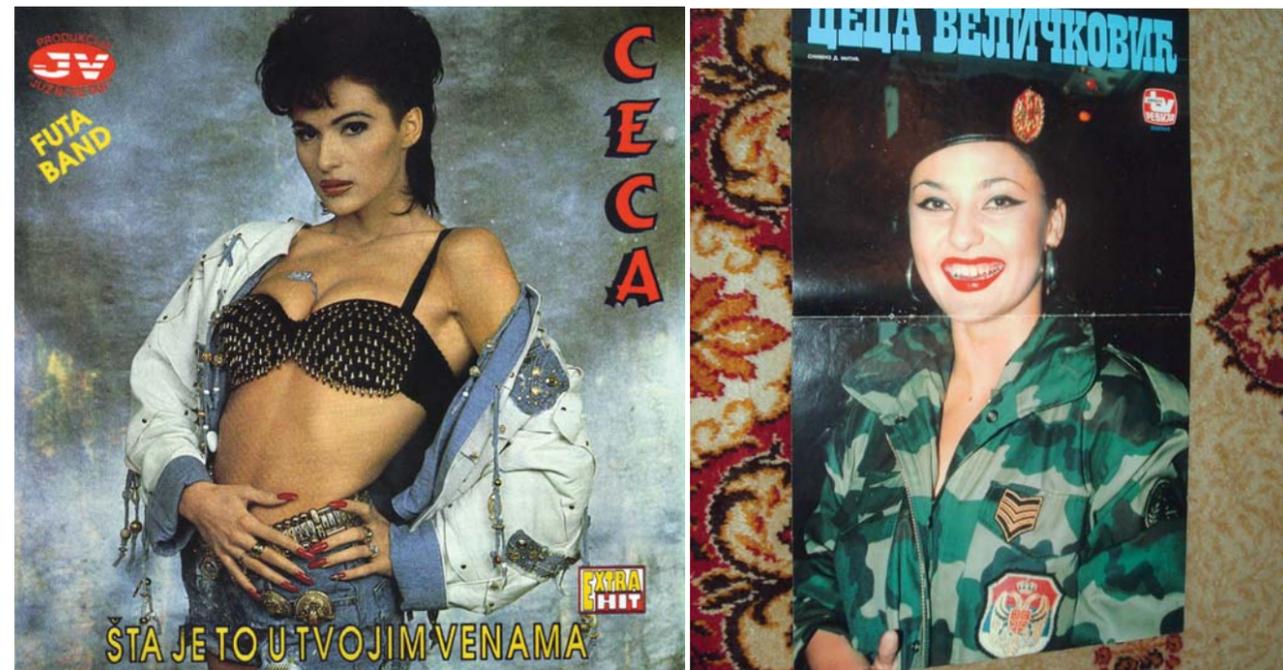
To this end, the Yugoslav central committee took the Balkans’ millennia-old tradition of folk music, cleaned out all the references to drinking and fucking in the bushes, stripped it of its ethnic specifiers, and presented the bland new result with the appropriately bland title of “newly composed folk music” (NCFM). The forced ethnic neutrality was especially important to Tito, as the component republics of the Socialist Federal

Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) had a historical propensity for killing one another in horrible and grandiose ways. Consider the fact that they’d just finished a war in which the Croatian Ustaše regime had committed such skin-crawling atrocities against Serbs that the Nazis had to tell them to chill out. Nobody wanted some old drinking song riling those chuckleheads up.

Tito died in 1980, and the cracks in his dignified, multi-ethnic Yugoslavia quickly started showing. In 1983, a Bosnian-born singer named Lepa Brena beat out the state-supported pop and NCFM groups to win that year’s nomination for the Eurovision song contest. Her entry was an *actual*-folk number about screwing some guy in the bushes, and it propelled her overnight into Yugoslavia’s biggest star.

Brena had come up singing in the truck-stop restaurants and *kafanas* along Serbia’s major motorway (a *kafana* is like a bar, but shittier), where the racy, old style of folk had gained an underground following despite the state’s best efforts. Brena’s music painted a chilling portrait of rural backwardness in the SFRY, one drastically at odds with the party line. But while officials trying to secure the ’84 Winter Olympics for their country may have balked at such unflattering ditties as “*Evo moga delije*” (“Here’s My Hero”), the video for which features Brena’s husband as a beer-bloated Yugoslavian everylummo who insults her cooking and passes out in bed cradling a bottle of brandy; or her follow-up hit “*Nema leka apoteka*” (“The No-Cure Pharmacy”), which suggests that Yugoslavian dentistry is run by incompetents and general anaesthesia is administered by having the hygienist show the patient her tits, they struck a chord with the Balkan hoi polloi.

Within a year Brena was playing shows to stadium crowds, and the M22 *kafana* circuit was bulging with imitators. Still unable to secure airplay from the state-controlled TV and radio, however, most budding “popfolk” singers sought support from the only members of their audience with any money—the Serbian mafia.



The late 80s proved a very lucky time to have a Serbian gangster as your manager. In 1988, mass protests in eastern Yugoslavia threatened the already-not-doin’-so-hot socialist state, and led future president Slobodan Milošević to break with the party’s taboo against nationalism. Openly declaring himself a champion for Serb rights, Milošević kicked off a long-pent-up eruption of ethnic pride throughout the SFRY, and soon everybody hated everybody else just like old times.

In the middle of this mess, Brena released two patriotic songs that would go on to achieve Lee Greenwood-level thrall over the frothing masses: “*Živela Jugoslavija*” (“Long Live Yugoslavia”) and “*Jugoslovenka*” (“Yugoslavian Girl”). In the video for the latter, tourist-board-quality helicopter footage of beautiful walled towns and castles along the Croatian coastline is intercut with shots of jazzed-up youths racing through the streets of Belgrade carrying the Yugoslavian federal flag. The same flag that would fly from the back of Serbian tanks sent to shell these same monuments two years later.

As the federal republic dissolved, Milošević shored up Serbia’s power by consolidating control of the Yugoslav National Army and selling off state assets to pay the bills. The buyers in this fire sale were not always Serbia’s best and brightest (they’d all got the fuck out of town when bearded wackos started recruiting kids in the public square to take care of “the Croatian problem”), but more often than not its best-connected and most willing to shoot a man in the face in front of his wife and daughter while laughing. Similar scenarios played out in the breakaway republics of Croatia and Bosnia, but not quite as dramatically as in Belgrade, where the murder rate skyrocketed, and organised crime became the only solvent industry in town.

With the line between government and gangster completely blurred, and the country’s intellectual class having vanished abroad, criminals channelled their money and influence into their favourite music and overnight popfolk turned from funny songs about cheating husbands into “turbofolk”: a coked-up, synth-and-trumpet-laden celebration of sex, money, boob jobs, brand-name crap and startling levels of vapidty.

“Turbofolk was first promoted on an RTS Channel 3 show called *Šoder lista*,” claims Serbian music writer Sandra Rančić.

“It was a satiric music-chart programme, and they’d play these trashy videos where it’d be like a village with sheep and chickens running all over the place, then a half-naked female singer. So *Šoder lista* had a very important role in the advancement of turbofolk culture, although I’m sure the creators didn’t intend for it to happen. They were just trying to make fun of it. But their plan backfired.”

This musical retardathon wouldn’t have been so bad if it weren’t also the soundtrack for some of the worst war crimes this side of Africa. At the same time they were running the show in Belgrade, many of Serbia’s criminal elite were also running paramilitary outfits with colourful names like the White Eagles, the Ravn Gora Četniks and Arkan’s Tigers. The latter group was named after Željko “Arkan” Ražnatović, an internationally wanted bank robber who decided to support the Serbian motherland by converting Belgrade’s biggest football-hooligan firm into his own private army then leading them on a four-year rampage through Bosnia and Croatia. His follow-up act would be becoming Serbia’s biggest turbofolk impresario.

Lepa Brena married a Serbian tennis star and ducked out of the country before her songs became the unofficial anthem of peasant rape, but she remained a major influence on the next generation of turbofolk singers, most importantly a teenager from south Serbia named Ceca.

Ceca took Brena’s Dolly Parton-esque winks at sexuality and dragged them into full-on Samantha Fox territory. Even if early hits like “*Cvetak zanovetak*” (“the Nagging Flower”) and “*Želim te u mladosti*” (“I Want You While I’m Still in My Youth”) left a teensy space for alternate interpretation, the videos she made for them did not. She also took turbofolk’s veiled support for the Serbian cause and made it 100 percent explicit, even travelling into Bosnia to do morale-boosting shows for the paramilitary units on the front lines. On one of these sojourns she played a gig for Arkan’s Tigers, where she met and fell in love with the 40-year-old married war criminal and father of seven. In 1995, the two were wed in a ceremony the Yugoslavian tabloids called “a Serbian fairy tale come true”.

LEFT: Ceca circa 1993, the same year the Bosnian Serb Army encircled the town of Srebrenica and began a siege that would culminate in the massacre of 8,000 Bosnian Muslims.

RIGHT: A Tiger Beat-esque poster of Ceca visiting the Serb Volunteer Guard, better known as Arkan’s Tigers and accused by the UN of committing summary executions, mass rape, looting, and ethnic cleansing in Serb-occupied Bosnia.



Arkan and Ceca on the happiest day of their and many Serbian nationalists/turbofolk fans' lives. Photo by AP.

Serbian culture does not place a high premium on subtlety, granted, but the marriage of Arkan and Ceca looked like what would happen if you hooked an eight-year-old girl's brain to a make-thoughts-real machine and forced her to drink coffee. While Arkan fired off a variety of automatic rifles in a cartoonish-looking World War I officer's uniform, his bride went through no less than four dress changes. This is, of course, after both were crowned by the patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox church.

The wedding was broadcast on state TV, sealing Ceca as the new queen of Yugoslavian music, and making the marriage of turbofolk with organised crime about as literal as it gets.

The same year, Pink TV—a bottom-denominator television station whose initial programming board consisted of turbofolk videos and bootleg copies of American action movies—went on the air. Following the war's end, Pink took over the role of spreading Serbian influence abroad from the Yugoslav Army, spawning satellite stations across the Balkans and muscling out the various regional music scenes through sheer relentlessness.

With the nation reeling under heavy international sanctions and Milošević limiting the internal discourse to state TV's bare-faced lies and Pink TV's mind-ruining pabulum, Serbia entered a surreal national hallucination. Soldiers returning from the Bosnian countryside found their home country just as lawless, and soon practices once frowned upon, like weapons smuggling, enormous breast implants, and fucking old guys for money, became viewed as completely acceptable enterprises.

In Belgrade, Ceca's career blossomed, and turbofolk entered a phase of unparalleled decadence. The music got dancier, more aggressive, and somehow even more shallow, with songs like Jelena Karleuša's "Gili gili" ("Tickle Tickle") being fairly transparent calls for sex, and Viki Miljković's "Koca Kola Marlboro Suzuki" literally just a list of brands. Despite its rural origins and despite often accidentally reinforcing the idea of Serbian backwardness (Suzuki?), turbofolk's association with the lifestyles of the rich mafiosi in control of the cities gave it an air of de facto legitimacy and made it, for lack of

any alternative, the main avenue of glamour and success in Milošević's Belgrade. It was like the entire country had turned into a creepy, alternate universe where all the authority figures are horrible Ralph Bakshi dog-men, all the women are gold-digging Ralph Bakshi cat-bitches, and a monster like Arkan can buy a second-tier football team and push it to the top of the league by threatening to kill the opposing team's players (which happened).

This farce reached its peak during the 1999 NATO bombing of Belgrade, when stars like Ceca were asked by Milošević to stage free "Fuck You, Clinton" b/w "Kosovo Is Serbia" concerts in the city's public squares—ostensibly to show the West that the Serbs weren't scared of their missiles, but more realistically as your basic human-shield manoeuvre.

A year later Arkan was assassinated, Milošević bulldozed out of office and the golden age of turbofolk came to an end. Ceca went into a year of traditional mourning for her husband, and Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić declared war on the Serbian mafia. Naturally this led to his *own* assassination, but the cooling effect on turbofolk culture and the wanton criminality that paid for it was already underway. As the country mellowed out and began working towards membership in the EU, the old gangsters became legitimate businessmen and former turbofolk stars started calling their music "turbopop" or even just plain old "pop".

The nail in the turbofolk coffin came in 2003, when Ceca was placed under arrest for embezzling money through her and Arkan's old football team, and for having a cache of assault rifles hidden in her basement. (PS: The officer who carried out the gun raid was the dad of Ceca's old rival Jelena. How catty is that?)

There are still a handful of self-identified turbofolk stars like Goga Sekulić and Maja Marijana fighting over Ceca's throne. But despite the best efforts of tracks like "Seksi Businessman" and "Panties" to resurrect the genre, turbofolk's body lies rotting in the grave, an important lesson to all of us from the mists of Serbian history: dumb music kills. 

To see what's going on in turbofolk today, despite the fact we just told you it's over, watch The Vice Guide to the Balkans this month on VICE.com.



the Producers

S E R I E S 2

Benga
Kwes
Bullitts
Mike Skinner
Starsmith



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SHROOM BAN

Means More Magic Truffles for the Netherlands

BY HAMILTON MORRIS

PHOTOS BY HAMILTON MORRIS AND SANTIAGO STELLEY

In the bucolic pastures of Hazerswoude-Dorp, nestled in verdant fields of ruminating Holsteins, lazy windmills and pert tulips, lies a quaint Dutch farm that functions as the world's largest psilocybin-containing-truffle factory. To be clear, the truffles this farm produces, often called philosopher's stones, are not technically truffles (or stones) but rather a distinct fungal propagule that serves a separate biological function from that of a mushroom.

The mushroom constitutes the reproductive body, or "fruit", of the fungus from which spores are dispersed; upon germination these spores combine to form a fluffy network of threads called mycelium. If the conditions are not correct for the mycelium to organise itself into mushrooms, certain species will form tangled clumps of mycelial tissue called sclerotia. In 2008, the Dutch government banned virtually every known psilocybin-mushroom species but neglected to outlaw the humble hypogean sclerotium. Overnight these scleroid nuggets of fungal flesh—truffles—became the only legal source of psilocybin in the Netherlands, and so I flew to Amsterdam to learn about their history and propagation.

When I arrived at the Magic Truffles farm, its two proprietors, known as the Truffle Brothers, were unpacking a "realistic" five-foot-tall plastic alien and making plans to dress the alien like Bob Marley and construct a large faux joint for it to smoke. We sat down for a chat.

VICE: Who are you, and what is your business?

Ali: My name is Ali. Next to me is my brother, Murat. We are known as the Truffle Brothers. You're here at the farm of Magic Truffles. We produce sclerotia, also known as magic truffles, here in Hazerswoude-Dorp, which is approximately 30 kilometres south of Amsterdam.

How did you get into the truffle business?

Murat: I was operating a pizzeria. Above my restaurant was a crack guy who exchanged crack products with those guys who hijack... What are these people who hijack buildings called?

Squatters.

Murat: Yes, right. So these *squatters* exchanged mushrooms that they found in the wild for the crack products of the guy above my pizzeria. This crack guy came to me and gave me a small bag of what appeared to be white pubic hair. It was kind of gross, so I threw it in the drawer and forgot about it. A week or so later I returned to the bag and saw that it was beginning to fruit mushrooms! So I went with this bag of mushrooms to

my brother and said, "I would like to create more of these." Ali had just finished with his mushroom project in Poland, and so we decided to start a business together.

What was your mushroom project in Poland?

Ali: I was a supervisor on an international white-button-mushroom project. This was a really large grow project with a canning factory behind it. So I was already part of the mushroom-cultivation network, though a *very different* part. While I was working on the white-button project, a friend of mine came up to me and showed me some spores he had collected on a petri dish. He told me, "It's a magic mushroom." I'd never heard of such a thing, so I took a closer look. I went to a friend of mine who owned a mycological laboratory and asked him, "Can we do something with these spores?" He said, "Well, let's give it a try." After several weeks there was only one mushroom in the aquarium, but it was a *giant* mushroom. I gave it to a friend, and he told me it was amazing. Apparently he was talking to deer and trees and flowers. That was, for me, the signal, "OK, this is good, let's continue with this." That's how it all happened, that and Murat's encounter with the, uh, crack guy upstairs.

Did you start at this farm?

Ali: We started much smaller.

Murat: We actually started in my daughter's bedroom, with a single aquarium of mushrooms.

Ali: We were searching the streets each night for people who were throwing out their old aquariums. That was like a kind of mushroom hunt of its own. We would say, "There's one!"

and pick up the aquarium. Before long, the room was filled with them.

Murat: Yes, my daughter's room was filled with dozens of mushroom aquariums... but it wasn't enough. We couldn't grow enough mushrooms to meet the demand. So that's when we tried to cooperate with gourmet-mushroom growers. Unfortunately, those projects did not work out very well. So in 1994 we moved the operation out of my daughter's bedroom and rented our first commercial grow facility not far from here, in a town called Langeraar. It was just a building we made out of some sheds with shelves in them. From there we started to supply the Dutch smart shops with mushrooms.

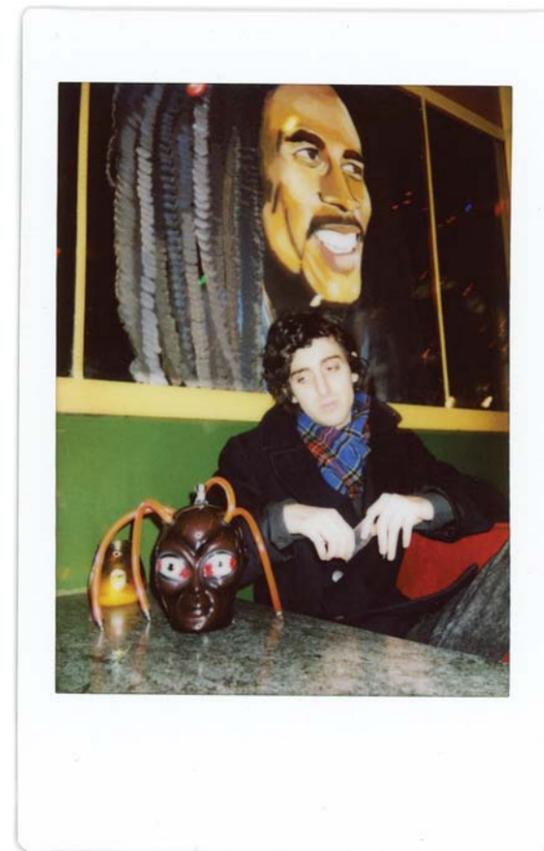
I've read that mushrooms reached their peak of popularity in the 90s. How many customers did you have during that period?

Murat: That was always the question, especially before we sold mushrooms in individually packaged units. It is extremely important to accurately gauge the market demand. Other growers would overproduce mushrooms, forcing them to dry the excess material and... do illegal things with it. Before the ban, mushrooms had to be fresh—that is, *wet*—in order to be sold legally in Holland. We would deliver bulk quantities of wet mushrooms to the smart shops at the beginning of the week, but by the end of the week significant evaporation would have occurred, and as a result, the mushrooms would be much more potent by weight. The customers thought they got a bonus, and the smart shops felt like they were being screwed because of the reduction in weight. So we started to pack the mushrooms in plastic single-serving containers that allowed them to retain their moisture.

OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT: A large pile of freshly cleaned Psilocybe atlantis.

OPPOSITE PAGE, RIGHT: What do Bob Marley and extraterrestrial beings have in common? They both LOVE weed.

BELOW: A single serving of vacuum-sealed Psilocybe galindoi.



Ali: Right after that development, we moved to a bigger place with ten grow(ing) houses and built an additional four, but that was still not enough to meet the demand. Then we found this current location in 2002, which is ideal because it is divided into two separate buildings, so we can keep the different steps of propagation isolated and minimise cross-contamination. We finally had everything we needed to supply the international market, but then mushrooms were banned in 2008.

I'm vaguely familiar with the events that led to the ban, but there were few accounts in the English media. What happened exactly?

Ali: What happened was not that shocking; what *was* shocking was the media's reaction. A Frenchman living in a van on the street mutilated his dog and was caught. He immediately blamed his actions on a dose of mushrooms he had supposedly taken, but he was then diagnosed psychotic. The dog mutilation had nothing to do with mushrooms. In the same way an American could say, "I did it because I was drunk," and hope for sympathy, the Dutch can say, "I did it because I was on mushrooms." The drug becomes a scapegoat for normal, or abnormal, human behaviour. Then there's the French girl who jumped off a bridge in the spring of 2007. That's what really catalysed the ban. Murat: It was never even proved that the girl was on mushrooms! Apparently the receptionist at her hotel saw her, or one of her friends, with a box of mushrooms and jumped to the conclusion that not only was the girl on mushrooms but they were responsible for her death. The girl was French, and in the Netherlands they cannot perform an autopsy on a foreign

body. But when she was returned to France no traces of psilocybin were found in her blood.

Before the ban, mushrooms were your most popular item, much more so than sclerotia, correct?

Murat: Yes, the truffles were just for the connoisseur. It was a side product at that time, accounting for less than 20 percent of our business. We have been growing them steadily for 15 years, but we grew them mostly because of their novelty. Then the ban came. What the government did was add a list of 186 more or less active mushrooms to the Opium Act. When we took a closer look at that list, we noticed that sclerotia weren't mentioned. If they are not mentioned they are not illegal, so we continued growing our truffles.

Why do you think they neglected to list sclerotia? Was it intentional, or was it an oversight?

Murat: They were aware of sclerotia, because it was discussed at length in Parliament, and they started asking the Ministry of Health questions about truffles. The Ministry came to the conclusion that truffles are weaker so they are less dangerous, and that's why they were not listed. But to my knowledge, the truffles are more potent than many mushroom species. Of course, we were not going to be the ones to argue that before Parliament.

Is that because they contain less water by weight?

Murat: Yes and no. The moisture content of mushrooms is about 92 to 94 percent, and in the truffles the moisture content is only 74 to 75 percent. So the truffles are a bit stronger by

fresh weight, but the mushrooms are stronger by dry weight. When we sold mushrooms, the dosage for one person was around 30 grams fresh mushrooms, and for the truffles it's only 15 grams.

What was the first sclerotia-producing mushroom that you cultivated and sold?

Ali: That was the tampanensis, the *Psilocybe tampanensis*, which of course originated in Tampa, Florida.

Murat: The literature says that it was only once found in Tampa, and that all cultures that are now available on the market are derived from that one specimen, often called the Pollock strain. It was never found again in the wild. So every philosopher's stone we sell is a descendant of that one mushroom.

What is the truffle-growing capacity of this plant?

Murat: We don't like to discuss our exact production, but I will say the *full* capacity, if we work 24 hours a day, in three shifts, for sterilisation and inoculation, would be somewhere around 18,000 tons per year.

When mushrooms were banned, how did you dispose of your stock?

Ali: That was the easy part. People were lined up here, crying, "The last mushrooms! The last mushrooms!" So getting rid of them was no problem at all. We had plenty of volunteers to assist us. I remember very well, the first of December we woke up and knew it was time to do some cleaning. I emptied the grow houses in front of TV cameras and interviewers. It was a sad day, the saddest day of my life.

"People were lined up here, crying, 'The last mushrooms!' So getting rid of them was no problem at all."

Do you think it's only a matter of time before truffles are illegal as well?

Ali: Well, you never know. As long as there are no incidents...

It seems an incident is inevitable. It is only a matter of time before someone takes an unnecessarily large dose of truffles and attempts to fly, or there is an equivalent truffle-related dog-mutilation incident.

Ali: Yes, it may be that an incident is inevitable. So everyone must be more responsible than ever before. The users must understand that their isolated actions can result in the destruction of an entire industry. The smart shops must sell their products with caution, knowing that unstable people are sometimes drawn to altered states. And the media must realise that a small story can catalyse drastic changes in the law. In 2008 all the mushrooms had to be destroyed, but the sclerotia remained. That is actually what they are meant for, to preserve the fungus in a hostile environment. Right now the environment is politically hostile, yet the sclerotia survive. 

Watch Hamilton survey the bountiful harvest of the Magic Truffles farm on a new episode of Hamilton's Pharmacopoeia.

LEFT: Hamilton with a fistful of *Psilocybe tampanensis* sclerotia.

RIGHT: Murat holds a *Psilocybe mexicana* sclerotium.

One of 15 sclerotium grow chambers at the Magic Truffles farm, each capable of accommodating approximately 600 bags of sclerotia.



DOs



I know you think the roller blades, flip-flops, sweatpants, unnecessary safety gear, bumbag, ridiculous heart-monitor thing on his arm, tucked-in t-shirt, lame group activities and late-80s Soviet rocker hair might have disqualified him from the DOs. But he clearly understands exactly what type of person he is (an oblivious loser) and is using clothing and accessories to communicate that fact, both to people who might be interested in the same things he is as well as people who don't want anything to do with him. And isn't that what style's all about?



Purses are the best. I know it's a little frustrating when you're trying to find your girlfriend's phone and it's rung like 14 times and you're still like, "Why do you have all this SHIT in here?" but when you're on day 2 of a bender it's like having HST's party kit crossed with your own personal MASH unit.



According to a recent survey, 61 percent of the world gets its news from the internet. The rest get their news from rubbish blowing around in the street.



Feeling worn-out after a long day of ducking around town? Nothing like a Red Bull and a smoke to recharge your droopy duck nappy.



I think it's very sad that no one will hang out with you just because you've got a haircut that looks like you're balancing two turds on your head and you drag your disgusting bum crack all over the furniture. It's not very nice. In fact, I think it's racist. These people are racist against ugly shit.

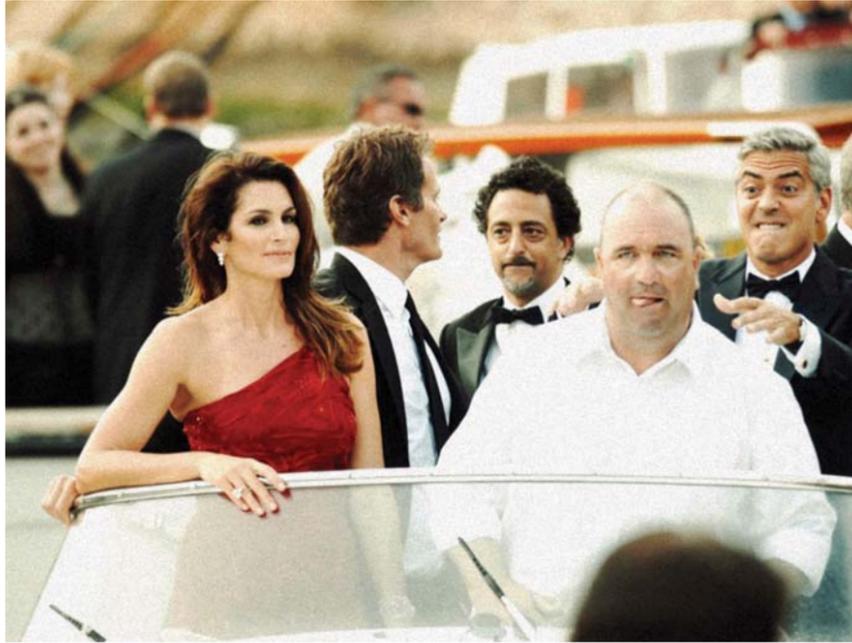
KR3W



LIZARD KING // HODGE JACKET // LK K SKINNY DENIM // FRANKLIN FOOTWEAR
CHAD MUSKA // TERRY KENNEDY // ERIK ELLINGTON // JIM GRECO // TOM PENNY
SPENCER HAMILTON // KEVIN ROMAR // BOO JOHNSON

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DON'Ts



If you saw a grown adult dressed as a baby and going, "Goo-goo gaa-gaa poo-poo mommy," and shitting and peeing themselves you'd be like, "Yuck! This is gross. Get me away from here." But isn't that essentially what Hollywood celebrities are? The only difference is instead of nappies they wear tuxedos and ball gowns, and instead of a rattle they have an Academy Award.



I'm sure the tiny gold frame on this jerk's wristwatch is only the tip of the iceberg. He probably also puts a gold frame around the letters he gets from his mother telling him how she wishes she'd had an abortion.



This photo was taken with a special scientific camera developed by NASA that can detect nerd BO.



I'm all for expressing yourself creatively through fashion, but I'm afraid I have to draw the line at sticking your head up a wolf's ass.



You know this guy's rock career is in trouble when you can start to see a sad face in the folds of his crotch.

AUG 79

CIAL A
GSTERS

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE DANCING

UPLOADED BY ALEX, ENGLAND

1980 myself, brother David and cousin Nigel at a family wedding. We near enough bullied the mobile DJ to play Two Tone all night. I even went home half way through the night to collect my albums, as the DJ only had a few singles in his box.

By the end of the night we'd converted all the guests to our dancing style, which we'd copied after seeing The Specials do 'Gangsters' on Top Of The Pops a few months before.

READ ON AT
fredperry.com/tellusyourstory
© 1980 Alex



Movie idea: a remake of *Reservoir Dogs* but slightly more gay. A group of homosexual gangsters named Mr Mauve, Mr Taupe, Mr Fuchsia and Mr Periwinkle set up an elaborate plan to rob the sperm bank. I think I smell a blockbuster!... Oh, no. Wait. That's just ass sweat.



Awww! Mr and Mrs Magic are getting married. And look at those magical shoes. Those shoes will come in handy when he's walking the streets all day looking for magician work.



A bedenimed weave monster has a white baby arm growing out of its chest and it's ordering drinks!?! Is this that Tyler Perry-David Cronenberg collaboration we've all been waiting for?

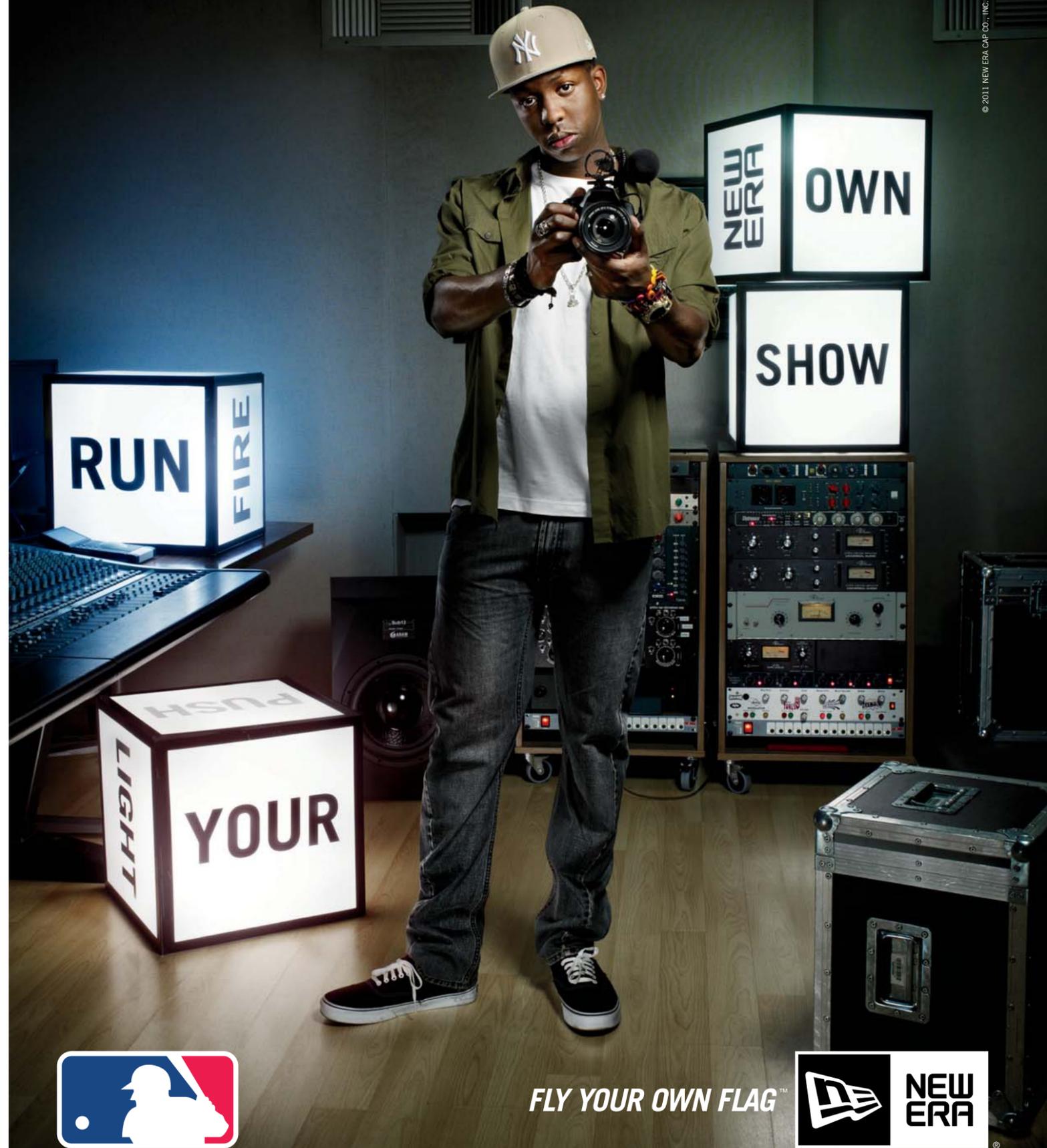


I know the feeling. You get so horny that you want to fuck a sea creature. I only hope this guy is wearing some kind of protection. He won't be laughing so hard when he gets crotch lobsters.



Hey everyone, I invented a new word for a person who looks like a creepy witch who lives in a concentration camp. It's called an "Auschwitz". You're welcome!

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DON'Ts



When I think of the people who post comments on the VICE website, this is how I imagine them living.



Ever wonder what would happen if K.D. Lang and Sean Lennon had a child and it grew up to stalk you and write creepy poetry about how beautiful your armpits are?



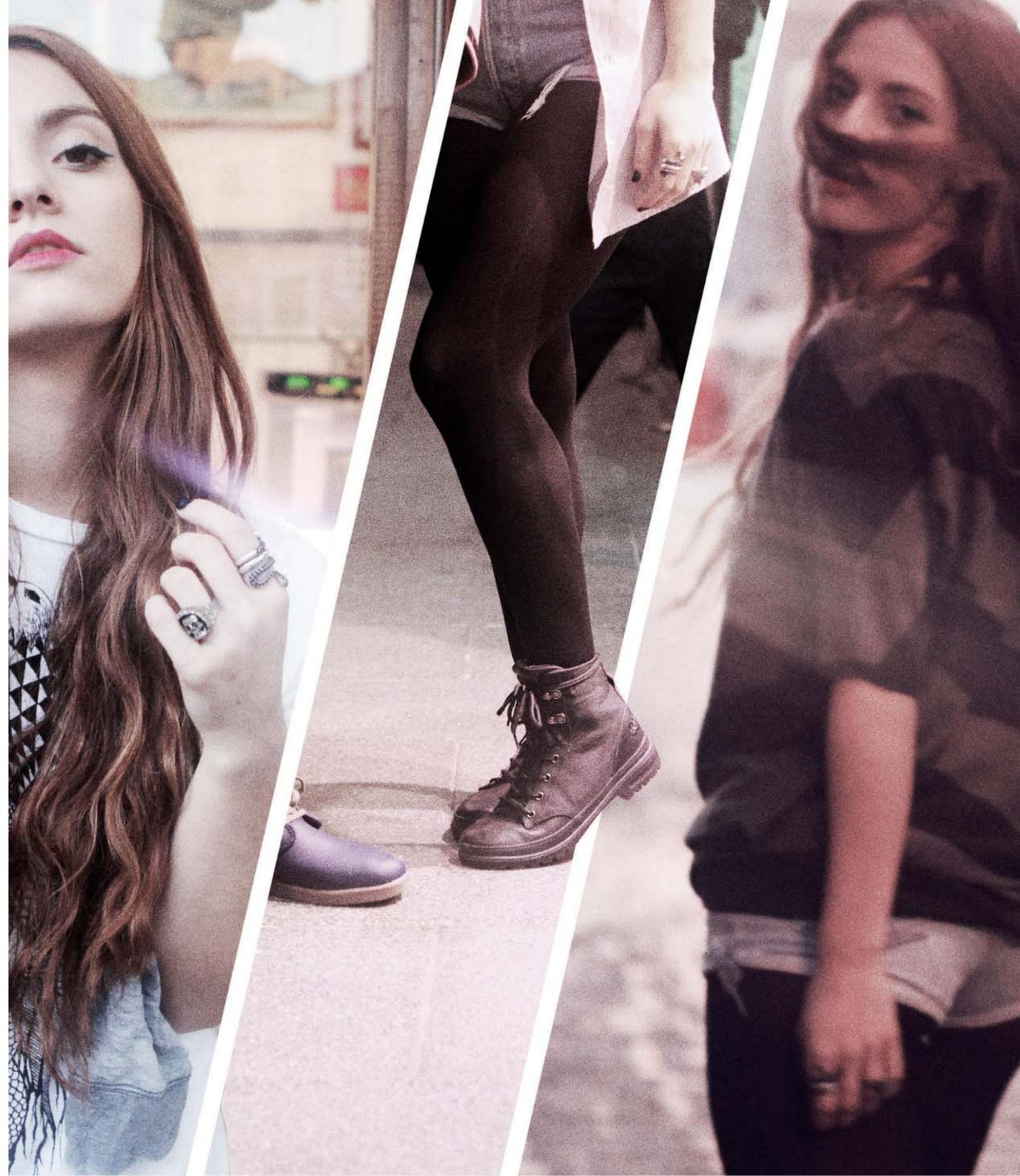
Everyone knows it's bad luck to open an umbrella indoors, but it's even worse luck to invite an attention-starved douchebag to your party.



"Can you excuse me for a moment? I have a 3:00 conference call with the CEO of Whoretronics International."



When you make your living stomping gerbils to death with your bare feet and letting Japanese businessmen piss on your feet, you're able to afford some of the finer things in life—like horrendous leg tattoos and hippie-vomit hair dye.



FOXY KNOXY: FREE AT LAST

PHOTOS BY RICHARD KERN
STYLIST: ANNETTE LAMOTHE-RAMOS

Stylist's assistant: Miyako Bellizzi
Hair: Darine Sengseevong
Make-up: Terese Bennett
Model: Emily Wilson at Major



American Apparel swimsuit and beret, handcuffs from Halloween Adventure

Element Eden sweater and trousers, Calvin Klein Jeans tank top, Clarks shoes, Coal Headwear hat, Topshop ring, Quiksilver throw as rug





Burton hat, jailbait costume and handcuffs from Halloween Adventure

American Apparel shirt, Lamb & Flag jeans, vintage necklace and bracelets





American Apparel shirt and stockings, Lamb & Flag skirt, Marlies Dekkers garter belt, Nlayala bracelet, vintage bracelet, Topshop earrings

Element Eden sweatshirt, Calvin Klein Jeans underwear





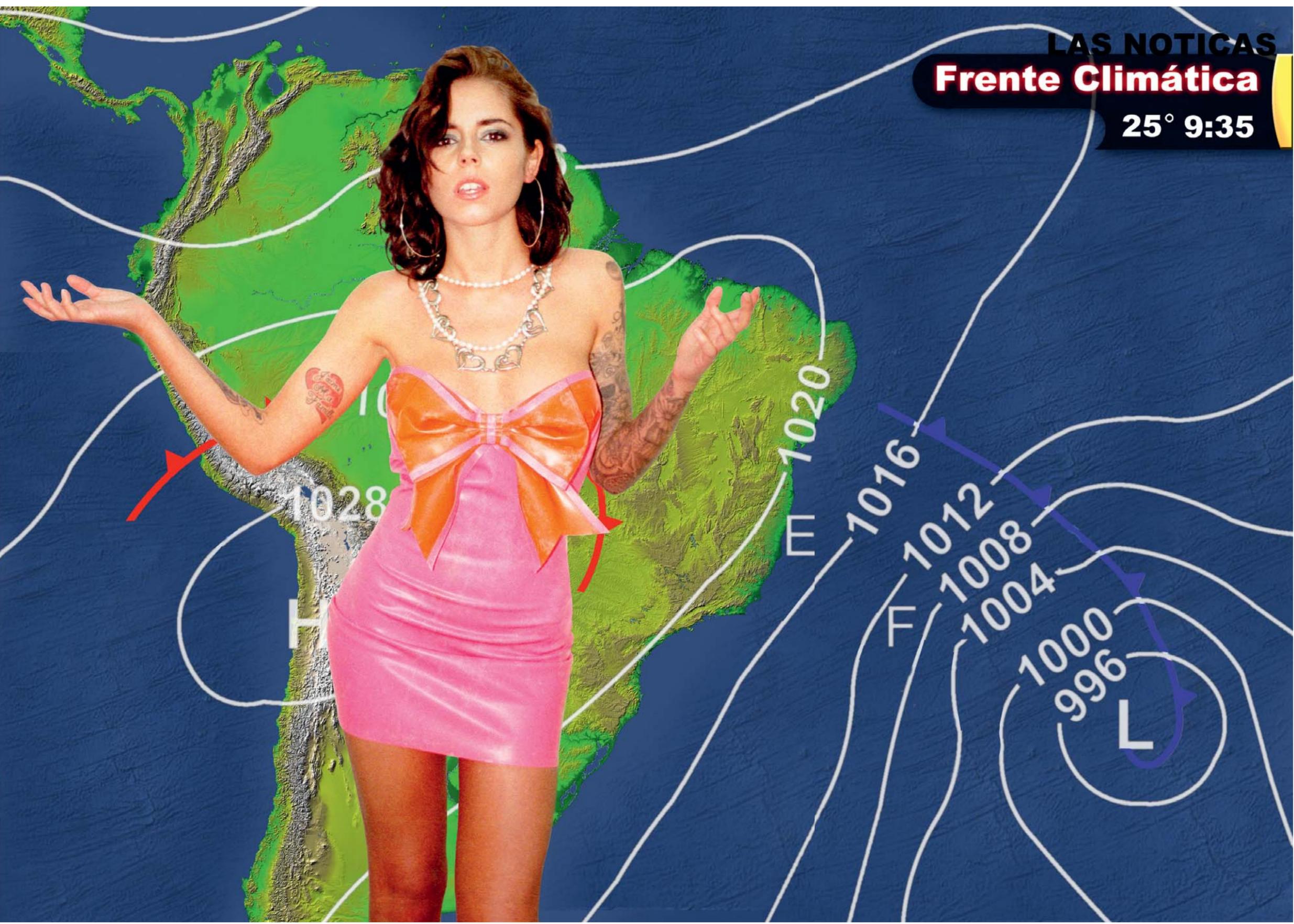
Element Eden sweater, vintage rosary, Topshop bracelets



Element Eden shirt, American Apparel sweater and jeans, Topshop ring

LAS NOTICIAS
Frente Climática

25° 9:35



SCORCHIO!!

PHOTOS BY CAMERON ALEXANDER
STYLIST: SAM VOULTERS

*Stylist's assistant: Daniella Maiorano
Hair: Michael Jones using Bumble and Bumble
Hair assistant: Sharne Harrington
Make-up: Stephanie G-M using Illamasqua
Graphics: Sam Roberts
Models: Ellis, Kamilah, Isabella, Jacqueline and Iona*

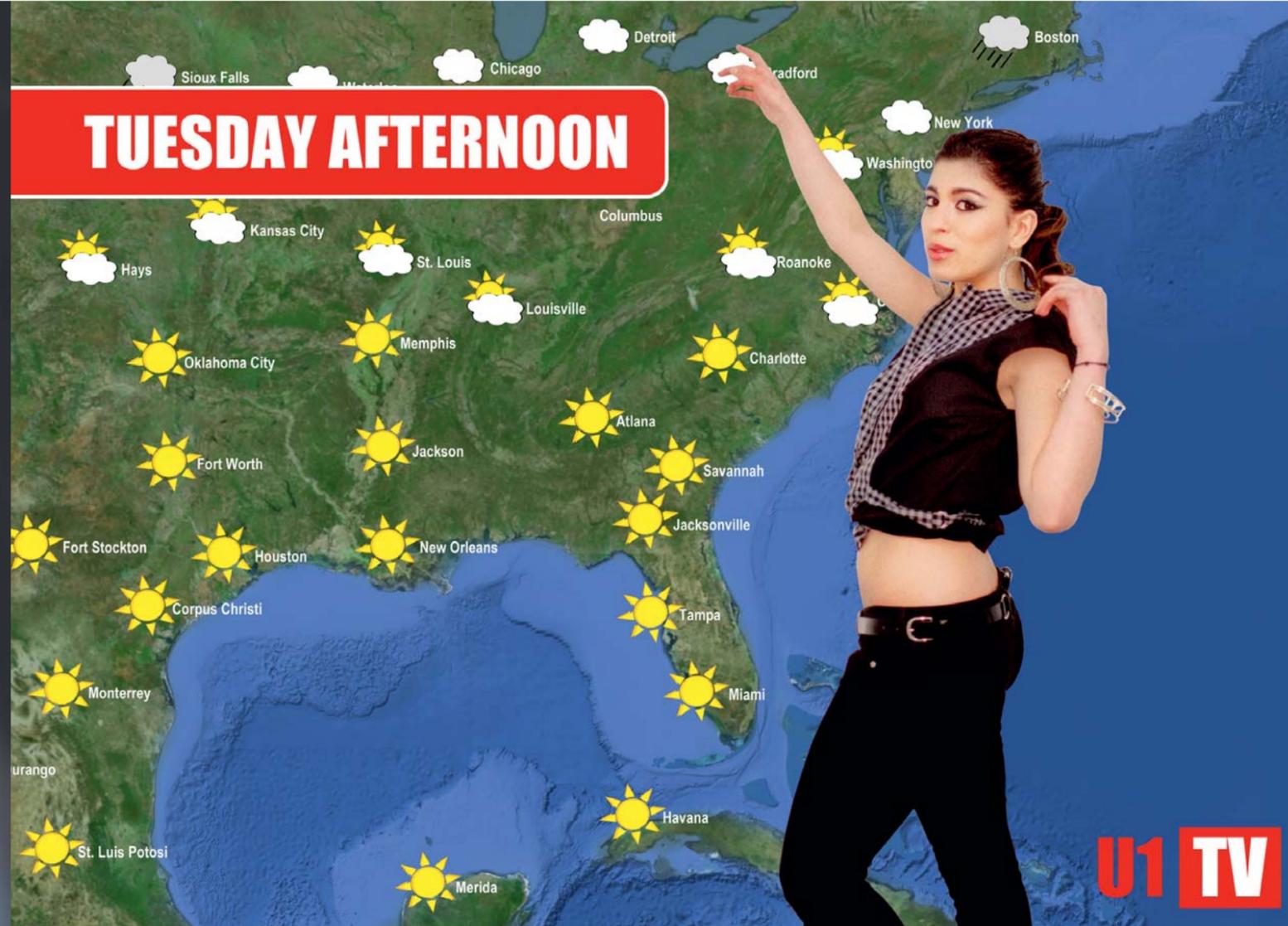
William Wilde dress, vintage pearl necklace from Mint, vintage belt worn as necklace from Beyond Retro

MID WEEK CHANGES



- HIGH UV LEVELS
- WARMER TEMPS
- LOW CLOUD COVER

TUESDAY AFTERNOON



Anglomania by Vivienne Westwood dress, American Apparel headband, vintage necklace

Fred Perry shirt, Levi's jeans, Freedom earrings and necklace, vintage belt from Beyond Retro, Freedom bracelet

Viernes 13



Fanny And Jessy top, AG Adriano Goldschmied Supply shorts, Prism glasses, Monki earrings, Freedom bracelet

Pronóstico Para Hoy

ACCU WEATHER

DOM	LUN	MAR	MIE	JUE	VIE
15° 18°	18° 22°	19° 23°	21° 26°	20° 25°	17° 24°

3
NOTICIAS



James Long gilet, Bench skirt, Topshop bra, Claire's Accessories cuff



Stussy x MadeMe shorts, vintage bracelets and ring; Stussy x MadeMe jeans, vintage bracelet, Volcom bracelet, Harley Davidson motorcycle

BABES ON WHEELS

PHOTOS BY PATRICK O'DELL
STYLIST: ANNETTE LAMOTHE-RAMOS

*Stylist's assistant: Alexis Gross
Photo assistant: Jeff Fribourg
Models: Ashlee, Brook, Jennifer, Jenny, Jessica and Jillian*



Motel shirt, Stussy x MadeMe jeans, Emerica trainers, vintage bracelet, Volcom bracelet, Baker skateboard



Motel shirt, Stussy x MadeMe jeans, Emerica trainers, vintage bracelet, Volcom bracelet, Baker skateboard



Stüssy x MadeMe shirt, Voiccom jeans, vintage bracelets and ring

underwater love

a pink musical



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From legendary pink director

Shinji Imaoka

(Lunch Box, Frog Song)

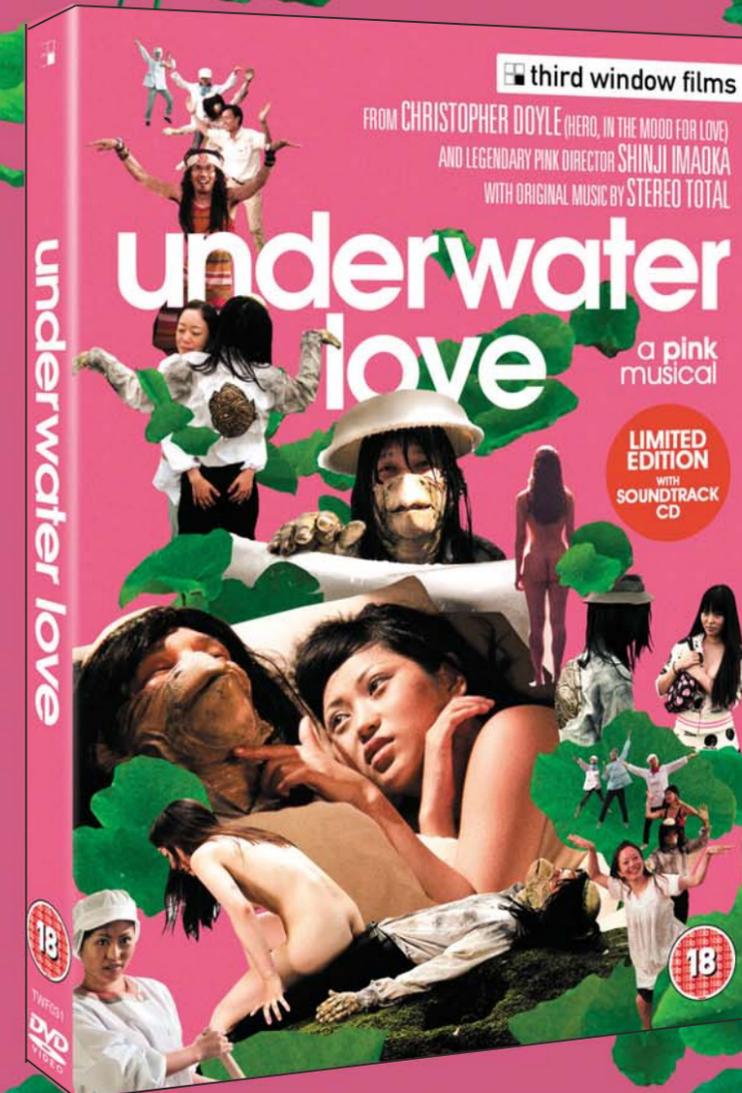
and cinematographer

Christopher Doyle

(Hero, In the Mood for Love)

with original music by

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The Sacrifice, 2011, oil on canvas, 64 x 50 inches

Images courtesy of Lyons Wier Gallery, New York

Excerpted from THREATS: A Novel by Amelia Gray. [to be published in February by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC. Copyright © 2012 by Amelia Gray. All rights reserved.]

A COUPLE OF THREATS

BY AMELIA GRAY
PAINTINGS BY MARTIN WITTFOOTH

Amelia Gray is an author from Tucson, Arizona, who lived in Austin, Texas, before moving to LA last month. We first became aware of this young woman's talent with words via her short story collections AM/PM and Museum of the Weird and now eagerly await her first novel, THREATS, which will be published by FSG next February. Somehow, somehow, we persuaded Amelia to give us a super-duper-early sneak peek for this month's issue in the form of two excerpted chapters. The story revolves around David, a retired dentist, who struggles to accept the death of his wife while trying to suss out the mysterious particulars of her demise. Things become even more troubling when he finds a series of elaborate, cryptic notes hidden around his home, such as: CURL UP ON MY LAP. LET ME BRUSH YOUR HAIR WITH MY FINGERS. I AM SINGING YOU A LULLABY. I AM TESTING FOR STRUCTURAL WEAKNESS IN YOUR SKULL. We don't want to give away too much, but let's just say it's an eerie crime story that alternates between utter madness and tiny moments of clear, heartbreaking tenderness. We've coupled the two excerpts with three works by Brooklyn-based painter Martin Wittfooth that we feel are insane in their own right.

He knew Franny had been behind the house. She wore a scarf coloured red like the berries that grew back there. Her feet were bare and her ankles were slick with fluid. "Something has happened," Franny said.

She was standing at the bottom of the stairs. She held the rail and tipped her head back to look at her husband. They held the same rail. "You've been tromping berries," he said.

"It's blood." She held the stair's rail and vomited down the front of her dress. "Could you call for help?" she asked, wiping her mouth with her fingers.

"Of course," he said. He commanded his body to find a telephone and determine its use. "What's the problem?"

"Goddamn it," she said.

"What did you do?" he asked. "What happened?"

"Could you call the fire department?" She sat on the stairs and leaned against the wall with her back to him. He came down and sat next to her. He touched her cold face with his hands. "You don't need to call anyone," she said. "Forget about it. I love you."

"Forget about it. I love you."

"What did you get into?"

She tipped her head to the side and back, squinting at him or resting against the wall. "That's your problem," she said.

They were quiet for a long time. He listened to her breathing so closely that he forgot to breathe, himself. He gasped for air. He prodded at her with his elbow. "Doc," he said. "You gotta understand."

She laughed once.

David sat next to his wife for three days. They leaned against each other and created a powerful odour. In that way, it was like growing old together.

Detective Chico rang the front bell and waited. "There's a grounding wire on your door," he said pleasantly when David opened up. Chico tapped the wire with his boot. "Was this your doing?"

A woman stood next to Chico. She was bundled up. "This is Dr Walls," said Chico. "She is a mental-health professional."

The woman held out her gloved hand.

"Hello," David said, shaking it.

"Don't worry, sir," said Dr Walls, squinting at him, removing her winter gloves though she was still outside. She extended her bare hand, and David shook it again. "I'm not here to commit you."



The Baptism, 2011, oil on canvas, 56 x 56 inches

“We came by to have another talk about how you’re doing,” said Chico.

David wondered at the condition of Chico’s teeth.

“Dr Walls would like to know you. There’s no harm in inviting us in.”

“It’s cold out here,” Dr Walls said, holding one bare hand with the other. She had the kind of pale skin that turned translucent in the winter.

David tracked the progression of her sluggish blood. He opened the door wider. “I could offer you some tea,” he said. “You could offer and we could accept,” said Dr Walls.

David led the way to the kitchen. The card with the first threat was still facedown on the kitchen counter, and he opened the silverware drawer and slid it underneath the butter knives. He removed a spoon and closed the drawer.

“Sugar?” he asked.

“Yes, please,” said Dr Walls, who had picked up a newspaper from the kitchen table and was holding it close to her face. She unstuck a ballpoint pen that had been taped to the window frame over the table.

“You’ve got your sugar spoon all ready to go,” Chico said.

David felt he could trust Chico about as much as he could trust any police detective who had made multiple trips to his home. David put the spoon in his robe pocket, set the pot of water on the range, and took the box of tea out from the pantry along with the bag of sugar.

“How have you been feeling?” Chico asked.

Placing the sugar on the counter, David slipped the teabags into his robe pocket, opened the cabinet, and took down three cups and three saucers. He arranged each cup on a saucer and picked up the bag of sugar. “I’m fine. I went on a walk,” he said, unrolling the bag. Inside, a scrap of paper peeked above the sugar line like a prize in a cereal box. David held the bag close to his chest and dropped his free hand into his pocket.

“Very good,” said Chico. “I was worried you would be cooped up all season.”

“Laying eggs,” Dr Walls said, rubbing her eyes.

David clutched the sugar spoon in his pocket. “My wife’s car is gone.”

“Yes,” Chico said. “The city confiscated the vehicle due to nonpayment.” He tapped his shirt pocket and reached inside. “I can give you the number of the appropriate department to contact with your grievances.”

“It doesn’t matter,” David said. “I mean, if that settled the debt, it doesn’t matter. I didn’t like that car.”

Dr Walls made a mark on the newspaper. “The light in here,” she said.

The water on the stove pimpled with the pending boil. The spoon was cutting a ridge into David’s palm, and he loosened his grip and brought it out of his pocket. “Thank you for letting me know about the car,” he said. He used the spoon to dig into the sugar mound, uncovering more of the paper. There was a word on it, a sentence. He turned his body, placing himself between Chico and the bag.

“We’ve been talking to a few coworkers of your wife,” Chico said. “Nobody said anything against you, but they all did have the same issue.”

“An issue.” David dug around the piece of paper, trying to make unnoticeable motions, careful not to rip the page.

“They all mentioned the fact that you’re never around. A few of them joked that they didn’t think you really existed. Only one of them claimed to have even met you.”

“They came over and cut my hair three weeks ago.”

Chico looked at Dr Walls, who set aside the newspaper and produced a pad of sticky notes. She wrote something on one. The water came to a full boil while David was reaching his hand into the sugar bag to grasp the corner of the paper. He kept his back square between the bag and the detective.

“Who cut your hair?” Chico asked.

The page in the sugar was not a card or a strip, but a full piece of notebook paper. When he had unearthed enough of it, David closed the top edge of the page in his fist and pulled it out whole. The action spilled sugar on the counter, his robe, the floor, the range. The sugar blackened and burned under the pot of boiling water. In one motion, he stuffed the piece of paper into his pocket and leaned down to blow on the smoke rising from the burning sugar. “It was a whole group of them,” he said. He felt the grains of sugar coating his hand and wiped it on his chest. “They seemed like nice girls. Maybe they were students. They were all young.”

“The girls cut your hair.”

David poured water into the cups and spooned sugar into one. Steam blushed the spoon’s edge. “One cut my toenails. I told them all not to bother, but they said they were there to do it as a favour to my wife.” The threat felt warm in his pocket.

“Could I get their names?” Chico asked.

“I don’t know their names,” David said. He reasoned that if he had left the threat in the sugar, it might have dissolved and vanished. It was too important to be ruled by the normal properties of paper. Taking hold of it had been important.

Dr Walls was beside him. “David, your hair is past your ears.”

“It was longer,” David said, handing her a cup. He touched the fuzzed nape of his neck. “You wouldn’t believe.”

“Where do you keep the tea?” she asked.

David patted the front of his robe, produced one of the bags, and dropped it into her cup. He had the sense that this woman was here to trick him. He didn’t trust the things she said or the way she watched him. He crossed his arms, covering his pockets so that she couldn’t reach in. The woman went back to sit at the table in the seat where guests sat, the one without a place mat. She was trying to be polite. David slipped the other tea packets into the other cups.

“I’m sorry we’re asking so many questions,” Chico said, accepting his tea. “I’m sure you want to get to the bottom of this as much as we do.”

“Important items have special properties,” David said.
“You have been so helpful,” said Dr Walls.

“I believe I’ve maintained a tradition of cooperation with members of local law enforcement and public-works operatives,” he said. “I believe that civilians ought not fear the guiding hand of the state.” He lifted the mug to his lips.

“What was that page you pulled out of the bag of sugar?” Chico asked.

David effused a small amount of bile into his tea.

“Good God,” said Dr Walls.

“What is your name?” David asked the woman. He wiped his face with his sleeve. “What is your full name?”

The woman’s teacup rattled on its saucer, though she was touching neither cup nor saucer. He saw her leg jiggling the table from underneath. “Marie Walls,” the woman said.

“Marie,” he said. “I’m sorry for all this.”

“It’s all right, David.”

“I haven’t been the same since my wife left.”

“David,” she said.

“I hate to state the obvious,” said Chico, “but you vomited into that cup after I asked you a question.”

“David,” Marie said. Her face elongated before him. Her eyebrows went first, pinching a delicate fold into her forehead. Her eyelids snapped up to follow, and she tipped her head back slightly to accommodate the movement. She observed him from behind her cheekbones.

David was holding the paper protectively in his pocket. “It was nothing,” he said. “It was a piece of the bag that fell into the sugar. I felt ashamed to serve the sugar to guests with a piece of the bag loose inside.” He attempted a religious-convert kind of gaze with the detective, but Chico’s eye contact was stronger. It was clear that in a past life the detective had been a phone booth beside an empty highway. David felt the page wilting in his warm hand. The sugar stuck to his palm.

From the corner of his eye he could see that Marie was nodding. “Such a good host,” she said.

“A good host,” Chico said. He was making the kind of eye contact employed by officers of the law. He had once been a mechanical crane that hauled beams to the top of a skyscraper.

David tipped his ruined tea out in the sink, took the paper out of his pocket, and laid it on the table. Chico stood beside him and read it aloud.

I WILL STRIP THE BARK FROM A TREE AND MAKE YOU NEW CLOTHES. YOU WILL WEAR THESE CLOTHES AS YOU WANDER THE FOREST FOR FOURTEEN YEARS. YOUR FATHER WILL DIE WATCHING THE SKY AND YOUR MOTHER WILL FORGET YOUR NAME.

Chico stopped reading, but David could tell he was looking over it again, memorising it. The man had no visible reaction beyond his jaw moving slightly down and to the left behind his closed mouth. It was enough for David to know that he should not have trusted either of his visitors.

“I don’t know what to make of it,” David said.

“There are more like this?”

“No,” David said. “I found it there before. I was afraid to move it.”

“I should take it with me,” Chico said, pulling on his gloves and holding one out for the threat.

“What’s happening?” Marie asked, bracing herself to stand.

“Official police business,” Chico said.

David held the threat close to his chest. “There’s no police business. I can’t let you have this.”

Chico made no initial response, but his jaw moved again within his closed mouth. He was tonguing the surface of his molars. He seemed exceptionally calm. “This could be considered evidence,” he said.

“There’s no reason why it would be. My wife was probably playing a prank on me, and she forgot about it.” David worried that he was talking too fast. Correcting the error would be simple enough but would require talking more to the man, who was probing the grooves in his teeth as if they contained an illuminating secret. “I usually don’t take sugar in my tea,” David said, slower, moderated, trying his best to sound reasonable by employing a reasonable voice, “so there was no reason for me to look here. I don’t usually take sugar.”

“This could be an important piece of evidence,” said Chico.

Marie had abandoned her teacup and stood by Chico’s side. “Goodness,” she said, replacing her thin glasses with thicker ones and reading the page. “Classic transferred umbilical addiction. ICD-10 F20. The coupled individual fears the opposing parental unit and conspires to destroy him or her.”

“There’s no reason why you wouldn’t allow us to take this,” Chico said.

“Or it’s a ruse,” Marie said.

“You’ve been nothing but helpful so far,” Chico added.

“Your attitude has helped to ease my mind regarding your status in this case.”

David folded the paper in thirds. “Ease your mind.”

“You’re a person of interest, after all. That’s normal procedure. You’re only helping yourself by cooperating. But really, right now you’re getting your fingerprints all over what could be a key piece of evidence.”

“This could be something my wife wrote as a joke,” David said. “Probably years ago.”

“David,” Marie said. Her face was the colour and shape of an oblong shell, a shaved almond, a cuttlefish bone on which a parakeet might smooth his beak.

David leaned forward and gently pressed his cheek against hers. It was satisfying, though she felt nothing like an almond.

“I understand your concern, but I’m beginning to grow worried for the physical object,” he said, cheek to cheek with Marie. “I believe it is within my legal right to keep it.”

“I think you should come talk to me sometime,” she said, whispering, into his ear.

Chico exhaled through his nose hard enough that David felt the blast on his face. He took a step back. “It is currently



Sebastian, 2011, oil on canvas, 48 x 72 inches

within your legal right,” Chico said. “I don’t enjoy the fact that you’re making that decision, though.”

David held the wilted paper aloft. “This object has sentimental value.”

“Understood,” Chico said. “We’re going to compromise.”

“Compromise is the evidence of a civil class,” Marie said.

Chico produced a pocket camera. “May I?”

David looked first at the camera and then at Marie. He held the threat in his palms, protecting it, while Chico took his picture. Chico put his camera away and handed David a sealing sandwich bag from his pocket.

“Keep it in there,” he said. “Do you have a stapler?”

David produced one from the junk drawer and Chico stapled the seal with three quick shots.

“We’ll head to the salon again. I’m sure we’ll find the ones that came by your home.”

They both shook David’s hand on the way out, and Marie stepped over the pile of frozen clothes on the porch. On their way to the car, Chico touched her arm once above the elbow. “It may not be wise for David to have a private session just yet,” he said.

“It would be a safe space for him.”

He opened her car door, stepped around the back, and got into the driver’s seat. “Maybe soon.” As they backed out of the driveway, Chico leveraged his arm against her seat while Marie watched the garage in front of her shrink back into the forest. The garage looked like a second house. She could see one pair of old wooden French doors propped slightly ajar by a substantial wasp’s nest that grew between the doors and held them in place.

Inside, David examined the threat. Specks of sugar had fallen to the bottom of the sandwich bag. He thought about the absolute fact that a great number of details had gone unnoticed. He reheated the pot of water, emptied his mug, and refilled it with sugar. The mug was full to its brim with sugar, and he had to put it in the sink when he poured the hot water in. The sugar sank under the hot liquid and clouded it, and David stirred it with a small spoon and blew across the surface before sipping the murky, sweet liquid, his lips pursed, his tongue lashing forward. He was a hummingbird. He held the mug at the centre of his body, over his heart, wincing as the mug’s contents splashed over the lip and onto his fingers.

GYPSY PARADISE LOST

The Residents of Dale Farm Get the Boot

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY SPIKE JOHNSON



ABOVE: Activists at Dale Farm extend a huge scaffold tower guarding the main gates.

OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT: Jay, a resident of Dale Farm, shortly after cracking his head open on a concrete post. He ignored a medic's advice to sit down and stay sober.

OPPOSITE PAGE, RIGHT: Young residents play on an old sofa near the main gates to Dale Farm.

Richard Sheridan's battered white Ford van pulls up outside the train station in Wickford, Essex. With newspapers and empty crisp packets covering its dash, it looks out of place against the ranks of shiny cabs and rows of identical homes. Richard is 37 but looks older, his barrel chest squeezed into a striped blue t-shirt and his stained blue jeans hanging well below his waistline. He stoops into the drizzle and shuffles to open the back doors, muttering something in a thick Irish accent. It's gibberish to me, but I understand when he motions for me to get in the van. I close the doors and lose my footing as he pulls away, falling onto some broken furniture, squinting to recognise the faces of the other crouched figures who surround me in the dark.

We're told to keep silent and out of sight as we pass a series of police roadblocks. I sneak a look between the headrests of the front seats as we approach Dale Farm near Basildon, the largest illegal Gypsy residence in Europe, and soon to be the site of a chaotic and unmanageable mass eviction. The long-standing tenants of Dale Farm, Gypsies of Irish descent, are considered a racial minority here in the UK. They live in modern caravans towed behind cars and trucks, camping wherever they can—at the sides of roads, other people's fields, or on common land. Each time they decide to settle down somewhere and set up camp, local townspeople and police immediately start pressuring them to leave. Some say the shy and guarded community is used as a convenient scapegoat for petty societal ills. Others view them as freeloading pick-pockets who need to get haircuts and real jobs. But one thing that is certain is the communities' unwavering commitment to one another.

About ten years ago, a group of Gypsies abandoned their portable caravans and established semi-permanent dwellings at Dale Farm (it had already been established as a popular nomad rest stop decades earlier). Buying land and burrowing

deep into the countryside, they left their nomadic life behind, withdrawing from a society intolerant of their heritage and escaping unwelcome glances and police visits.

In the council buildings of Basildon, there was concern that the development of the farm was carried out without official approval. In the UK, local councils must grant planning permission before any new structure is erected, mostly as a measure to guard against overcrowding and unsafe living conditions. If the owner defies the council by building a structure without permission, the authorities will seize and demolish it. Despite humanitarian concerns and legal and labour costs, Basildon Council argues that the long-standing refusal to abide by this law makes all residents of Dale Farm candidates for eviction. By the end, the operation could cost approximately £17.8 million of taxpayers' money. Tony Ball, leader of Basildon Council, argues that there must be consistency within the law, and everyone must abide by the same rules. Of course, the Gypsies disagree.

"When we bought this place, the government was encouraging Traveller families to buy land and settle," says Patrick James Joyce, an Irish Traveller who moved his family to Dale Farm a decade ago. Without planning permission, the Travellers are only permitted to live 28 days a year per site in their caravans, whether or not they own the land. The council has attempted to create alternative living arrangements for the 86 families threatened by eviction—often in cramped apartment blocks, in cities and isolated from the rest of their community—but these have been refused by the Travellers as culturally unacceptable.

More than a decade of complicated and convoluted legal proceedings came to a head in September, when local authorities began eviction proceedings. The Gypsies were able to delay expulsion via legal manoeuvring, but by late September, when I arrive, Dale Farm is threatening to erupt in violence.

Our van bounces and jolts over the potholed tarmac of a single lane. News reporters and television vans are lined up on the pavement. The normally quiet fields surrounding the farm are now sprawling fenced enclosures housing bailiffs poised to enter family homes by force. Heavy-duty metal sheets laid over pasture support bulldozers and diggers. Portable toilets stand in rows, and men in hard hats and high-visibility jackets check the perimeter, itching for action. The end of the lane is blocked by a giant wooden gate set underneath soaring ramparts made of metal poles, tarpaulin, old tyres and razor wire. These utilitarian extensions clash against the decorative domestic walls of Dale Farm. Scaffold poles are piled over patterned terracotta brick, a cross between a construction site, medieval castle and *Mad Max* stronghold.

Photographs of children who will undoubtedly become homeless if evicted are fastened to the outside of the battlements, their faces appealing to the outside world. Above, on the ramparts, figures wait, their identities obscured by masks and scarves. Someone taunts onlookers: "We've got rocks up here. I hope you brought a hat." When we pull up, Richard Sheridan, in his white van, is recognised as the president of the Gypsy Council and the gates swing open.

The farm has changed significantly in the last decade. "The whole place was a wasteland [when we moved here]. It was being used as a scrapyards for old cars," Patrick says. The land was bought by ten families, including Patrick's, who were searching for a permanent home and respite from the constant pressure to vacate campsites. It was a place where they could grow vegetables and preserve their cultural heritage. Over time they laid roads, built dwellings and enrolled their children in local schools. Dale Farm thrived, its population surpassing 400 by 2007.

Since 1994, the Gypsy way of life has been complicated by a law allowing authorities to displace Travellers on a whim without offering an alternative site—previously, municipalities

Someone taunts onlookers: "We've got rocks up here. I hope you brought a hat."

were required to provide campsites. The revised law was officially designed to encourage Gypsies to settle down and establish permanent homes, but in practice officials rarely granted Travellers the necessary permits to stay in one place. "Even when we apply for planning permission, we're refused," complains Steve, an elderly resident. "It's because of our heritage; they're racists, bigots."

We sit on tree stumps and old car seats just inside the front gate, watching sympathetic non-Gypsy activists climb scaffolding like monkeys, extending and strengthening structures. Steve's bushy eyebrows hang heavy over sad blue eyes, the skin on his kind face rough from a life outdoors, shadowed under a navy sun hat. "It didn't always look like this. We're proud people," he says. He describes Dale Farm as it used to be, with smooth tarmac and well-tended gardens—a place where families would gather and play.

Some of the pitches are already vacant, their owners choosing to take caravans away early and escape the risk of losing everything to the bailiffs' demolition machines. Other homes remain, their inhabitants vowing "to see it through until the end".

Battered religious icons are scattered around: A fibreglass Jesus Christ has had his arm reattached with duct tape, and a print of the Virgin Mary stares at a toilet cubicle from behind broken glass. Travellers are deeply Catholic, conforming strictly to the rules of their faith: no premarital sex and no divorce. As night falls, rain turns front yards to mud under hundreds of trampling feet. No one will sleep tonight. The rumour is eviction tomorrow. Gypsies drink and sing folk music at the top of their voices, and activists take to their tree houses and perimeter lookouts.



ABOVE: The dried scalp of a boar's head, attached to one of Dale Farm's perimeter barricades, taunts bailiffs and passersby.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Activists try to hold back riot police as they attempt to secure Dale Farm.



Screaming, the front line of activists falls. Lines of coppers spill through the fence.

woods. "We're breaking the law if we stay, we're breaking the law if we travel," says Patrick. Adopting a cowboy stance, he uses an electric drill to mime shooting at the bailiff compound. "I'm going to break it and stay."

It's October 19 and the black sky reveals the first hints of blue as I crawl out of my sleeping bag. I'm two sips into my coffee when the alarm sounds—long high-pitched whistles. Shouts ring out from perimeter lookouts. I peer out of the kitchen window and see the moon glinting off the clear shields and blue helmets of riot police. They march across the long grass. Activists dressed from head to toe in black, nearly invisible, rush to meet them, pushing back on the barricades made of corrugated iron, wood and barbed wire. Police Tasers fire. Screaming, the front line of activists falls. Lines of coppers spill through the fence.

Beneath a hail of bricks and bottles, police force activists to retreat toward the front gate. Patrick weaves through the seething crowd, filming the action. Plumes of acrid smoke are billowing into the clear autumn sky. A caravan has been torched as an extra line of defence. Activists and Gypsies work together to throw tyres, sofas and old sheds into the blaze, turning the air a thick black. The site's power is cut.

Now the only light comes from bailiff floodlights as they cut through the concrete and steel of the front gate. Police stand guard behind a wall of clear shields as an activist approaches. He has discarded his mask and black overalls, revealing his face. Stopping a metre away, he points and spits as he shouts, "Are you happy? Do you sleep well at night?"

The next morning I awake suffocating in my collapsed tent. It's 6 AM. During the night anonymous feet have tripped over rocks that were holding down its edges. More barricades have been built, this time inside the farm's perimeter. Callum, a bioengineering student, works on one that blocks roads leading to the site. He wears scuffed black boots and dark army-surplus gear, looking anaemic and thin in the dawn light. He lashes the wall of a child's playhouse to scaffolding with rope and barbed wire, reaching through one of the pink heart-shaped cutouts to tie a knot. "This should slow the bailiff's machines, giving us time to climb onto roofs and chain ourselves on," he says.

Further down the road, rows of tyres bound with barbed wire and studded with nails are threaded onto more scaffolding. Across them the words OUR HOMES confront anyone who passes.

I stuff my tent into a bag. A Gypsy approaches. He wears suit trousers, smart shoes that have seen some wear, and a V-neck woollen sweater. His greying hair is combed back, 1960s-style. "Leave it there," he says, pointing to my tent with his cigarette. "You can stay there as long as you like." I follow him into his caravan to watch the news, beamed from TV cameras just the other side of the fence. The BBC is explaining the situation, showing footage of Gypsies making a last-minute court appearance to plead their case.

Updates are scarce inside Dale Farm. People rely on satellite-TV news and van radios. Most information comes via whispered rumours filtered down from firsthand reports phoned through by Gypsies present in court. The latest gossip is that eviction is coming at noon.

At the front gate I squeeze past a burned-out car filled with concrete. Activists in blue hooded jumpsuits and face masks lie on the floor, their limbs chained inside the vehicles. A young resident, perhaps five years old, pulls her possessions behind

her in a Tinkerbell suitcase. Fences topped with football-size spirals of razor wire create a claustrophobic corridor, the only entrance to the site. Another van blocks the way, its flat tyres and activists chained to it makes it impossible to move. NO PLACE LIKE HOME is painted on its hood in blue capital letters.

Towering 20 or 30 feet above me, sharp metal barricades puncture the sky. The typically introverted residents of Dale Farm are now climbing the ramparts all around to heckle bailiffs and give interviews to countless press people outside. Mothers lean on fences, shouting encouragement to activists. Girls pull younger siblings up to join them. Leaning into a camera lens, one shouts, "We're not going anywhere! This is home! Some of us were born here!" Now people are saying that the cops are flanking them by coming around through a less-fortified side entrance.

Activists hurry away to strengthen other fences and to check tarpaulins that block the view of television cameras on hydraulic lifts filming over the fence. I move closer to the gate, where a girl is slumped awkwardly under a blanket, a chain tied around her neck. A sign warns that if the gate is opened, the chain will break her neck. As I lift my camera to take a shot, I'm pushed away. "Don't photograph now," an activist tells me. "She's having a pee under that blanket."

An injunction against the eviction is awarded, earning the residents five more days of freedom. Music coming from within the farm grows louder, and members of the press are allowed in for interviews. Gypsies and activists stand shoulder to shoulder, congratulating one another, triumphant in their temporary victory. People make beer runs by means of a secret entrance—behind a shed, through a fence, over a wall, behind a house and over a barbed-wire gate.

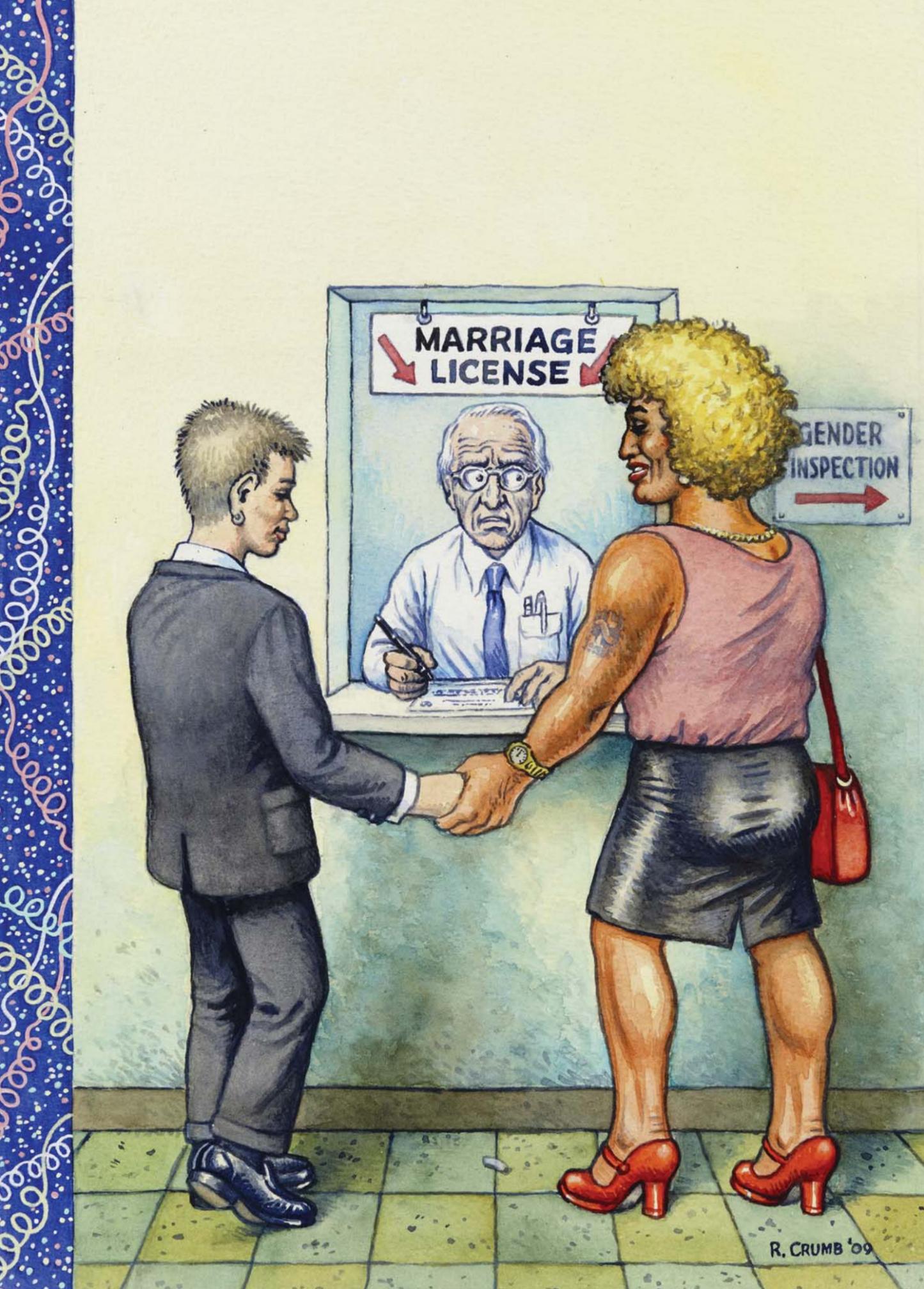
Perhaps the crisis will be averted and this will become one of the numerous milestones for the farm. Many births, deaths and marriages have happened on this soil. It is hallowed

ground. "My brother and sister-in-law burned to death when their caravan caught fire up there," says Patrick, pointing to a vacant pitch 150 feet away. "My father died here too, it was probably old age. But we couldn't get him to hospital in time." As he speaks, his voice softens and he breaks eye contact, staring at the damp tarmac. His wife and children have left, buckling under the stress. Now he prefers to stay on friends' couches.

The legal process grinds on for weeks. Life at Dale Farm slows again. Activists use this lapse in pressure as an excuse to leave—most never return—and more Gypsies decide to move their caravans off-site, fearing the worst. But a dedicated core remain. Judges award more temporary court injunctions, granting the Gypsies time and prolonging the agony. Decisions are adjourned for days as repercussions are considered. An atmosphere of suspicion grows: Gypsies toward activists, activists toward journalists. "Our chances are slim to none," Patrick sighs.

Dale Farm seemed like the perfect place to Patrick. It was private, remote and undesirable to anyone else. "If we can't settle on a scrapyard, then where?" he says. Now private removal companies demolish brick foundations with sledgehammers and pull apart plumbing. Sewage spills across roads as the companies tow away homes of families who have cut their losses.

"I'm not going anywhere. This is my home," says Patrick. Despite appeals, press conferences, protests and demonstrations, Dale Farm has reached the end. Judges are refusing the residents' right to appeal and bailiffs are issuing 48-hour notice of their entrance. A giant crane waits menacingly in an adjacent field and police riot vans materialise. Flocks of activists arrive back at the site, once again chaining their limbs to gates and trucks. Rocks are thrown at scouting bailiffs in the



R. Crumb, Rejected New Yorker Cover, 2009, watercolour, ink and graphite on paper, 14 1/2 x 10 5/8 inches. Courtesy the artist, Paul Morris and David Zwirner, New York. Copyright © Robert Crumb, 2009.

THE GAYEST STORY EVER TOLD

Why Did the 'New Yorker' Reject This R. Crumb Cover?

BY NADJA SAYEJ
ILLUSTRATION BY R. CRUMB
PORTRAIT BY JOHNNY RYAN

In June, I attended the opening week of the Venice Biennale with the intention of interviewing the biggest and brightest art stars for an online show I host and produce. Sadly, none of them would talk to me at length. Or at least their handlers didn't deem me worthy of their time.

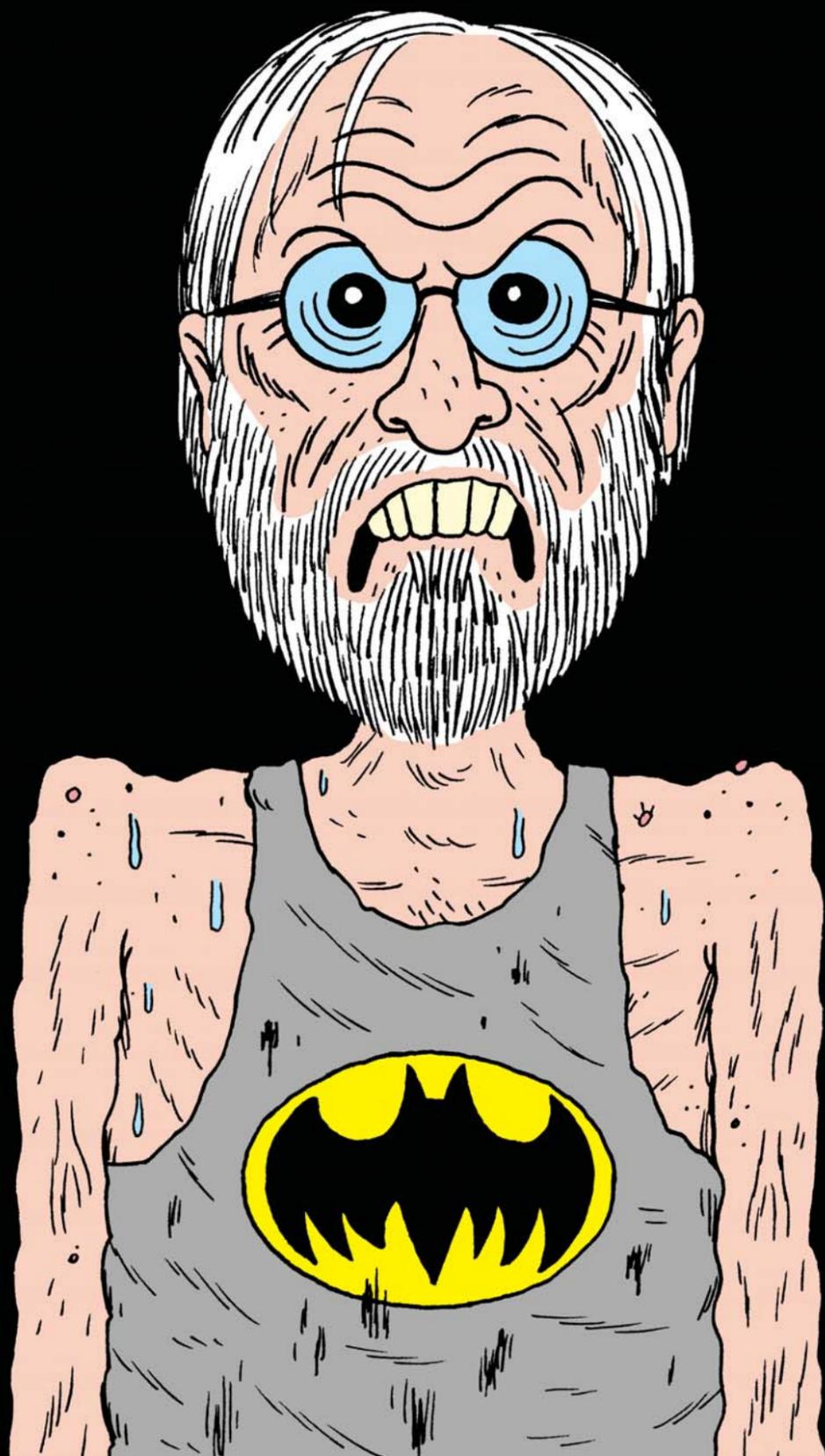
At one point, I elbowed my way into a group of journalists surrounding the red carpet and attempted to corner the acclaimed artist Christian Marclay. All he talked about was how he didn't know how he would manage to get his Golden Lion (the Biennale's award for the best artist featured in its main exhibition) back home. I kept my suggestion of maybe checking an extra bag to myself. Later I saw Swiss fancy-pants artist Thomas "Hershey Highway" Hirschhorn, who is truly a great talent, but a rather disappointing conversationalist. He literally had nothing to say. The closest I got to a true score was a fleeting moment with John Waters, whose PR mafia had been profusely apologising all day for cockblocking me. But when I finally confronted him, the most he could muster was "Hurry, before they see us!" as he posed for a quick picture with me.

On the flight home to Berlin, I was digging through my bag when I noticed a red book I had forgotten I'd acquired. It was the exhibition catalogue from the Biennale's famed Danish Pavilion, which seemed like a shitty consolation prize, until I flipped to the bookmark stuck between its pages.

The cardboard placeholder featured a colour comic by R. Crumb depicting a drag queen and king holding hands in front of a marriage-licence clerk. On its flip side was a blurb from Crumb explaining that the image was intended to be the cover of a 2009 issue of the *New Yorker* but was rejected for reasons unknown. Although I was excited to obtain such a rare and odd artefact, things didn't quite add up.

Besides this obscure bookmark, the would-be *New Yorker* cover—like Crumb—was nowhere to be found at the Venice Biennale. Instead, his incendiary "When the Niggers Take Over America!" (which first appeared in a 1993 issue of *Weirdo*) was on display. Was someone or something trying to keep the *New Yorker* controversy under wraps? I imagined Sy Hersh appearing out of thin air, with his hand stuffed deep in his trench coat pocket: "Stick these in a book no one's going to read—or else..."

Before further developing my conspiracy theory, I decided to get in touch with Crumb to enquire about the rejected-cover debacle. If there's one universal constant that we can all count on, it's that R. Crumb is incapable of feeding anyone bullshit.



VICE: I was very impressed by a bookmark that features one of your illustrations—one I had never seen before. I got it at the Venice Biennale.

R. Crumb: Bookmark? I don't know anything about this bookmark.

At the Danish Pavilion they were handing out a book called *Speech Matters*, which shared the title of the exhibition. Inside there's a bunch of boring stuff about the exhibiting artists, but my copy also contained a bookmark featuring what appears to be a gay or transgendered couple registering for a marriage certificate. They sent me the book.

But they didn't send you the bookmark?

No.

Did the rejection offend you?

I'm in a privileged position because I don't need the money. When you go to the cover editor's office, you notice that the walls are covered with rejected *New Yorker* covers. Sometimes there are two rejected covers for each issue. I don't know what the usual policy is, but I was given no explanation from David Remnick, the editor in chief, who makes the final decisions.

Has the *New Yorker* attempted to commission work from you since this cover?

Yeah, Françoise [Mouly, the art editor] keeps mailing me these form letters, which they send to various artists they like to use. It says something like, "OK, so here are the topics for upcoming covers." They send it out a couple of times a year or something. But it's a form letter, not a personal letter.

Did you receive an apology?

An apology? I don't expect an apology. But if I'm going to work for them I need to know the criteria for why they accept or reject work. The art I made, it only really works as a *New Yorker* cover. There's really no other place for it. But they did pay me beforehand—decent money. I have no complaint there. I asked Françoise what was going on with it and she said, "Oh, Remnick hasn't decided yet..." and he changed his mind several times about it. I asked why and she didn't know. Several months passed. Then one day, I got the art back in the mail, no letter, no nothing.

Can you clarify the genders of the people on the cover, or is that giving away some sort of secret?

The verdict isn't in; that's the whole point. Banning gay marriage is ridiculous because how are you supposed to tell what fucking gender anybody is if

they're bending it around? It could be anything—a she-male marrying a transsexual, or what the hell. People are capable of any sexual thing. To ban their marriage because someone doesn't like the idea of them both being the same sex, that's ridiculous. That was the whole point of the cover; here is this official from the marriage-licence bureau, and he can't tell if he's seeing a man and a woman or two women. What the hell are they? You can't tell what they are! I had the idea of making them both look unisex, no gender at all. On TV once I saw this person who is crusading against sexual definition, and you could not tell if this person was male or female—completely asexual. I was originally going to do the cover that way, but when I drew that it just looked uninteresting so I decided it should be more lurid somehow.

A drag queen and a drag king getting married.

Whatever they are.

Do you think the *New Yorker* is homophobic?

I think it's the opposite. The *New Yorker* is majorly politically correct, terrified of offending some gay person. I asked this gay friend of mine, Paul Morris, "If you saw this cover on the *New Yorker*, would you be offended?" He said, "I'd wanna hang it on my wall!"

Do you know if they commissioned another artist for that particular idea—gay marriage?

On that subject? No, I don't think so. I don't think they ended up having a cover about gay marriage at all. And once the topic is no longer hot, they pass on it. I don't expect an apology but just to be treated like an equal, you know? The majority of artists will bend over backward to cater to editors, but I'm spoiled. I had total freedom to draw what I wanted, starting in the hippie era. You could print anything in those underground papers. Anything.

That was a type of freedom few experienced.

There was no money in it, but the freedom was incredible. You didn't have to answer to any kind of editorial policy. Even after my stuff became popular, I continued to work completely uncensored. Then the *New Yorker* called, and when the *New Yorker* calls it's a big thrill. It's big-time: 2 million circulation, blah blah blah, and they pay really well. I expect certain limitations from the *New Yorker*; I can't show explicit sex, foul language, or at least not *too* foul language. You expect these things in a mainstream publication—I can live with that. The *New Yorker* has a usual policy of having artists send in rough drafts of what you want to do, and the editor

OPPOSITE PAGE:

We asked Johnny Ryan to draw a portrait of R. Crumb because he is one of Johnny's heroes.

“I just don’t need the work bad enough to have to worry about what makes David Remnick like or dislike something.”

can then suggest changes, and I told them right from the start: “I don’t do that, I can’t work that way. I will send you finished pieces, and you can take it or leave it, accept it as is or reject it.” They replied that they were OK with that.

Good for you.

This was the first time they rejected something of mine. I could live with it if they gave me a reason. If not, I’m second-guessing the editor, and...

And it’s a waste of your time.

Well, you know, I just don’t need the work bad enough to have to worry about what makes David Remnick like or dislike something.

Let’s move on to a more pleasant topic. You’re releasing a ten-volume Taschen book project next year?

Actually it’s all sketchbook material. Taschen thinks on a grandiose level. They wanted to do a giant book containing all of my work, like a fucking 100-pound book with everything I ever did in it, and I thought, “No, we’re not going to do that, forget it.”

Why not?

Why? For one thing, have you ever seen these Taschen big books? They’re ridiculous. You can’t even read it. You have to sit the book on a podium, turning the pages like a giant Bible in a church. That’s ridiculous, I don’t want anything like that. But I did agree to do this sketchbook project. Basically, it’s sketchbook material from the 1960s until 2011. It’s probably going to end up being 12 books instead of ten because I’m too egotistical to reject my own stuff. I don’t know when it’s going to come out.

OK, one last thing: I heard somewhere that you don’t do on-camera interviews anymore. Why?

It’s just a big fucking production, you know? Actually, if I’m going to be somewhere in New York and someone says, “Can I come interview you [with a camera] while you’re there giving a talk,” then OK. But I don’t want people coming to my house. I don’t like the way I look on TV. It’s torture having these fucking cameras in my face; I hate having my picture taken. I refuse to have professional photographers take pictures of me. They can be very aggressive. I hate them.

I’ll have you know that I’m doing this interview in my lingerie and you’re missing out. We could’ve conducted this via video chat.

Gee, yeah. Maybe we should get Skype or something.

I have really, really big breasts and resemble the women you like to draw.

How is your butt? Is it big too?

No, it’s quite small. I have been told that it’s cute, but I have double-Ds. People notice my boobs before they see my face.

Especially if you’re tall because the big tits are right in your face.

Exactly. I’m 5’10”. I’m going to have to mail you sexy pictures of myself.

Oh, please do. Do you have my address? I’ll give it to you. Are you ready to write it down? Don’t mention anything of where I live. I don’t want anyone showing up at my door.

Especially video people!

Yeah, especially them. *WTF*

This text, written by R. Crumb, appears on the backside of the bookmark that was tucked inside the exhibition catalogue for the Danish Pavilion at the 2011 Venice Biennale: “It was suggested to me by the cover editor of the New Yorker that I make a cover for an issue to come out in June 2009. As it was a hot issue at the time, it was suggested that perhaps I could do a cover about gay marriage, which I then proceeded to do. Later, the cover editor explained to me that the chief editor, David Remnick, went back and forth, first accepting my cover design, then rejecting it, then accepting it, then rejecting it. This went on for many months. I heard nothing for a long time. Finally, the artwork was returned to me without explanation, nor was an explanation ever forthcoming. Remnick would not give the reason for rejecting the cover, either to the cover editor, or to me. For this reason I refuse to do any more work for the New Yorker. I felt insulted, not so much by the rejection as for the lack of any reason given. I can’t work for a publication that won’t give you any guidelines or criterion for accepting or rejecting a work submitted. Does the editor want to keep you guessing or what? I think part of the problem is the enormous power vested in the position of chief editor of the New Yorker. He has been ‘spoiled’ by the power that he wields. So many artists are so eager to do covers for the New Yorker that they are devalued in the eyes of David Remnick. They are mere pawns. He is not compelled to take pains to show them any respect. Any artist is easily replaced by another. Fortunately for me, I do not feel that I need the New Yorker badly enough to put up with such brusque treatment at the hands of its editor-in-chief. The heck with him!”



2011 FALL / WINTER COLLECTION

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ORDURE-À-PORTER

Misha Koptev Is the World's Best Trash Tailor

PHOTOS BY SYNCHRODOGS

Synchrodogs is the collaborative moniker used by Ukrainian photographers Tania Shcheglova and Roman Noven, an adorable couple who say they are "dating hard", which (in our minds) involves pretending to be wood nymphs and having naked adventures in the forest with lots of tongue kissing, heavy petting and eating all sorts of forbidden fruit growing from trees unknown to modern science.

Tania emailed us recently to say, "Hey, we just took a bunch of pictures of this 42-year-old guy named Misha Koptev who makes clothing out of random crap he finds wherever." While most people who wear clothes they find in bins are known as "tramps", we were certain the young Synchrodogs would have nothing to do with such riffraff. They tracked down Misha (not an easy task because he is "drunk all the time") in Lugansk, a crime-ridden city in eastern Ukraine with a population of 450,000. Misha's been making clothes since 1993, but he doesn't have a job or money, and one might argue that he doesn't know shit about fashion because he can't sew, didn't study design and doesn't have access to TV, the internet or magazines. He told Synchrodogs that "inspiration is bullshit" and proceeded to lock them in a room of his mother's apartment, along with two 60-year-old gay men and some of his creations strewn among rubbish, dirt, bugs and animal bones. Then Misha left to have a drink with a cute boy and didn't come back. 









38 Great Eastern Street, London, EC2A 3ES

FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER
CLUB.THE.MAMMOTH
Crushed Beaks *Live*
We Are Animal *Live*
Canute *Live*
Club.The.Mammoth DJ
Entry: Free

SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER
LOTTAROX PRESENTS:
Vulkano *Live*
Native Tongue *Live*
Secret Special Guests *Live*
Dec Rusche DJ Babeshadow DJ
Entry: Free

MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER
THIS IS NOT
REVOLUTION ROCK
Axis Of *Live*
Our Lost Infantry *Live*
Entry: Free

WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER
AIHN PRESENTS
Calvinball *Live*
One Night Stand In
North Dakota *Live*
Entry: Free

THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER
PAINT IT BLACK
Ghost Outfit *Live*
Holiday Shores *Live*
Torches *Live*
Entry: Free

FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER
BALLAD OF...
MAGAZINE LAUNCH
The Balladettes DJ
Do It Again DJ
Entry: Free

SATURDAY 19 NOVEMBER
PNKSLM
Black Mekon *Live*
The Castillians *Live*
Atomic Suplex *Live*
Entry: Free

MONDAY 21 NOVEMBER
PINK MIST: THE XCERTS
"SLACKERPOP EP"
LAUNCH PARTY
The Xcerts *Live*
Straight Lines *Live*
Crushing Blows *Live*
Entry: Free

TUESDAY 22 NOVEMBER
PINK MIST
Tangled Hair *Live* & U&I *Live*
Love Among
The Mannequins *Live*
Suffer Like G Did *Live*
Entry: Free

WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER
RECORDS RECORDS
RECORDS RECORDS
Throwing Up *Live* Paws *Live*
French Kissing *Live*
The Callas *Live*
Entry: Free

THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER
VICE ISSUE LAUNCH
Trailer Trash Tracys *Live*
Mozart Parties *Live* Vice DJ
Entry: Free

FRIDAY 25 NOVEMBER
FRIDAY NIGHT FIST FIGHT
Age Of Consent *Live*
Silverclub *Live*
The Recusants *Live*
The Revolutionary Spirit *Live*
Entry: Free

SATURDAY 26 NOVEMBER
STREETS OF BEIGE
Anenon *Live*
Yosi Horikawa *Live*
Infinite Potentials DJ
Laurent Fintoni DJ
Bare Girls *Live*
Parker x JJ DJ
Entry: Free

MONDAY 28 NOVEMBER
THE OLD BLUE LAST
PRESENTS
Hooray For Earth *Live*
Elephant *Live*
Abi Wade *Live*
Entry: Free

TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER
STROLL ON PRESENTS
Young Fathers *Live*
Dandy Riots DJ
Entry: £5

WEDNESDAY 30 NOVEMBER
GNAT'S CLIT RECORDINGS
That Fucking Tank *Live*
Plus Special Guests
Entry: Free

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

No Pain In Pop | Off Modern | Leo Deus | Pop Scene | God Don't Like It | Rough Trade | Baby Love
Sleeping Giants - Movie Screening | Danielle | Zoo Music Girl | My Ex Boyfriend's Records | Katy Bones

For full listings visit theoldbluelast.com

VICE













MIKE JUDGE IS MY XANAX

*Or Whatever People Take to Not
Hate Everything All the Time*

BY ROCCO CASTORO
PHOTOS BY TERRY RICHARDSON

I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for Mike Judge. By that I mean in a cab, on the way back from a fancy hotel in midtown Manhattan, where an hour ago I watched Mike and Terry Richardson hold cardboard Beavis and Butt-Head masks over their faces and chuckle like teenage idiots while everyone else in the room giggled their asses off.

But I also mean I wouldn't be *me*, a highly cynical person who, at the end of the day, would rather ridicule the absurdity of this often-terrible world than cry about it or become a serial killer. You could say that Mike's work—especially *Beavis and Butt-Head* and his feature films *Office Space* and *Idiocracy*—served as coping mechanisms of sorts, visual antidepressants that at various times in my life helped me say, "This guy's making a good living by making fun of all this crap. Things can't be *that* bad." I think it's safe to assume that most of the people whose company I enjoy feel the same way, whether or not they want to get that obnoxiously analytic about it.

When news came earlier this year that *Beavis and Butt-Head* would return to MTV, I was excited. Then I started to wonder whether today's kids would get it—whether the combination of pop culture's current state of awfulness and the fact that internet commenting has turned young people into defensive pussies who never have to deal with retribution for their half-formed opinions would mean they'd take one look at the show and say, "I like what they're making fun of, and this makes me feel stupid, so fuck these guys." Either way, I'm going to laugh *really* hard at all of it.

So I was ecstatic when Mike, who I've been chasing since last year's Larfs Issue, agreed to an interview. When he said he'd illustrate this month's cover I pooped my pants (just a little bit). And when I emailed Terry to see if he could drop whatever he was doing for a last-minute shoot with Mike, he replied minutes later: "Holy shit... me, Mike, and Beavis and Butt-Head together? Sounds awesome! What time do you have him?" Then I threw up all over my keyboard from overexcitement.

Thank God I was able to keep it together when it came time for the interview.

VICE: I'm a little weirded out by meeting you.

Mike Judge: *[laughs]* Because I'm weird?

No, that's a good thing. It's just that your work has informed so much of my sense of humour, especially as a kid. My whole generation, really. You made it OK for me to let people know how much I thought certain things sucked, and laugh about it. How old are you?

Twenty-nine.

Yeah, I've been getting that a lot lately—people saying, "I grew up on your stuff" or "I grew up being told not to watch it." Versions of that.

My parents were cool enough to let me watch it, but I did go to Catholic school and the nuns there totally didn't approve of shows like *The Simpsons*, and especially not *Beavis and Butt-Head*. You went to Catholic school too, right?

Yeah, a Catholic high school. I went to public school until ninth grade. Actually—I just heard about this—but back when the show came out, the school's newspaper said some negative stuff about me, but now they claim me. So...

How do you think kids who never watched the original series are going to react to the new show? I feel that the culture of this generation sucks so badly that they may be too far-gone to understand the nuances of *Beavis and Butt-Head's* commentary. Or, more likely, I'm just getting old and crotchety.

When I started doing the show, I was already old. I was pushing 30; about your age, so obviously I already felt like I was older than the characters. But it's weird, even at the time in '92, I remember people at MTV would say that AC/DC and Metallica were old references. They were like, "Maybe it should be Nirvana or Pearl Jam or something else, you know?" It was already unhip to begin with, but to me it's more like a state of mind than a cultural reference to a particular time period, even though there are some specific references. So it's about going to that same place, except now I'm watching *Jersey Shore* and *16 and Pregnant*. The last episode was 14 years ago, so yeah, things have changed, but...

But they haven't.

No, they haven't, and the other characters haven't. Like, I was looking at the hippie teacher character, and back when I first did the show I thought, "Are there really guys like this anymore?" Then I looked around and there were plenty of hippies in tie-dyed shirts, and it's the same thing today. There are other parts that we had to adjust a little bit, but *The Simpsons* are still wearing the same clothes and have the same hair and have been on this long.

How about MTV? It's basically unrecognisable from the network it was 15 years ago, and it seems like only tweens and douchebags watch it now. Are you working with any of the same people as before?

Well, Judy McGrath just left, which was kind of a bummer. She'd been running the whole thing since I started. But as

for everyone else, it's kind of the same bunch of people. It's funny—when I did *King of The Hill* over at Fox, they were firing everybody every few months. At MTV, the people at the top have been the same, so it's like going back to the same place, except the network has obviously changed a lot. You have these executives saying, "We've got all these shows like *Teen Mom* that are watched by teenage girls. That's our demo. We need guys watching us." I think part of the reason they wanted to bring the show back was to see if they could get more of a male audience again.

Everyone's into revivals right now. *Arrested Development* is returning, bands are reuniting to tour behind albums released in the mid-90s. I guess that's because everyone is—*[laughs]* Running out of ideas. I guess that is happening. *Arrested Development* is one that people keep watching—myself included—and it kind of gets better the more you watch it. There are so many networks, and a lot of people looking for content. It seems a lot of shows are failing, and you look at something like *Arrested Development* and think, "Why not bring it back?" I've heard that they've wanted to do that for years now.

So were you planning on making new *Beavis and Butt-Head* episodes for a long time, or did MTV approach you?

It started with MTV approaching me. They'd bring it up every year or two. They wanted a movie, and then there was a while when they were talking about a series, but I hadn't heard about it for a bit. My manager would occasionally say, "You know, they call me from time to time," but this last time it came as a full-court press, like, "Would you want to bring the show back?" *King of the Hill* was done, and I'd just done a live-action movie *[Extract]* and didn't want to do that again anytime soon. I had





written down ideas about a sequel to the movie, and ideas in general over the years, but I always felt like I wasn't quite done with it. When I quit, I was burned out. I wanted to do other things, but I never felt like, "I'm completely burying that. I'm done with it." I also wouldn't have thought that, 14 years later, I'd start doing it again. But it feels right for some reason.

Did you struggle getting back into doing their voices?

I never do the voices if I don't have to. I like doing it when I'm doing it, but it's not anything that I do in my spare time.

Was it something that you needed to practise?

Yeah, definitely. I don't like listening to myself after I record. But I did record, listen to it and watch some old episodes. To me, it sounds the same. But that's another thing, I think by the time I'm 60, I might just sound like Beavis all the time, so that's another good reason to do it sooner rather than later.

I noticed that the show's logo now says "Mike Judge's Beavis and Butt-Head" rather than "MTV's". I feel like I've seen it this way on the DVD boxes of the old episodes, but it was surprising to see that it was going to carry over to TV. Got any good dirt on this subtle but important change?

When [my relationship with MTV] began, I had these two two-minute shorts with Beavis and Butt-Head that I licensed to *Liquid Television*. Then MTV wanted to buy the characters from me—they didn't say what exactly they wanted to do with them—and so I negotiated for a while and thought, "It takes six to eight weeks to do two minutes when I do everything by myself," and I was kind of done. I'd produced two shorts and made a few thousand off of them selling them to festivals and *Liquid Television*, but that was it and I was a nobody at the time. So I sold it to them outright, and then they wanted me to do the show so I ended up getting paid that way. But at some point they decided, "We're gonna call it *MTV's Beavis and Butt-Head*." I was like, "Really? I created this in my house with pencil and paper and cels and film and... *MTV's Beavis and Butt-Head*? But whatever, you own it, that's fine." Years later the movie came out and they wanted a sequel. I was unhappy with some stuff, and I just did a fuck-you negotiation with them [*laughs*]. At one point my lawyer said, "You want to ask them to call it *Mike Judge's Beavis and Butt-Head*?" and I said, "Yeah, go for it." I kind of forgot that we agreed to that, and then when we were redesigning the logo I was like, "Wow, OK." Normally I wouldn't splash my name all over something, but if it's between *MTV's Beavis and Butt-Head* or *Mike Judge's Beavis and Butt-Head*, I'll take it.

When you submitted those first shorts to *Liquid Television*, did you ever think a cartoon about two borderline-retarded school friends would become such a phenomenon?

That's a good question, because I was just making these homemade cartoons, and I didn't want to get too delusional about it. On one level I thought, "Oh, that'd be cool if I got with some other people making films in Dallas and met some people doing comedy, or got a job running an animation camera. I was just trying to do something, so I was making these films.

With *Beavis and Butt-Head* I did at one point think, "Oh, this could maybe be characters that someone might want to take to another level and do something with." Then suddenly I see this show that comes on, *Liquid Television*, and I was like "You've gotta be kidding. This is too good to be true. Wouldn't it be awesome if I could get something on there?" To me, it was just an incredible dream come true for them to run my shorts. But in the back of my mind I was thinking, "I should do stuff that could maybe be taken to the next level," because *The Simpsons* had just become this huge thing, along with *Ren & Stimpy*.

"Anytime you hear an executive talk about being 'edgy' or 'dark', it's usually something that sucks and loses everybody money."

There was a lot of controversy surrounding cartoons in the 90s. People were losing their shit over the idea that they didn't necessarily have to be made for kids, and subjects could be tackled in the animated world that would probably be off-limits or seem weird in a live-action show. But is it even possible to piss people off anymore? No one even seemed to care when Cartman made chilli out of that kid's parents. I feel like people would've freaked out if it happened 15 years ago. How do you up the ante?

I never think of it that way. When I first started taking meetings in Hollywood, anytime you hear an executive talk about being "edgy" or "dark", it's usually something that sucks and loses everybody money. Sometimes, when you get a good idea and it happens to have some crazy element to it that's going to piss people off, then sure, it works. But I don't start with that in mind. Back then people just had it in their heads that a cartoon is for kids. It's not that way anymore, but at the time it was. Even *The Simpsons*—people probably don't remember how controversial that was. Bart was the underachiever, and that was just a big, "Oh, how dare you have a cartoon character calling himself an underachiever. Everyone should be an overachiever!" But there was stuff at animation festivals that was just beyond anything that you would even see now [*laughs*]. It was that crazy, funny stuff. Right around that time, at the end of the 80s and beginning of the 90s, there was this thing happening with cartoons and animation. We had this generation of people my age, and we'd all watched the old Warner Bros. stuff growing up, which was amazing. Then cartoons got horrible for a while until *The Tracy Ullman Show* and *The Simpsons* came out of nowhere. The idea that there was a cartoon with great stories, with funny and great characters that were relevant, was kind of mind-boggling.

Can Beavis say "fire" again?

Yes, he can say "fire".

Good. Kids need to burn more shit down these days. Another thing I was wondering: Is Daria coming back?

I've been asked that question so much lately that I was thinking maybe we should bring her back. I always liked that character, but my producers at the time said, "You know, we're thinking of spinning this show off," and I thought, "Oh, that's a good idea." But they became determined to do it without me, I guess, so they went and hired all these people—I had no idea. So I was a little pissed off about that, and I just disassociated myself with it. I liked the character, and I know they had a couple of great writers on that show, so it must have been pretty good, but, yeah, a lot of people seem to want that character back.

"I've got better at filmmaking in general, and thought, 'I'd like to go back and do *Beavis and Butt-Head*.'"

I liked her better on *Beavis and Butt-Head*, for the record. But a lot of people would probably disagree with that.

I liked her on *Beavis and Butt-Head*. Everyone on the show is portrayed negatively across the board. Daria was the only one who was occasionally not. I liked that interaction with her and them. So yeah, I might have to bring her back.

Someone told me that some of the story ideas for the new *Beavis and Butt-Head* came from uncompleted episodes of *King of the Hill*. Is that true?

Not really from *King of the Hill*. Just seeing something around, I'd go, "Oh that would be a good idea." And doing movies and *King of the Hill*, I think I've got better at filmmaking in general, and thought, "I'd like to go back and do *Beavis and Butt-Head*." I knew that it'd be easier now to get it right, from a filmmaking perspective. When I did those initial shorts, I didn't know how to stage things, or what "crossing the line" meant—there were all of these things I learned as I went.

I also heard that if things got too racy for MTV that, this time around, you'd put them online. Have they freaked out about anything to that degree yet?

Not yet. Came close to it [laughs].

Can you divulge?

I'm trying to remember exactly what it was. It was something where they were watching one of these shows like *16 and Pregnant* and the MTV folks were like, "Well, the producers of the show aren't happy with this or that," and I'm like, "Well, all right, I'm unhappy with you telling me I can't put it in there [laughs], and I'm a producer of this show, so we'll just put it on YouTube." You can do that now. Everyone's putting my stuff on YouTube, so...

Because everyone loves it. But I imagine it can be a headache to deal with sometimes.

It's good. The only thing that's a bummer is that the very first thing I ever animated—they call it track-reading animation,

when you follow the lip sync and you animate to that. I did that with a stopwatch, which took forever. I got it perfect, and now it's on YouTube for the entire world to see but it's out of sync [laughs]. It drives me crazy. I'm flattered that it's on there; I just wish it were in sync.

Speaking of YouTube, it's about the only place where people watch music videos now. I don't think MTV even shows them at 4 AM anymore. I'm hoping *Beavis and Butt-Head* will still be watching new and weird videos that you don't see elsewhere, and I always wondered if you handpicked them or if you had someone who would trawl through all of that stuff for you.

Most of them I handpicked, but I did have some people who worked on the show do some trawling for me. We would get sent tons of stuff once the show was a hit and people saw what was going on. It's kind of the same with the new series. There are actually a lot of really cool music videos out there right now, even though no one plays them on TV anymore. In fact, as someone who has seen a gazillion of them, I'd argue that they're better now than they were back then.

So you have encyclopaedic music video knowledge, but something people might not know about you is that you also have a degree in physics. Does that ever come in handy?

There's some technical stuff maybe that, after you've studied physics, just seems easy. There was a time, after a test screening of *Office Space*, when a Fox executive was trying to make a point about one of the statistics, and when you do physics, in thermodynamics, you learn statistics inside and out, or pretty well. So I was able to go, "No, that's not what that number means; it's this, this and this." I lectured them all on statistics after a screening that didn't get a very high number.

What was the statistic?

It was some kind of data that they used to try to tell me that I should get rid of the gangsta rap.

Really? What a giant crock of shit.

They were fighting so hard to get me to take it out, so I went out on a limb and said, "OK, let's specifically ask the focus group at this next screening, and if they don't like it, I'll take it out." So this group of 19- to 30-year-olds or whatever said it was great. The woman running the thing was trying so hard to pollute the thing. She was like, "What'd you think about the music?" And they were like, "Oh, it's great!" "But what about the gangsta rap?" And then they said, "Oh man, it was great!" "But maybe there was *too much* of it?" They wouldn't give her anything. Not one bit of negativity came up, and this focus group saved me.

I feel like that very sort of situation is exactly why so many people love your stuff. I wouldn't say you're an underdog, because that's not entirely accurate, but it seems that you always prevail in some roundabout fashion that really sticks it to your detractors.

I'd feel better if it was a huge hit out of the gate, but, actually, yeah. I grew up watching lots of TV, but not so many movies



until later in life. I was brought up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, completely away from any entertainment people in New York or LA, and I always kept getting this feeling that they're slightly out of touch with the way most of us think and feel. And when something does happen that you can relate to, especially stuff that's about everyday life, you really appreciate it. I did. I guess part of it is me thinking that way, trying to do stuff that maybe Hollywood is a little too out of touch to do. That's probably why I gravitate to stuff like *King of the Hill* or *Office Space*. It's more about everyday, normal people. But yeah, I guess my movies have a delayed reaction thing going.

“With *Idiocracy*, that really was a case of ditching a movie... I always hated articles that said how much the movie made, but not that it was in only 11 theatres.”

It's the same thing with *Idiocracy*, which is one of my favourite movies of all time because it's very frank, in a hilarious way, about how dumb people are. But it never had a wide theatrical release. I've heard tons of rumours, but can you set the record straight?

I can tell you what I know. We locked and finished the movie and put it in the can, and it didn't come out until over a year later. So by the time that it got around to marketing, I was completely out of touch with them. I got a couple of calls. They showed me a couple of trailers—some of them I thought were good, others I thought were horrible. This always happens. It happened with *Office Space* too. They sent me a tape with 13 trailers on it. At first I was really happy, and I go, “I like all of these except No 3 and No 11. All the rest are great.” I call them up, “Hey, these are great,” and they go, “Yeah, we really like No 3 and No 11.”

So they tested the trailers, and they didn't do well—I wouldn't have liked them either if I were in a test group. Then they looked at it and said, “OK, let's use *Office Space* as a business model. It made us a ton of money, but it was like three or four years later. What did we do wrong there? We spent money on the release and trailers, so let's not do that this time.” But you could argue that maybe they did the right thing. It seems to be making money now, just like *Office Space*. But with *Idiocracy*, that really was a case of ditching a movie. They put it in maybe like 11 theatres. I always hated articles that said how much the movie made, but not that it was in only 11 theatres. Not only that, but if you looked it up on Moviefone, it was still listed under “Untitled Mike Judge Movie Project” [laughs]. They didn't even go through the effort of entering a title into whatever database they pull that stuff from.

The reason that movie is so important—and probably so controversial—is because it helps people like me cope with the

rest of the world. It's like, “Well, at least it's not that bad yet, and I'll be dead before it gets to *this*.”

I've got to watch it again, because I haven't seen it since it came out. Over the last year, so many people have been talking to me about it. I saw it a million times in the editing room, obsessed over every frame of it, but I'll have people quote it to me now, and I'll think, “Yeah, I should check it out again.”

How do you feel about how *The Goode Family* was handled? I'm one of three creators of that show, and I kind of let my partners do it. I was busy making *Extract*. I did do some of the drawings and the voice of the main guy. It seemed like they promoted it right, the show just didn't work for whatever reason. That happens. It seems like with animation—or maybe it's true with everything—but especially with animation, shows are either a complete sensation, a phenomenon, or they just don't work at all. If you look at *Family Guy*, *South Park*, *The Simpsons*—they all have that thing where it clicks like crazy.

What about how *Extract* was promoted? I remember hearing quite a bit about it leading up to its release. Yeah, no excuses there, really [laughs]. The thing is, though, it was a very low-budget movie. We used private investors, and everyone seemed happy.

It seemed like everything went right for once.

It actually did. That was about as good of an experience as I think you can have making a movie—where you're getting up at 5 AM and all that stuff. It went well from beginning to end. I had a great crew, great producers and everything.

Will you be making another live-action movie anytime soon? I'm going to take a break from it. I think *Extract* was around an eight-week shoot? Yeah, that was about right for me [laughs]. *Idiocracy* was ten or 12 weeks, and that gets a little rough. But, yeah, it was actually a good experience. The thing I don't like is the casting process. Actors come in, they want the part, and sometimes you want to tell actors that they're great even though they're not right for it, and it's going to sound like BS. It's like going on an awkward date every five minutes for eight hours. It's really tough.

One last and very important question that I thought you might be able to clear up: I've had a long-standing debate with a couple of friends about the definition of the word *chode*. Some people think it's a dick that's fatter than it is long, while others are adamant that it's another word for “taint”—the perineum. What do you think it means? Or maybe it's better to ask what *Beavis and Butt-Head* think it means.

Well, like I said, I grew up in Albuquerque, and what I heard is that it just means “penis”—it's short for “chorizo”, and it came from the *vatos*. That's how I heard it growing up: the cholos were like, “chode—short for ‘chorizo’.” And the taint, you know where that comes from, right?

Taint your balls, taint your asshole. 'Tis in between.
Yep. 

Watch highlights from our interview with Mike Judge in a new episode of VICE Meets... on VICE.com.

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WHAT WAS IT ALL ABOUT?

BY BOB ODENKIRK

The Occupy Wall Street protests in New York's Zuccotti Park are more of a long-term affair than initially planned. Weeks passed, crowds came and went, signs were waved, rested, repainted then rewaved. Chants were chanted before dissolving into general hubbub, then new chants rose up and echoed through the canyons of America's financial mecca.

In an attempt to trace the evolution of the ongoing uprising, we here at VICE dug through the stinky rubbish and discovered a much-waved sign. Then, using super-toxic paint thinners that burned our brain cells to smithereens, we carefully and painstakingly removed each layer of protest, one at a time, revealing the messages underneath. By doing so, we thought that perhaps we would learn where it all began, where it ended and how it got to wherever it was meant to be... and have fewer brain cells!



The first message, concealed under layers of paint and vitriol, was a simple expression of frustration at the corporate and bank bailouts of recent years.

Note the use of the dollar sign in place of the letter s! Very clever! It's also the only element that stayed consistent throughout the many layers.

Carbon dating told us that on the third day of the protest someone painted over everything with this extremely generalised "attack".

According to forensic science, the previous message was only on display for a few hours before it was seized by the super-specific hipster influx of the second weekend, which resulted in this.



As the days dragged on, frustration mounted, made clear by the sign's next iteration.

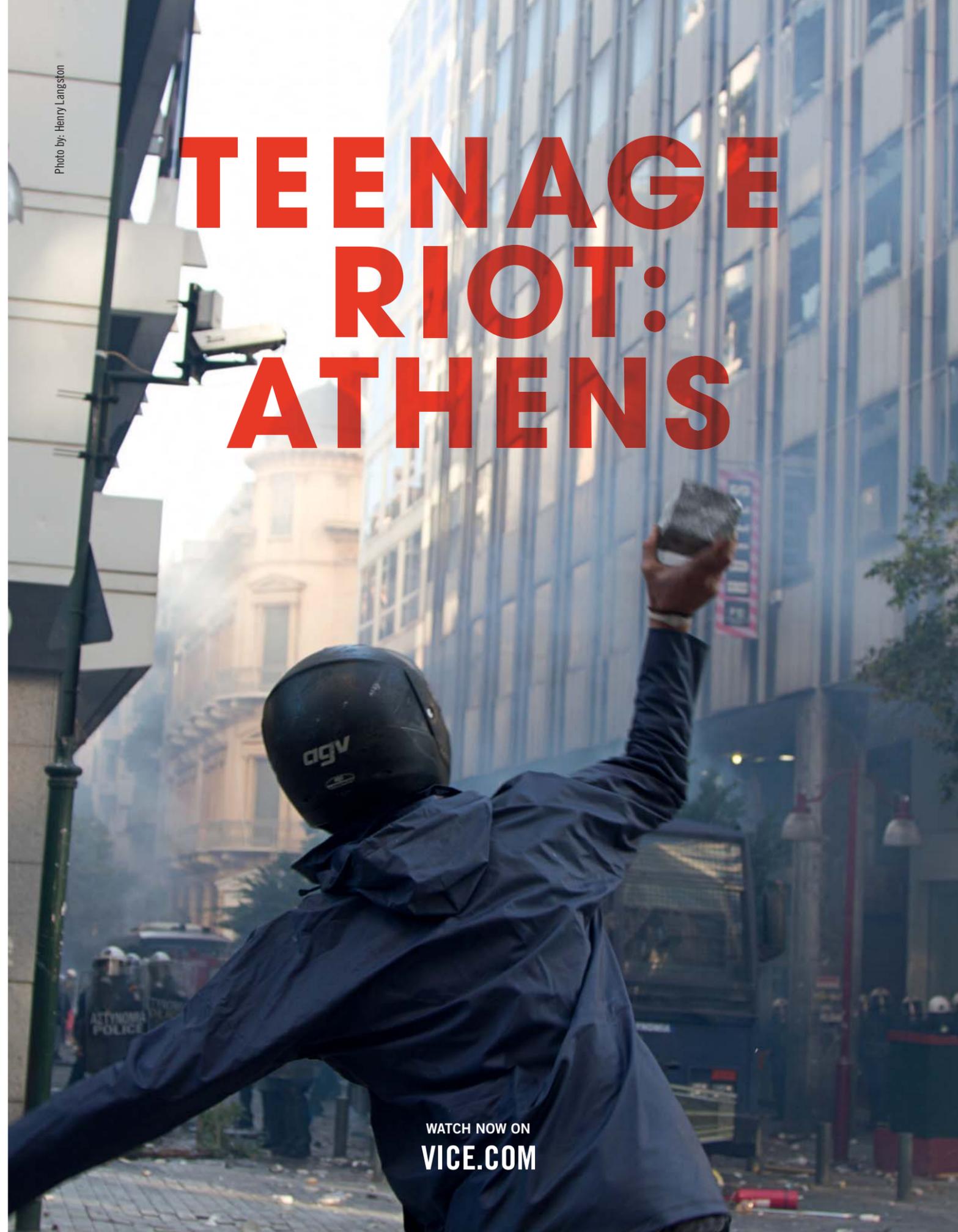
Around this time the NYPD began to burst at the seams, eliciting this hastily scrawled penmanship disaster.

After a flurry of anger and rage, exhaustion set in, inspiring this plaintive display of reason.

And finally, any pretence to a higher calling was abandoned and the profit motive overtook even our valiant frontline.

Photo by: Henry Langston

TEENAGE RIOT: ATHENS



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TOUPÉE: JANET

BY BRETT GELMAN, PHOTOS BY JANICZA BRAVO



I smell my blood. It smells like shit. If a vampire came along he'd probably turn the other way. I'm an open sewer and I'm dying, and they're laughing. Mandela and Artichoke are laughing at me. They're taking off their clothes and giggling their fucking heads off. I thought Artichoke looked a little old to be a child, but the hair on his dick proves it.

Mandela's in fucking stitches over it all: "He's not our kid." "No shit." I can barely squeeze the two words out of my quivering, dying mouth.

"I gave that little shit up for adoption the minute I shit him out. You think I'd keep anything that was a part of you? No, stupid, Artichoke ain't our son. Artichoke's my new fuck friend. So I guess I lied. I don't hate artichokes after all."

Artichoke squats down next to me. He runs the gun down my cheek. "Sorry, buddy. Didn't mean to shoot you. But Mandela gets what Mandela wants. After all, she's the one with the sweetest puss around."

Mandela cackles like the witch cunt she is. "That's right, sweet as shit, but not half as sweet as the money we're about to get paid for erasing your bald ass."

They make out some more. The lights fade again. She puts my former son's crooked cock in her big stupid mouth. I'm pissed. I'm out.

Awake again. Still not dead. Surprise, surprise.

No one's around. Well, actually I shouldn't say no one. There's someone. She's staring at me. I can tell she's a she.

"Hey, pooch, where'd you come from?" I know she can't be Mandela's dog. She looks happy and healthy. A dog wouldn't last a week in this psycho bitch's house.

She's cute as all shit too. Some sort of Schnauzer mix. Nothing better than a cute dog. Always brightens your day. Even when you're bleeding like a fucking pig from a gunshot wound put in your gut by an adult posing as a kid because he can't get enough of your ex-girl's diseased snatcharoo. This pooch is just too cute for fucking goddamn words.

She walks over and licks the sweat off my face. Must like the salt. Her tags say that her name is Janet. She's got a real tickler for a tongue. I love her.

"Thanks, girl." I give her a little head rub with my hand. She gives me another lick, then moves her beautiful brown eyes down my chest, fixing her gaze on my wound.

"That's right, Janet. Shot. Dying." She gives me a quick cute look. Then, without warning, she picks up her head and plummets her nose into my bloody belly hole like a fucking cat crawled inside me.

I scream like a fucking ghost. What the fuck?! I thought Janet was my friend. I'm trying to pull her off, but she's strong. I ball up a fist. I don't want to, but I'm gonna have to punch this dog in her cute fucking head. But right as I'm about to take the swing, she comes up. Her face covered in my shit-smelling blood. She opens her mouth and PLUNK... it's the bullet.

"Good girl, Janet." Janet runs out of the room and comes back with a sheet. Wow, Janet makes Lassie look like a fucking moron. I take the sheet and wrap it around my stomach. I take off my bloodied clothes and put something else on. It's hard to stand. Legs are tired. Not much in 'em. I give Janet another pet. This dog's the best of the best.

I see a car.

Shit! Gotta be ready. Take a peek out the window. It's Mandela all right. But Artichoke's not there. Where's Artichoke? Who gives a fuck?

"You dead yet, asshole?" No, I'm not, Mandela. No, I am not.

Before she's at the door, I run out. My fist is kissing her face. And it's hard and it's nice. I don't punch women, but this feels good. She hits the ground. She's screaming. Of course she is. Ain't nothing quiet about Mandela. But we are outside. Why didn't I wait for her to come in? I'm stupid and impulsive like that. There go my hands. Her neck is soft. Janet's panting. Neighbours are looking. Cops will be here soon. Mandela gives me a sock to the gut. That hurts. But the rage keeps my shit together. I just squeeze harder. Her eyes are scared. Her breath is trying to get in and out. How could you, Mandela? How fucking could you? Janet is panting. Cute dog. There're tears now. I think they're hers at first, but they're mine. Guess that's the little bit of love I have left coming out.

I squeeze harder. The tears stop. The love is gone. Her eyes are gone. She is gone.

"Let's go, Janet."

We are gone.

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

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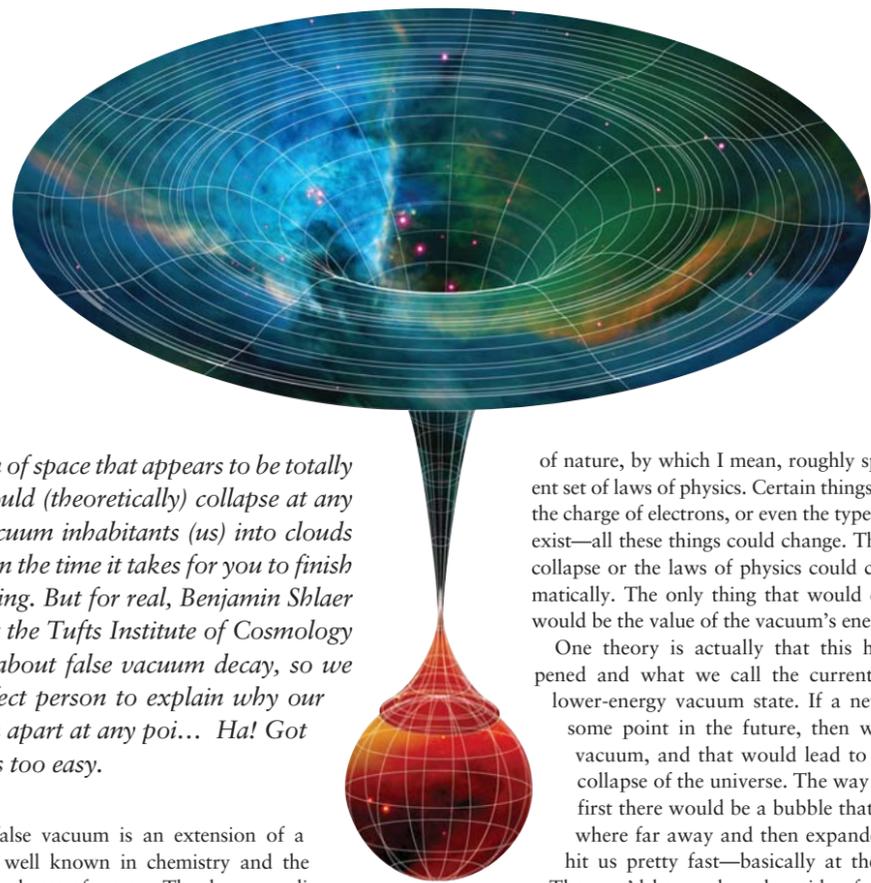
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THE LEARNIN' CORNER: FALSE VACUUM DECAY

BENJAMIN SHLAER AS TOLD TO HARRY CHEADLE, ILLUSTRATION BY KAMRAN SAMIMI



A false vacuum is a region of space that appears to be totally stable, but in actuality could (theoretically) collapse at any moment and turn the vacuum inhabitants (us) into clouds of nonstandard particles in the time it takes for you to finish this sente... Ha, just kidding. But for real, Benjamin Shlaer is a postdoc researcher at the Tufts Institute of Cosmology and a man who knows about false vacuum decay, so we thought he'd be the perfect person to explain why our universe hasn't just fallen apart at any poi... Ha! Got you AGAIN! Man, this is too easy.

ABOVE: A God's-eye view of what it would look like if a false vacuum bubble universe formed and detached from the "real" universe. We hope that makes everything clear now.

Decay of a false vacuum is an extension of a theory that's well known in chemistry and the physics of the phases of matter. The theory applies to the different "phases" of empty space as well, and those phases are called vacua. The same physics that governs water converting to steam as you boil it applies to empty space. Kind of like when you boil water and at the bottom of the pot there are these little bubbles fluctuating, we expect tiny "bubbles" of other vacua to be forming around us all of the time.

Tunnelling is the process by which these bubbles (which we believe are always there and just very small) can occasionally—and this is why it takes a very long time to happen—fluctuate to be big, and when I say big, I'm still talking about below the scale of nuclear physics. So very small in conventional terms, but big enough that the roundness of the bubble and the surface tension of the bubble don't cause them to collapse right away. When these get that big, then we say they tunneled. They had to borrow energy from somewhere to get that big, and there's no apparent source of the energy—it's just this quantum-mechanical borrowing of energy.

You might call them critical bubbles—a bubble that's produced in the tunnelling process that then grows. So a critical bubble is much bigger than most bubbles, which harmlessly collapse.

New bubbles occasionally appear in the vacuum and can grow to the size of the universe and leave behind a different vacuum, a different kind of empty space. If that happens, you'll have a different physical construct

of nature, by which I mean, roughly speaking, a different set of laws of physics. Certain things, like the value of the charge of electrons, or even the types of particles that exist—all these things could change. The universe could collapse or the laws of physics could change quite dramatically. The only thing that would definitely change would be the value of the vacuum's energy density.

One theory is actually that this has already happened and what we call the current universe is the lower-energy vacuum state. If a new one occurs at some point in the future, then we'd have a new vacuum, and that would lead to a big crunch—a collapse of the universe. The way it would look is, first there would be a bubble that appeared somewhere far away and then expanded, and it would hit us pretty fast—basically at the speed of light.

Then we'd be on the other side of this bubble wall. We might not really be held together by chemistry anymore if the laws of physics changed too much, but if the laws of physics didn't change that much and we were still intact after the bubble passed by us, then we would find everything starting to be gravitationally attracted, and we'd all basically collide with all the galaxies and other matter in the universe. It'd be a catastrophic sort of crunch.

There's nothing wrong with fearing that our vacuum is unstable, but the process takes so long we might just never observe it. It's possible for there to be an instability that is so slow that we haven't observed it yet because it hasn't happened yet. But it could, in principle, still happen.

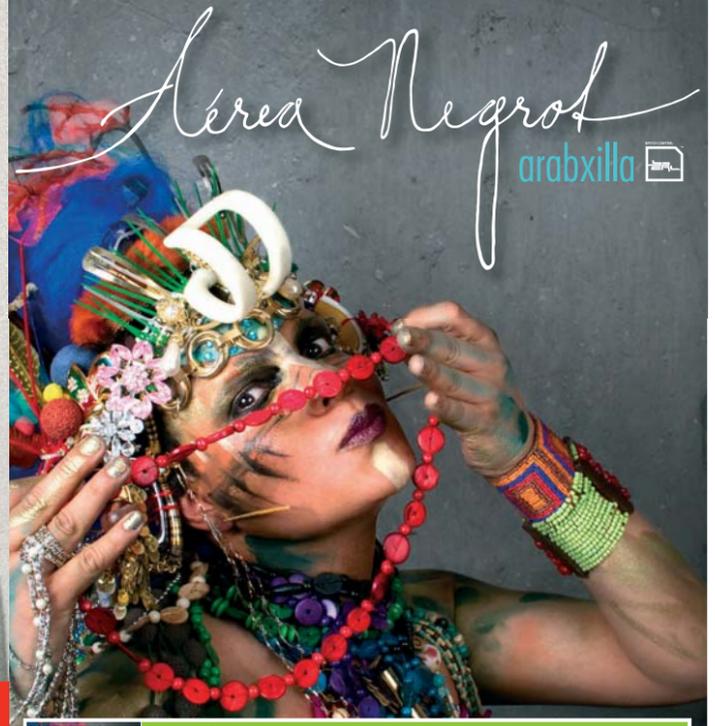
You could have different regions of space that are in different vacua, and in that case there's always what we call a domain wall separating them—basically, a bubble wall that is usually accelerating. When you cross through that bubble wall you cross to the different vacua. Although usually it's accelerating so fast that you can't cross the barrier. But in principle, if it were a very slowly accelerating domain wall, for instance if the two different vacua have exactly the same vacuum energy, then you could actually cross back and forth and check out each vacuum. But you'd want to make sure that the same chemistry existed on both sides beforehand. You might cross into a vacuum where there were no stable protons or electrons and then you'd probably turn into some particles that would not be very comfortable to live in.



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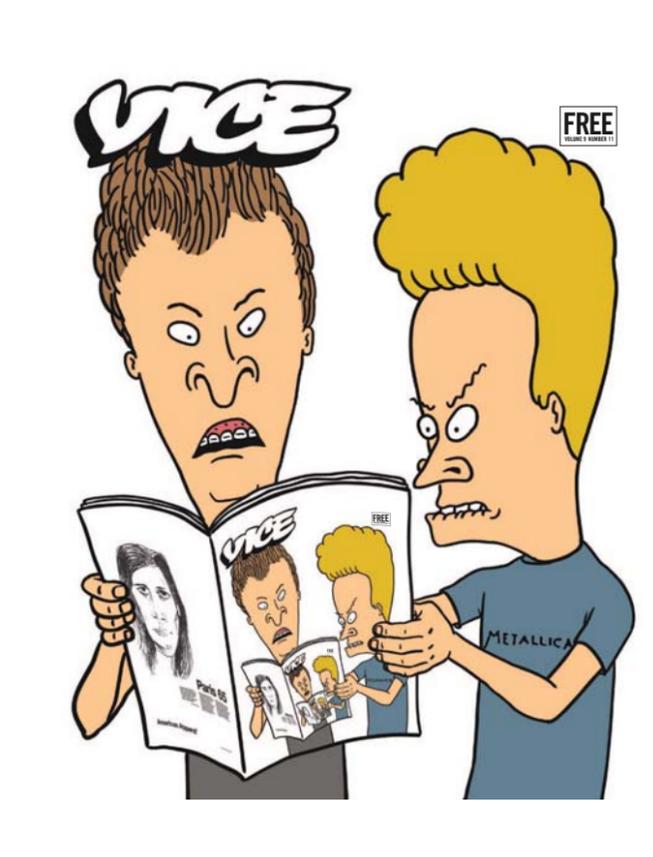
Áerea Negrot
arabxilla

Echoes of Bowie's exiled glamour, Klaus Nomi's shrill operatics and Grace Jones at her lethally bored best. 4/5 - *Uncut*

A complex, stylish and ultimately truly distinctive record. 9/10 - *Future Music*

Negrot's vocal work, juxtaposed to her own unique take on techno, creates a sort of experimental pop that leaves the listener craving a second listen to fully comprehend the absolute mind-fuck this material just thrust upon his or her ears. - *Kamran*

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This is all still the case, but after untold years of emails and letters from people whining about how they can't get their hands on an actual physical copy of the magazine because some idiot keeps grabbing 20 copies at a time and then selling them on eBay, we are throwing our hands up and saying, "FINE!"

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THE CUTE SHOW PAGE!

BY ELLIS JONES, PHOTO BY ALEX DE MORA

Red Squirrel Orphans

Watch a brand new episode of The Cute Show! featuring these furry, Oliver Twist-esque rodents later this month on VICE.com.

You know how squirrels stand all hunched over a nut, tightly grasping it with their tiny claws and then shoving it into their mouths so their cheeks get all puffed? Everyone loves that. Know what else everyone loves? Orphans (at least the ones in cartoons and books). So imagine if you took two baby squirrels, painted their coats a nice red-dish hue and then gave them a backstory about how a gust of wind knocked their wee nest out of a tree and then suddenly they were running around the streets of London, all alone and cold. Are you crying yet? You should be, because that happened to three sisters and one brother who live together at the Sanctuary Wildlife Care Centre in Morpeth, Northumberland. When we went over for a visit, the four little ones were scampering all over their caretaker's bedroom. One of them tried to jump straight into a full mug of coffee! Can it get any cuter? Probably not.



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Now Christmas, that's an entirely different story. Just this morning I bought six 300-foot spools of red rope light off eBay at \$140 a spool, along with 50 sets of red string lights. Red lights are hard to come by on the street, so you have to special order them to make sure you have enough. And I need a lot. This year I'm finally adopting a theme. It's been sorely missing. For the past five years I've just been throwing shit-tons of lights all willy-nilly around my yard and home. Not this year. This year I'm going to be the candy-cane house. Or Polish house, depending on your heritage. Strictly red and white lights only. I bought a number of sheets of weather-treated half-inch plywood and jigsawed out two-foot-wide-by-four-foot-tall letters that spell MERRY CHRISTMAS and painted them alternating colours of red, white, red, white... with white lights stapled to them. I already have a perimeter of lighted candy canes around my front yard—I just need to get some ten-foot PVC plumbing pipe and elbows to make some monster candy canes for the end of the driveway.

I'm bogging you down with unnecessary details. The point of the review was to say that I still haven't decided what the family should be for the Halloween/Christmas card. It's somewhat difficult to organise since this year we have a newborn and the costumes they make for newborns are limited, and my wife's retarded Uncle Lonnie always has

to be slightly off from the group. Some ideas that would be fun but I've already vetoed are: us as the cast of *Jersey Shore* with Lonnie as Snoopy from *Peanuts* instead of Snooki. My wife as a man and the rest of us in dresses (that's mainly because my wife in business-sexy is super hot). Us as the Beatles and Lonnie as Mick Jagger, but I don't think he'd sit still for the collagen implants or Botox shots. Us as KISS and Lonnie as King Diamond. Us as clowns and Lonnie as King Diamond. Us as cowboys and Indians with Lonnie as the other kind of Indian with a turban on his head. Us as Hasidic Jews and Lonnie as Hitler. And lastly, us as ninjas and Lonnie as Godzilla. I'm sure by the time you read this I'll have it figured out. Maybe something Bible themed with Lonnie as Buddha. Naked Lonnie is always a hit.

More stupid can be found at Chrisnieratko.com.



HALLOWEEN XXX PORN PARODY

Dir: Jim Powers
Rating: 8

Smashpictures.com

For starters, I would've hoped that a porno remake of *Halloween* would've at least had the decency to incorporate the word *wiener* into the title. I understand that porn parodies are big money these days, but I'm asking for just a little bit of effort in keeping the fun-loving tradition of naming dirty movies alive. *Jamaican Me Horny*, anyone?

I don't know if you're aware of this, but each year my family and I dress in our Halloween costumes to go take our photos with Santa Claus for a Christmas card. That's our thing. I'm not even a big Halloween dork. I didn't get married in a barn with all my guests in costumes. I don't orchestrate some elaborate small-town Tim Burton performance play on my front lawn. Hell, I don't even decorate my house. I couldn't give a shit about Halloween.

Saints Row: The Third (THQ, PC, Xbox 360, PS3) is pretty unacceptable. It's also brilliant. Imagine the difference between *GTA IV*'s misery-guts Niko Bellic and its more jubilant expansion, *The Ballad Of Gay Tony*, then extrapolate that line through the roof of the boardroom. You'll kick your way into a flying jumbo jet through the cockpit window. You'll rescue a crateful of sex workers being airlifted in a helicopter as it comes under attack from speedboats. You'll try to calm a tiger in your passenger seat by doing skids. You'll escape from a sex club on a rickshaw pulled by an auto-tuned gimp. I've never written this paragraph before, and I'm glad someone's finally given me the chance.

Saints Row gets some stuff wrong. Your companion AI is erratic, it isn't completely bug-free, and there are moments when the insanity is not as relentless as you'd like. But you can't fault the ambition, the imagination and the fact that they've managed to make the whole "pimping bitches and hos" aspect seem as disarmingly quaint as René's waitresses in *'Allo 'Allo!*. It's hard to be offended by something as not-of-this-world as *Saints Row*.

Meanwhile, *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* (Bethesda, PC, Xbox 360, PS3) is a game that makes you feel sorry for the PR. Everyone in the specialist press and every punter who's played the last two games in The Elder Scroll series comes pre-sold. It's a game that's accrued so much love and goodwill from players, and not just because it's a brilliant, well-written and acted fantasy RPG in a world where elves, orcs, lizards and cats swap stifled pleasantries in the streets. It also lets people do some unpleasant stuff and valiantly tries to react appropriately. Sometimes it doesn't work, sometimes it does—and when it's not impressive, it's comical. But if the person you're talking to has never heard of *Oblivion* or *Morrowind*, how do you sell it to them? "It's the story of a civil-war-torn land where dragons have returned"? That just makes it sound like *Game of Thrones*. If I was a PR, I'd just show them YouTube videos of *Oblivion*, such as that clip where an AI glitch causes a dog to turn on his owner. Or the videos of people who break into someone's house, fill their bed with oranges, then stand there until they come home. How can a game be programmed to react "correctly" to a character finding oranges in his bed? The fact *Oblivion* raised expectations so high that people wanted to find out is a massive compliment.

Skyrim has all that dicking-about appeal (it's been kept in intentionally), but now it's

slicker, has a much better character development system, and you can bait dragons into towns and get the town's guard to kill them for you, before eating their souls and learning a new power. Cheeky.

At the time of writing, I've only played *Skyrim* for 15 hours. I can't think of many other games where I'd have to apologise for that, and if this column had scores out of ten, I'd probably have to politely abstain. People will spend hundreds of hours in *Skyrim*. There are so many ways to level up that classic role-players will want to dry hump a pillow. But if the first two days of solid play are anything to go by, I've got good months of levelling up ahead of me. Fuck Christmas.

At the other end of every conceivable spectrum is *Sonic Generations* (Sega, Xbox 360, PS3, PC). Script, rich characterisation, personal development—you can all have a nap. We'll be communicating with an inexplicable sense of "attitude" for a while.

To celebrate Sonic's 20th birthday, he's having a party with all the god-awful friends he's accumulated over the years. There's Amy, disrespecting herself as ever with her undignified flirting. Later, Eggman pops by, flipping senselessly between his two states of "Aha, Sonic! Now I am going to murder you forever!" and "Oh no, save me from this unexpected new evil, Sonic!"

You play *Sonic Generations* as old and new Sonics, in two- and three-dimensional reworkings of levels taken from his long history. In terms of fan service, it's perfect—but the technology isn't right. They've thrown so much detail into the worlds that even with 20 years of tech progress under our belts, *Sonic* just isn't smooth. And for God's sake, a game this fast needs to be smooth, otherwise it's just nauseating. It's like watching a helicopter's blades look like they're going slowly backwards.

That's the only complaint—and you do get used to it. Still, it's a shame, because *Sonic Generations* has some of the best level design of any of the games. In fact, it needs to get some kind of award for doing the impossible and making 3D *Sonic* more fun to play than 2D.

Finally, *Batman: Arkham City* comes out on the PC mid-November, and blow my arsehole wide open if it's not the most beautiful thing. It's easy to forget about the potential chasm between PC and console gaming, but it's at its starkest at the moment, with elements of the current generation feeling like a corpse whose fingernails are still growing. Move a 32-inch HDTV onto your computer desk and get cracking.



Saints Row: The Third



The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim



Sonic Generations



Batman: Arkham City



FORMING

Jesse Moynihan
Nobrow

Forming, the first book of an epic trilogy out on Nobrow Press, is a graphic novel by writer, cartoonist and storyboard artist Jesse Moynihan. He sketches a comical saga on the origins of our humanity, presenting his own take on creation myths. It all starts back at the dawn of time when Ahura Mazda sends his son Mithras off to Earth to set up an inter-planetary mining colony, only for Mithras to ignore his father and set about exploiting Earth for his own ends. The rest is what you'd expect from humanity: battles over gold, coltan and diamond sources, idealistic children devising non-exploitative collectivism, the first Atlantean workers' revolt, gnomes with evil influences, demi-gods dispersing their seeds, one unrecognised genius artist, people turning against each other, and lots of shagging. This is the first Nobrow hardback of collections of Moynihan's online comic series. Here he shows that you can be good at drawing, storytelling and satire all at once, picturing "a cosmic order that almost makes sense".

nobrow.net



FIRST PICTURES

Joel Sternfeld
Steidl

A photographer I know recently gave away all his film and sold his faithful old analogue Leica on eBay so that he could get a boring digital Canon G10 to take snapshots of everyday life. "Really? You're throwing away your career to join the overcrowded Flickr community?" I said, hoping to hear him laugh and say, "Got you!" Instead, he just smiled and said, "This new project will be a documentation of the time we're living in. You might not see why these pictures are special now, but I guarantee you that in 30 years from now, looking at them will make you go, 'But of course!'" Maybe it was for a similar reason American photographer Joel Sternfeld chose to wait more than 40 years before publishing this impressive 300-page pictorial epos. Sternfeld's *First Pictures* are reminiscent of the work of his contemporaries Shore and Eggleston, only Sternfeld's pictures feel fresher. They possess all the qualities of a talented young photographer's first work—it's alive, creative, searching and has an extra layer of humour, which makes flipping through this photo book a pleasure both for the eyes and that muscle behind them. You could say that if Jacob Holdt's book *United States 1970-1975* is a portrayal of black people during that period, then *First Pictures* is its equally fine opposite—a depiction of white people in America in the 70s.

steidlville.com/books



WHITE STAINS

Aleister Crowley
Edda

This reprint of *White Stains*, one of the infamous occultist, bisexual libertine and celebrated drug-user Aleister Crowley's first forays into publishing, is so well presented it'd make any bookophile jump with excitement. This super special edition of 418 hand-numbered and hand-printed clothbound hardback books, complete with a silk page-marker shaded the same red as the poem titles, comes in a custom-made slipcase adorned with a screen print by Swedish artist Fredrik Söderberg. As the cherry on top, the book also encompasses four new esoteric aquarelles by Söderberg, interpreting Crowley's erotic poetry. Never mind that Crowley—once dubbed "the wickedest man in the world"—writes like a soft-spoken romantic who's not even half as offending as Rimbaud; it's publications as carefully put together as this that restore your faith in the eternal life of the book in its physical form. It makes you want to hide that Kindle in the box where you keep your old MiniDisc player and whatever other gizmos you once thought you needed.

edda.se

MOM & DAD

Terry Richardson
Mörel Books

I know what you're thinking. "Yeah, yeah, Terry Richardson's that tits and ass guy, all he does is shoot pictures of naked chicks." Well, you're wrong, frustrated blogger/Tumblr-er/doesn't-get-laid-photographer. Aside from being one of the most in-demand snappers in the world, Terry has also been shooting his parents obsessively over the years, which has resulted in a surprisingly sweet portrayal of the couple. *Mom & Dad* comes as two separate paperback books in a slipcase, one titled *Mom* and the other *Dad*. Given the nature of these books you wouldn't expect any tits and ass pictures, although, I'm forced to be honest with you here, he's slipped one in of his mum. Taking into account it's Terry Richardson we're talking about, the series about his mum shows a relatively typical mother and son relationship. The one about his dad, however, shows an ongoing battle with insanity depicted through his dad's regularly updated Sharpie notes written on walls, the toilet seat and on Bob Richardson-headed paper with glued newspaper clippings. While notes such as "Look in toilet for shit, call 911 for help" can be quite funny, they serve as constant, unavoidable reminders of Terry's dad's spiralling health condition. The book is published in an edition of 1,000, so don't come crying to me when you find out they've all gone after you've read this.

morelbooks.com



UNDER A GREEN MOUNTAIN

David J Bevan
Various Folk Tales Press

"Nottingham-based skater poetry" is not something I've ever felt the need to get into before. And I certainly didn't intend to be very excited about getting into it today, but actually *Under a Green Mountain* has made my morning. I would describe it as "dark yet witty urban poetry" but that sounds fucking dreadful. Maybe "gritty, blood-spattered, claustrophobic rantings" is closer, but then it sounds like some softcore teenage vampire wank fantasy. I think you should just read it because it's really good—and scary and funny—and there's hardly any skating in it.

happygoingnowhere.blogspot.com

JULIAN ASSANGE: THE UNAUTHORISED AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Andrew O'Hagan
Canongate

Julian Assange would probably rather eat his own shit than see this first, raw draft of his part-memoir, part-manifesto printed and distributed worldwide. Was this unauthorised, premature publication a prank on Canongate's part to give Assange a taste of his own medicine? Or was it, as Assange implies in a statement on WikiLeaks, Canongate's cunning plan to save some dough by printing it after only having paid him a third of his advance, which he can't access due to his financial blockade, meaning the money's likely to go back to the publisher? Either way, having read this, I must say I like the guy better than before. Sure, he has a tendency for being obnoxiously arrogant, self-gratifying and even occasionally chauvinistic (personality traits he humbly admits to in the book), but it clearly takes a certain character to have the balls to accomplish what Assange has achieved as the founder and editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks. The book gives accounts of his solitary confinement at HMP Wandsworth, backtracks to his childhood, and tells the gripping story of WikiLeaks. Although written in a corny *V for Vendetta*-meets-*Tom Sawyer* style that cracks you up at times, it's an amazing resource for people who want to find out more about Assange. He is, understandably, frustrated about how his persona has got tangled up in WikiLeaks' struggle for justice, giving the organisation a human face prone to smear campaigns. Which is the main reason he didn't want this very personal first draft of the book to come out. But no matter how factual and impersonal this book could have been, it wouldn't have changed the fact that everyone loves to read about a celebrity scapegoat being pursued with prurient alacrity by an insatiable media.

canongate.tv

THE SHOOTING STAR PRESS #1

Thomas J Hughes
Self-published

The first issue of this pro-wrestling fanzine by Tom Hughes starts off sensibly with an introduction comparing professional wrestling to Shakespeare. It may seem far from sensible to start pitching WWE's staff writers against the Bard, but the writing is engaging and passionate enough to pull you into the conceit (or agree with the point, depending on your relationship with wrestling). The tidy illustrations are one-colour and low-key, but they're pretty enough and—considering the usual publications that cover pro-wrestling—give the impression you're reading something more honest than an over-priced glossy franchise magazine. If wrestling is, or has ever been your thing, you'll enjoy the unashamed tone of the zine. (If you're a real fan you're already reaching for the baby oil and Lycra.) More of the piercing insight offered in the intro would benefit the section on the current championship. However, the rose-tinted retelling of classic bouts, the WWE tag-team division "obituary" and heartfelt tribute to "Macho Man" Randy Savage are enough to get you to the end feeling satisfied and more than a little nostalgic.

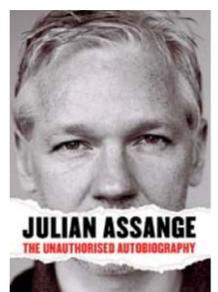
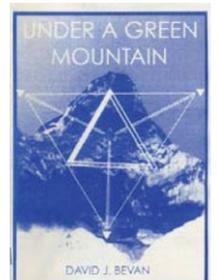
tom-j-hughes.co.uk

THE MILAN REVIEW OF GHOSTS

The Milan Review
Self-published

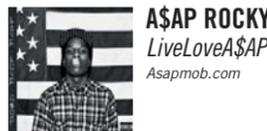
The Milan Review of Ghosts is the first issue of *The Milan Review*, a new biannual literary magazine of short stories and artwork edited by VICE's very own Italian stallion, Tim Small. Each issue has a theme and the first one is ghosts, which means lots of nail-biting pieces about haunting memories, recurrent dreams, demons, uncanny spirits, sinister places and unsettling images. This beautifully put together issue collects tales from places such as an oppressive Nigerian neighbourhood where segregation and violence is part of daily life, a remote library in America where inner struggle, depression, emptiness and SMS abuse eat a man up inside, leaving him a husk of a person, and a church in Liège where a young apostate comes back from the dead to confront her priest. This anthology of spooky goings-on includes stories from big-name writers such as Clancy Martin, EC Osondu and Tao Lin, and excellent artwork by Matt Furie and Maison du Crac. We should add that this actually came out a few months ago, but seeing as Halloween just happened we thought it was a good time to bring it up.

themilanreview.com





**BEST ALBUM OF THE MONTH:
A\$AP ROCKY**



10 When A\$AP Rocky came to our offices in New York, he described the concept of A\$AP as: “Wu-Tang Clan smoking crack backstage, Mobb Deep on heroin and Dipset on steroids.” If you add: “Bone Thugs-n-Harmony drinking lean with DJ Screw and Marvin Gaye as a 23-year-old Margiela-wearing party monster from Harlem” to that description then you have an almost complete picture of Rocky and his crew. They are undoubtedly the most exciting thing to happen in rap for a long fucking time and this mixtape is an absolute must even if you are a casual fan of the thing known as “music”.
ANITA CRAPPER



4 With a background in satire and a name chosen from a Wu-Tang name generator, the least Childish is going to be good for is a few LOLs. Sadly, *Camp* sounds somewhere between emo Eminem and sexless Drake, apart from “Bonfire”, which mashes Weezy’s “6 Foot 7 Foot” with Game’s “Red Nation” and is ace. But seriously, tell us a joke, Mr Funnyman.
MABEL SIZZURP



6 Another compilation of Chicago footwork tracks from the likes of DJ Roc, Spinn and Rashad that,

like the last one, swings between the sublime and the ridiculous. Something about the re-re-re-repetition makes me want to shove a skewer up my nose to scratch an itch on my brain, but when it smooths out into a flow of flickering beats, jabbing bass and *Mortal Kombat* samples, the effect is weirdly euphoric.
NED BUNGER



7 Dubai is pretty fucked up. All around are monstrous malls and glittering shard-like skyscrapers, but the women sport their gaudy designerwear under hijabs and the wheels of commerce are oiled with the blood of Indian immigrants who can't go home because HR took their passport on arrival. Here, DJ/rupture, the academic dance scholar it's OK to like, teases another unsavoury thread out of Dubai's social fabric. *El Resplandor* is an imagined score to Kubrick's *The Shining* if it were set in a luxury Dubai hotel. It starts in sombre, vaguely ethno-classical mode but before long, all manner of buzzing digital effects intrude, like a dust storm clogging the air conditioning. It never really goes totally off the wall, but it's worth bearing in mind that killing a woman with an axe is probably totally legal in Dubai, so long as she's your wife and you keep her hair covered while you're at it.
HACK NICHOLSON



8 Intergalactic disco shaman Mike Silver introduces his cosmic cat alter ego Mickey Moonlight with an

album of slinky clockwork exotica and tropical frippery that might have the Ed Banger nippers scratching their heads. The greaser from Twin Shadow adds a human touch by crooning on “Close to Everything” and “This Son is Coming Up”, but mostly these are junk-shop spirituals beamed in from some Venusian tiki bar where the cocktails are called “Buckaroo Banzai” and “Diamonds in the Mind of Talula” and it's always happy hour.
THEYDON BOIS



6 Compiling a DJ-Kicks CD must be a bit like making a mixtape for a beautiful-looking girl, except instead of studiously mining your record collection for songs that say “I find you very attractive” in a way that is both sensitive and slightly mysterious, you're doing it to impress a faceless mass of judgmental dance music fans who spend too much time on Resident Advisor. Gold Panda just mixed Drexcia into Muslimgauze, which in this company probably gets him to at least third base.
FLORENCE RIDA



7 Having become the face of faceless dance music as one of the fathers of electroclash, Tiga has now gone full-tilt in the other direction: he and collaborator Zombie Nation have spent the past four years granting zero interviews since the sarcastic deconstructionist masterpiece “Lower State of Consciousness” put ZZT on the map. That was a breezeblock rework of Josh Wink that sounded corrosive and bitter, catching the Justice/Digitalism boom in fritzzy house just in time. Their full-length debut delivers much of that nihilism. There

are few better words in the electro lexicon than “muscular” and this is definitely that: 12 sharply sculpted journeys towards the end of days that sound deeply animal, red in tooth and claw. What's more, four song titles start with the letter z, as if the tracks were named by the main character in Tibor Fischer's *The Thought Gang*.
KOBUS WIESE



4 This is dub. It must be. Tim Love Lee has taken out most, but not quite all, of the vocals. He's turned up the bass here and there. And it says “dub” on the sleeve, after all. That should be enough to overlook the fact that it never makes you feel like you're hurtling through the stars with meteorites zipping round your head and evil space Nazis on your tail like good dub can. Just listening to gently re-worked instrumentals from the bloke who brought us Groove Armada.
JEM JAH



9 Is there any arena of human interest as proud of stagnation as hardcore? Thirty years ago its founders came out of the gate like gangbusters, and since then, three decades' worth of bands have

**WORST ALBUM OF THE MONTH:
LOS CAMPESINOS!**

decided to ape the formula with increasingly shitty results. So here we are in 2011, when reissues of records that originally came out in the early 80s are the best hardcore records of the year, and the genre has all the forward momentum of a wet fart squeezed silently into a sofa cushion.
TIM NAEHRIN



1 What a thrill to see that dubstep, product of our fair isle, is finally getting its day in the sun. And if it takes the patronage of angry 40-somethings with ratty dreads and an extremely hectic therapy schedule, well, hey, exposure is exposure, yeah, bro? Basically what's happened here is that Korn have removed their horrid slap-funky bass and replaced it with equally horrid chainsaw wobble, and the result is so terrible and shitty it makes Skrillex sound like some cool underground shit from somewhere like Bristol that just got an extremely positive write-up on the Boomkat mailout.
EL PEE



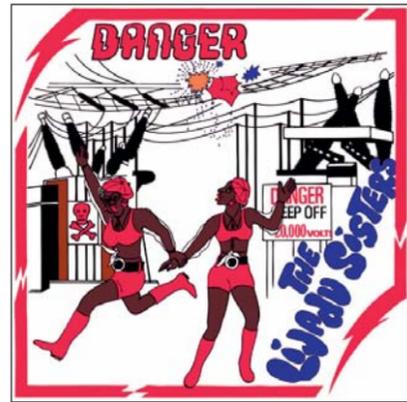
7 A fairly creditable long-player of nasty and hateful sludge-thrash from San Francisco's Bay Area. *Invernal*, it says here, is themed around “a post-apocalyptic trek to a nuclear infested and mutated Antarctica”, which I suppose must mean that Black Cobra are a band of intrepid Ernest Shackletons, hardened by long journeys across freezing icy wastes, and definitely not a bunch of stoner longhairs who rely on their girlfriends to come and pick them up from rehearsals.
LUIGI PATAZONI



8 This is severely fun LA bubblegum punk, but I am pretty sure that most of the songs are about my sister since she's boning the main guy, which might be weird for some people when they have titles like “Too Drunk to Come” and “Make Me Feel Weeird”. There's also a line in here where he goes, “Tell me about your dad/What kind of guy is he?/ You say he hates fags/ Well I think he'd like me”. Despite the weirdness of hearing odes to what a babe or jerk my sister has turned into, this is still a really strong album and I would highly recommend it to people who dig Ty Segall, Wavves, Nobunny or Mean Jeans.
GAYS IN THE MILITARY



0 I love Los Campesinos!. I love Gareth Campesinos. Leonard Campesinos. Abdullah Campesinos. Siphon Campesinos. Agatha Campesinos. All those guys, and their great line in making indie music into some sort of religion for nerds. I've already got my limited-edition signed asthma inhaler on pre-order ahead of this release—from an independent record store, natch—and when it comes out, I'm gonna wrap all my 7-inches of the singles in Alan Moore comics, then turn them into a fanzine about fanzines printed on 7-inch singles by Los Campesinos! wrapped in Alan Moore comics. This will prove that I am as serious about indie as they are, with their fourth tranche of terribly tuneless diary scrapings.
ROBBIE FLECK



**BEST COVER OF THE MONTH:
LIJADU SISTERS**



ALADDIN
We Were Strong, So We Got Lost
Versatile

7 Reassuringly pervy sleaze-pop from two French dudes, one of whom, singer Nicolas Kerr, looks like an 80s badboy John Malkovich and sings as if he's auditioning for *Gold! The Spandau Ballet Musical*. Gilb'r from Château Flight is the guy behind Aladdin's Suicide waltzing and metallic doo-wop, which is cut from the same cloth as the Horrors. But where *Skying* aimed for the stars, Aladdin are happy to roll around in the gutter—and you know how mucky Parisian pavements are. LES PANINI



LITTLE GANG
Half of Everything
Control Freak Kitten Records

8 I had just moved flats when this CD, containing the musings of the crème de la crème of Swedish indie, landed on my desk. I've played it so much I no longer know if it's because I'm too lazy to unpack my other CDs or if I just don't see the need to listen to anything but these dreamy tunes that, if you listen to them while mopping the floor, make you feel like you're ice skating in a crystal echo chamber on the moon. I command you to go to your computer, open a browser window and search for "Blast Beat's Erik Nilsson Music for One Apartment and One Drummer". See it? Yup, that dust-bag-ninja guy's their drummer. Right, I'm gonna re-watch that YouTube clip now. MILOU-P



LE VOLUME COURBE
"Theodaurus Rex" EP
Pickpocket

9 Le Volume Courbe is a French girl called Charlotte Marionneau who lives in London and makes delicate, fuzzed-out dream-pop of the highest order. This

latest EP is the debut release on new label Pickpocket, which she started alongside Kevin Shields from My Bloody Valentine. He also plays on one song, "I Love the Living You", but our favourite here is the cover of Nico's "Le Petit Chevalier". JENNIFER JUPITER



BONNIE PRINCE BILLY
Wolfroy Goes to Town
Domino

8 I know it's hopelessly passé to carry a torch for Will Oldham ever since he covered Usher, decided he could make proper whoopin'-and-hollerin' Nashville country music, and grew his beard out to resemble something you might have seen in a German porno mag in the 70s. I reckon every three albums or so he hits form, though, and this one—a stripped-down outing that sounds a bit like he's harking back to his lonely old Palace days while leafing through a fistful of dirty Polaroids—might be one of them. CHILL DAVE



ATLAS SOUND
Parallax
4AD

7 Man, this asshole's really been killing it lately. Like with the songs and crap? It's like, fuuuuuuck. MICHAEL FAY



LUKE HAINES
Nine and a Half Psychedelic Meditations on British Wrestling of the 1970s and Early 80s
Fantastic Plastic

5 Luke Haines, if you didn't know—and let's face it, you probably don't—is a man with ginger hair and skin like damp tracing paper who celebrated the Britpop boom of the mid-90s by scowling lots and writing songs about German terrorism and dead children. For some

reason that didn't earn him enough money to buy his own chocolate-coloured Rolls-Royce, so now he's back with a new money-spinner, a clutch of songs about fat pensioners pretending to punch each other in a ring in the 1970s, sung in a voice like you're trying to give a sleeping baby terrible nightmares. Probably won't surprise you that everyone dies at the end. DOUGLAS BADDIE



YOUTH LAGOON
The Year of Hibernation
Fat Possum

3 According to science, 22 is the age at which nostalgia for a receded adolescence reaches a climax—a fact 22-year-old Trevor Powers seems well aware of, having made an entire record of lo-fi pocket symphonies that yearn mawkishly for the recent past. Soon, he will look back on his adolescence and realise it was an uncomfortable time of delusion and false consciousness. For now, we will all have to let him go through it. "I have more dreams than you've got posters of your favourite teams" is the one line that many reviews have mentioned already. The difference is that these other so-called-reviewers seem to think that this lyric is A Good Thing, whereas I'm telling you that it should be obvious to anyone that it is A Very Bad Thing. OS DU RANDT



DOMINANT LEGS
Invitation
Lefse

6 Part of Girls' San Fran gangbang (Hannah Hunt stars in the video for "Honey Bunny", Ryan Lynch was their occasional guitarist), the good news is that Dominant Legs are taking on the sound of Belle & Sebastian. The bad news is it's not the prime-era stuff they seem into, but the leftovers: the synth cheese that arrived circa *The Life Pursuit*. The good news is they've refashioned it into something more freewheelingly disco. The bad news is I

have an inoperable tumour in my left lung. The good news is the 12 tracks on here shine with the inner light of kids making music that sounds like a party you'd want to go to: a low-hassle collection of smart people flopped out on good quality secondhand furniture. JAMES SMALL



PAPER DOLLHOUSE
A Box Painted Black
Bird

6 Rayographs were one of those critics' bands: skilfully etched, 60s-tinged pop that ached with artfulness, but seemed proportionately bland, like a painting of a really good painting. So it's nice to see lead singer Astrud Steehouder casting aside all the over-thinking now she's struck out on her own. Inspired almost exclusively by cult 1988 horror film *Paperhouse*, *A Box Painted Black* is a brittle, dark nest of obscure folk and piano murmurings, like PJ Harvey if she were still pretending to be a witch. CHESTER WILLIAMS



TOM WAITS
Bad As Me
Anti

8 How much rougher can Tom Waits' voice get? Those who've been to Dylan's recent shows point out that his leathery pipes have almost burst. But Dylan's 70. Waits is still only 61. It's been seven years since his last record, and in the interim, the Mr Snuffleupagus of jazzy blues has added another layer of barnacles to his vocal cords. His 17th studio album reads like a retrospective sampler for people who've never had the sort of friends who keep trying to force Tom Waits records on you. All his personas are here: there's soft singing, jazzy singing, folksy singing and crazy singing. The crazy singing's the best, by the way. DOMINICK MOHAWK

**WORST COVER OF THE MONTH:
KORN**



SUNN O))) MEETS NURSE WITH WOUND
The Iron Soul of Nothing
Ideologic

4 For a certain type of guy—bald, dressed in black, piece of shrapnel through his dick—this double-billing is like hearing that Jesus has teamed up with Santa Claus to make this the best Christmas of all time. In practice, *The Iron Soul of Nothing* takes Sunn O)))'s seeping sludge magma and makes it into something all ghostly and rusted. Just watch this one fly off the shelves, keeping the record industry solvent between the last Adele album and the next Robbie Williams one. CHARLES HANSON



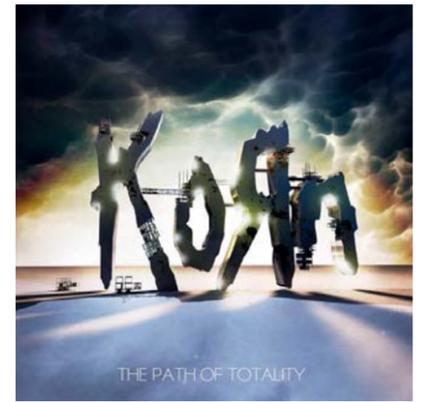
LIJADU SISTERS
Afro-Beat Soul Sisters
Soul Jazz

5 Beneath the scratchy sound these late-70s songs from the Nigerian twin sisters are unbelievably forward-thinking. As well as a large dose of the inevitable Fela fella, there's psych-rock riffs and simple poppy tunes. Unfortunately the singing is even scratchier than the studio's tin-can sound, so an hour in their company feels like the children's play that goes on long after the fixed grin fades. JIMMY LOVEBOAT



MUNGO'S HI-FI
Forward Ever
Scotch Bonnet

2 Where would reggae be without dreadlocked white blokes preserving its ancient sound? Scottish soundsystem curators Mungo's Hi-Fi are back with a



clutch of vocalists you've probably never heard of (bar the late Sugar Minott) and a stack of basslines you've definitely heard before. The news has just announced the death of Jimmy Savile, a man who preserved his late mother's room. This seems relevant somehow. FELICITY KENDALL



SANDRO PERRI
Impossible Spaces
Constellation

9 You could call this guy an Arthur Russell copycat. And in fact, there's no doubt that Sandro Perri has a soft spot for the New York disco man's late work—impressively sprawling songs built up from meandering guitar licks and harmonic changes that are always complex but never elusive. In his defence, Perri does an excellent job as Russell's scion simply because he knows how to keep a song entralling for more than four minutes. And last time I looked, there was a real shortage of people biting Russell's style. DINOSAUR F



OMAR SOULEYMAN
Leh Jani
Sham Palace

6 Is Omar Souleyman still authentic in 2011? What is the natural lifespan of an exotic foreign bauble for cool Westerners to pretend they like? And could he get an extension on that lifespan by coming out strongly on the side of the Syrian protestors? Or would that just be disappointing to his hipster fans who prefer a clean brand position without the unnecessary complications of politics? All of these thoughts must've been buzzing round Omar's head when he considered his next release. Solution: re-release his big "hit", "Leh Jani", as an epic 30-minute jam that he originally recorded in 1998. "That'll fox 'em," Souleyman must've thought, as he counted his lucrative boutique festival appearance fees. "I can't be less authentic than I was in 1998, can I now?" ANDRE JOUBERT



FRANKLIN MARSHALL

AUTUMN WINTER COLLECTION 2011

franklinandmarshall.com



Paris 65

Most people don't realize that the various components of a face are never perfectly symmetrical. Opticians get to know that when they try to fit glasses. This is a portrait of a woman I was married to back in 65. I should've made her look a lot prettier - maybe I needed glasses!

—Morris Charney

Paris 65 is part of a series of illustrations from the late 1960's, made by Dov Charney's father, Montreal-born artist and architect Morris Charney. When we discovered his original drawings, we were inspired to print them on fabric. Now, seven of his drawings are available in various chiffon styles, each a unique design based on Morris' life.

Visit our website to learn more about Dov's Montreal heritage and the Canadian inspiration behind American Apparel, and to shop the complete collection of Illustrated Chiffon styles by Morris Charney, including Cat Fancy, Beaver Lake, Manic, Place, Squabble, Steeple and Paris 65.

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