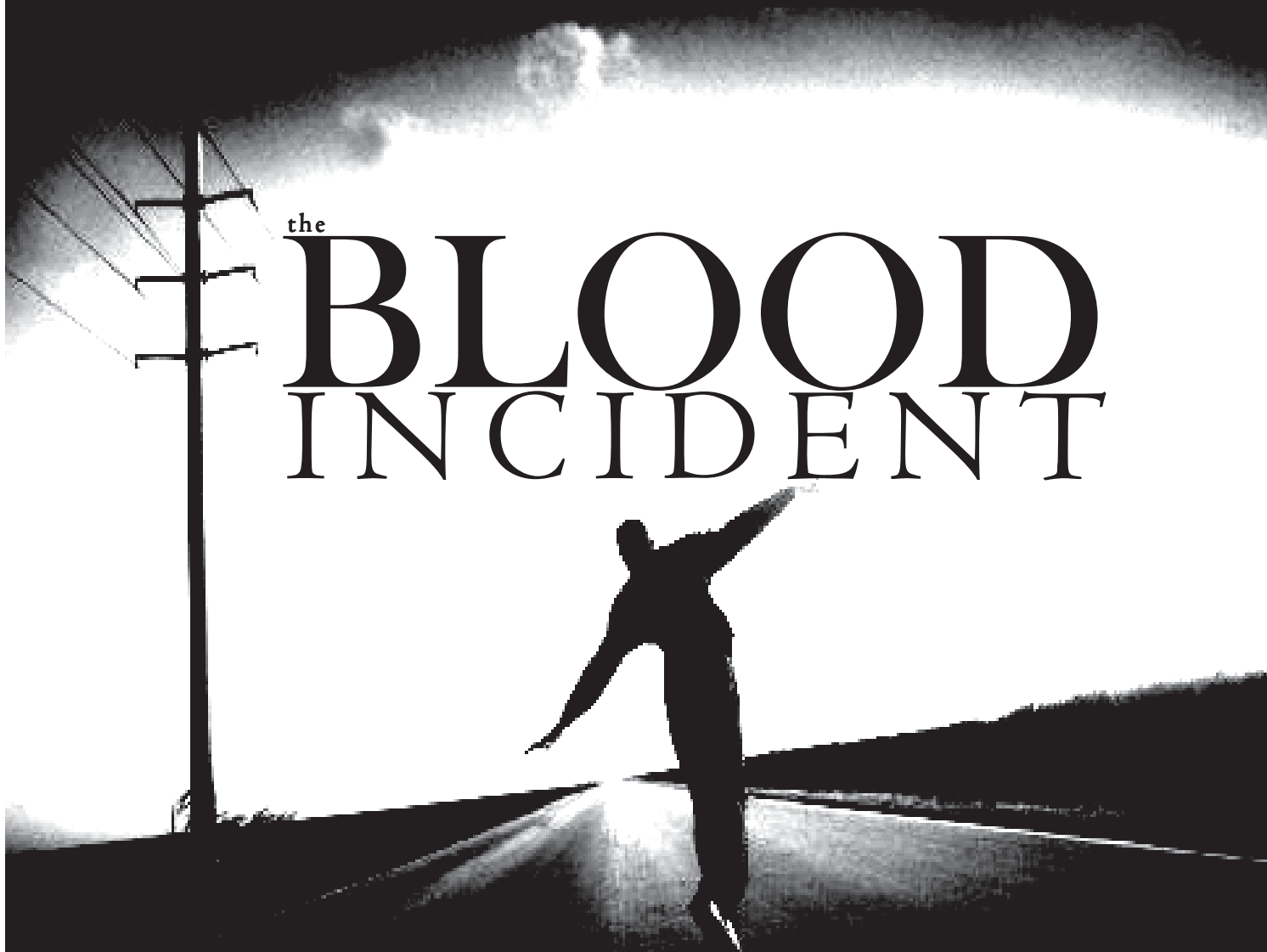


FUNDED IN PART BY THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES FEE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH, A LITTLE SICK PRODUCTIONS AND DEEKMAGAZINE L.L.C. PRESENT:

DEEK

[MAGAZINE]

the BLOOD INCIDENT



FEATURING:

—DEAD MAN CLEANUP

—LAMBCHOP'S UNFORTUNATE DEMISE

—BORN DEAD ICONS

—HOW TO DELIVER A BABY

—FAT F**K to RIPPED UP STALION: BEFORE AND AFTER

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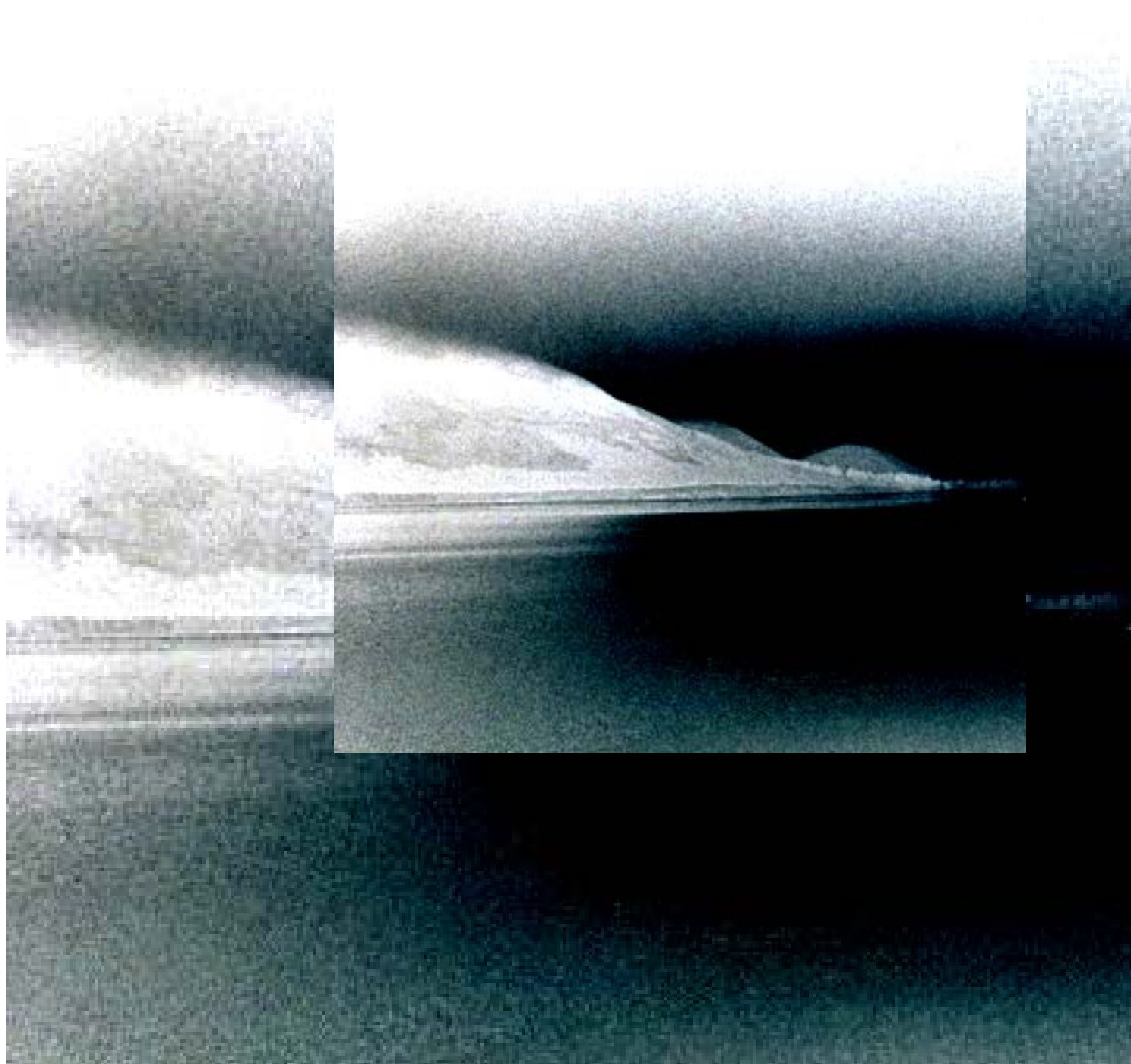
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LIKE A BEAST ONTO A BALLET FLOOR



YOU LOSE YOUR FOOTING AND **FALL TO THE EARTH, SCREAMING,**

GROWLING. YOU BREATHE HEAVILY, PANT AT THE DIRT AND REMEMBER

FAILURE PERSONIFIED IN A MOMENT—A CLEAR, STUNNING FLASH IN

TIME THAT CLEARED YOUR MIND AND MADE YOU CLEAN. **F**ACE DOWN, YOU THINK BACK AND
REMEMBER A FLAME — MAYBE HEAVEN, MAYBE HELL — AND IN RETROSPECT, YOU CHERISH

THAT

ONE,

COOL,

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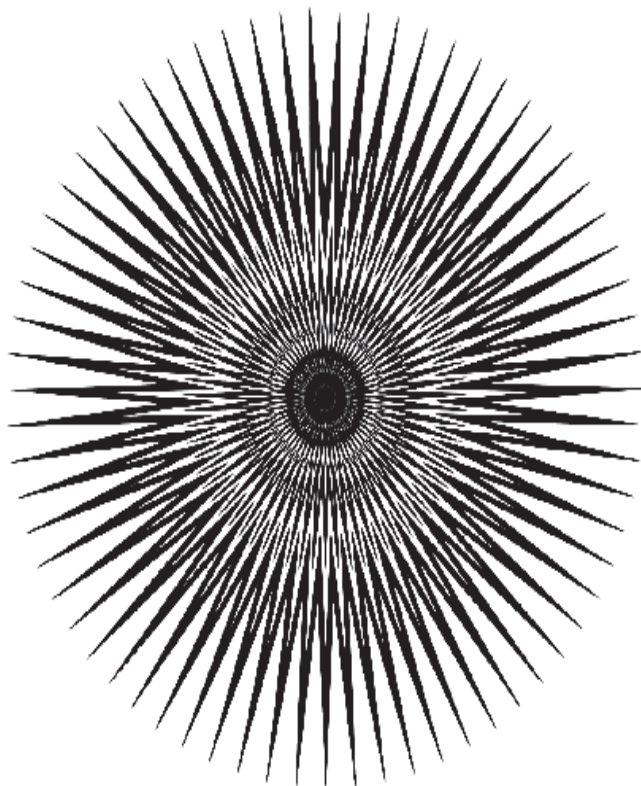


INCIDENT

THAT GREETED YOU BEFORE ALL EXISTENCE SEEMED TO HAZE UP AND TURN INTO SHIT.

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WARRIORS,

First off, I'd like to say that this song... this *terrible* song I hear in department stores all the time, (sometimes as Musac) is driving me fucking crazy and I can't continue going on like this. The "song" goes:

"Do you have to say goodbyee

For the summ-mer

Blah blah, blah blah, blah blah," and so on.

(I think it's called *The Sound of Summer* or *The Sound of Silence* or *This Summer's Depressing Urinary Tract Infection* or *Hell (in Musical Terms)* or something).

Whatever it is, it definitely wins **THE WORST SONG IN THE UNIVERSE CONTEST** by a huge margin. It's been stuck in my head for *weeks* and, whoever recorded it, I salute you and wave my penis in your general direction because *you* are a super-irritating bastard and I hate you passively with an aggressive sexual lust. On that note, we're beginning a contest called **THE MOST FUCKED-UP LETTER OF THE MONTH AWARD**. This month, our winner was Thad McCullough, of Squirrel Hill, who wrote something you can see on **page 8** (which comes right after this one). Thad won a free copy of **deek**. Who will win next month? You?

Now that we've got that out of the way, I'd like to thank you for putting up with another issue of **deek [magazine]**. I'd like to thank you because chances are, if you're reading this, you've totally lost your mind and you don't need silly apologies to keep your day going strong... So, maybe the thank you means nothing. Or maybe it means something. Fuck. Either way, your readership is appreciated, so get off my case.

Last month, we got some flak for putting "**Masturbation**" on the front cover while "**promoting**" **car theft**. So, in this Incident, we kept it a bit cleaner, simplifying much of the layout so you can savor, particularly, **1) a profile about a man who mops up after murders; 2) a fictional story about a fat man and a "Lose Weight in 25 Minutes" ad; 3) a nonfiction piece about a fetus falling bloody, wet and lifeless from the inside of a woman's uterus, and, of course, more. More, more!**

Also, this month, we decided to add some fun stuff for you to mess around with. After all, we don't want you to get totally bored reading all this marvelous literary brilliance. So, if you turn to page 27, for example, you'll see something you may not have seen. Or, at least, something you may not have seen in a *while*. It's a **Madlib!** All you have to do is fill in the blanks with any mildly appropriate word and—voila!—you have a sentence absolutely devoid of coherent reason.

Here's an example:

* I enjoy _____ while
VERB WITH "ING" ENDING PLURAL NOUN
 swimming in your _____
NOUN

Now you try,



Sancho Dorito
 Editor-in-Chief

* **CORRECT ANSWER:** I enjoy **shaving gorilla testicles** while swimming in your **ocean**.



DEEK

VOICES.

—FUCKED UP LETTER OF THE MONTH:

THIS MONTH WE RECEIVED A TON OF FEEDBACK ABOUT OUR FIRST ISSUE, THE COLLECTOR'S INCIDENT. MANY WROTE, BUT THIS RESPONSE IS SLIGHTLY BOLDER, SLIGHTLY RAUNCHIER, SLIGHTLY... MORE FUCKED-UP THAN THE OTHERS WE RECEIVED. HAVE A LOOK:

DEAR DEEK,

I enjoyed Ben Rubin's Masturbation Proclamation, but I'm afraid it has left me with many more questions than answers. For starters, how do we know this "Ben Rubin" is an actual person? You have not included a picture of him. Is he seductively stocky and swarthy, with a firm, plump ass? Or perhaps he is tall and hung, with warm, musky nuts. It's this lack of attention to detail that keeps a good

magazine from becoming a great magazine. And while we're on the subject of appearances, what about the cock that this "Ben Rubin" allegedly chronically masturbates? How big is it, how small is it? Lack of information like this is a grave oversight. I challenge Deek Magazine to provide its readership with "Ben Rubin's" personal information, so that the people can find out for themselves where he lives and supposedly masturbates. How can anyone beat off that much? I would have to observe it myself to believe it. And other questions remain, like, if "Ben Rubin" really enjoys watching Peter North slamming into a chick, who's to say he wouldn't be curious to see my own nice fat boner, slamming into my fist? And what if this were the case, that we become jack-off buddies? We could hold each others balls when we come! Suddenly the author's sexuality would come into question. Does "Ben Rubin" have these urges? Where does one draw the line? Why don't you tell me, Deek Magazine.

Sincerely,

THAD MCCULLOUGH

—DEAR DEEK,

Thought the Unsafe Text reading at Hemingway's was great. Keep that shit coming.

Lonely,

SERJ LAKINANN

—DEAR DEEK,

Have you ever been called on the phone by a complete stranger only to be asked for your name and your fucking *social security number*? Did you answer the phone and say GREAT! I LOVE SPINACH! YOU GUYS DON'T KNOW FUCK YOU SUCK.

Seriously,

"LARRY"

JASONE43@HOTMAIL.COM

—DEAR DEEK,

What you have here, surprisingly, is one of the most curious publications I've ever seen, with more artistic and literary potential than many, if not all the larger papers in the city. Deek feels young and smart; it's fun to look at, fun to read and, although it's sometimes uncomfortable to sit with, it's definitely a triumph. You've really set a stage for something new in Pittsburgh.

Best,

KEVIN FRIESS

VISIBLEINVISIBLE@HOTMAIL.COM

—DEAR DEEK,

Do you accept anonymous submissions?

Lonely,

ERIK SOHNUZ

—DEAR DEEK,

I really like Deek. It's a very good mag indeed....very impressed with the layout and quality....laughed out loud several times, [but] please fill in the 'blank pages;' it makes deek look less professional. Also, as much as I love the Wynkataug Monks, the interview lacks depth and comes off amateurish. It really seems like the dude that interviewed them never did an interview in his life...

Constructively,
BILL JULIN

—DEAR DEEK,

I am drunk. There are beetles falling from my fucking ceiling. Stop sending me this deek shit in my e-mail, cause it makes me want to murder your family and dump you into the Allegheny River.

Love,
MANDY MELODINI
—CO-FOUNDER, DEEK MAGAZINE

AND THESE PEOPLE E-MAILED
WORDS@DEEKMAGAZINE.COM
EITHER FOR THEIR OWN LUSCIOUS COPY
OF DEEK OR FOR A BIT OF INTERACTION:

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- BOB GAVEL
- ELIZABETH MCGUIRE
- TOM JONES (SERIOUSLY)
- "STONEY"
- NEIL YODNANE
- ERIC LIDJI
- AARON PALETERO
- LISA MORROW
- ADAM TURCIG
- KELLY MCHARGUE
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- CLARICE ROBINSON
- KATE MAVRICH
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- JESSICA MCCOLLOUGH
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- GEORGE VAGINA
- "SKUNKY"
- "THE FITS"
- THOMAS VAN GEMERT
- "SMALLS"
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- DAVID CARTER
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- MATT HODANIK
- TANIA THURBY

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MAIL LIB

HERE'S WHAT YOU DO:

LOOK AT ALL THESE DESCRIPTIONS AND PICK WORDS OR PHRASES THAT APPLY. LIKE, IF IT SAYS,

1) "SOMETHING YOU MIGHT SAY TO SOMEONE AS A GREETING," YOU MIGHT WRITE, "PULL UP YOUR FLY, YOU PERVERT." THEN, TURN TO PAGE 27 AND FILL IN YOUR WORDS WHERE THERE ARE BLANK SPACES THAT LOOK LIKE THIS: ____ (1) ____.

- 1) Something you might say to another person as a greeting.
- 2) noun
- 3) term of endearment
- 4) plural noun
- 5) action verb
- 6) noun
- 7) a moment in of time, like, "day"
- 8) noun
- 9) noun
- 10) adjective
- 11) noun
- 12) action verb
- 13) noun
- 14) action verb
- 15) noun
- 17) noun
- 18) action verb
- 19) action verb
- 20) noun
- 21) noun
- 22) noun
- 23) noun

SEE
PAGE
27.



DEAD MAN CLEANUP

by MATT STROUD



“A friend will help you move;
a good friend will help you move
a dead body.”

You continue saying that phrase over and over as you walk down Fourth Avenue downtown while staring down at a piece of notebook paper in your hand. The coroner's office is your destination and...where is it? They said Downtown Pittsburgh, Fourth Avenue...



“Hey,” you yell at a huge black man—easily 6’5”, fat. “Where’s the coroner’s office?” He looks up to his left, toward a staircase leading to double doors and says, “You need yo’ eyes checked.” Fuckin’ right you do. You were expecting maybe a building covered in blood, stinking like death, decay? A portal to another universe, guarded by a succubus? No. You see a building fashioned from old, evil looking stone. Maybe it looks this way because some contractor wanted it to look imposing. . . or maybe it’s just been here for a long, long time. You’re looking upward, then down at the same piece of notebook paper, then up again. All you can think is that phrase — that group of words that seems to sum all this up for you so perfectly:

A friend will help you move; a good friend will help you move a dead body.

And, you remind yourself, if that’s the case, Price Robinson must be a good friend to . . .

In 19 years working as a coroner in the Allegheny County Coroner’s Office on Fourth Avenue downtown, he’s moved, investigated and studied aftermaths in some of the most grisly deaths you can imagine.

But in his spare time, what he sees gets even more unbelievable.

“I’m a glorified janitor,” he says, explaining a company he founded called Biocare. “I clean up after death. I clean what no one wants to deal with.”

Dead bodies, that is. And not just your run-of-the-

mill dead folks. Biocare takes care of gruesome scenes where the city, insurance companies and families refuse to clean up after a particularly nasty death.

Price, 43, gives this example: A few years back, a set of twins were sledge-hammered to death by their father, who admitted to the murder, saying “something just went wrong that morning.” Price handled both the autopsy and the clean-up. He rejoiced when a judge passed two consecutive life sentences for the murderer in 1999.

“It makes me feel good when I can help put someone like that behind bars,” he says.

Price, who lives in Monroeville with his wife of 15 years and his daughter, 13, says the twins’ case got him thinking. But he also notes that sometimes, in this line of work, awful circumstances are just part of the job.

“I have to make the separation between the living and the dead,” he says. “I have to look at it like everyone’s a piece of evidence after they die.”

Price, whose hobbies outside work include golfing and fishing — “what other sports promote drinking beer as part of the game,” he says — was born on the North Side.

He spent his childhood in New York, Illinois and Connecticut. He finished high school, then took classes at four different colleges before managing restaurants in Connecticut. He never got his degree. Before becoming a coroner, he worked at his grandfather’s celebrated Crawford Grill in the Hill District, then opened the short-lived Castle Shannon Deli, which lasted less than a year.

He got a job as a clerk in the Allegheny County Sheriff’s Office, heard about a job opening in the morgue. He got the job, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Price started Biocare when “a lady [he had spoken to] couldn’t find anyone to clean up after her husband’s death.”

Price is employed at the coroner’s office full-time.

“How do you sleep at night,” is something he’s asked often.

With a humored grin, he blinks twice and thinks a few seconds before speaking.

“If I had nightmares I would’ve quit a long time ago,” he says. “You never know what you can do until you try it.”



DEEK PRESENTS GRAPHIC NASTINESS:

LAMBCHOP'S UNFORTUNAME DEMISE—

Lambchop Vs. PREDATOR



WORDS BY:

SETH STEINBACHER

PICTURES BY:

ZACH BRADEN

Reality television just wasn't bringing in the cash anymore. The fickle American public took a good look in the mirror one morning and realized that the people they saw drinking eel piss and degrading themselves and others for money were more attractive than the average Joe/Josephine public. No one likes to be reminded of how ugly they are—that's why Regis Philbin has been a television icon for decades.

>>>>



Network executives watched mortified as ratings dropped and people began doing things like step aerobics instead of watching the tube. How would they be able to support their chic cocaine habits? Something had to be done to stem the rising tide of reading above a seventh grade level.

Innovators of television, including the guy that came up with the T.G.I.F. line-up in the early nineties, met in a Los Angeles penthouse to brainstorm. Jim Belushi-sized quantities of blow and gallons of bottled water were ingested in that

frantic meeting of network giants. The answer came like the first rays of sun after Noah's flood. Violence!

Something fresh! The public is demanded to see something bleed they had never seen bleed before. It couldn't be humans; it couldn't be giraffes versus starved wolverines. It had to be something or someone everyone knew and loved.

Calls were made and strings were pulled until a fight was created that would keep America and her areas of economic influence spellbound. Intergalactic big-game hunter, the Predator, and ex-PBS superstar and current crystal meth addict, Lambchop, were set to come face to face in a death match.

The battle came to be one night in the Pinckney B.S. Pinchback Civic Arena of St. Petersburg, Florida. Thousands inside the arena and millions more at home watched as the referee struggled to keep the combatants apart before the bell was rung.

"Isn't it going to be hard little one, for you to fight without Sheri Lewis's hand up your ass?" said the Predator.

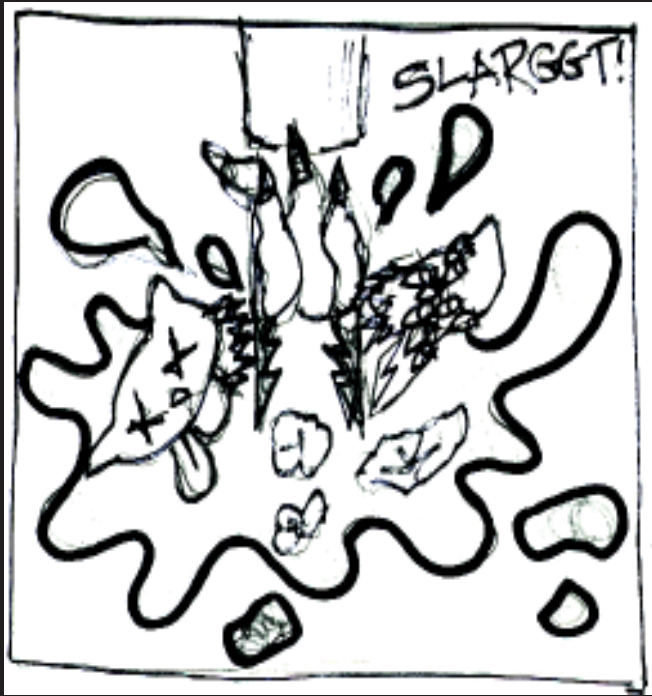
Lambchop, steeped in the terror and reckless rage of a crystal meth withdrawal, screamed back.

"I'm a killa'! I eat souls! I'll suck the postulant marrow from your alien bones!"

The glory of battle! Nothing whets the appetite of imagination more than watching other living beings tear each other apart. All that pent-up anger from the regularity of our daily lives can be released vicariously through televised violence. The unbearably long grocery check-out lines; the tedium of our unsatisfying jobs; the embarrassment from all those times we've been out walking in public and tripped over our own feet on the sidewalk — can all be flushed out of our hearts by the sweet sound of bones cracking on impact.

Everything that rises above the dirt casts a shadow, even the moments that tower in the collective imagination of the American television viewing public. This event had some ill dealings in its murkier recesses behind the scenes.





After Sheri Lewis's death and the subsequent cancellation of Lambchop's Play-a-Long, the forlorn little lamb fell on difficult times. Without Lewis's guiding hand, work was next to impossible for Lambchop to find. He ended up taking minor roles in low-budget porno's just to make ends meet. One such film, *Farmer Brown Does His Sheep*, caught the attention of the tabloids. Nationwide children could see their once favorite television star in unflattering situations captured in gritty black and white photos on the scandal sheets.

In an interview he was quoted as saying, "Yeah I did some porn. I'm not proud of it but I needed the money. Without Sheri nobody was willing to give me a chance. I tried getting into the Hollywood scene but movie execs just wouldn't buy a lamb doing serious acting. I got pigeonholed into a

certain role and no one could see past that. It happens to a lot of people in this business."

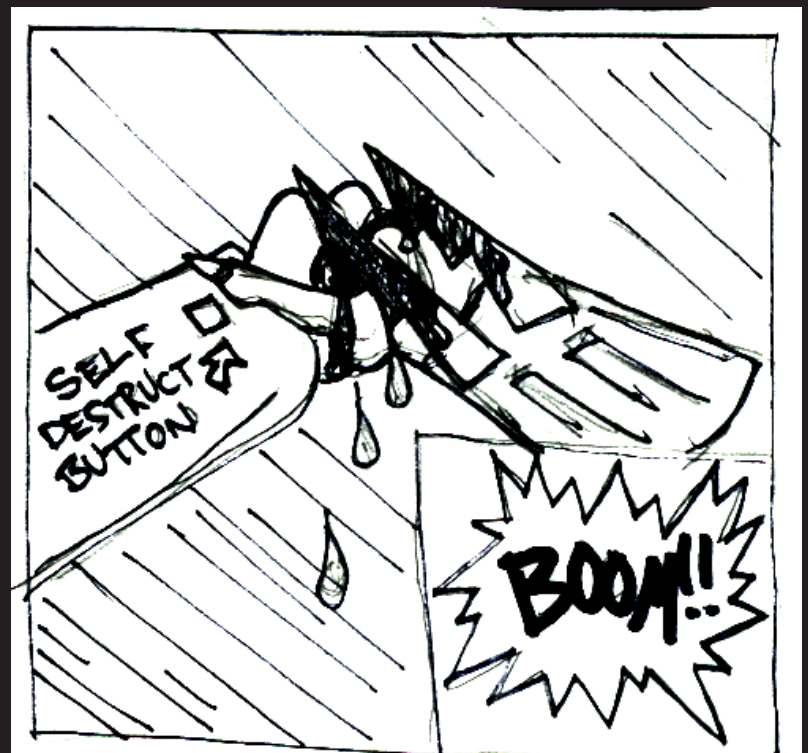
Broke and depressed, Lambchop turned to using crystal meth. He wandered the streets of L.A. for days, either high or trying to score more meth. The fight organizers pulled him off the street into the back of a luxury SUV and got him to sign a contract. They took full advantage of the fact that he was not of fit mind to enter into an agreement. Otherwise he probably wouldn't have signed on for something that surely meant his death.

Whatever the methods of creation, people had a once in a lifetime television event for their enjoyment. The fight bell rang and Lambchop charged out of his corner, thirsting for the Predator's blood. The Predator stood his ground and slowly unmasked. With the raging lamb circling and taunting him, he let some drool ooze out from the center of his four-pincer mouth. He raised his giant fist high above his head and bid his time.

It was nearly impossible to hear over the din of the crowd. Officials heard Lambchop saying, "Come on you big ugly motherfuck," just as the Predator's fist came smashing down on top of him

The lamb's body structure was completely smashed in that one maniacal clout. Blood, liquefied body tissue, bile, and even feces came gushing out like a ketchup packet being stomped on. Bits of the body flew out into the crowd and on to the horrified spectators.

For a moment, the entire arena was silent, then the ending bell was rung and the crowd roared with delight. Flashbulbs went off from everywhere. Members of the Predator's crew rushed around him and towed off the bone fragments and blood

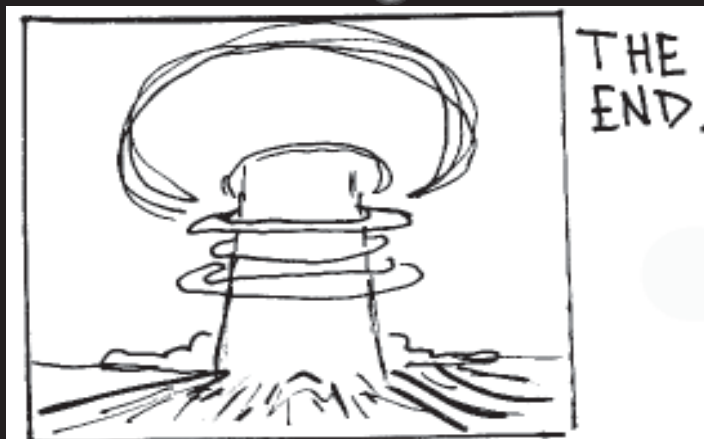


Reporters and fans attempted to rush the ring but event security held them back. The Predator looked directly into the ABC camera and flashed a beautiful smile. He looked as if he practiced impeccable dental hygiene.

The ring ropes were held down for his exit but in a surprise twist, he exploded. After the smoke cleared no trace of him was discovered, as if he had somehow disintegrated and his particles traveled out of the arena unnoticed. This won the thunderous applause of the audience.

Thus ended the second most watched event in television history (the first being the final episode of *Family Ties*). The television networks made millions of dollars and a handful of execs got all of it. All was right with the world once again.

A network boon was created in the aftermath of the fight as other weird celebrity match-ups were arranged. Making-the-Death match specials were aired as well. A two-hour special made to memorialize that first thrilling fight between alien and lamb is set to air this upcoming spring.



SEALED

by MEGAN BRANNING

I stared at the elevator doors, trying not to breathe in the jungle mist of hair spray that filled the air. The elevator bumped along, humming to itself like an old man wandering in the park.

Just before the fifteenth floor there was a jolt, the lights flickered. My heart mimicked the elevator's sudden stop. Visions of the inside of a casket pushed into my head.

What a way to go, holding a pile of manila envelopes. I couldn't be destined to die at age twenty-five, in a box, with the guy from Accounting pressing his belly against my back.

Those manila envelopes. If it weren't for them I'd have been sitting safe at my desk, not hung by the end of a steel thread. After spending four years in college and graduating with honors, were envelopes to be my undoing?

These thoughts flitted through my head like Firetip butterflies, until I realized the elevator was moving again. It stopped at my floor, I pushed my way past the woman in the hair spray cloud, and went down the hall to deposit the mail.

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THE RUGBY ABORTION

BY KELLY ROTTMUND

NONFICTION



FOREWORD GOES like this: i don't know if this fits easily into fiction or nonfiction. i don't know if it happened. as it was told to me, it was supposed to be nonfiction, but I don't really know. do you? it was told to me as if it actually happened, so i think that makes it nonfiction. but it might not have happened—fiction. i don't know. have you read joann beard's piece undertaker please drive slow?? she gives us the thoughts and memories of a woman with cancer. she never met the woman or talked to her. beard said that some of the memories she gives the woman are her own [beard's]. and that piece is nonfiction. i don't have a definite answer. i don't believe this piece. it sounds harsh and unfeeling but there are just too many weird and unfinished events that i have been told of by this girl. one summer when we were living in different cities she was pregnant and didn't know what to do. so she would ask me for advice and ask if I would mind if there was a baby in the apartment we were going to share in the fall. when we moved in together there was no baby and she never mentioned it again even though she told me she was going to let me know what her final decision was. according to her the best friend that got her pregnant is in the mafia and his family lives on morewood or amberson ave. i forget which one. i never met him. once i saw a note that was written by him. i also heard that he threatened to kill her ex-boyfriend so that he would stop harassing her. at one point i knew this best friend's last name so I looked up his family's house on the allegheny co. website. the owner of the house's name wasn't the same as this boy's. also, she said that he died on sept 11, 2001 in the somerset co. plane crash. i looked up the list of those who died and his name wasn't on it. there were no people on that plane who were any where near his age, in case he was traveling under an alias. and then, after the plane crash there is all this crazy stuff about how his father took her to see the boy's dead body at the funeral home. but two months later i heard on the radio that all the bodies of the people who died were just about to be released to their families. and it's just all sorts of little inconsistencies and things that don't seem to make sense that caused me to doubt everything she said. especially when after the plane crash she came home with a cat saying that it had been the boy's and his family wanted her to have it and then she told us that they bought it for her at petco in monroeville. it's all so trivial but i never knew what to believe so i didn't believe anything. as for the kind of person she is...she looks like a linebacker. she's rectangular in shape and really solid. she loves purple and sparkles and blonde hair and furry animals and vin diesel-like men and makeup and "fuck me" boots and halter tops and all sorts of other things she shouldn't wear ...because she looks like a transvestite. she shaved the sides of her face and the skin underneath her chin. she was really knowledgeable about cars and insurance and student loans... things like that, but then she would go out to a grimy bar on the southside in a skirt that barely covered her ass and i'd have to say, maybe you should wear something else. what the hell are you thinking? after a while we just stopped talking to each other. we smiled. said hi. that was it. i haven't talked to her in over a year. if you want more of a description let me know and i'll see what i can say about her or if i can find out more information. i haven't seen her in over a year. maybe longer. i'll guess i'll see you tomorrow or something. maybe we can talk about it. make some sense of all this...

The rules:

You must wear a mouth guard.

You cannot bite.

You cannot elbow someone intentionally.

You cannot tackle a player if they don't have the ball.

And that's about all I know.

My roommate Julie plays rugby. I've seen her play before. During every game, the brutal lunging, grabbing and tearing inflicts injuries and, on the sideline, you avert your eyes. On the field, things get very ugly. People fight, they bleed—they break the rules. There's no ambulance waiting to transport injured players to the hospital; no parents or coaches waiting on the sidelines to escort wounded warriors home.

Rugby is a violent, fast-paced sport. Players self-medicate by drinking beer. If hurt, they elbow their way through a crowd of ale-guzzling ruggers surrounding the keg; then they swipe ice from the keg's cool, metallic rim, dropping it onto raw skin. Someone pours beer and they wrap gauze, one handed, around their knees and elbows until they resemble a skewered marshmallow. If the player needs serious medical attention they wait until another rugger is available to drive them to the emergency room. If no one can drive, they deal.

On a Saturday in October, the match was in Ann Arbor, Michigan. My roommate was there. I was at home, waiting, knowing she was on the verge of doing something terrible.

Pregnant. It was the second time in six months. The first pregnancy was the result of rape. At that time she was vehemently against abortion for religious and moral reasons but knew she couldn't support a baby. The second pregnancy was the consequence of a night spent with her best friend. This baby would never know this friend, its father. Julie said he was killed in a plane crash about ninety miles outside of Pittsburgh on September 11, 2001. She could not keep the baby. She didn't have the stamina or ability to provide for it financially or emotionally...

Abortion costs, she told me, range from \$225 to \$575 during the first trimester.

Will a strong blow to the stomach quicken the death? Will excessive drinking kill it? If I eat a whole pack of birth control pills at once...? She already knew the answers to these questions. No fucking way. Some people told her this, but she didn't want to hear it. It was what *some* had told her, so she asked others. She'd asked and asked again, waiting for the right answer—her right answer. She didn't want to give birth to a deformed baby and be reminded every day of what self-induced abortive techniques had done to her child. So she waited until someone told her the trick, as she called it...


The trick would flourish in Ann Arbor and conclude in Pittsburgh.

Her story was this: She and three ruggers drove to Michigan after class on Friday. Their night consisted of getting drunk in the hotel room and trying to regain their rugby playing abilities through four hours sleep.

Saturday morning: First she was cleated on the left leg. The shape of a foot composed of small circular bruises adorned her thick thigh. She sustained a concussion with the second blow. The final hit. It was with this hit that she felt herself begin to bleed. She went to the bathroom, attempted to clean her saturated underwear, inserted a tampon and positioned a pad in the red cloth attempting to dam the continuous flow. She returned to the match.

The five hour, six minute trip to Pittsburgh took a long time. Every hour the car veered into a rest stop or a McDonalds so Julie could use the bathroom. She probably wiped the area below her vagina where her rubbing thighs smeared the running blood and then changed the sopping tampon and pad. For the rest of ride she tried to ignore the feeling that she was being impaled on a wrought iron fence. All she needed was a shower, she thought.

When she got to the apartment she took one. As she stepped out of the shower, she watched blood flow from her vagina, down her legs, over her ankles and onto the beige linoleum floor. She reached down to remove the tampon that no longer acted as a cork. The bloated cotton, saturated in browning red, slid out from between her wet legs. Attached to the end of it, a fetus fell wet and heavy to the floor. Her friend Fiona called the hospital. She was told that as long as Julie "birthed" the placenta, she didn't need to visit the hospital, but should visit Student Health on Monday. Fiona mopped the floor while my roommate cleansed herself of blood and vomit.

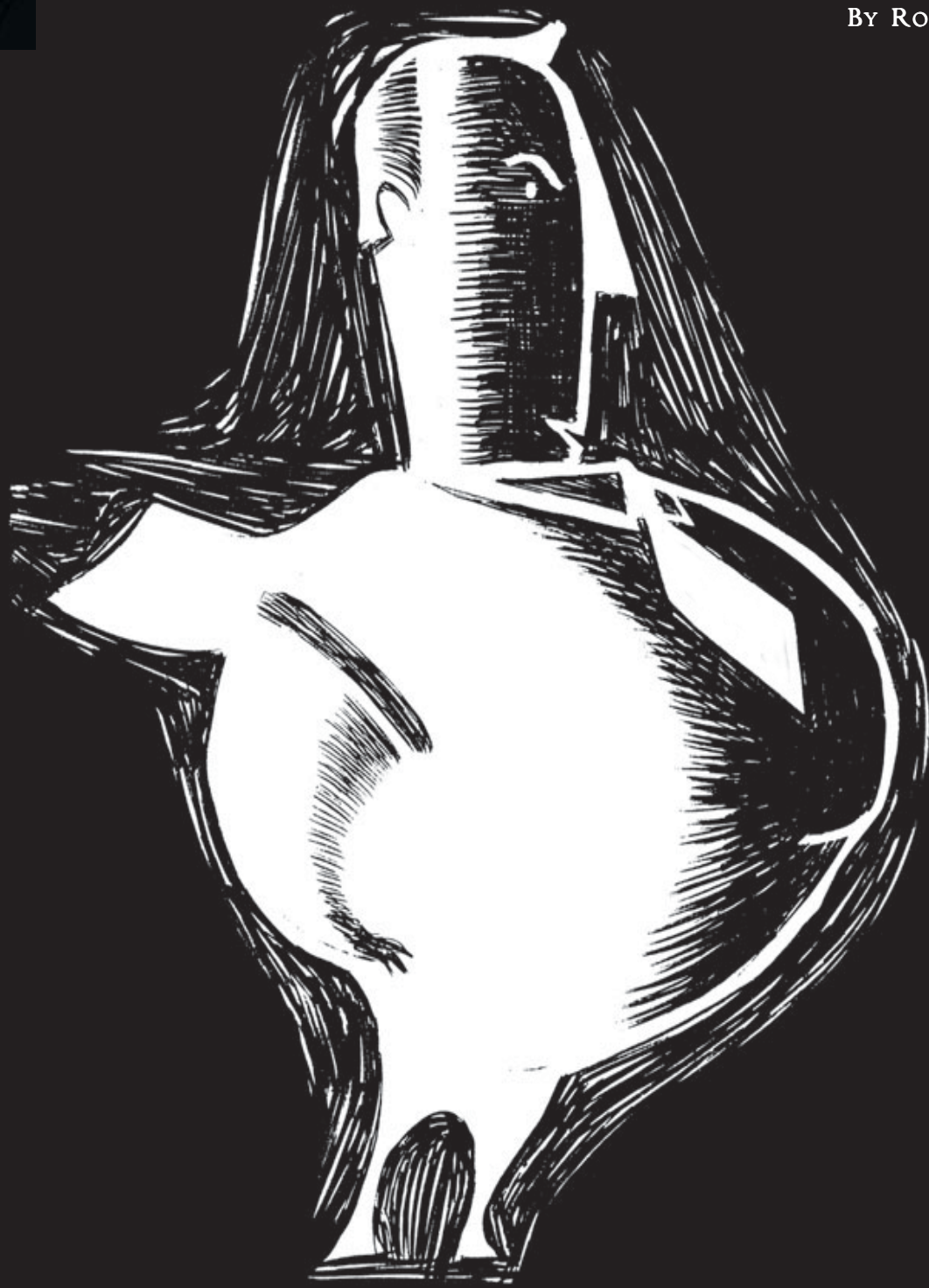
Julie stayed up all night, self medicating, drinking beer. 

f1ct1on

BEFORE AND AFTER:

THE STORY OF A FAT FUCK TURNED STUD.
WATCH OUT, LADIES.

BY ROBERT ISENBERG



BEFORE:

He's sitting on a white plastic chair with a painful-looking sunburn seared into his rolls of fat. His bare feet have stripes of white where his sandal straps were and he can't drink his beer fast enough because he needs to be drunk now. But every time he swigs from it, he guzzles too much and chokes, letting the froth-saliva-beer spatter on his chest. He scratches his head but his hair is so thin, and his fingernails dig too hard, so he winces because even his tender red scalp hurts.

Hey, Rodney, says the handsome DJ with the smooth voice as he walks past. The handsome DJ wears a white undershirt with an unbuttoned baby-blue dress shirt hanging off his shoulders. He smiles distantly at Rodney, but their eyes never meet, and by the time Rodney has swallowed and said, Hey, the DJ has already walked past and clinked martini glasses with the up-and-coming hip-hop artist with the big orange shorts and the wraparound sunglasses and the bleached yellow hair.

Rodney's swollen freckled arm rests on the plastic table, which seems uneven until he realizes that the pressure of his elbow on its surface keeps tipping the whole thing; it doesn't help that there's that awkward bloom of an umbrella sticking out of it — which doesn't cast shade on Rodney, he's sitting on the sunny side — so Rodney picks up his arm and puts both his hands in his lap, grasping the beer bottle's neck with his pudgy fingers. For a moment he lets the now lukewarm bottle press into his groin, causing mild stimulation as he watches two women — both clad in bikinis, their sun-baked bodies screaming seductively in his eyes as rivulets of water dribble along their calves.

One of the women pushes off the pool wall, clinging to an inflatable off-green brontosaurus. And when she reaches the middle, her legs warp as they kick beneath the surface. She says, Hey, Rodney, you look like a baked potato out there.

Behind the grill, near the entrance of the house, the surfer — who Rodney recognizes from the cover of Hang Ten magazine but he can't place the name — doubles over with laughter. His head flies up again, the muscles of his chest and torso stretching back into place, and he points to the woman with his grease-dotted spatula.

God, Lauren, he says. You're such a bitch.

I didn't mean it in a bad way, she says. Fuck you, Mitch.

Yeah, anytime, sweet thang.

Lauren picks up the green brontosaurus and holds it in the air, kicking harder. She says: I'm taken, asshole. Why don't you screw Mr. Dinosaur here?

'Cause you have bigger tits, he says, laughing.

Lauren bears that fake-hurt smile and hurls the inflatable at Mitch, but it only splats on the surface of the water a few feet away. She crinkles her nose and leans back as Mitch laughs, backstroking in an awkward circle.

Well Rodney, Lauren says, you gonna come in or what?

Rodney has forgotten that he's even here; it's like he's watching a lousy beach movie on his wide-screen back home. This woman isn't even talking to him; his sunburn can't possibly hurt this much; he wants to scratch his skin away, his muscle tissue, everything. God, just get this shit off this fat fucking body, he thinks. His tear ducts have a mind of their own — they betray him. Maybe everyone will think his tears are sweat, all merging together; maybe if his eyes are red they'll think he's stoned and ask for pot, even though he doesn't have any. God, what's the best way out of here? What is this place? Sequoia Terrace? How did he get in here? What's that bee doing here? **Get the fuck away from me. Go back to your hive. I'm hungry. I hate being fucking hungry—**



>>>>

Rodney gets up, slapping his beer on the table.
He's drunker than he thought.
Mitch says, Hey, Lauren, you got your date after all.
Fuck you, Mitch. Come on, Rodney, she says. Come on.
There's a burst of light-headed sparklers, stars, a galaxy dancing in front of Rodney's face, and he tips one way, then the other; he looks down at the faded blue paint that says FIVE FEET: DO NOT DIVE. Jesus, five feet. He waves his arms in the air; his toes press into the concrete, trying to keep his balance; oh, he's balancing; no, no, he's not; oh, God, he can't dive, but he's walking too fast — not fast, but too fast to stop — there's a great gargled sizzle behind him — Mitch flipping burgers, he's not even watching. . . Well fuck him, he doesn't have any friends anyway! And the water rises up to Rodney's face...

He feels the blanketing sting across his stomach, his left chest; a great wall of whiplash; sucking in water; he's going to die; his eyes are opening; he sees legs kicking through the foggy chlorine; shadows traced along the white walls; his palms press against the pool floor, pushing him off; if he was dry, he'd be crying; if he could breathe, he'd be gagging.

He bursts out of the water, spitting out water, sputtering; hearing laughter; the laughter's okay, he's used to it, but then the one guy, the off-duty life guard, he's like:

Woah, man, you okay?

{ Yeah I'm okay : what do you think? : I can't take care of my fucking self? Fuck you life preserver man! You and your celluloid bitch girlfriend-wife-life-partner whatever she is. Why do you even invite me to these— }

He opens his eyes, gasping for breath.

The up-and-coming hip-hop artist is throwing his hands up at the DJ, screaming, Man, why you got to play me like that? You think you're motherfucking Jesus?

AFTER:

After—many years after—Rodney is wearing a bathrobe and sitting in his recliner in the living room, flipping through a magazine. He's waiting for his martini so he can ease up before his massage. The rust-colored paint-sponge walls are calming, as is the piano concerto playing quietly on his speakers. He inhales, because he likes to see his massive chest inflate, the canals of skin opening between patches of chest hair. He opens up the bathrobe just enough to reach inside and scratch himself; then he flips the magazine and smells the cologne advertised on page 17.

It might just suit him; he should remember to have Gilda pick up a bottle before he goes to Club Rocker on Thursday.

He calls to the kitchen: Yo, Gilda. Where's that martini?

Gilda appears in the doorway, then leans against the frame; she is only a silhouette of curves, a series of perfectly sculpted crescents; the sum of Gilda is her solar flare of her big blond do. Her cut-off Jeans shorts are frayed, he can tell, even in the dim light; he needs to buy her new ones.

What? she says.

Rodney slaps the magazine down on his legs; his bathrobe is still open. He says: What the hell?

She says: What the hell, what?

Gilda teeters, then slumps down along the doorframe, laughing to herself. She says: Did you say you wanted a martini?

I don't want one anymore, he says. You see this magazine? (Holding it out). You see the ad this week?

Looks even better than last week. Fucking beautiful.

You see it?

What ad?

The ad, the ad. See, right here, page sixty-eight.

See it? Before? (Flipping the page). After. Isn't it gorgeous? Makes me look at that six-pack picture and fucking barf, I swear. You see this?

Yeah, it's great, Rodney.

Yeah, it great.

He tosses the magazine in her direction; it smacks on the slate floor.

He says: You bet it's great. That photographer — skinny motherfucker, some nerd from UCLA, I swear to God — he's like, Shit, you're even bigger in real life. 'Cause he saw the ad. He saw what I looked like before. We were supposed to have a three-hour photo shoot — he took five. Five hours. That's when you know you're somebody, you know, Gilda? You hear me? Gilda, did you fall asleep again? I'm not carrying you again.

Gilda rolls her head his way. She says: Did you ever screw that Lauren girl?

Lauren? No.

She was pretty.

Not as pretty as you.

Yeah, Gilda says. She was prettier than me.

I don't think so.

Gilda sighs and raises her hand, seeming to reach for something, but she just lets her wrist fall into her lap, and she chuckles — once. As her head rolls back along her shoulders, Rodney can see the smudges of eye-liner on her tank-top. He wonders how it got there.

Anyway, Rodney says.

Gilda says: I'm gonna go out.

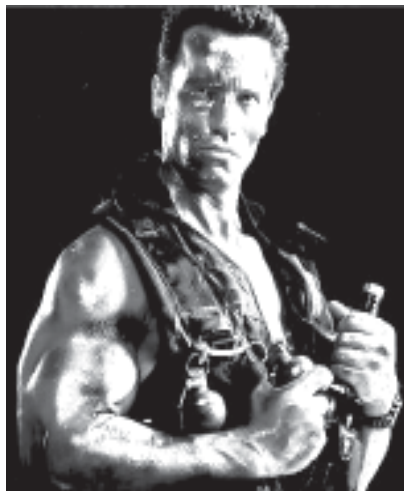
Okay. Don't be out too late.

Yeah, okay.

The kitchen light switches off. The front door closes. Heels click on the driveway pavement. Keys tinkle. The engine roars and headlights flood the living room, just for a moment, before Rodney is in the dark again, scratching his knee, wondering what's on TV.

BEFORE AND AFTER:

[LEFT TO RIGHT. IF IT SEEMS LUDICROUS, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT IDEA.]



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BOOKS YOU MAY NOT HAVE READ, BUT SHOULD!

CHARLES BURNS'

BLACK HOLE



BLACK HOLE

- PUBLISHED BY: Fantagraphics and Kitchen Sink Press for a mature audience.
- GREAT FOR: fans of horror movies, Rare Bit Fiends, and other dream narratives.
- FORMAT: Standard, black and white.
- DISTRIBUTED SEMI-ANNUALLY.

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—BESIDES HIS COMIX, BURNS HAS ALSO DONE ILLUSTRATION WORK FOR IGGY POP'S 'BRICK BY BRICK' ALBUM, TIME MAGAZINE, AND MANY COMIX ANTHOLOGIES.



Can I just say that I would rather not be writing this right now? I would rather be somewhere outside, somewhere beautiful and natural, smoking a joint with my best friend. I would rather be in a small town, in a deserted railroad yard, where it's always dusk and the sun casts everything in a warm, golden glow.

What is this desire I'm trying to articulate? Something nostalgic, something dreamy and psychedelic. I'll tell you what to do—read Charles Burns' comic book *Black Hole*. It's what I'm trying to get at.

But back to that deserted railroad yard. It really is a place, a place right behind the house I lived in all my youth. It is the place where I first saw a pornographic magazine.

Jon Mosco asked me if I'd ever seen a *Playboy*, and I hadn't. So we rode our bikes far into the railroad yard and parked behind an abandoned train car because the weeds were too thick. He took me to a

pile of thick black tarpaper, and removed it piece by piece. Underneath were several magazines—*Playboy*, *Penthouse*, etc.

He showed me the pictures; they made me nervous. I'm a homo, but I'm not sure I realized this at the time. That night, I came home and helped my family carve a pumpkin, noticing that my socks were covered in black burrs—menacing little two-pronged things. They seemed to amplify the guilt and terror I felt for having looked at the nudie mags.

The next day I took some friends there, some male friends I would lose in a few years when we all realized there was something different about me, something I didn't have the balls to come out and say. And here is another thing I can't explain: we looked at the magazines, then we took them to a garbage can, set them on fire, and pissed on them.

Now, I'm shaking my head contemplatively, thinking: there's nothing more confusing than adolescence. But Charles Burns navigates the territory so deftly, with a dream logic that seems downloaded from my subconscious and yours.

Black Hole is ostensibly about a sexually transmitted plague that only affects teenagers. It gives them hideous physical mutations, and they are cast out of their homes and forced to live in the woods.

But all this horror (those menacing black burrs) is offset by the sheer beauty of the world around it, the innocence that is so inevitably lost. One panel is a close up of the burning tip of a joint—it's startling in its intricacy, all the mystery and despair that he puts into the drawing of a burning joint. "It finally felt like summer was coming," are the words he juxtaposes with this image.

In my favorite issue, our protagonist is buying weed from a group of college guys. He walks into the kitchen to find a girl, naked from the waist down, a pert tail springing from above her buttocks. She makes him eat a bologna sandwich. "A pink sliver of meat."

She takes him down into the basement, into her room, where she creates her art. Her room is astounding—black, covered in the most surreal and evocative art imaginable. She puts on some music that is only described as "weird electronic stuff," and he feels himself inexplicably attracted to her—especially her tail.

I'm not sure what is going on here—why her basement room seems like somewhere I've been before, why I can imagine this weird electronic music without hearing it... All I can say is I'd rather be there right now, in a world of mystery, feeling the deep loss of innocence I never knew I had.

REVIEWED BY:
NAT SOLTESZ



BORN DEAD ICONS:

OUTSIDE THE OUTSIDER'S CLUBHOUSE

(THE MR. ROBOTO PROJECT, OCTOBER 6, 2003)

BY IAN CLEMENTE

I walked in and occupied an hour and a half trying to act casual – reading flyers, desperately thinking of ways to start small talk with someone... trying to think of ways to not feel like an intruder. I eavesdropped on conversations, most of which centered on why some band sucked, or why some person was wrong. And as people shuffled in, the age span and gender integration surprised me, as did the amount of punks dressed entirely in black, sporting imposing logos and confrontational hairdos, attempting somehow to attract attention to their physical appearance. Whatever preconceptions I initially tried to dispel, the audience immediately confirmed. **Welcome to the Mr. Roboto Project.**

SCENE
OBSERVATION

The show started an hour late, and everyone rose reverently as **Suburban Death Machine** tuned their instruments. Roboto co-op member and SMD guitarist Ian Ryan introduced the first song, saying:

“This song is about vivisection and how fucked up it is.”

With that, the band made a sloppy entrance into their first song, which, oddly enough, sounded like a song about vivisection. (I can't accurately explain that; you'll have to trust me). SMD's music focused on power chords, bass lines, and vocal melodies that consistently mirrored each other as the drummer kept a (purposely?) sloppy beat. The song structures varied little from one to another, and neither did the tempos. Most of their songs were around a minute and a half long.

SMD writes tunes about pertinent social issues, which is mildly intriguing, as far as I'm concerned. But I found two

problems: First, whoever worked the mixing boards mixed the vocals so poorly, placing such an emphasis on volume, that any political message was drowned in the monotonous thrashing. Secondly, and honestly, I feel that politics provide a weak premise for weak music, which is exactly what SMD presented. I enjoyed, however, the rhythmic quality of the guitarist's work, and the energy of Dan, the lead vocalist, who paced a lot and assaulted audience members on occasion.

While exhibiting slightly more range than SMD, and sharing the same bassist, **Aphasia** presented dragged-out, indulgent songs, probably about how much the world sucks. The band broke pace in between several songs attempting to tune up, but never really got there. The vocalist strived to be tough and sexy, often hanging an arm around an audience member and pouting her lips before dramatically falling to her knees, screaming. Lots of screaming. While this music obviously meant something to the band, I couldn't get into it. Maybe I place too much emphasis on a memorable melody.

I read an article hanging on the wall in which a writer from a major Pittsburgh newspaper labeled Roboto as “pummeling and unpretentious—in a place as far from the trappings of mainstream rock music as can get.” I wanted so badly to believe that. But so many obstacles



LA FRACTION—INADVERTENT STARS IN AN INADVERTENT PLACE

stood in my way and eventually overcame me. First of all, that *statement* is full of pretense, so how can it tell me where to avoid it. Secondly, throughout the night, those that knew and accepted each other at Roboto danced repetitively in a circle, making the same gestures and faces as if on cue. Apparently, a certain code exists for being punk and, well, that's pretension to me.

While discussing the concert a day later, **The You** front man Josh Verbanets remarked, "Sometimes I think Roboto is cool, but then I get there and find it's the sort of place where people make fun of your band... while you're playing." Several other bands outside the co-op agree with this.

For example, I heard a member of SMD refer to **La Fraction**, a headliner for this show, as "a dancy pop band." The reason for this, I'm assuming, is that the lead singer, Magali introduced the first four songs as love songs and smiled through the whole set, obviously excited to be there. La Fraction came to Roboto from France with a significant amount of years, talent and fun on the previous two bands, getting even me — the disillusioned, jealous critic — dancing and smiling with succinct, heavily melodic and diverse rock. After the band's set, Magali told me, "Next time we come back, hopefully we'll understand this country better." Out of all the members of bands to whom I offered *Deek* as a platform, she's the only one to say something other than, "No."

The night's main headliners, **Born Dead Icons**, from Montreal embodied everything that the two local bands of the night wanted: powerful vocals, tight riffs, a strong sense of song craft (yes, that is attainable in the hardcore genre!) and an intuitive,

alert drummer. Most of the audience stood in either exhaustion or awe as BDI swept, with very little talking in between songs, through a fantastic set. They even kept my attention in the midst of my fretting over the absence of buses.

After the show, I stood on a corner, in the reality of an absence of buses, exchanging extended glances through car windshields with everyone who performed or attended that night, many of them obviously questioning my presence in theirs. While I didn't expect a ride home, I thought that, since hardcore punk espouses a rhetoric of brotherhood, someone, seeing me in the unfortunate situation of shivering on a street corner in Wilkinsburg, might inquire as to the state of my safety because I supported their fucking *hobby* earlier. Ian Ryan was friendly whenever I asked him a question, but it seems this scene appeals to and includes certain people, and those not fulfilling preset expectations is unimportant. Maybe no one even recognized me from the show. Maybe I'm wrong and next time I go back, hopefully I'll understand Roboto better.



Black, I want to understand you.

It's three years ago and I'm on a work-study program in Israel, teaching English to middle school children. I walk into a fifth grade classroom filled with ordered rows of students facing a teacher as she slowly, deliberately repeats English words to them in her best "American" accent. The florescent lights perched on the high ceilings are turned off; sunlight beams radiantly through paper-thin, sand-tinted window shades, brightening dusty particles in the air. It's hot and all the students wear flimsy flip-flops and light t-shirts. The teacher separates the students into pairs to work on an assignment. I'm to circulate the class and try my best to answer their questions, which are offered to me in broken, garbled English. They'll ask, for example, "Is 'unpretty' the...proper prefix word?" As I'm doing rounds of the classroom, I come to two Israeli boys — one a darkly tanned white, the other a rich, earthy black Ethiopian. The white child merrily grabs his partner's hand, displaying it, flippantly repeating, "Shit! He has shit all over his skin!"

Black, I want to talk to you. I want to understand you. I see how you've been treated. I see how they look at you merely as coarse, cracked hands for working; as a mouth forced to shut up and smile; as a pair of shivering legs to spread, a face to bash, a neck to lynch, a life to cage, an animal to despise. I want to know you.

Two weeks ago, my English class discussed James Baldwin's book Notes of a Native Son — a book that helped give a voice to the Civil Rights movement and explained what it meant to be a black American in the 1950s. It seemed like it stated everything white and black America was afraid to confront. And as my paunch, white-bearded professor sat atop a desk in the front of the class—giving a sermon on his personal experiences living in a black neighborhood as a youth—he referenced the book, explaining the relevance of his favorite pages in context. Very few students spoke in the two-and-a-half hour lecture. There existed only a pleading mess of distant comments:
—"I can't relate to this,"
—"I don't feel right relating to this."

This book was written 48 years ago, and its poignant defiance was hushed and denied by a class filled exclusively with white students. I felt like nothing had changed.

Maybe I'm being naive. Maybe few students did the reading in the first place. Maybe it was a boring text, or the teacher wasn't engaging enough. But what I *can* say, I can say for myself: I was afraid to say much of anything because it was easier to avoid the subject. Perhaps, if there was a black student in the class, things might've been different. But I was glad there was no black student there to realize just how awkward and distant we felt — a sea of hesitant, tight, white lips attempting to safely prod a sweltering issue. I was glad there was no black student for us to refer to — to question like an anthropological experiment speaking on the behalf of his entire race.

Times like those I get irritated and confused. I can not, *will not*, fear to relate to your life. A book written on race half a century ago shouldn't be regarded with safety gloves, from far away, so that we can ignore it... so we don't offend.

Black, I want you to do something for me. I want you to call me a shylock, a kike, a filthy, money-grubbing Jew, until your voice becomes hoarse, until the words become so hollow that their deep-seeded

anger is completely ravaged out of them. **Black, I beseech you to disown the word nigger, and make it ours.** I want to pulverize its discreet taboo and utter or not utter it as much as I want, make it so innocuous and inconsequential that we can forget about it. As strangers, we will call each other the worst names possible and neither of us will offend the other. We will have moved on.

One summer ago, I was taking to my older brother in the car while driving through a neighborhood he used to live by in Philadelphia. There was garbage all over the cracked, concrete stretches. It was rundown, filled with liquor stores and fried chicken joints. Old, worn paint chipped off the dilapidated houses, voices hollered, and, Black, you were there, jay walking in front of our car. Hermetically sealed in a sheath of steel and glass, my brother and I looked around and pontificated like two aristocrats on a safari. "Why did this happen?" we questioned. "A cultural flaw of carelessness and disorganization," "A despising of the white man's world," "An inability to get up," "We should help them." Help them? I would've been afraid to walk in their streets.

Now these places worsen, face gentrification, can't find an outreach hand. My older brother and I pursed our lips and theorized, driving by and then away, finally parking our car in front of our suburban home — our green front lawn, our clean street, our expansive playground with newly painted sky-blue swings and a red merry-go-round, our unbarred windows — and continued the discussion a safe distance of several miles and a highway barrier away.

Black, you're mad at me, I know. You don't want to hear this from me because I'm not like you. It's better I didn't talk about these things, because there is no doubt I got them all wrong. You're thinking I'm a racist. You're mad at me for calling you Black, and not African American. How dare I state your word. My saddest point, though, is that you won't believe me — you think I could never understand. And you're absolutely right.

I look back to three years ago, remembering those two Israeli children, and I remember my tense expression as I stared at them — they were both laughing.



—BEN RUBIN



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Sealed with a kiss

Guess it's gonna be a __ (9) __
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But I'll __ (11) __ the __ (12) __
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__ (16) __ me with a kiss

I'll __ (17) __ you in the __ (18) __
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—IAN CLEMENTE

Unlike most people, I love life and I'm paying my own way through college. I'm superficial, apolitical and severely interested in writing, acting and music. I love (especially baby) animals. You want to see more of my work? emailme@pitt.edu.

(See page 24)

—MATT STROUD

To friends, Matt goes by his last name. His words have been used locally in *Pulp*, *City Paper*, the *Post-Gazette*, the *Tribune-Review* and other smaller publications with less prestigious names, like *Deek* and the *New Yinzer*. He has also written for publications distributed nationally and in the UK, but who gives a shit.

—JILLIAN KETTERER

Jillian Ketterer is a pervert and quite possibly a furry. She is also allergic to oranges. Some might say she is a gay man trapped in a lesbian's body, but I wouldn't say that because I'm a stapler, and staplers can't speak.

—ROBERT ISENBERG

Robert Isenberg is a Pittsburgh-based playwright and freelance writer. His features, essays, fiction and reviews have appeared in *Pulp*, *Pittsburgh Magazine*, *Whirl*, *MAGAZiNO* and the *New Yinzer*. Plays include *Light*, *32 ft. per sec. per sec.* (rated among the top 10 original plays of 2002 by the *Post-Gazette*), and *Painted Eyes Following*. Originally from Vermont, he lives in Polish Hill and recently published a serial novel at www.emayhem.com. (See page 18)

—MEGAN BRANNING

Megan Branning is an aspiring writer who has never had anything published before (nothing that counts, anyway). She graduated from Pitt with a degree in Psychology, and she has a pet chinchilla named Pita. (See page 15)

—KELLY ROTTMUND

Kelly is a writing major at the University of Pittsburgh. She's addicted to sunglasses and quirky jobs. If you can offer either, let her know. (See Page 16)

—NATHANIEL J. SOLTESZ

Nathaniel J. Soltesz is a default writer in Pittsburgh. He smokes weed and masturbates constantly. He likes anything dirty, secret, or special. (See page 22)

—BENJAMIN FOX RUBIN

Ben Rubin is a writer, for many years. His special major studies in college level English has lead him to writing the great many columns and pieces he likes to do. He, as well, has a great love for art and movies. (See page 26)

—ZACH BRADEN

Zach is a nice guy with big dreams and a lazy ass. He is an artist working for deek [magazine] and a studio musician who has ^[not] toured with bands like Sepultura, the Mars Volta and Dredge. He is currently looking for inspiration. He has a cat named Stuey, who lives with Zach and his woman, Kelly, somewhere in Bloomfield. Or Friendship. One or the other.

—CLARENCE WATT

In Clarence's wildest and wettest dreams he is a rock photographer extraordinaire. In reality he is a kind of vermin that lives in his parents' attic listening to Bill Hicks and reading Charles Bukowski but not at the same time. (See page 27)



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2) If you'd like to submit your work for publication in future editions of deek [magazine], submit a written proposal or a completed work to words@deekmagazine.com. Or mail something to the address on page 5. We accept art, photography, fiction, nonfiction, and... fuck it—we'll consider anything.

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Blah, blah, blah,
The Editors

—deek [magazine]

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***If you would like to share an idea, or whoop members of the deek [magazine] staff, meetings catering to such purposes happen every Friday evening in Hillman Library on the ground floor, at the first table on your right, from 5 to 6:00 pm. All are welcome.

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NEXT MONTH:

RESIDUE FROM DISASTER—find out how to get those nasty spaghetti stains out of your hair and from underneath your claws.

- Health tips from Jesus Christ;
- “The strangest conversation I ever heard...”
- Lambchop gets it... *again*;
- The secret lives of Ernie and Bert;
- A guide to speaking French poorly. Or Greek;
- Why having sex with animals is probably bad;
- First person account: Shark Hunt.

And, as always:

*a new Underappreciated Scholar: [How to Get Santa's Fat, Silly Ass Out of your Chimney After that Stupid Bastard Gets Stuck in There, Like Always.]

*sex
*filth
*love

*beauty
*brilliance

DEEK [MAGAZINE]

Distraction is a deceptive practice. What's yours?

THE
UNDER
APPRECIATED
SCHOLAR

IS AN ANOMOLY, A GLORIFIED FREAKSHOW, A GENIUS, AN ACADEMIC OF THE HEART, A WEIRDO, A SPECIAL SOT, A FRIEND, A FOE, SOMEONE WHO KNOWS TOO MUCH OR, MAYBE, TOO LITTLE.



HOW TO: DELIVER A BABY

So, think about the future. Picture it—yourself in ten years. You're driving. You look in your rear view mirror and there she is, in the backseat of your family sedan, stretched out with all three seat belts around her body to keep her in place. Gingerly licking at a creamsicle, accidentally slobbering all over her huge flowered maternity dress (and your upholstery), her body swells with child; her girth rivals that of a cement mixer. These will be the joyous times, remember—the moments of ripeness that leave you waiting, curious to see what kind of human being this love-of-your life will expel from her loins. (And if you're not married to this pregnant girl, or, for that matter, in love with her, assume you're a taxi driver or something, caught in a weird situation.) Get ready. The Scholar's gonna tell you what to do.

And now, you're ready, expecting something predictable to happen. Be calm. All you have to do is let time linger for that definitive moment... that second when she begins huffing huge breaths of air, panting like a marathon runner, screaming crazy. Just wait for it. You'll know when it happens, cause she'll screech loud and painful; she'll grab the hair on your scalp and, winded, wheezing, she'll say "It's time!" The thing is, babies have a way of doing their own thing, which, normally, isn't in sync with everyone else's. Especially yours.

1) Don't panic. Here's what you do: Pull the car to the side of the road. Then get out and make sure she's lying down. Undo all the seatbelts... who's dumbass idea was that anyway? Call 911 (if you don't have a celly-cell phone, get one, you antiquated bastard).

2) Now, get her to drop her drawers, and have a look at the holiest of holies. Can you see a head trying to make an escape? If you can't see the head, throw clean newspaper under her, all the while maintaining an aura full of what they call the three C's (confidence, control, and calm). If you see the head emerging, crowning, double time everything – but maintain the goddamn aura!

3) You'll need a pair of scissors and thread (preferably white... don't you wish you had a first aid kit?). If you have time to boil water in the microwave (which you won't), do so immediately. If not, disinfect these items with alcohol or soap and water. Don't get too far away from her during this mad scramble of preparation – she needs all the support that she can get, and if you're running from the side of the road into random folks' houses every two minutes, she might get lonely...

4) Remember, this is not so different than pulling a medicine ball out of your ass. As the head comes out, gently... GENTLY rotate the baby by the shoulders until she/he is facing- up. Support the head with one hand and swab the mucus out of the little bugger's mouth and nose.

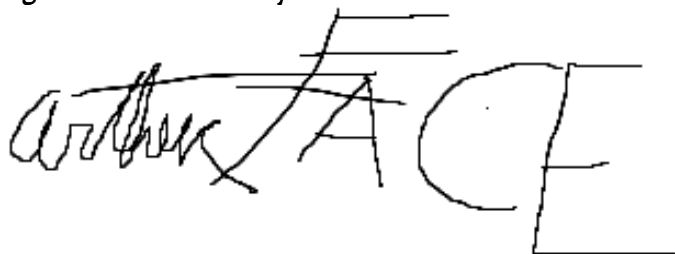
5) Once the shoulders are delivered, the rest of the body will plop out quickly, so be prepared to catch it. Once you're sure the baby is breathing on its own...

6) Lay him on the mother's stomach. Make sure you have a clean towel or blanket to throw over them both. Now, get ready to catch the placenta, cause it's coming down the alley. Within a few contractions, the placenta will pop out on its own, but don't throw it away, you moron. (Imagine that scene. Someone walking along the sidewalk, smoking a cigarette in the sun, looks down and sees a...) Wrap the placenta in clean newspaper and save it for the paramedics, cause they'll need it.

7) Now take 2 lengths of thread and tie them tight around the umbilical cord about four inches apart, the first one approximately four inches from the infant's stomach. After a minute or so, slice the cord between the two threads, keeping in mind that, while this may seem painful, it's not hurting either mother or baby. (You can wait on this until the paramedics get there if you want)..

8) Don't be frightened by all the blood and... gunk that will come flying out of there. It's normal. And when it's done, you'll never eat roast beef again.

Congratulations, Daddy:



Arthur Face

THE UNDERAPPRECIATED SCHOLAR

—With help from **Gia Rotand, M.D.**, who does not exist.



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