

DEEK

MAGAZINE

POPULAR UNDERCULTURE

THE FUTURE INCIDENT

17

THE FALL OF MAN

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Deek Magazine: Popular Underculture
P.O. Box 7502 | Pittsburgh, PA 15213
deekmagazine.com
info@deekmagazine.com

Publisher: Nova Keenan

Chief: Matt Stroud | Nonsense Management: Nate Bog(os/uszewski)

Visuals: Houston McIntyre, Doug Crissman | Master: Jesse Hicks | Minister of Propaganda: Ben Edwards | Willy Loman: Mo Mozuch

Artists of Submission: Tiana Hunter | Models: Juan Ramirez, Elina Malkin, Aaron Kniess, Andrea Duest, Robert Gray, Joe Deck, Jesica Bogdan, Jeri Lynn Herbert | Production Assistant: Shahid Khan | Makeup: Valeria Huet

Apologies To: Larry | Cookies From: Margo List

SUBMISSIONS:

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The Race Incident

Deek Magazine Issue 18

An Exploration of Ethnic Nonsense

Deek ventures into the mire of race and identity September 9th, 2005.
Incident-specific assignments are available for writers, photographers, illustrators, designers, and artists with... other talents.
Photo Essayists and Visual Artists with an interest in documenting the current state of affairs are sought.

Send inquiries ASAP. Submission deadline is August 10th, 2005.

For questions on writing – words@deekmagazine.com
For questions on anything visual – art@deekmagazine.com



AT LEFT AND COVER IS JUAN RAMIREZ, LAST MAN ON EARTH
PHOTOGRAPHED BY NATE BOG(OS/USZEWSKI) FOR DEEK

DEEK MAGAZINE: POPULAR UNDERCULTURE

THE FUTURE INCIDENT

A GROUP HUG WITH THE IMPENETRABLY FAITHLESS (while documenting the fall of man)
HEAT, ANNO DOMINI 2005
ISSUE 17

Within:

(24) FEATURE

The 5 least Influential People of the Future

Deek Magazine wants to prepare you for the bleak, hopeless future where the value of fame has fallen to an all-new low. We've pushed our prognosticatory prowess to its limits to predict the next crop of arbitrarily-worshipped mediocrities, the Least Influential People of the Future. Learn them, live them, love them.



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Kicking the habit



Hey everybody!
And so on.

Stroud
Chief
Deek

P.S. The world's going to end January 18th, 2345.
P.P.S. You should be aware that, in The Future, all paperstock will be thin, and all color will dissipate into a blur of black and white, dryly soaking your skin into a pesky grey that's hard to wash off, conveniently creating the foundation for a raceless, classless society. Unless, of course, you advertise.
P.P.P.S. My work here is done. Where's my beer?

TO COMMENT ON WORDS, send an e-mail to words@deekmagazine.com
TO COMMENT ON ART, send an e-mail to art@deekmagazine.com
TO SPIT SOMETHING RANDOM, send an e-mail to deek@deekmagazine.com
* We must warn you that anything you send Deek could potentially make it onto this page. Without warning. Just letting you know.

OP-ED:

Deek:
I like my sex like I like my decaffeinated, sugar-free latte.
– Samsonite Jarbasket

FFFFLLLTATTERY.

Leedle Deek:
You've got some very talented people. Look of the mag is great and the writing is snarky and intelligent – kind of like if only PhD's wrote porno. Damn shame no ones gets paid...
– Francine Bratwurst

Deek, baby:
Sex Incident looks as lovely as a rat, as usual.
– Lindsay Keegan

SEX.

Re: That hottie on the cover of Deek Magazine - m4w:
I saw you on the cover of Deek Magazine and can't keep my mind off of you ever since. I hope one day we can have our own sex incident :)
– anon-77395963@craigslist.org

DEEK LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN:

Re: Model Casting
Sent: Thursday, July 07, 2005 2:39 PM
Are you interested in kids?
Model #109045 Thanks
– TYCREATION@worldnet.att.net

FOR THE CHILDREN:
A PRIMER ON SARCASM AND HOW NOT TO USE IT.

Dear Deek:
You guys should just print the following in big red letters on the inside front cover of each issue: "Hey wow guys we are just so much more hip and with it and avant garde than you could ever dream of being I mean seriously guys you just have no idea I mean like we are just walking on the cutting edge so much I think I've got to get steel soles for my shoes and yeah I know that to your inferior mind that looked like a dumb metaphor but seriously man we are IT with a capital IT." Having gotten it out of the way on the first page, you won't have to beat us over the head with it incessantly through the rest of the magazine.
– Phil Crenshaw

DISHONESTY, AGAIN, FOR THE CHILDREN.

Deek, Boss Pirate:
I've been told that everyone lies on their resumes in Hollywood; this plan would just give me a fighting chance. If you don't feel comfortable with this, don't worry about it. But if you do, here's the scenario: If some guy calls you and asks about Treg, tell them a very simple story – I came to work for you guys as an assistant right out of college. I'd submit a story every month, some would get in, then after ten months, I worked my way to staff writer. (I worked as your assistant from June 2004 to April 10th, 2005.) That's all you'd need to tell anyone who called or e-mailed, as well as that I was a good assistant, at Deek's offices. Sound okay?
– Treg Nebeschent

GET A JOB.

Dear Deek:
Here is a list of rejected headlines from long ago. Thought you might enjoy them:

Thin, Attractive Woman Encouraged By Nation's Obesity Statistics
Homeless Arizonan Has Awesome Tan
Generic Pharmacists Now Available
Corrugated Cardboard Salesman Recommends Corrugated Cardboard
Sweden, Norway To Talk To Finland About Its Drinking
Ann Arbor Awarded Fall Olympics
Shouts Emanate From Tuba Case
Sixth Grade Trumpeter Simulates Breasts With Mutes
Lucky Charm Geometricians Discover New Marshmallow Shape
Clitoris In There Somewhere
First-Time Athlete Kind Of Looking Forward To Wearing Jock Strap
Fat-Assed Suburban Loudmouth To Address Congress
Nobody Appreciates A Good Bowel Movement Like Area Man
– Khrrystyne Linderhosen

DEEK – NOT REALLY
FOR CHILDREN AFTER ALL:

Re: Model Casting
Sent: Thursday, July 07, 2005 2:44 PM
Please, disregard, I haven't seen a magazine, now I see it is not for kids. Thanks
– TYCREATION@worldnet.att.net

FFFAAAASHION.

Deek, daarrling,
I'll be more than willing, able, capacitated. It's a joy to wordsmith. Hopefully the sorry machines at the internet cafés will handle the dangerous amounts of style. I don't know about the correspondence... I mean, I have a very tight schedule of shopping (it is sale season after all) and lying around on the Riviera. Of course sale season would make quite a nice little article in an of itself. With any hope that I don't poison myself on wine, words will be flying through your mailbox.
– Elizabeth Marklewicz

DEEK IN-HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE
RE: LOVIN' LAMB (PAGE 57)

Deek management:
Do we have the sheep? Like do you have her now...in your house...just sitting there... looking all sassy and just waiting for...I mean, I guess I'll need to photograph her too...of course. For the ad. Tasteful photographs though. Nothing trashy. All joking aside though, I want to fuck that little bitch.
– Big Rat, Bloomfield



Correction: In the music section of Deek's Divine Incident (May, 2005), Dave Missioni – a real person / musical encyclopedia – was not given credit for his interview with Low ("Low – Great Destroyer," page 47 and 48). We regret the error.



WASHINGTON, D.C. – A congressional vote Wednesday will determine the future of chameleon prostitution in the United States. Chameleon people, who have been prostituting themselves since their 2019 arrival, are outraged over the decision, and some Americans fear it could lead to psycho-sexual father/son sodomy.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A congressional vote Wednesday will determine the future of chameleon prostitution in the United States. Chameleon people, who have been prostituting themselves since their 2019 arrival, are outraged over the decision, and some Americans fear it could lead to psycho-sexual father/son sodomy.

Emperor Santorum Achieves Universal Morality Goal

The resulting ceremony included a fireworks display, a giant layer cake and a reading from the Book of Ezekiel. The 42 remaining Americans were all in attendance as Santorum gave them these words of congratulation:

Americans, from proto-humans to imprisoned arson robots, are skeptical over whether the decision would change anything, as the demand for chameleon-people hookers is high because of their ability to satisfy any sexual fantasy (including deviant practices banned in 53 states).

"For thousands of years we have been pleasuring the known Omniverse," said lunar Senator Delrahman Forp, the only chameleon-American Senator. "[There is] intergalactic harmony with every planet we practice on, except of course this one." He added, "especially the United States."


the Liberal Institutions, the UN, Music, Dancing and Women Who Think for Themselves. Your existence is now perfect. Enjoy the warmth of moral justice."

The crowd seemed enthralled at the possibility of a new world built on moral decency and a universal race. "It's just what Jesus would have wanted!" exclaimed Vonda Mae Shepard of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. "Now no one will have to be afraid that someone might threaten the children with their wicked liberal thoughts!"

When asked to comment on Shepard's words, The Risen Christ could not be understood through overwhelming sobs and tears.

BOSTON – A Pew Center study has confirmed that homosexuality in Massachusetts has been rising steadily since the turn of the century. While no official cause has been determined, former President John Ellis “Jeb” Bush – a longtime proponent of the infectious nature of homosexuality – held a press conference this morning outside of his hyperbolic-mansion in Holy Christ, New Texas.

"Everyone thought my brother, God rest his soul, was wrong when he tried to ban gay marriage. Everyone thought I was wrong when I started homosexual interment after I was re-elected in 2012. I can't express how great it feels to be vindicated at my age," said the octogenarian. "It's pretty obvious that as soon as it became OK to be gay every one of them boys up there started doing it," he added.

Prominent Bostonian homosexuals disagree. "I didn't become gay because it was a cool Boston thing, like voting for Kerry in '08," said former heterosexual actor Ben Affleck during an interview on the Tomorrow Night Show with Pauly Shore. "When I got caught cornholing Macaulay Culkin on the set of 'Reindeer Games 3: Blood Money,' I had just realized that my penis prefers man-ass." 

[illegible]

The thing with science is that it seems to work pretty well. There have been rockets on the moon with people in them. And if that doesn't impress you, there have been rockets in a room and people underneath them, too. We're building things – big complicated things – that make far away objects look very close. And we're seeing... uh, neat and new stuff. Discovery! Yes! Good! But think about it: Religion works pretty well too. There are lots of people who are happy and content, regardless of all the big, bad wolves out there who take great pleasure in blowing down straw ideas. Why, just the other day, a man at my bank told me that he "hopes God is with [me] in all [my] journeys." And for a brief second before I scoffed at him, I felt happy that he hoped his God would hang out with me. Maybe He'd buy me a beer, too. Who knows.

See, both science and religion are in the explanation game. Which brings us to the idea of falsification and those snarky philosophers. Because if we conceive of both religion and science as explanatory systems of thought, then there needs to be some guidelines for how adequate a job each system does. And, unfortunately, it seems that religion fares about as well as science when we're trying to explain things like the origin of the universe and petty meanness – they're both about as successful as a dolt in a spelling bee.

The problem is that while God is a mighty simple explanation for phenomena, it's also a tough concept to explain. And you can't solve one mystery with another mystery. Science, on the other hand, offers explanations that can be tested and retested; and many of these explanations are helping our world progress out of the rock-throwin,' spear-chuckin' stage. These explanations satiate philosophers of science like Imre Lakatos, Thomas Kuhn and Karl Popper who maintain that the Finding Out of New Stuff is what makes science good and religion bad.

But not all philosophers like tooting the horn of science. Lots of folk like blowing up science as much as science likes blowing up folks. Albert Camus was fond of pointing out that, at its most theoretical levels, science is poetry. Ultimately, talk of electrons (and the tiny solar systems in which they exist) is pretty and compelling, but it's words without content – a wedding engagement with a ho on the side. Recall Heisenberg and his illustrious principle?

Camus says poetry, I say religion. And I don't mean that in a pejorative manner. Science and religion are really, as has been hinted, two versions of the same beast. They are the drawing of the beautiful young girl which, when turned upside-down, turns into a miserly old hobo. Both explanatory systems depend on the faith of the adherents – priests have faith that a silly thing like God exists; scientists have faith that silly things like quarks and time exist.

If this all seems like an oddly placed caveat to you, you're probably right. Breaking

down/building up science and religion on the same level does nothing to answer the question of which will lead to the ultimate destruction of humanity. Will it be religious zealots out to destroy everyone who believes in the wrong God? Or will it be the guns and missiles that the religious zealots use to destroy their enemies? Do nukes kill people or do idiot assholes kill people?

Quietly, I'd guess, like the Russians in The "Sum of All Fears," a secretive third party will ultimately be the end of us all, creeping into our lungs and choking the vitality and humanity out of us while we stupidly battle against the wrong enemies.

Yes, unfortunately, the question if this edition of Punk/Counterpunk has fallen prey to the silent killer of compassion. By asking will religion or science be the end of humanity, one is waiting for an answer to be one of the given options. Even if one answer is not favored over the other, there is still the assumption that one answer can be argued for until it can be generally agreed upon as correct. This is not the case. ☹

Two Anonymous Good Points:

"A man of God will tell you less and less about more and more until he's told you nothing about everything. A man of Science will tell you more and more about less and less until he's told you everything about nothing."

"A man of Philosophy will tell you anything about nothing and claim that he has told everything about something."

Yes, in the tradition of Uriah Heep, and at the risk of being arrogant and dogmatic about others who seem arrogant and dogmatic, I propose that the major task of Western Intellectual Tradition in the 21st century, both in the world of science and in the world of religion, is being aware of the human race's long childhood, and the hope of a future universal family of humankind. That there will be a cosmic cataclysm in which "God" destroys the ruling powers of evil and raises the righteous to life in a messianic kingdom is pure and unadulterated magic. That humankind might end life as we know it, is a possibility. It's not science or religion *per se* that could end it all, but the persons who speak and act in the name of science or religion, when either proffers absolute and arrogant knowledge.

We humans have learned a lot in our short history since the beginning of *Homo sapiens sapiens*. The great Wisdom Literature of our past, and sometimes present, seems to indicate four major areas of awareness that will help us evolve into a family of humankind, and make the prospect of an apocalypse obsolete. I now dare to synthesize that Wisdom Literature in the most "umblé" way.

1) Our world is incomplete because it is still evolving. I would say imperfect, but that infers that it was once perfect, and is now imperfect. It was never perfect. Incomplete is better, but I will still use the word "imperfect." I am imperfect, you are imperfect, the world is imperfect. Each of us is limited. None us can ultimately control the big things in life, like sickness and death.

2) There's a lot of Good in the world. The challenge is to capitalize and prosper the good. In your own experience, what happens when someone sees good in you – even though you are imperfect – and communicates that in a meaningful way? Usually, you want to dance, you want to live, you want to pass it on to others. Seeing the good is life-giving.

3) Agapic Loving. Every human being has a capacity to love. It's in all of our genes to want to love, unselfishly, agapically. Whether that capacity is tapped properly and humanely, is another question. Culture, as embodied in our source figures, comes into play. The least wrong definition of the word "God" is "God Is Love. God Is Agape." And since that is a predicate nominative of the first class, Love Is God. Wherever you see unselfish loving, you see what is meant by the word "God" or "Allah" or "Brahma" or "the Transcendent One," et cetera. So drop the word "God" and give it a rest. "In Love we trust. One Nation under Love..." Who could, in their right mind, argue with that? Defining the word "agape" needs to be done, but not here. In brief, it means "I see good in you, and want you to grow and develop with no strings attached. And I will do everything I can not to manipulate you or control you. Everything you need is already in you. I want to be an occasion for helping you find that without expecting anything back.

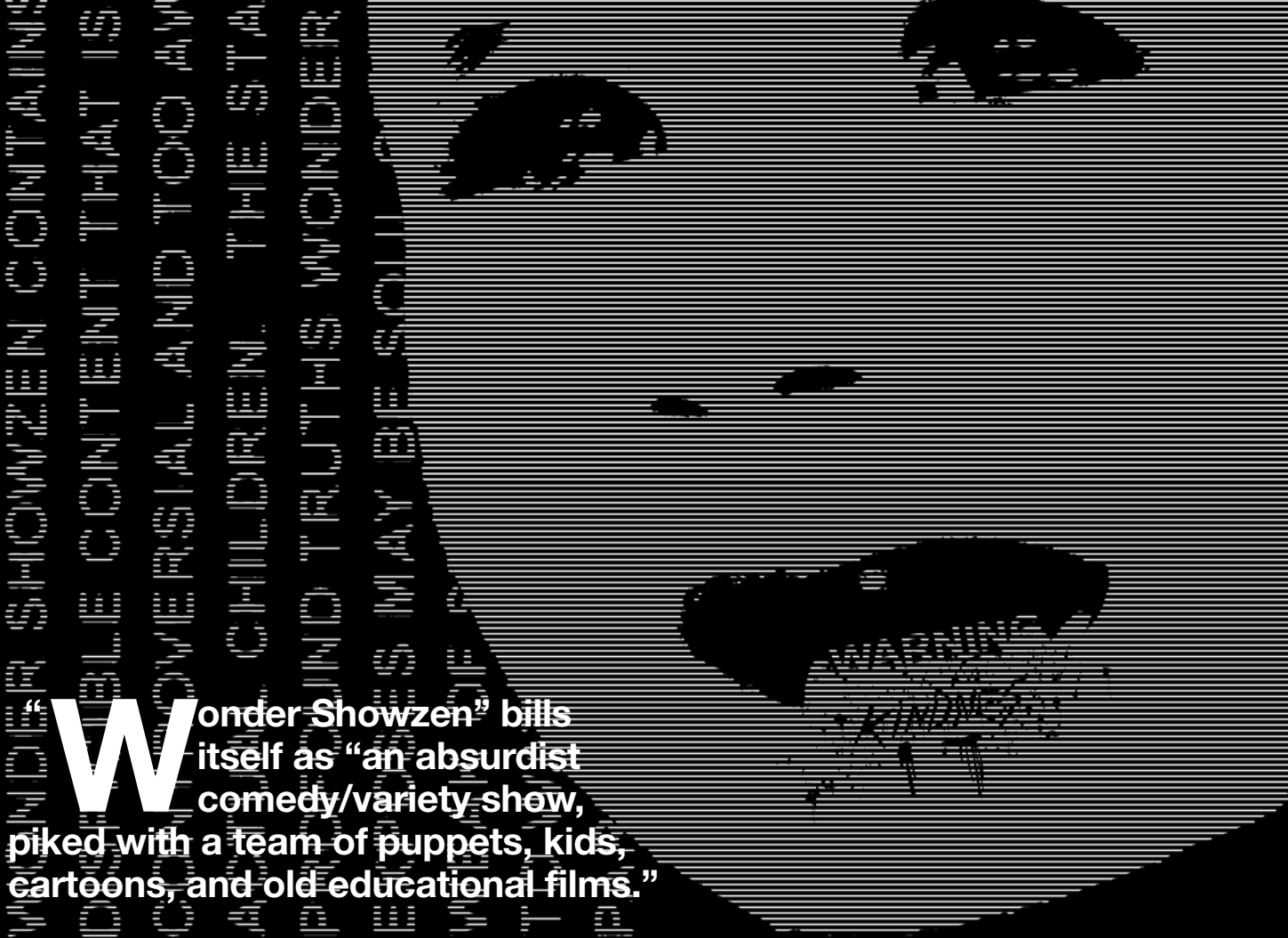
4) Gratefulness. None of us did anything to "deserve" one breath of life.

Everything is a gift. And the only response to a gift is an attitude of thankfulness. It's also good for your physical and emotional life, so I'm told.

The legacy of Western Civilization hangs in the balance. Knowledge is our destiny, and we have come a long way. We are nature's unique experiment to make rational intelligence prove sounder than reflex, and more healthy than magic. It seems we just hate to give up magic. "Science" is only a Latin word for knowledge. And if religion is to survive, its leaders must apply some rational thinking, and figure out what makes common sense. Spirituality will survive, of course. We are by nature, it seems to me, spiritual beings. Whether spirituality will be found in traditional buildings is quite another question. Religion is for those who are afraid to go to hell; spirituality is for those who have been there. So an apocalypse, or an end of traditional churches is possible. And for scientists, the challenge is there, also, so that science will lead us into a more human, loving, compassionate world, and not give us inhuman solutions, with no test in reality. And so science needs to be wary of leading us into an apocalypse – a dead end.

Every judgment in science or in religion should stand on the edge of error. Arrogance and dogmatic statements lead to tragedy. ☹

Bill Hausen is a Catholic priest, excommunicated from the Diocese of Pittsburgh after breaking away from the Catholic Church to form his own house of worship in Avalon. His new place is called Christ Hope Ecumenical Catholic Church. Find more info here: www.christhope.com.



“**Wonder Showzen**” bills itself as “an absurdist comedy/variety show, piked with a team of puppets, kids, cartoons, and old educational films.”

That concise definition doesn’t do justice to a show that features “Global History in 30 Seconds” – in which an animated United States sprouts teeth, takes a big chunk out of Europe, humps Africa, then squeezes out several smaller Americas before blowing up the Earth – and “What Riles You Up, Harlem?” where a man-on-the-street interviewing puppet asks “You ever get mad when people try to bite you in the nuggets? Let’s give it a shot!”

In short, it’s like nothing you’ve ever seen before. *Deek* talked to Kramdar, keeper of the Wonder Showzen Truthstone, via email after the conclusion of their first season. Here goes:

How’d the show come about?

The mothers of Vernon and John both paid to do volunteer work in a prison. They developed a theatre/improvisational comedy school for the inmates. When “Little Woman” was the next play to stage, smaller actors where needed, so John and Vernon were birthed. Along with Tiny and Tiny Jr., the cast was complete. The show was a hit, but the friendship betwixt John and Vernon was the biggest hit. Years later, “Wonder Showzen” squeeze out they mindginas, and was delivered quivering to the dumpster of second tier cable. Ironically, it was later imprisoned, but not in a jail – in an emotional strongbox of dogma (portrayed on the program by Bucket Of Chicken).

Vernon Chatman and John Lee, the show’s creators, showed early versions in NYC and had to shop it around a bit before anyone would pick it up. How was the experience with USA Networks?

USA was like the lottery. They gave us a bunch of money and told us to come back in 6 months with 22 minutes of something. We spent all the money freeing detained friends who could not afford bail. And a buck-buck of chicken. Then we got them all together and made Kids Show. Which eventually got rejected from USA, picked up by MTV2, and decided to refer to its sad self by the baptismal name “Wonder P. Showzen D.D.S.”

The 1st season of Wonder Showzen plays Fridays at 9:30 on MTV2.

Most of the reviews have been positive, though they seem to all be “Look out, South Park!” and “Takes offensive to a whole new level!” What do you think of that kind of review?

Let’s get out of this entire 20th century understanding of the world. We are no longer talking about levels. The future is in dimensions. Our home brew revolution? We’ve broken the second wall.

What about, “Wonder Showzen = OK. Wonder Showzen + Acid = GREATEST SHOW EVER!!” ?

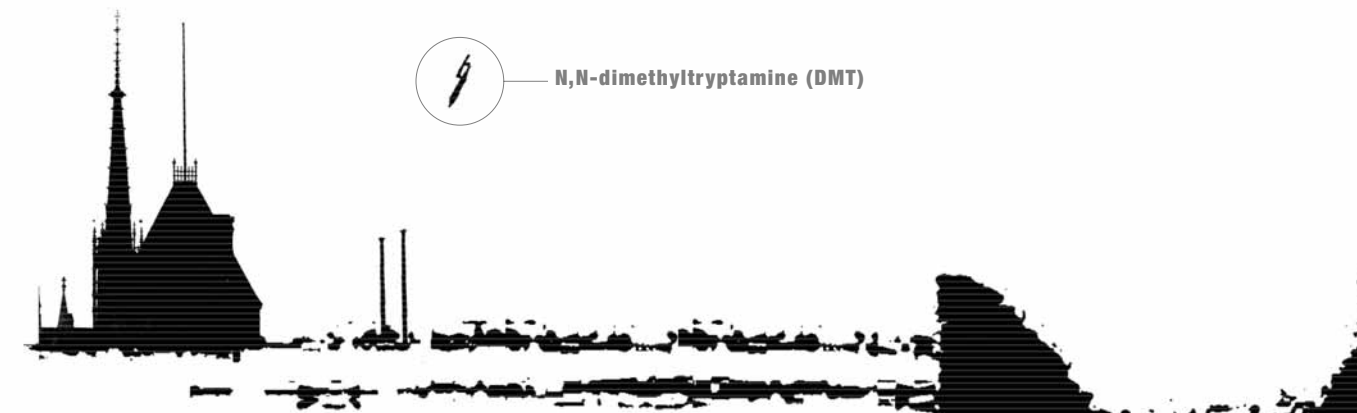
We despise all drug use. Especially when we’re tripping balls.

For a show that’s featured “Preschool Race War” and a music video tribute to slaves, the ballsiest scene yet, I thought, was playing the second half of the latest episode backwards. What were some of your favorite scenes?

I love that scene at the beginning of “Putney Swope” with the helicopter. That scene in “Taxi Driver” when DeNiro and what’s her face are eating in the diner. The art centric fashionista set gathering weekly to clutch comfort at “Cafe Habana in Holita.”

Do you know yet if MTV2 will be picking up more episodes?

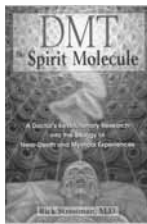
We’re doing 6 more starting early next year. ☺



 **N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT)**

Dr. Rick Strassman

is a former psychiatrist and author of *DMT: The Spirit Molecule*. In 1990, Strassman set out to investigate the effects of **N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT)** – an extremely powerful psychedelic – on the human brain.



After much legal wrangling (DMT is a Schedule 1 drug, meaning, according to the DEA, it has “no recognized medical use.”), Strassman secured permission for his research. Over the next five years he administered DMT to 60 volunteers, who explained their altered states as everything from alien abductions to near-death experiences to mystical enlightenment. In *DMT: The Spirit Molecule*, Dr. Strassman details his experiment and tries to account for DMT’s incredible effects on the human consciousness.

You came to explore DMT’s connection to “mystical” states of mind from a biological perspective, through an interest in how brain chemistry might induce such states. What piqued your interest in this area in general, and with DMT in particular?

It seemed that, based upon such striking similarities between psychedelic drug-induced states, and those brought on by meditation (and later, I saw, near-death states and some aspects of psychosis), that there probably was a biological basis for these states. That is, if there were a chemical in the brain that elicited such states, then giving that chemical to people would reproduce those states – similar to what would be found in the natural condition of endogenous release or production of the chemical. I became interested in the pineal gland because of its long history of metaphysical speculation regarding its “spiritual” properties. Melatonin, the primary pineal hormone, is a tryptamine, as are DMT and psilocybin. Then, I found out that DMT was found in the body (although not necessarily in the pineal), and was quite psychedelic. It had been studied previously in human studies, making it easier to consider doing a human project than might have been the case with other drugs that also are endogenous and might have a pineal basis, such as 5-methoxy-DMT.

For the research you did in preparing your experiments, did you focus primarily on academic sources, or did you also look into more popular descriptions of the psychedelic experience, such as those of Terence McKenna, Timothy Leary, etc.?

Both. The popular descriptions were more, well, popular, and got me interested in things. Then I turned to the academic references to look for more support and backing for proposing a clinical research study with people.

You had to jump through a lot of hoops to conduct this research – you decided to focus on DMT partly because it was more obscure and therefore less controversial than psilocybin. Why do you think it’s so difficult to do this kind of research in the United States? And what do you make of DMT’s status as a Schedule I drug?

Schedule I drugs, such as LSD, DMT, psilocybin, are hard to manage, and ought to be regulated to some extent. What happens on the street, on the other hand, is a different matter. If people are going to study these drugs in science, they ought to know what they’re doing, and answer some serious questions about safety of their study design, plans for dealing with adverse reactions, etc. These are powerful drugs, and can be very unpredictable in their effects, so it’s a good thing, in many ways, that they are so tightly regulated.

DMT as a Schedule I drug seems more or less appropriate. However, some time back I recommend to the Attorney General’s office a new category, such as IA, where they are still tightly regulated, but don’t meet all 3 criteria for Schedule I placement – no accepted medical use, highly abusable, and lack of safety under medical supervision. Obviously, for anyone to study these drugs (such as I did, and several others have after me), they are usable in clinical research, and can be given safely under medical supervision.

Could you talk briefly about the range of DMT experiences you found in your experiment, and some of the connections you found among those experiences?

Effects were very fast, as we gave the drug intravenously. There was a huge rush of body and mind, culminating in a separation of consciousness for body-awareness. Then, people found themselves in a very colorful, emotionally intense realm, sometimes leading to contact with “beings” who were aware of the volunteers, and often interacted with them. Effects began in about 10-15 seconds, peaked at 1-2 minutes, started resolving at 5 minutes, and were pretty much gone by 30 minutes. I placed effects into therapeutic ones, “other-worldly” ones, and a sort of in between class of effects. These were what was seen with our biggest dose, 0.4 mg/kg. Our lower

doses were 0.2, 0.1, and 0.05 mg/kg. 0.2 was also psychedelic; 0.1 was a bit like too much MDMA, or too little LSD; and the 0.05 dose was mistaken for placebo, or felt like a low dose of MDMA or opiates.

In the book you reference the ongoing fascination with the pineal gland, from Descartes's belief in the pineal as home of the soul, through certain mystic doctrines of the "third eye" being located in the pineal, to modern science's seeming bafflement as to its exact function. What do you make of this history?

It's an obscure little gland – the only unpaired one in the brain. Thus, Descartes, who was looking for a source of thoughts (which we're only able to hold one at a time), looked for an unpaired organ, and came up with the pineal. Also, since he believed thought, especially imaginative thought, was related to the divine, that perhaps the pineal was a conduit for spiritual energies or information. The Hindus also, in their chakra system, located the crown chakra on the top and center of the skull, just above where the pineal rests in the human brain.

You seem to have reached a near-Cartesian conclusion regarding the pineal and DMT – you do call it "the spirit molecule," after all, a label not far from Descartes's statement, "In man, soul and body touch each other only at a single point, the pineal gland in the head." Can you explain what brought you to this conclusion, as well as some of its more controversial consequences?

I think DMT can open the door to experiences which most often refer to as spiritual. Thus, "the spirit molecule" captures the essence of that idea. The more controversial aspect of this idea, of course, relates to "is this just your brain on drugs," or what exactly. I entertained and discarded that model, as well as the Freudian (this is your unconscious on drugs, like a dream), and the Jungian (this is an archetype on drugs), and settled on the free-standing, independent, nature of these effects. That is, because DMT leads to states of consciousness without a body, perhaps this indeed is what it is; rather than being something else.

Even after calling it "the spirit molecule," you seem to advocate a strongly pragmatic, cautious approach to DMT. What's the reasoning there, and what place do you think compounds like DMT have in science and psychology?

I think we can only deal with what we can deal with. DMT shows us a lot, but we might not be able to do much with it; or worse, mess things up even more with misunderstanding, misusing what it can show us. It's not God, but can show us a reflection of God, as reflected through the prism/lens of our mind and soul, at whatever level of development they are.

DMT can be helpful, in the right hands, and with the right set and setting. It's too fast acting when smoked or given IV, so the oral use, as in ayahuasca, seems to allow for a more manageable trip – where people can do psychological or spiritual work. Nevertheless, the set and setting it seems to me are as important, if not more so, than the drug state itself.

Also, the evolutionary role of DMT in our minds/brains is a very tantalizing question. Why do we have such a powerful psychedelic in our bodies – what does that say about our perception of "existence," and what does it say about the evolution of consciousness?

DMT also seems to provide access to non-material realms that we don't perceive normally. I take a leap towards the end of the book and speculate that perhaps it's allowing us to perceive dark matter and/or into parallel universes. It's worth comparing what we're finding in modern physics with what people on DMT describe. 🌀



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When I last left you, I proposed schemes that were seen as violent, sexist, crude and offensive by hillbillies and capitalist pigs alike. Can you imagine that? Something offensive in Deek magazine? For shame! Anywho, I was told I needed to become more sensitive to Deek's delicate audience base.



TYPICALLY, I WOULD SAY,
"TOUGH SHIT. SPEAK ENGLISH,"
BUT I REALLY NEED THIS JOB
(EVEN THOUGH I DO IT FOR FREE).

So, yeah: I entered the Ayn Rand School of Sensitivity and Manners. And sure, originally, I was unwilling to find "my inner cigar and booze critic." But eventually, I came around and made them a deal. I wouldn't write any more inflammatory crap if they just let me out with a swift kick to the skull, a haircut and a bottle of booze. Like the old country standard goes, "I'd rather have a bottle in front 'a me than a frontal lobotomy." They agreed. I then took a piss in their ridiculous fountain. While inside, I did get to sample a wide variety of "sensitivity-training caliber" tools of sin... Here's what you'd want to know about them:

The Griffin's No. 300 – \$6
👤👤👤👤👤

The Griffin's goes though a variety of flavors very quickly, so it's great for the mood swings you experience in sensitivity camp/resident asylum. You get a little bit of everything: Oak, fruit, earthy tones, vegetables, turpentine. It's just a great cigar for a great price. I hope the Griffin's people aren't reading this, but I'd pay \$10 for it over a Davidoff or a Dunhill any day.

Another thing you get with the Griffin's is a decent length smoke; ideal for pondering over "what you've done to put yourself in this situation." Beyond that, this cigar would make a great gift to anyone for any occasion – weddings, funerals, birthdays, Bat Mitzvahs... Seriously, anything! See, isn't this fun seeing the new, happy, conservative, boring and helpful Bucky G?! I LOVE ALL OF YOU PEOPLE!

Evan Williams Bourbon Whiskey Aged 7 Years- \$16
👤👤👤👤👤

Evan Williams is good for one thing and one thing only: drinking away your problems. I know this is kind of the ugly side of sensitivity, but I've learned to admit my faults. Oftentimes, these utterances occurred under the influence of Evan Williams' bourbon. The one thing to remember whilst indulging in what Lionel Hutz, Esq. once called "The brownest of the brown liquors," is that you will lose all motor skills and functionality. In my youth, one of my circus cousins drank five shots and woke up upside-down in the sword-swallower's training room. Take a second to wrap your imagination around that one.

Now, the poor rating is not because I dislike Evan Williams' (or the way it ruins your psyche), but merely because it tastes pretty bad. If you're looking for a smooth, refreshing whiskey that you can drink straight or on the rocks, look in a different direction.

Overall, it was fun drinking Evan Williams while I was recovering from my brief incarceration since I've now lost most of the knowledge I promised to retain from my stay. Bucky Gainsborough is still on this sensitivity kick; I figured I'd let you in on a little secret: I need to cradle a stuffed bunny rabbit named Flopsy-Mopsy to fall asleep AND HE IS SO ADORABLE GODDAMNIT I THINK I'M GOING TO GO SMOTHER HIM WITH KISSES RIGHT NOW BECAUSE I LOVE HIM SOOOOOOOO MUCH!!!!

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Wow. you'll notice I didn't boil David Icke's theories down to an easily-remembered sentence or two. After watching his three-hour presentation, reading his books, and looking through his website, I'm still not entirely sure what David Icke's conspiracy is. I know shape-shifting reptiles are involved, royal bloodlines going back to the Knights Templar decide who's President and that the world is really some kind of Matrix-like simulation hijacked by the power-elite. Other than that, it's a little fuzzy.

I suspect the problem might be an over-reliance on PowerPoint and recycled Bill Clinton jokes to warn the masses that "The prime centres of government, military, legal, and economic power are all occupied by extremists who either want to set the world ablaze or will unquestioningly serve those who do." OK, excellent – now we've got a conspiracy theory!

But then comes the poorly-Photoshopped image of George W. Bush as Hitler. *Arrgh!* The idea that the world is "a provable illusion – just a lucid dream" – seems harder to buy from somebody who trolls the 'net looking for "hilarious" George W. Bush as Hitler photos.

Oh, and about David's webpage: loading it with ads like, "NEW MONATOMIC GOLD IN AN ORGANIC SUPERFOOD – Now you can have the most prized possession of the ancient Egyptians in an organic live superfood. The ultimate body and spirit health combination. Click here for info," don't make your site look professional. Then again, I am talking about the guy who wrote "The Reptilian Agenda," which tantalizingly promises to reveal "the history of

the Illuminati with its connections to unseen forces in other dimensions of reality that some call 'extraterrestrials.'

If you feel like I'm excessively quoting here, you're probably right. But as I mentioned, it's hard to find the argument here. How do you prove, or even start to discuss, an idea like, "David Icke also reveals how we live in a virtual-reality dream world, very much like the one portrayed in the Matrix movies. It is like a holographic Internet in which our brains and DNA act like a computer terminal logging in to a collective reality designed to enslave us in a false 'world' of illusion."

Whoa. There *is* no spoon, right?

Icke's style combines New Age spiritualism with a sneering hatred of politicians in a delicious brew of "occult symbolism," rehashed Monica Lewinsky jokes, offhand comments about the Satanic rituals of Presidents (I love a good Satanism-ring conspiracy, but I need more than "clever" Photoshop work to buy it. Call me skeptical; the CIA-controlled extraterrestrials tapping my phones certainly do) and bloodlines cribbed directly from *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, the same book that inspired that

paragon of intellectual probity, *The DaVinci Code*. (Obligatory *DaVinci Code* slam: I'd rather have my eyes plucked out and slowly roasted with a delicious Jack Daniels' marinade than read that hackery again. I would sacrifice my children to the dark god Beelzebub to render Dan Brown incapable of "writing." Gladly would I sacrifice them.)

Best to just enjoy Icke's mental pinballing among the Knights of Malta and secret societies, the politics of fear, and how very difficult it has been for him to confront the hard truths known only to David Icke. Nowhere, though, does he explain what made him think "Alice in Wonderland and The World Trade Disaster" would make a tasteful title.

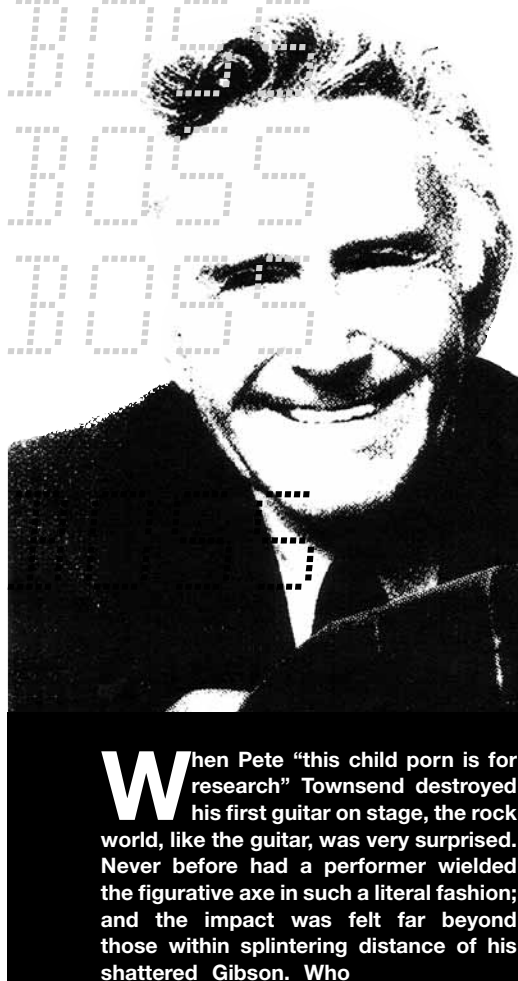
Watch it if you must, but do so knowing that only David Icke grasps the full truth revealed in his work. So be safe out there, and remember: the reptiles may control the world (which is an illusion), but "Infinite love is the only truth – everything else is illusion!"

COMPLEXITY: Is quantum loop gravity complex? What about the higher repercussions of chaos theory? No, they are not complex. David Icke: that is complex.

PLAUSIBILITY: I don't think there's anything implausible about reptilian extraterrestrials being the controlling force behind mankind's development for the last few thousand years, or that they would select every important world leader via a spaghetti-like mess of royal bloodlines. That's just obvious.

WHERE IT WILL HELP YOU SCORE: With David Icke, that's for sure. Possibly with "Matrix" fans, who will be wowed by your ability to bend reality to your will. You are the One! The One who will probably not be scoring anytime soon, unless this really is the Matrix.

(P.S.: It's not!) ☹



When Pete "this child porn is for research" Townsend destroyed his first guitar on stage, the rock world, like the guitar, was very surprised. Never before had a performer wielded the figurative axe in such a literal fashion; and the impact was felt far beyond those within splintering distance of his shattered Gibson. Who

went berserk for the antic, requesting it more often than their former favorite gag where an intoxicated Keith Moon would drag a chauffeur underneath his car and kill him. Peers cheered Townsend on and even paid him the highest rock compliment in copying him. Soon, the windmill windup and spring-loaded explosion at the end of "Won't Get Fooled Again" was part of another hard day's work for Mr. "Seriously, it was research" Townsend – one of the few lucky bastards to have "guitar smashing" listed in his job description.

Which leads me to wonder: Which professions sanction the kind of mayhem that would otherwise get one fired, jailed, or, at a minimum, examined thoroughly by the company psychiatrist? What if it wasn't Pete Townsend from the Who, but Pete Whoeverthefuck, your friendly-neighborhood guitar instructor from the strip mall music store? Would we ask for more if he smashed his Yamaha FG Junior after a rousing, mistake-free duet of "Go Tell Aunt Rhody"?

I know. I can hear the rebuttals: "Music is supposed to be passionate. Musicians are artists who pour their hearts and souls into their work and the emotion that drives them to destroy their instrument is just as much part of the art form as the music itself." It's an argument that's true for a select group of guitarists, perhaps, but doesn't pass muster with other performers.

Take brass instruments, for instance. In his heyday in the 1940s, bandleader and tromboner (no puns, please), Tommy Dorsey never once capped off the mind-blowingly difficult performance of "Trombonology" by wrapping his slide around a bandstand, despite the fact that the adrenaline rush of such an achievement could have easily justified his actions. (For fun, illegally download a copy, get stoned and give it a listen. Prepare to be amazed to the point of delirious laughter.) And although it would be pretty cool to believe Dizzy Gillespie's trumpet bell pointed skyward because he stomped it, history tells us the defect

was caused by the passive smashing that occurs when an instrument is inartistically and accidentally dropped.

No, these musicians practiced restraint because the times and their audiences dictated it. Perhaps they went berserk off stage, partaking in gin-soaked groupie fourways as a lesson in "Bone-ology," but one can only speculate. Their "I like Ike" audience would have had a difficult time reacting to anything more bizarre than white slacks after Labor Day. Unlike rock fans who would scramble for frets and guitar strings to keep in diaries until exchanging sentimental value for cash value thirty years later on eBay, big band and jazz fans were far too polite or cool to do anything more than wonder what in tarnation was going on. There's a reason your grandparents aren't auctioning off Artie Shaw's reeds and Doc Severenson's spit valves online. Had the extreme actually happened, they'd probably simply collect them and return them to the stage.

There's more to life than music, though. There're sports, too. Take baseball, for instance. Strike out, lose the game, beat the shit out of the dugout. Pretty much expected, not to mention sanctioned by everyone who takes part in America's national pastime. Even the manager knows to get the hell out of the way while the destruction runs its course. Baseball reporter loses it and goes berserk, however, and all hell breaks loose. Early in his career when he was covering baseball for ABC, Bryant Gumbell followed up a particularly clumsy interview with what he thought was an off-mike self-critical tirade. The quick cutaway showed that the network wasn't about to let Gumbell blow off a little steam and move on. The "Technical

Difficulties" screen, sans audio, made sure of it, despite the fact that the only difficulty the network was experiencing was an inability to stop its reporter from saying "Fuck me running! That motherfucker fuckin' sucked!" And I'm willing to bet that his tantrum was countered with an equally severe one later on, delivered by the network brass.

Which brings us to the corporate world...

Despite the occasional outbursts of violence and destruction that lead the nightly network news to invoke the phrase "disgruntled former employee," corporate America has eliminated violence and destruction from the paradigm and replaced it with its own sanctioned version. Worker smacks her monitor when the server goes down and cusses gently? Perfectly acceptable. Almost quaint. Guy in the next cube reacts to same server lock-up by heaving his hard drive "top-rope" style over cubical? Permanent file material.

Lesson learned: Mundane violence accepted. Rogue acts suspect. As long as outbursts are confined to a small range of acceptable practices, it's cool. Conformity and process trumps chaos. Paper shredders were invented as much to streamline the destruction of our discarded spread sheets as they were to minimize our own desires to rip the shit out of them ourselves as they became our asshole fathers reminding everyone in a slurred Thanksgiving speech that the apple of his brandied-eye is a complete and utter failure.

It all comes down to what you want from a profession. If it's the satisfaction that comes with destroying a finely tuned instrument during a rock-fueled frenzy, perhaps you have a future as an unemployed lead guitarist in a Who cover band. If you're unsure, however, I recommend asking at the job interview. "Will I be allowed to hurl a jack stand into a table of six now and then," is sure to get an immediate and honest response from Dominic the Olive Garden manager. And if the answer is no, there are plenty of dive bars out there that wouldn't flinch if you heaved an empty quarter barrel into the crowd to clear the place at quarter past two.

The work world is your oyster.

Shuck it yourself. ☹

It's easy to catch dinner on the run. Little bunnies hardly hear you coming barefoot through the grass and rubble. Grab Flopsy with both hands to prevent wriggling. Holes in the jeans add to huntress' aerodynamics; a "t" burned off the shoulder shows homage to classics of yestercentury. Venus didn't make it through the fall of Rome, but you've made it through the end of time. Savor the flavor.

MODEL: JESICA BOGDAN
SHIRT BY HANES, JEANS BY LEVI'S, BRA BY VICTORIA'S SECRET DYING WISH AS SHE WATCHED THE BOMBS FALL



Indulge your desires. A can of beans keeps you going strong for days on end, but there's no dry cleaning in sight. Keep the suit clean; you are the last man on earth; ladies love a gentleman. Boots are meant for walking and that's what you'll be doing, Adam, day after day after day after day until you find that new Eve.

MODEL: JUAN RAMIREZ
SUIT BY POLO, BEANS BY BUSH, BOOTS FOUND IN THE RUBBLE OF A SHOPPING MALL



Hot and parched from a long day scavenging? Take your drink on the rocks. Keep cool in a strapless dress cut low from the top, burned up extra high from the bottom. Feel the nuclear breeze. Combine with versatile off-road heels to show a little leg while out and about. Relax, sit back and wait for the bitter, lonely end.

MODEL: ELINA MALKIN
DRESS BY (BURNED BEYOND RECOGNITION), ACCESSORIES BY SOME STORE SHE LOOTED AFTER THE RIOTS



EVERYONE ALWAYS TALKS ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO change the world – it’s all Mother Theresa-this and Josef Stalin-that. From the ancient Greek pantheons to *Time* Magazine’s “Man of the Year,” we’ve always venerated the great and the mighty, whose footsteps shake society.

Of late, though, we’ve lowered the bar of celebrity. We elevate the petty and the weak if they happen to make a living pretending to be someone else; we shower gold on whichever ubermensch emerges triumphant from the throng of clawing, desperate jackasses on *Survivor*.

In 10,000 years, when this once again becomes The Planet of the Apes, it won’t be a ruined Statue of Liberty around which our simian successors frolic in blissful ignorance. It will be a 300 foot likeness of Puck from “The Real World,” his acne-scarred visage rising from the sand, emblazoned with the words, “Look upon my works, ye Mighty, and despair.”

Deek Magazine, ahead of the curve as always – The Future is Our Business™ – wants to prepare you for that bleak, hopeless future, where the value of fame has fallen to an all-new low. We’ve pushed our prognosticatory prowess to its limits to predict the next crop of arbitrarily-worshipped mediocrities, the Five Least Influential People of the Future.

LEARN THEM, LIVE THEM, LOVE THEM.



5. PETER BLATT
(2017 - 2056)

His Legacy: Three coffee rings left on the anti-grav table of his childhood sweetheart. The rings did not (metaphorically) scar her heart: looking back she would say, “Who’s the wanker who couldn’t be bothered to use a hyper-coaster? I am so peeved!” Her soul-account was instantly deducted 30 bins to pay royalties to FoxCorp, copyright holder of the word “peeved.”

Young Peter Blatt grew up in the hardscrabble wasteland of New York City in the years following the Great Nanotech Plague of 2012. Abandoned by his father, a relapsed stimstem addict, Peter fell in with a group of singing, dancing newspaper boys. Sadly for them, newspapers had long since gone the way of the dodo and the Segway. [Segways having been underground since 2013, after their superior balancing ability and haughty attitude forced a Meg Ryan-led Congress to launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike on the Segway’s Chicago bunker. Several million people died in the attack, but Ms. Ryan called the loss “necessary...and delicious,” before ripping off her face to reveal the reptilian overlord lurking beneath. -Ed.] Out of a job, with only their moxie and synchronized dance moves to sustain them, these “Newsies,” as they called themselves, soon descended into ritual cannibalism.

Blatt spent his formative years running with the Newsies – his famous star-shaped facial scar was caused in a battle with a swarm of cyborg rat-soldiers, leftovers from the UN occupation of Manhattan – before making his way to “Time Warner Presents ‘Nevada!’” The military build-up in neighboring Comcastikstan, which would eventually lead to the Seven Channels War of 2037, made Blatt rethink his position as freelance gene-splicer in New Warneria’s south side. He enrolled in a correspondence course in middle management taught by the holographic likeness of Paris Hilton.

After the course entered his bloodstream, Blatt was offered a job in the Martian Robot Mines. He resettled to the colonies and soon found love with a bio-manipulated pantherwoman named Sheba McGillicuddy. They were life-grafted in 2050; though they had no children, they adopted several camelephants whom Blatt would kiss, each in turn, before catching the wormhole to work.

By 2056, Peter Blatt seemed to have put his dark past behind him. He was a productive member of Martian society, had a happy graft-mate, and acquired enough bins to afford the best advertisement-blocking technology for his home. Then, tragically, he bumped into a robot co-worker while looking for some Meta-Post-Its in a darkened supply closet. The colleague, who testified later that the incident had “given my fear-simulation circuits quite a stimulus,” unthinkingly fired his laser eyebeams into the dark, rendering Blatt a pile of ash. Robot-human tensions continued to rise.





4. JOHN SAULENGEER V2.0 (2034 - 2112)

His Legacy: Played Michael Hutchence in an INXS cover band that sent almost a dozen people sailing on the seas of nostalgia, back to the glory days of rock 'n roll. Also sported a wicked "40 oz. to freedom" tattoo admired by the entire Accounts Payable staff.

No one has asked about the impact John Saulengeer v2.0 has had on society, and even fewer people have answered. A controversial figure, his name provokes strong reactions along the entire emotional spectrum – from "Who?" to "What?" people just can't stop talking about John Saulengeer v2.0.

John Saulengeer v2.0 was thirteen years old when the Second Coming of Jesus occurred, in 2047. The sight of Jesus descending from the clouds surrounded by a herald of angels and all the light of the world certainly made an impression on young John, but more impressive was the sight of Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes, in their thousand-foot-tall robotic bodies, confronting the Son of Man in the skies above Tokyo. As co-Emperors of United Earth, Cruise and Holmes had trouble convincing others to follow the Scientology way, and their administration saw the confrontation with Jesus as an easy way to boost approval ratings by projecting a "strong, confident leadership style."

The battle raged for days, with no quarter given and none asked. Jesus drew on his martial arts knowledge and shape-shifting ability; Cruise and Holmes formed a lethal tag team of OT-VIII's, their minds honed by Scientology's teachings. Finally, a weary Jesus tricked Katie Holmes into swallowing a live nuclear warhead. The bomb detonated, leaving only Jesus and Cruise. The handsome, passionate, combative star of such cinematic classics as "Risky Business" and "Mission:Impossible" flew into a love-fueled rage, pounding Jesus with blow after blow. Most of Asia was demolished, but the Lamb of God had been vanquished and Scientology was declared the one true religion.

John Saulengeer v2.0 signed up for the Scientology Youth the very next day.



3. DANIELLA FAWKES (2101 - 2200)

Her Legacy: Spawning two children; naming them Bullet and Concrete during the Great Naming Your Children After Nouns fad of 2130-33. During Summer of the Shark 2143 ("Here's to taking a bite out of 50 more years!"), both children were devoured by sharks and accepted this with a minimum of hysteria. They knew that for a media event to occur, some must die so others may "live."

By the twenty-second century the world had grown very strange indeed. Genetic experimentation had rendered the human body a blank canvas. Rupert Murdoch, his mind transferred into the body of an Ethiopian child after losing a bet to Ted Turner, returned from his deep space exile to reveal he had conquered death. Ironically, in his absence Hell had filled up, and the dead walked the earth. One of them, a dead (ha!) ringer for Bill O'Reilly, had his own talk show. It was a calm, reasoned debate on the issues of the day.

Surviving among those dead, who'd overthrown the Segway rulers of several Eastern European countries through a combination of zombie cunning and guerilla marketing, was Daniella Fawkes. Fawkes worked two jobs (hundreds of years of progress still hadn't worked out that whole "single mother vs. capitalism" problem) to support Bullet and Concrete, her two third-sex babies. Pulling late-night shifts at a dot-com theme restaurant named NyteBytez. com, Fawkes would often sneak away from her zombie guests to write self-affirming poems in her order book.

Meanwhile, MTV-Congress moved that President Jenna Bush Mark IV, fresh from the War of Plutonian Liberation, be granted special emergency powers against the Segway Separatists. A remarkable 18% of the world's population voted in favor of the act, with the remaining votes split among Coolio's "Fantastic Voyage," Franz Ferdinand's "Take Me Out," and the new Rolling Stones single. The Carson Daly simulacrum thanked everyone for participating in the day's token show of democracy before allowing several teenage girl-cats to give a few shout-outs.

Daniella Fawkes didn't have time for shout-outs or politics. She had time to spend 18 hours a day serving zombies who tipped poorly, two more on the phone to her ex-boyfriend – a CelebriTease addict who spent most of his waking hours believing he was Jim Morrison, Jim Jones, Van Morrison, or some combination of the three – trying to get him to pay child support, and fifteen to twenty minutes talking to her children before falling asleep in front of the evening news, which by that point was mostly reruns.



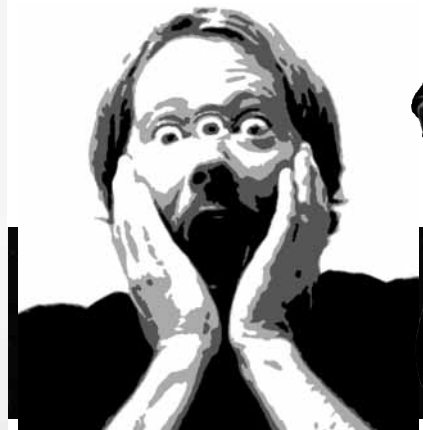
2. SIMON O'ROURKE (2187 - 2303)

His Legacy: Popularized a form of wheezy, pathetic mouth breathing that influenced both him and himself.

Also wrote several dozen letters to FoxCorp asking them to resurrect "Futurama."

"The Simpsons' has had almost three centuries of success," he said, "but you never gave 'Futurama' a chance!"

Later wrote several letters to FoxCorp explaining that he would stop whining about "Futurama" if they'd please, please turn his water back on and return his pets.



1. KLORGON BERICTNO (2277 - 2345)

His Legacy: Watched in mute horror as Segway Separatists detonated their Doomsday Device, collapsing the Earth into a hyper-dense sphere roughly the size of a basketball.

Simon O'Rourke lived a simple life selling replica Backstreet Boys collectibles to the hyper-evolved crabs that'd colonized most of the East Coast following the system failure of Jenna Bush Mark V. The crabs, despite their immense cranial capacity and ability to breathe underwater, all seemed to have the personality of Japanese harajuku girls. (Crabs, even with the benefit of nuclear-accelerated evolution, are socially awkward, and known as "Nature's MIT students." In 2299, they "discovered" trucker hats, and the East Coast crab glitterati went simply mad for them.) Simon spent each day shilling Nick, AJ, Brian, Kevin, and yes, even Howie to the delighted clack-clack of crab claws. Business was good, because no matter how many dolls, posters, and CDs the crabs bought, they were quickly reduced to scrap by their over-eager claws.

But Simon dreamed of more. One day he hoped to appear in the holographic skies over North America, larger than life, as the star of his own "Three's Company" knock-off. Instead, he'd spend hours immersed in his feeling suit, or in front of his quantum mirror, peering into the lives of Simon O'Rourke's from other dimensions. Here one sold fashionable headwear to zombies; there one wrote hypertext novels that went unread but were critically praised.

Simon's father had been an Anchor, his genes twisted to provide the kind of dull, unthreatening personality necessary to survive the vast Media Fields of the Western United States. There Shamus O'Rourke – media name, "Thad Johnson" – had roamed free, narrating events around him in a buttery voice and halting, overly-emotive cadence. He was a noble savage who lived only to stare vacantly at the teleprompter.

Then the Murdochs came. As their Harvester ships swooped in, Shamus yelled to his son, "And now, tragedy in the west, as a family is torn apart by tragedy. Diane?" The Murdochs fired a tranquilizer dart into Shamus's side. He fell, and to young Simon's ears the sound of his body hitting the ground was white noise, a sudden flash of static replacing a once-clear vision of the future. Shamus's final words to his son were, "In our 'Around the Community' feature this evening, a local boy whose family was torn apart by tragedy finds the strength to go on. But first, a message from our sponsors. We'll be right back." Both Shamus and Simon remained stoic as three Murdochs led the father into the awaiting transport. But just as he entered the shadow of the ship, Shamus looked back, and in his eye Simon saw the shine of tears.

Every day Simon cursed the name of Murdoch. The profits from his replica Backstreet Boys business were growing, and soon Murdoch, who thought himself safe in his subterranean stronghold, would learn the meaning of vengeance.





TIANA HUNTER is a freelance model and photographer located in New York City. She began modeling at age 10, and has since transitioned from fashion and commercial print to fine art nude modeling. As a photographer she specializes in fashion and fine art.





makeup by julia



makeup by isadora edison



Excerpt from Owner's Operating Manual Sony Vlog Uber-Camera (written 05/22/2088):

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'VE BOUGHT THE BEST CAMERA EVER CREATED by man! You're the star! By utilizing your own personal satellite, the Vlog Uber-Camera makes you the star of your own 24 hour TV channel! Do whatever you want, whenever you want! Are you an action hero? Are you a diva, drama queen, or the Dad That Has the Advice? You decide, superstar!

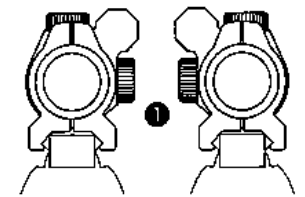
(Note: The Telecommunications Corrections Commission statutes do not allow "bathroom" language or behavior until after 11 p.m. PST. Even then, film judiciously.)

Your camera comes equipped with a ratingometer (fig. 1, right below the lens) letting you know instantly what your ratings are! Who knows, you could get advertisers or become a big-time network!

Also unique to this model is a special vlog literary feature – as you film, a microchip inside the camera registers your thoughts online, creating a literary companion that lets fans of your life get unprecedented access.

Congratulations, and good luck! You've joined the millions who've decided to become stars of their own networks! There's no limits!

SONY
uv-654364512HF123



UBER•VLOG
OWNER'S OPERATING MANUAL

EPISODE TWO:
"Hey Everybody!
It's Time for the..."

**MY MOM HAS
A DISEASE!
SHOW...!"**

(original air date: 06/12/2088)

As Mom's stumbling down the stairs, (I told her I made dinner. I hadn't) I try not to cry. The camera's a gift from my rich asshole brother "for the family."

Of course, if he wanted to give a real gift for the family, he'd buy Mom the best pills for her Alzheimer's, or better yet, put her in an amazing assisted living facility. I hear they have a great one on Phobos that makes Hawaii look like the Seattle ruins.

I wish I could get a real job, but there's only so many billion people (six, at last census count) who can work fast food in America. The only thing I hate more than myself is the inescapable fact that Mom's unemployment checks from the dishonest corporation that ran her factory are running out.

I help Mom down the stairs as the screen shows a fat, mostly bald Italian man with a handlebar mustache standing in front of a monolithic restaurant.

I put Mom on the couch. I want to tell her this is a game, and it doesn't mean anything. And that I hate myself that I have to do this. And that I'm sorry. And that I wanted better for both of us...

But this is television, and we don't have time.

Ratingometer: 4.20403

This is it – this is the day. If I can keep the number above eight for three hours, we should get enough advertising to have... everything...

The light comes on the vlog camera:

"Hello, it's me, Larry Knutsen, and time for everyone's favorite show: My Mom Has a Disease! Today, we feature an interview –"

I step out of the way of the camera, revealing my Mom and the vacuum cleaner.

"Mom talks to the vacuum; let's see how this goes. Mom, anything you want to say?"

"I want to water my flowers..." she mumbles.

Ratingometer: 5.30320

This vlog camera's so advanced, it sends out a signal that gets instant feedback from the audience – they love whenever she mentions

the flowers. It's a laugh riot.

"She doesn't know they're holograms!" I whisper to the camera, punctuating it with a wink.

Ratingometer: 7.32229

They really like it when I make fun of her. And they like all their comedy, even this broad and awful, carefully explained.

I kneel behind the vacuum cleaner. "Mabel... I'm Georgie..."

She looks at the vacuum, and shakes her head warily: "No, you... can't be. You're a human being, not a vacuum."

When I was fifteen, Mom caught Dad with some woman – he told her it was a hologram, and she believed it for a couple weeks. She never forgave herself, and I guess the

Alzheimer's just sets it off. Luckily, horribly, the audience loves it.

"Yes..." I grumble, my head hidden under the couch, "I had ... surgery, and turned into ... this. I did it for my new lover!" Mom's eyes are bulging out now – God, I wish I could stop this.

She looks at the vacuum. She glares at it:

"Are you still with your ... floozy?" A tear's in her eye.

"Oh, shit..." I think to myself. I turn the vacuum label towards the vlog camera: "X64000 NITRO HURRICANE BLOWER."

"Product placement's a bitch," I whisper under my breath. After the episode where my mom sang to her soup for half an hour, they shelled out a couple grand.

This is Not A Game
BY: GREG BENEVENT

LITERATURE

I poke my head out from under the couch – Ratingometer: 8.200201. My mother’s sickness is doing better than I’d thought. If I can keep these ratings up for a little while longer, maybe I can get just a little more money from advertising –

“She accepts me as who I am! I never loved you...” I shake the vacuum handle at her. To punctuate the point, I turn on the vacuum’s nitro-blower, thus reversing the suck factor –

FWOOSH – she flies back on the couch, her head bouncing off of the armrest.

RATINGOMETER GLOWS IN THE DARK: 11.392332

The lens is infrared, so it catches her stumbling around in the dark. One day, I blocked off the stairway with the kitchen table, and let her walk around the living room all night. I was able to buy her a jar of the good pills with that one.

“Oh, dear Lord, please ... save me and my cat,” she mutters, tapping her head against the window. She never had a cat.

“Look at those flickering lights!” I yell, like an old-timey gameshow host. “Watch them flick –”

The light switch breaks off in my hand.

I can’t turn the lights on.

“Hallelujah!” she yells. Her dentures slide out of her mouth.

RATINGOMETER: 4.383822

And dropping, fast.

Oh no.

Mom roots around on the floor looking for her dentures, right in front of her.

RATINGOMETER: 3.291991

We’re losing it.

How much do your love your mother? I think.

I look at the side of the vlog camera – it keeps a running online poll of any question you want during a broadcast. I just always leave up, “What Do You Want to See Next?” Even though she’s eighty-six years old, “Take Off Your Shirt!” leads with 43% of the vote, above perennial favorites “Hit Her!” (23%) and the too-vague “SCREAM!” at nineteen.

She reaches for her dentures, and puts her hand on them – they slide out from under her – her hand slips, and she falls to the ground, on her back.

RATINGOMETER: 2.01032

“How much do you love her?” I mumble. Enough to hit her? Tackle her? Moon her? Maybe I could just backhand her and be done

with it? Why is love always this complicated, or is just for the poor –

Suddenly, a hand on my shoulder.

A cold voice: “Stop. Help her up,”

I turn around – something ice cold and metal smacks me in the face –

It’s Tommy, my brother. He’s pointing a laser cannon at me, the one with two barrels.

“Move!” he mutters, and raps my cheek with the gun.

“What the hell are you doing here?” I ask, backing towards Mom. The barrel’s in my line of sight – I can’t see the ratings.

“Stopping an atrocity. Help her up.”

I lean down, and give Mom my hand. She pulls herself up by squeezing my elbow. As she’s doing this, I sneak a peek –

RATINGOMETER: 11.828282

“How could you do this to our mother? How could you disrespect her!”

“Hey asshole, I was here! Where were you? Huh?” I lean into the barrel, putting it to my forehead as I yell at him – please don’t pull the trigger – “I stuck it out with her, I stayed here, you ran off—”

“Because you couldn’t keep a job!” he thunders, and “clicks” the gun. 18.44881. The black barrels of the gun are limitless, a dark infinity. They reflect off the camera. As well as –

There’s a label on top of the barrel: “REMINGTON! WHEN IT NEEDS SHOT!” a bright red label proclaims. Oh, man...

“Boys, please ... I’m not worth it,” Mom mumbles, and sits on the couch.

“Tommy ... turn the gun...” I whisper, trying not to move my lips.

“What? Asshole! What are you saying?”

“Turn the label towards the camera...” How can my brother be so stupid? If he would let the audience see the name of the gun, maybe we’d get another sponsor!

He won’t do it, he just points the gun at me. Idiot.

Time for the histrionics:

“I give her pills, I’m helping her life, and you give her nothing—”

“You give her ... heartbreak!” Tom yells, voice breaking. Tears are running down his face – I watch one run all the way from his eye, to his knuckle, to the handle of the gun he’s got pointed at me. This is great stuff.

RATINGOMETER: 28.6364784

He’s openly crying now. Mom’s mumbling to herself. Time to go for everything:

“You’re an awful brother! I wish you were dead! She was a horrible mother, too! All her life was spent at that awful factory! I wish she was dead! I wish I’d killed this whole family! Then I brought them back from the dead, and killed them again! Dad slept with a hologram, he probably slept with you, too – you impotent, half-retarded little coward shit!” I scream at my brother. I have no idea what I just yelled, it sounded really bad, though. It might’ve been a little over the top. However, it must’ve worked, because he cries inconsolably –

“I’m going to KILL YOU!!” he shrieks at the top



of his lungs, a banshee. Mom’s weeping, I’m not sure why –

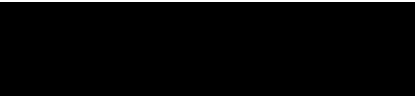
RATINGOMETER: 47.283829

Tom sticks the barrel of the gun down my throat –

I laugh, and hug him.

He’s jumps backward, like I tried to punch him. I smile at him –

“Dude, dude ... it’s all right. Show’s over,” I laugh, and reach out my hand. “How are you doing? It’s been a while, man.”



“What...” his eyes are wild, the gun shaking in his hands. “What’s ... wrong with you?”

A hearty laugh bellows from my lungs. A great laugh, a complete one. “I did it, man!” I hug him again. He quivers in my arms, glaring at me. “Your gift. We’ve got the money, from the advertisers. We’re ... oh man, she’s going to be all right.” I point at Mom, and sit next to her. I put my arm around her.

Tom points the gun at me, again. I snicker, shaking my head –

“Dude, you were great. Show’s over.”

“Get ... away from her,” he says, gulp in his throat. “You’re ... awful.”



I roll my eyes. This is stupid: “No, man. I saved her. I made this all right. I got her the pills, now she’ll be able to go to Phobos. You know the place.” I lower my head towards him, “I saved this family.”

“You beast,” Mom whispers.

I feel cold all of a sudden, “What?”

She pushes my arm off of her, and gets up.

“What’s this? Come on, I was doing what had to be done.” What the hell is wrong with these people?

Tommy puts one arm around Mom: “Get your things,” he whispers to her. “I’ll take you home.”

I sit there and glare at him as Mom saunters upstairs.

“You know, it takes a strong son to do what had to be done.” I say to him evenly, “I didn’t run off to sell poison like you. I stood up like a man and took what was coming to me. I didn’t enjoy it, not one bit,” my voice falters a little bit as Mom comes down with a pink bag that’s at least thirty years old. Tommy never takes the gun off of me.

“You ... I am disappointed in you,” Mom stutters, and throws her hologram plants at me. Only, she pulled them out of their projectors, and they’re just empty shells.

UNITED STATES OFFICIAL STATE SUPREME COURT CHANNEL: 42813819 (court date: 11/18/2091)

The judge is the sternest looking woman I’ve ever seen. I bet she always had gray hair, and she was born in a volcano. Her black robes reflect the camera light behind her desk, she pounds her anti-grav gavel.

“Larry Knutsen, you’ve been charged with obscenity charges. What do you say in your own defense?”

I clear my throat, and look at the Public Defend-O-Tron 7300 next to me. (All of the money I had went to Mom’s new home on the Phobosian Assisted Living Lifedome, P.A.L.L.) The robot is blue, about thirteen models behind the top-of-the-line models, and has a business suit and glasses painted onto his exoskeleton. He thought it’d be good if I spoke.

“Your honor, I am sorry for what I did to my mother. I loved her, with all my heart. But I was broke, and could not find another job. I supported her the only way I could – by entertaining masses I’d never see. I am not proud of what I did, but I am proud of what happened. I did it to make my mother happy in the long run. I did it to keep her safe. I haven’t been able to find a good job, so I had to hurt her to help her. I regret every second of it, but I’m so happy she found peace and comfort on the PALL.” I nod to the judge, and sit down. The robot and I worked on that speech last night.

One of the judge’s lips curl up: “I don’t know what your attorney told you, but that’s not what you’re before us today—”

“What?” I say instantly, adding hastily, “Your honor?” I glare at the robot. I got him on sale at the Defense Attorney store down the street from the courthouse. He was in a bin near the front. The paint on his suit is chipped off in a lot of places, particularly the tie, but I thought this was a good make and model. Besides – I’m still broke.

“Did you, or did you not thinksay on your vlog literary companion on January 4th, twenty-eighty-eight that “Mom’s unemployment checks from the dishonest corporation that ran her factory are running

out?” She puts on glasses to look at me, down her nose from her desk.

I sweat through my new suit: “Your honor ... I don’t know what I thought, I turned the vlog companion off.”

“Mr. Knutsen,” she sighs, “As established in Telecommunications Corrections Dept. v Richards we have the right to tap into your vlog camera’s memory banks to accurately gauge your thoughts as you broadcast, so as to prevent any obscenity from hitting the airwaves. Now, did you think that or not—”

I look wildly at my robot. He “beeps” and “boops” and looks through a folder in front of him. “OBJECTION” flashes in red letters on his neck. I don’t know if his voice speaker is malfunctioning, or he wants me to object, or what’s going on here –

“One moment, your honor...” I mumble, and grab his head, looking for a volume control, a programmable chip, something

– His head comes off in my hands.

Oh no.

“Uhh... one moment, your honor--” I try to say calmly, as I search rapidly for a way to re-attach my attorney’s head. I set it on his neck, I try stuffing it down – nothing – his neck is an incomprehensible mass of sparking red and blue wires, and microchips with frayed ends. I’ll never get it re-attached here. Besides, he’s an older model, so there’s probably no warranty or tech support.

“Seeing as you’ve had ... problems with your counsel, the court will give you two weeks’ recess to obtain suitable counsel,” the judge intones, and bangs her anti-grav gavel.

Something about this doesn’t feel right.

I don’t know much about the law, but I’ve seen enough trashy legal reality TV shows to know you don’t get a recess for dismantling your attorney. They usually just make a court-appointed repairman slap some crazy-glue on, and get you back on the docket.

And then, it all hits me.

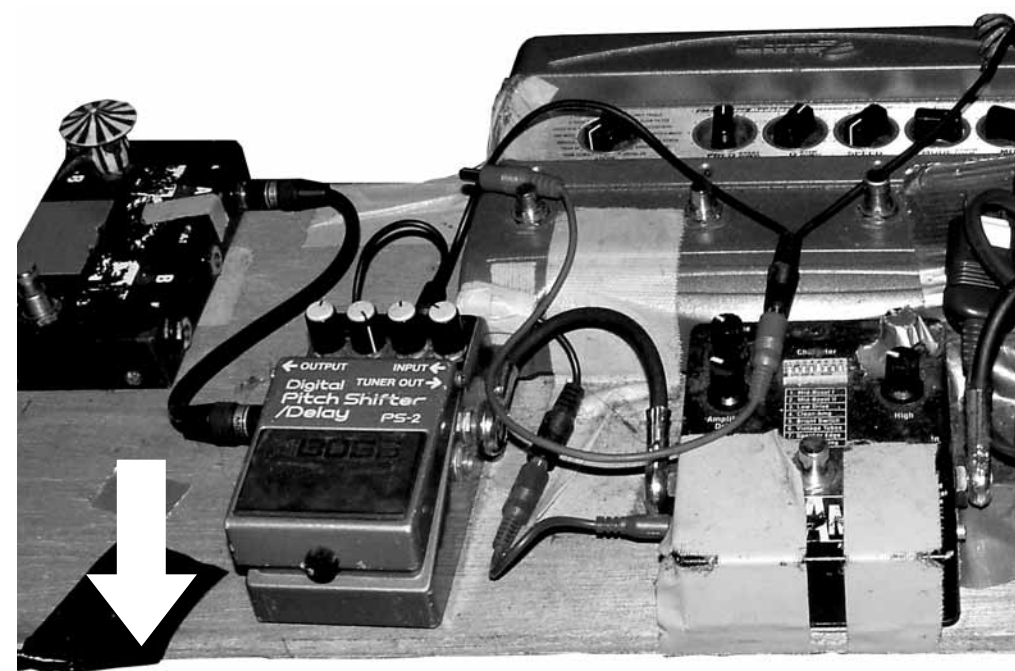
The light from the hologram flowers, sunflowers, near the window reflects on the court’s United States’ Official Cameras. The little red lights near the infinity dark lenses:

RATINGOMETER: 77.437371

My trial’s going very well. Not for me, but for the viewers.

I pick up my attorney in one hand, and his head in the other. I’m glad my Mom’s on Phobos, and I pray she isn’t watching this, but playing checkers with a hologram of Dad.

I’m not guilty, at least until sweeps week. 🕒



et's climb – just for a moment, together – a family tree of musical influence that ignores everything before 1987 and begins with God – the trunk – as a two-headed asexual beast represented by his highness Steve Albini. Here goes:

1. Big Black – Albini's first band² – faded out and became Rapeman³.
 - a. Rapeman consisted of two distinct, fertile hemispheres: anger and experimentation.
 - b. Anger and experimentation gave birth to two discordant children: Phoenus⁴ and Accidental Goat Sodomy⁵.

Phoenus represented wholesome experimentation – wordless tunes that droned on without direction or lyrical content. These songs embodied some of Albini's DIY frustration – his reluctance to stick to a song structure, for example, and his refusal to sing like a normal human being – but mostly played around with harmless ideas, firmly intending (but failing) to find some direction away from a *mystifying periphery of expression* we call "Purposely Filthy College Rock Sludge."

AGS represented all of Albini's repressed anger. They yelled a lot. They took the wrong sides on one-sided issues (like "whether or not you should sing about murdering a child for fun"). They experimented with diesel fuel on stage, lighting themselves (and fans) aflame. They talked a lot about raping and killing people. They sang about cutting your guts out and hanging them up in a dentist's office. They sang about intentionally running over someone's cute little puppy dog. And, of course, they wore black and pretended to throw-up blood.

i. Phoenus gave birth to bands like Hum and Explosions in the Sky, who never really allotted much space for significant change. Their music stayed scholastic, experimental, odd, then boring – because they never moved on to... anything. Phoenus' lead singer, Tung Hui, now teaches Intro Sociology courses at a community college in Jordan, Minnesota.⁶

j. AGS quickly died off. But not before they could produce a family line leading to Dying Fetus (who were less shock and more rock⁷), down through an avalanche of bands with names like Perpetually Fucking Susan, Cephalic Carnage, Anal Cunt, Vital Remains, T-Bag and the T-Baggers, Cryptopsy, Hitler's Pitching A Tent, Cap'n Gruesome and the Gore Whores, Disciples of Annihilation, and so on. These were bands that seemed to embody a semblance of Albini's frustration (namely, the idea that, if you're not going mainstream, you might as well go full tilt in the other direction), while avoiding much of Albini's concern for creative ideas and mischievous (arguably) positive energy.

- i. Screamo was born after Anal Cunt mated with Dashboard Confessional.
 1. We all cried and wept.
 2. And so on.

¹ Or, "Next time, figure out how to use your cassette recorder before you interview the band."
² Often lopped into the same category as Husker Du, Sonic Youth (and sometimes Devo), along with the Jesus Lizard and the Melvins, Chicago's Big Black were nasty woodshed critters in late eighties independent rock. Born in 1982 (when Steve Albini was a sophomore at Northwestern University writing for fanzines and generally yelling a lot), their website says: "A six-song EP, Lungs, was recorded on a borrowed 4-track for the price of one case of beer. Five years later, at the peak of their popularity, Big Black split. They never had a manager, a booking agent [or] a lawyer, [and never took an] advance from their record company. They left a musical legacy dripping with power, cynicism and a sense of humor that was blacker than black. In Seattle, at their final gig, they smashed up all their stuff."
³ Albini was in Rapeman with two other men – David Yow (vocals), and David Sims (bass) – who would later form the Jesus Lizard.
⁴ For reference purposes, you'd probably describe them – if they were 19-year-olds playing at the Roboto Project next Thursday – as sounding like slow indy drivel; like twangy, undistorted, unorganized stoner rock with occasional Neurosis acoustically. This is what you'd say. But the truth is that Phoenus represents the part of Steve Albini's influence that eventually created Silver Jews and Jawbox and Dredge and Low and so on. So there's that.
⁵ Their stage performances reportedly involved televisions playing video loops of, among other things: 1) a man shooting himself in the face and 2) a girl giving fellatio to a horse on a highway before being hit by a car.
⁶ Where we do we do what we like.
⁷ Compared to Accidental Goat Sodomy. Picture that for a moment. Accidental... goat... uh, nevermind.



PHOTOS: ALLISON DIESEL

aa: But, one night, sometime in 1995, Albini's two halves merged. *In Japan*. In the form of Melt Banana. And what they created was a force splitting Albini's fullness of anger and experimentation perfectly. They were smart enough to realize that *shock* is not enough to pull a band into infamy, but it can help. They also realized the opposite was true – that intelligence and creativity won't create a legend... but, again, they can help. And what you got was music that, on a cursory level, sounded like really fast, really noisy punk rock with a yelping female lead singer instead of a growling behemoth. But this was interesting. This was true frenzy. This was aptitude. This was Melt Banana. And Deek got a chance to talk with one of them – Melt Banana's guitar lunatic, Agata – on a rainy evening in May, 2005, with the intention of digging a little deeper. Here's what we found:

STREET



⁸ Besides wearing a surgeon's mask (which he wears for reasons that are unclear: When asked, he'll go into this charade-like explanation of a disease he had as a younger man that would cause him to throw up blood sporadically or when exposed to certain types of airborne bacteria. This may be true, maybe not. Good costume, though) and wielding a Gibson SG, Agata, as a reviewer from CHOKE Mag put it, "somehow creates sounds that recall the techno-war of Operation Desert Storm as seen on CNN, but with R-Type Laser Cannons instead of Scud Missiles. He throws himself recklessly about the stage, turning his guitar over and over, collecting and harnessing feedback and then blasting it in surgical strikes at a largely unsuspecting audience."

⁹ A chord is a combination of three or more pitches sounded simultaneously. From this definition, Melt Banana uses chords. Though there are no, like, A-chords in the music or anything – no Simon & Garfunkel chord changes. Most of his work is done with a slide; he uses a Koto tuning (FAEACC#).

¹⁰ which doesn't really put them any slower than, say, Weezer. Or NIN or Tool or ... anyone of that nature (who Agata probably either hate or disregard)

¹¹ Steve Albini produced a Bush album or two, just "to pay the bills." How do you think he feels about this?

Ichiro Agata's on-stage presence is maniacal.⁸ But after the show, he gets quiet, sedate. Maybe this is because of the language barrier that separates him from his interviewer.

When he loosens up, he likes to talk about comic books, video games and language, but will speak of his song writing process when prompted. Which brings us here:

Agata says Yako, MB's lead singer and lead song-writer, initially wanted to write music without chords, which they've moved away from, sort of.⁹ He said they are considering using on only drums and vocals on their next album – no guitar or bass. They've experimented with this on previous tours (a progression which has created tension in the band). He says the writing process is slow (he cited 5 albums in a decade)¹⁰ and seemed to stress this slowness deliberately – "srrrow" – mentioning that he hopes for maybe 3 or 4 more albums before they can't go any further. Strange that he'd give a moderately specific number. As if he sees the band as finite, like, relatively soon...

I guess this goes back to the idea that they – or he, rather – seemed to believe there's only so much you can do with a particular sound. He mentioned bands who seem to change their sound frequently – rock, electronic, pop – and that Melt Banana is not looking to go this route. They want to, instead, explore the unique sound they've cultivated into a cavern of sorts, allowing it to grow downward until it dies. They're

looking to have their music produce a feeling like a good movie or a piece of art; they want to produce excitement, emotion; they want people to cry or get angry or get happy. And when this is no longer possible, he says, it's time to quit making music.

So what's the point? Well... listen: The point is that, no matter what kind of music you're creating – no matter how many people hear your music after you die; no matter how many bands you influence, or how many heads you spin or how many ideas you put forth – there's always going to be a shred of doubt in whatever you do: An irritating part of your brain – a haloed, imaginary angel – that will try to convince you that your motives are flawed, that everything you're doing is essentially worthless, that there are, maybe, other options to pull you through;¹¹ other ways to express your art; other, less painful means to an end you wish to achieve. And does Melt Banana understand this? I *think* so. Not sure really. There's the language barrier, after all. And I'm obviously editorializing here, but that sense of reluctance definitely comes across in conversation with Agata. Does he think his music is without boundaries? No. Definitely not. Does he think they're beyond categorization? Maybe. But what the fuck does that mean? And what the fuck does that matter? They are the final direct line to a Steve-Albini-DIY-aesthetic we can cling to – no managers, no big labels, no fucking around with MTV, et cetera. Anything MB does in the future is simply icing on the cake. Or missiles in the silo. Explosions in the sky. A chance to sell out while the sellin's good. Et cetera, et cetera. Boo. Hiss. ☹

Melt Banana is probably going to come to a town near you, at some point. Buy their albums here: www.parkcity.ne.jp/~mltbanan

RADIOHEAD – OK COMPUTER



Like most white people, I've been abducted by aliens. Back in 1995 I sat peacefully on the porch at my parents' house, minding my own business and huffing Parks Gum paint thinner when a figure appeared before me in a flash of white light. When I try to put the pieces back together after the incident, I strongly argue that the being was pudgy and green – kind of like John Popper or Ronald Isley – with testicles the size of bowling balls and no eyes. My first inclination was to kick it in the face, but as it had no face and my legs were temporarily incapacitated from the turpentine, I decided to just sit back and enjoy the ride. I mean, when was I going to get to do this again?

The creature latched itself onto my chest, all the while chortling The Byrds' "Mr. Spaceman." Next thing I remember, I'm surrounded by these aliens whilst sitting in a big, comfy chair in a giant geodesic dome with a beautiful view of the cosmos. Apparently, I was not a prisoner, but an honored guest. I had been chosen as the Musical Emissary of Earth representing the 20th century. I felt like a roadie getting head from a groupie when the drums come in at 4:19 of "Stairway to Heaven."

Then, without warning, a human band of silhouettes carrying earthly instruments emerged upon the massive stage in front of me and began to play a whiny, yet complex brand of rock music to which I had never been exposed. My first reaction was, "Oh shit! They got Bowie too." The aliens revealed then that although Bowie had visited and showered their culture with his many gifts, this world needed "a new plan to greet the 21st century." This music must be it.



After the show, I was escorted to the stage and introduced to the band. "Hi, I'm Thom Yorke. This is my band, Radiohead"

"I know who you are," I interjected curtly. "Your music blows rhino balls. What are you doing here and how did your band get so good all of a sudden?"

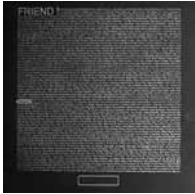
"We signed a 3 year deal with the Kooks (the aliens, apparently). They have the ability to unlock all creative potential in humans. In return, we just practice interminably and they base their society upon our performances. When we get back, we're going to put these songs into an album called *OK Computer* and the Earth-people will think it's genius! The kicker is, everyone back home will think it's about their own future when it's really about the distant present of these wonderful Kooks," Yorke explained.

"Groovy," I replied, "How do I get them to unlock my creativity?"

"Oh, we've got better plans for you," explained one of the Kooks in a voice that sounded like Mick Ronson choking on the head of a guitar. "Someday, when time is different, you will wander the Earth a Kook in disguise, teaching more to us with music." The next thing I remember, I was back on my folks' porch. This time with a beer. Thanks, Kooks.

When *OK Computer* came out in 1997, I wasn't surprised. It was unlike anything every produced by humans. Of course, it wasn't. They painted their homage to the Kooks on page 19 of the goofy, pretentious liner notes.

My mission, on the other hand, ultimately failed. I couldn't take today's Earth-music any longer and wound up in jail. Who knows, maybe someday, when the Kooks are ready for the next rock overhaul, they'll visit Scott Stapp, Linkin Park, The Game and Justin Timberlake and eat them. ☹



Shellac
The Futurist
[Icons: 5 icons]

Sounds like: Big Black, Rapeman, Jesus Lizard, Melvins
Music’s good for: Playing no-name cities in Europe and Northern Canada just because you’ve never been there; doing shows on river boats, at donut shops and whiffleball tournaments.

The tale behind *The Futurist* is actually much better than the album, so let’s start there. Here’s the story: Three years after releasing their debut (*At Action Park*), Shellac released what would become one of their most legendary fuck-yous (to everyone) in the form of an LP you really couldn’t buy. This was *The Futurist*. Written as a soundtrack for a dance production, it was recorded in-full, and later deemed unfit for proper release by the band. Instead, they decided to press a limited run (779 to be exact) and give it to some of their friends and family members as a gift. The catch? The band printed a list of all of the recipients as the record’s front cover, circling in silver pen the name of each record holder as they were distributed, insuring that if the person were to, say, sell the fucker on the internet, the band would be able to figure out who did it. Which is pretty sneaky. ANYFUCKINGWAY, we were able to locate a copy of *The Futurist* on the internet. And we listened to it. And it’s not that good (for Shellac). But to appreciate why it’s not that good, you’ll have to reread some Shellac lyrics first. Here, read:

“Prayer to God”
By Shellac
From *1000 Hurts*, 2000

To the one true God above: / here is my prayer – / not the first you’ve heard, / but the first I wrote. / (not the first, but the others were a long time ago). / There are two people here, / and I want you to kill them. / Her – she can go quietly, / by disease or a blow / to the base of her neck, / where her necklaces close; / where her garments come together; / where I used to lay my face... / That’s where you oughta kill her, / in that particular place. / Him – just fucking kill him, / I don’t care if it hurts. / Yes I do, I want it to, / fucking kill him, but first / make him cry like a woman, / (no particular woman); / let him hold out, / hold back / (someone or other might come and fucking kill him). / Fucking kill him. / Kill him already, kill him. / Fucking kill him; fucking kill him, / Kill him already, kill him. / Fucking kill him, fucking kill him, / Kill him already, kill him. / Just fucking kill him! / Fucking kill him, / Fucking kill him already, kill him. / Ah fucking kill him, fucking kill him, / Kill him already, kill him. / Kill him already, kill him already / Kill him, fucking kill him. / Just fucking kill him, fuckin’ kill him, / Kill him already, kill him. / Fuckin’ kill him, kill him, / Fucking kill him already, kill him. / Kill him, fucking kill him, / Kill him, just fucking kill him. / Kill them already, kill them already. /

Kill him. / Amen.

Now, I’m not saying “Prayer to God” is the most sparkingly poetic song in the universe, but it’s kinda funny if you ask me. Funny and sick. And honest. And this, again, to me, represents part of what makes Shellac one of the best fucking bands ever – the idea that, when I listen to a Shellac record, I am almost guaranteed to laugh at some really sick idea at some point. But on *The Futurist*, what you get, instead, is not funny – a little less than a half-hour of Steve Albini masturbating with oscillator tweakings and Morse code transmissions and overseas correspondence interspersed with brief guitar/bass/drum bursts. Skronking noise here, guitar twists there; squirt here, squirt there, whatever. Like I said: It’s shitty for Shellac (which is, I’m guessing, why they didn’t release it), but still: Shitty Shellac is fine by me.

An aside: Does *The Futurist* represent Shellac’s interpretation of the Future? Mmmmaybe, but doubtful. I have no idea what’s behind the name. I’ve looked; can’t find anything. Could be many different ideas. Are they saying, for example, that, in the future, we will all be humorless droids listening to musical twaddle? That we’ll have to express our humor in different ways to overcome The Man’s Censorship slowly shutting us up forever? That we need to become mute humorists? That *The Futurist* represents the “Silent Movie” of Shellac’s career? That this album is a *mime for the masses*?

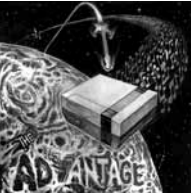
Wait... no. No. No. No. No. Shut up.
– Marty Eggs



The Loved Ones
Drastic
[Icons: 5 icons]

Sounds like: Green Day
Music’s good for: torture

Dear The Loved Ones: Go fuck yourselves. I am not prepared for another Green Day cover band. I am not ready to hear more stale, generic emotional punk rock. I’m pulling out the shotgun and the Hefty bags. Get out of my house.
– Bob Gavel



The Advantage
The Advantage
[Icons: 5 icons]

Sounds like: Don Caballero mixed with 8-bit Nintendo game soundtracks
Music’s good for: Playing video games

Geeks of the world, leave your parents’ basements and go to the record store; your new favorite album has arrived.

Consisting of members from indie nerd-rock bands Hella and Chrime In Choir, The Advantage is a cover band that deals exclusively in video game music. A niche act to be sure, The Advantage go one step further by focusing solely on game tunes from the classic 8-bit Nintendo Entertainment System (The band is named after a once-popular arcade joystick for the system.)

Re-imaging the simple synthesizer beep and boop compositions as instrumental guitar rock, their self-titled debut features 26 tracks of 8-bit coolness that blend together with very few breaks, almost sounding like a nonstop video game megamix. While some fan favorite classics are here, such as the Underworld and Overworld music from Super Mario Bros., and cuts from games like Zelda and Contra, much of the best music comes from lesser-known and cult games that never reached a big audience. The hyper fast-paced themes to Batman 2 and Bomberman really stand out, as does the brooding music from Wizards and Warriors and especially Castlevania, which is

represented in two tracks on the album. The later, “Evergreen” is slowly dissolved into a wall of feedback – the only time that The Advantage deviate from the source material; it’s a fitting denouement to the album.

As far as nerd-rock goes, it just doesn’t get any nerdier than this. Buy it and listen to it while driving to work or studying for a big exam; it’ll make any task feel like a mythic quest to save the princess. Or something.
– James Eldred



The [freaking] White Stripes
Get Behind Me Satan
[Icons: 5 icons]

Sounds like: The Hives, The Vines, The Verve, The Strokes, blah blah blah
Music’s good for: Googling your mom, who you haven’t seen in years, then finding out she’s starring in a new Adam Sandler flick; then wishing she weren’t; then wishing that, instead, she would’ve gone into porn like a normal human being. Your mom *paid* to have sex with me, by the way. I was only doing my job.

Get Behind Me Satan proves that The White Stripes truly are the Wonder Bread of retro-rock. In the midst of Hollywood heartbreak, backstage fisticuffs, country-western recreation, thespian pursuits, and secret marriage to a supermodel, Jack White has upheld a bluesman’s perspective on the hand he’s dealt and the music he creates.
– Ballast Portage



Breather Resist
Charmer
[Icons: 5 icons]

Sounds like: Every Time I Die, Deadguy, Norma Jean
Music’s good for: Drinking kerosene and reading “Anger Management for Schizophrenics: They Started It.”

If at this moment you are unaware of Breather Resist, let me enlighten you: They are a band. On top of that, if you consider yourself “hip” to the new variety of noisy, spazz-riffed, angular trends in hardcore-type sounding music these days, then pay attention: Their debut Jade Tree release, *Charmer*, is by far the loudest, and, ahem... best thing to come forth from this perennial punk/indie label this year. Featuring current Black Cross and former the National Acrobat guitarist Evan Patterson, and production from Kurt Ballou of Converge, you get an idea of where their sound is – loud, spazzy hardcore. And while Black Cross is content to stay well within the bounds of the post-hardcore

landscape, Breather Resist lurches back and forth across boundary lines with celerity. Similarities to Every Time I Die, the Jesus Lizard, Fear Before the March of Flames, and the aforementioned Converge should wet your appetite. In fact, the next time you feel like listening to Every Time I Die in particular, you should listen to these guys instead. They have accomplished what E.T.I.D. do without giving you the notion that, if the band members weren’t into hardcore, they would have pledged a frat. Bonus. It’s technical, it’s heavy, and it’s all over the place.
– Zach Braden



Dredg
Catch Without Arms
[Icons: 5 icons]

Sounds like: Team Sleep, U2, Far
Music’s good for: Drinking cabernet sauvignon and reading “The New Guide to Spiritual Bliss as a College Graduate”

Attempting to find background info on the band for this review – even in the often over-populated world of internet fansites and webzines – proved amazingly futile. I have only ever seen one press photo of the band, and the names of the members don’t even appear in the liner notes. One of the most puzzling facts, however, is how this band has remained on a major label (one album on Universal; this, their second, is on Interscope) nearly since their inception with no corporate radio airplay, no MTV presence, and very little promotion. Curious, indeed.

But with a closer look at the music and art displayed via the band’s reclusivity, you may find that this is, in fact, precise and purposeful. From their first LP, 1999’s *Leitmotif*, dredg have balanced a heavier-based sound with broad instrumentation and expansive songscapes. On *El Cielo*, their 2002 debut for Interscope, this vision became crystal clear. The album, easily the band’s triumph thus far, combines a grandiose yet accessible sound that has led into the poppy but sophisticated sound of *Catch Without Arms*. Songs like “Bug Eyes” and “The Tanbark is Hot Lava” continue to meld rock, jazz, ethnic sounds, and distinctive guitar work. The title track creates a beautiful sound-wash of piano and concise melodies that make for a nice listen. The only downfalls on the album are when dredg seem to be sampling themselves, crossing over old territory. That and one particularly god-awful song that sounds like a bastardized Sade-meets-Incubus disaster are all that prevent *Catch Without Arms* from being the as-a-whole piece like *El Cielo*.

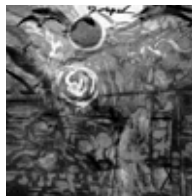
While dredg’s headlining tour this summer with the Pale Pacific and Circa Survive may thrust them into the middle of the current emotional rock trend, that’s an unfair limitation. For current fans, this new album is not a disappointment. Those unfamiliar should take a cue from the band name and do some investigation. Start with *Leitmotif* and follow the path laid our for you. Otherwise, you might get lost.
– Zach Braden



Clutch
Robot Hive/Exodus
[Icons: 5 icons]

Sounds like: The Allman Brothers Band, Kansas, Corrosion of Conformity
Music’s good for: Drinking a 30-pack of High Life while reading “A Pocket Guide to AD&D and Isaac Asimov”

It’s interesting. I can base my entire review of the new Clutch album around two separate statements made by two different people in regards to the aforementioned release on DRT Entertainment: “It sounds like Clutch” and “Like a good punch in the face – just what I expect from that band.” Exactly. My job is done. I am under the belief that music journalism, when you really get to the point of it all, is silly. It’s like band t-shirts. If everyone has heard of the band, what the fuck is the point of wearing the shirt, other than proving to everyone exactly how cool you are? Reviews of long-established bands can be the same way. At this point, you either love Clutch or absolutely can’t stand them. There is no “they’re ok” here. *Robot Hive/Exodus* sounds like Clutch, and it will punch you in the face. Neil Fallon continues to craft Appalachia Mythology, sounding like a crazed hillbilly Frank Herbert. The music is – as always – that tremendous southern prog rock I have come to love and respect. And the fact that I could jump right in to this album, as compared to *Blast Tyrant* (which had to slowly grow on me), means that these bearded bastards are still churning out grand romp and stomp that has truly become the new southern rock. Conceptual elements abound, from their own well-concted recipe on album-opener “The Incomparable Mr. Flannery,” the fantastic accompaniment from the now permanent organ player on “10001110101,” and the Elmore James inspired blues of “Gravel Road.”
– Grady Greenshears



Gospel
The Moon is a Dead World

Sounds like: Mewithoutyou, The Mars Volta, The Postman Syndrome
Music's good for: Drinking Red Bull until your eyes twitch; reading "Have You Ever Considered The Fact That We Have Been In The Post-Hardcore era for Over 17 Years: Understanding Post-Hardcore"

This is my new favorite album, damn it. Gospel create tightly knit, chaotic, soaring post-hardcore that completely blows away anything else I have heard in a long time. On Level-Plane Records, *The Moon is a Dead World* fuses together an immense amount of talent into one epic album that never seems to stop. From airy, reverb-soaked intros and interludes, to meandering bass lines that dance with sometimes punctuating, sometimes tumultuous guitars and technical, driving percussion, there is never a dull moment in any of it. While some people may tend to throw around references to the influence of The Mars Volta, this is a band that shouldn't get that nod out of blatant similarity, but simply for the scale and pacing of their music, the majority of which carries much different influences than Omar and Co. Gospel seem to draw primarily from influences more closely aligned within the blanket of post-hardcore, ranging from Sadaharu and The Plot to Blow Up the Eiffel Tower to well... yeah, At the Drive-In. But a penchant for expanded jam-sequences shows that Gospel has a much broader reach. They blend in elements of Primus and Tool, carrying themes over multiple tracks and blurring the delineations between songs. One of the things that can be shared in all really good music is the ability of the listener to experience the same songs from the perspectives of each musician and the instrument they are playing. Each part that makes Gospel a whole does its own individual job flawlessly. More aggressive than Coheed & Cambria, more expansive than Jawbox, and more flowing than the Blood Brothers, Gospel may have found the perfect groove.

— Gezana Happypants



The Dead 60s
 S/T

 (they did actually convince someone to put out this piece of crap; that's worth half a point)

Sounds like: The Clash, Joe Strummer rolling in his grave
Music's good for: Drinking so much Guinness that you think you are actually listening to the Clash and reading "How to Rip Off Your Heroes"

Hi. We are a British band called the Dead 60s. We really, really like the Clash. Please like us.

— Evan Oswell



Stephen Malkmus
Face the Truth

Sounds like: Uh, Pavement
Music's good for: Playing with the magnet poetry on your Dad's fridge.

Sure, now that Stephen Malkmus is a parent, he might have a little more trouble explaining Loretta's scars to his kids than the birds and the bees. But just how else dad-hood will affect him is a tough call. After all, it's always been difficult to peg exactly what's on Malkmus' mind.

With *Face the Truth*, his third solo effort since Pavement's "hiatus," nothing seems to have changed in that department. When he says, "You are so much like me," on the folksy "Freeze the Saints," he could be talking about his daughter, but he could also be talking about a can opener. And although I'm more than happy to give him the benefit of the doubt, *Truth* is filled with enough guitar bliss and pop grit to make that unnecessary.

The album opens with a squeaky barrage of fuzzy synthesizer and silly-putty guitar, on the explosive "Pencil Rot." There's an energy to Malkmus this time around that some might consider a return to form, and that energy is most evident in *Truth*'s eclectic, scattered sensibility. Unlike his self-titled solo debut and 2003's *Pig Lib*, *Truth* isn't easy to figure out: "I've Hardly Been" sounds like an Indie Rock vacation to Calcutta, and the vocoder stuttering of "Kindling for the Master" grooves like nothing Malkmus has ever done.

Despite a handful of pretty dull moments, *Truth* offers up a slew of classic Malkmus melodies ("Post-Paint Boy" and "It Kills") and some genuinely baffling lyrics ("zodiac ballet," for one). Perhaps the most telling lyric on all of the record comes again from "Freeze the Saints," on which Malkmus sings, "Done is good, but done well is so much fucking better." *Face the Truth* follows that maxim to the end.

— Clinton Doggitt



A Life Once Lost
Hunter

Sounds like: Meshuggah, Isis, Dead to Fall
Music's good for: Drinking cement mix while reading the directions for your new trampoline.

On their debut for Ferret Records, A Life Once Lost jackhammer all competition into more rubble than Fallujah. This is seriously heavy metalcore. While there is no shortage of double-bass and palm-muting on "Vulture," "Pain & Panic," and "A Rush & Seige," *Hunter* finds the band finally creating a balance between their Meshuggah-owed math chug and ALOL's more sonically tempered work seen on 2004's *Open Your Mouth for the Speechless*. While the aforementioned Swedes are content to stay light years ahead of any other math-metal, while slowly drifting further out into space age epics, A Life Once Lost pack more hardcore-style intensity and pure energy in place of degrees in calculus. But the welcome addition that makes this new record a step forward is the newfound use of tonality and chord-structure. While usually just fine with thick, chunky guitar parts interspersed with high-fret squeals, *Hunter* contains many a well-placed part where guitarists Robert Carpenter and Douglas Sabolik let their notes ring and sustain, allowing you to hear the full chord. The album's namesake track is a perfect example. Hunter is certainly a success for A Life Once Lost. This is triumphant.

— Billy Stalin

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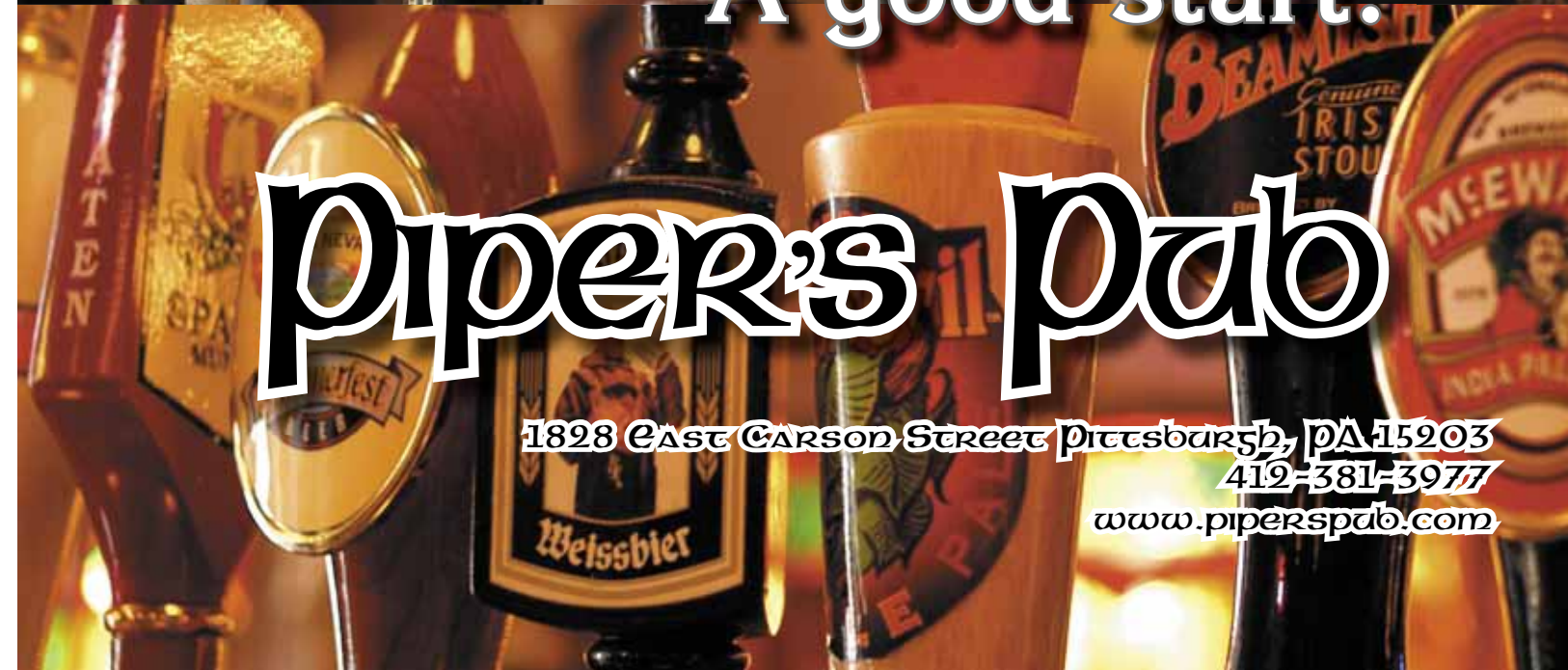
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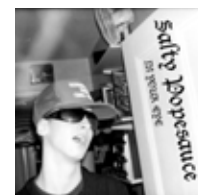
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Salty Popesauce

In Your Eye



Sounds like: Krudge, Plastic Piggy Panic, Automatic Cadavers

Music's Good For: Stumbling home from the strip club, another Tuesday night behind you, wondering, "What have I done with my life? Oh yeah, I ROCKED OUT!"

Salty Popesauce is definitely an acquired taste. The opening shot on this album, "It Burns," feels like someone the band took "Stairway to Heaven," turned the amps to eleven, and then condensed it into a 1:54 sonic blast. Repeated listening reveals unexplored depths, but the first reaction is to double over, unsure if your earthly body can withstand that much rockin'.

Later tracks are more exploratory, often stretching over 4 minutes, but they never veer into Godspeed You! Black Emperor territory. That's a good thing, because while Salty Popesauce has a lot of energy and unfocused anger, they don't have the melodic chops to sustain longer pieces. "In Cthulu's Claws We Will Slumber," an H.P. Lovecraft-inspired power ballad, suffers from an excess of ambition: at nearly 7 minutes long, it's an unwieldy beast that feels twice as long when it should be half. Skip this out of place track and move on to "Strumming Mechanical Kryptonite," which sticks to the band's well-honed formula.

Fans of SP's last album, "Holy See, Holy Do," will find much to like here. Guitarist Hans Solondez keeps the riffs coming hard and fast, matching lead singer Emmanuel Éclair's taut—some would say whiny—delivery. Drummer Slate Emasculus is competent if not extraordinary, and his cowbell work on "Peter's Pence" will certainly draw some attention. Bass player Tim Bodine plays bass.

Overall, the album is a satisfying return to form by the Boulder foursome, yet it contains enough new directions to suggest Salty Popesauce haven't blown their wad just yet.

— Eason Caritas



Lunar Park

by Bret Easton
Ellis

Knopf – August 16.

A lot of people don't like Bret Easton Ellis. His stories often feature affluent, amoral decadents – mostly famously, Patrick Bateman, the narrator of 1992's *American Psycho*. Bateman, a Wall Street shark whose taste for blood and money emptied his soul, went on a series of increasingly brutal murders in that book's pages, and while no one in Bateman's world paid much attention, everyone paid attention to Bret Easton Ellis. He received death threats, got invited to the best parties, and his work was reviled as often as praised.

All of which forms the backdrop of his new novel, *Lunar Park*. In it, "Bret Easton Ellis," tired of snorting cocaine with co-eds and aging-decadent writers, tries to make a by marrying his on-again, off-again girlfriend. More crucially, he tries to be a father to their son." He moves in with them, taking over a guest bedroom as he tries to fit into suburban family life.

But Ellis's past is not through with him. A series of bizarre murders modeled on *American Psycho* begins; local schoolboys disappear without a trace; and something seems to be haunting 307 Elsinore Lane.

Lunar Park is Ellis's most mature work yet; the marketing blitz – "Bret's Back" – is a bit misleading: *American Psycho*-era Ellis couldn't have asked, "Why was I holding on to something that would never be mine?" and answered in the next line, "(But isn't that what people do?)" Bret is back, but this is a deeper, more interesting Bret.



Never Let Me Go

by Kazuo Ishiguro
Knopf

Kazuo Ishiguro is a subtle writer. His style is conversational; his characters simply talk, often circling around what they really want to say. They navigate with words, realizing only later what they mean. Ishiguro doesn't work with strong declarations, or debate, or even raise his voice.

His new book, *Never Let Me Go*, takes a controversial topic – human cloning – and lowers the volume. Rather than write a shrill polemic, he assumes the argument has already been decided: like any technology, cloning, once we allow it to progress, will change us in ways we can't even imagine. Ishiguro puts us in the shoes of Kathie H., a 31-year-old "carer" who speeds the recovery of "donors" – cloned humans who live expressly to provide the sick with healthy new organs. Kathie is herself a clone; the people she cares for are her childhood friends.

The carers and donors spent a sheltered life in the English countryside school of Hailsham, Kathie remembers. They are never told exactly what their purpose in life is, but certain hints follow them as they grow up. Their school is idyllic, but not shielded from the universal sufferings of youth. Only later will they realize who they truly are, and to Ishiguro's credit they don't face this knowledge with epiphany or despair, but with the quiet dignity that rarely comes even in adulthood. Ishiguro asks us to confront the everyday cruelty to which we can grow blind, simply because it is right in front of us. But it is Kathie who shows us how to overcome that blindness.

Philip K. Dick’s
amphetamine-
fueled tales
sketched a future
so strange we’re
only now catching
up to it.

“The whole government is a fraud and the President is an android.”

Drug companies market their newest wares with the slogan, “God promises eternal life. We can deliver it.”

“A paranoid incompetent has schemed his way into the White House and convulsed America in a vicious war against internal enemies.”

These are the worlds of Philip K. Dick – from *The Simulacra*, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, and *Radio Free Albemuth*, respectively.

Reading Philip K. Dick’s work – much of it almost a half-century old – in the year 2005 provokes a feeling of vertigo, of passing rapidly through a kaleidoscope of perspectives, each offering a unique kind of truth. With his paranoid metaphysics, dry existential humor, and ultimate generosity of human spirit, Philip K. Dick offers us a roadmap to a future not only stranger than we imagine, but stranger than we *can* imagine.

Philip Kindred Dick was born in 1928, in Chicago, with his twin sister, Jane. Jane died shortly thereafter – a trauma that haunted him for the rest of his life. Soon after, Dick and his mother moved to California, that last outpost of the American Dream.

He briefly attended the University of California, Berkeley, with a major in German, but before long he realized college wasn’t for him. Before dropping out, he’d taken a class on pre-Socratic philosophy, which asked: What is real? What does it mean to be a human? The class articulated questions he’d often asked; he began writing, exploring those questions through the “genre ghetto” of science fiction.

In 1952, he published his first short story, “Beyond Lies The Wub,” in which a crew of space travelers discuss mythology with a large, pig-like creature – the wub – who they then eat. The wub, offended not in the slightest, genially continues the discussion from beyond death.

The story might seem more cute than challenging, but Dick described his aim as creating an “alien lifeform that exhibits the deeper traits that I associate with humanity: not a biped with an enlarged cortex – a forked radish that thinks, to paraphrase the old saying – but an organism that is human in terms of its soul.”

In 1953, Dick published twenty-eight stories, including those about a dog who thinks garbage men are invaders come to steal his family’s precious treasure; a group of astronauts (again) who encounter God, only to realize it’s not *their* God; and an android who believes himself to be human.

It’s those early stories that Hollywood has most easily grasped: *Minority Report*, *Paycheck*, *Screamers*, and *Impostor* are all adaptations of Dick’s pre-1956 work, stripped of their metaphysical doubt and retooled as action-adventure blockbusters. It took Ridley Scott to get Dick right, in adapting 1968’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* as *Blade Runner*, which critic Andrew O’Hehir called, “The movie that invented the future.” Yet for all its stylishness, *Blade Runner* dropped Dick’s philosophizing in favor of...Harrison Ford.

Still, Dick’s worldview has permeated our culture, with Hollywood increasingly reflecting that. *The Truman Show*, so widely praised for its satirical take on our media-saturated culture, owes a great debt to Dick’s 1959 novel *Time Out of Joint*, in which the main character lives on a simulated early-60’s suburb, unaware that his world is an illusion created to keep him working for the government. *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*’s selective memory manipulation echoes 1966’s “We Can Remember it For You Wholesale,” previously adapted as *Total Recall*, and *Sunshine* screenwriter Charlie Kaufman wrote a script of Dick’s *A Scanner Darkly* – the 1977 novel now being filmed by Richard Linklater of *Waking Life* fame.

If Hollywood strip-mines Dick’s work – he ranks second only to Steven King in cinematic adaptation, it’s because his stories – long-form thought experiments, really – predicted for the future, we are only 50 years later coming to experience. His anxiety about the *very nature of reality* presages our own increasingly anxious 2005, a world of fake “authenticity” in which a hyphenated contradiction like “reality-tv” – the ontological equivalent of combining matter and anti-matter in the pursuit of higher ratings – has become commonplace, even trivial. When the ability to create reality – through media, technology, and genetic manipulation – outstrips the ability to comprehend it and, most importantly for Dick, remain human, we are on our way to becoming something else – for better or worse.

It would have flattered the PKD of 1953 to know the rest of us would catch up eventually. But you can’t eat prophecy, and in those early years Dick made money selling stories to cheap pulps; he eventually turned to amphetamines to speed his output, bragging that he could type 120 words a minute. He cranked out novels in weeks, locking himself in a room with his typewriter and a supply of speed.

The combination produced some of his best work, and his worst. The Dick canon is notoriously uneven: the great works, like *A Scanner Darkly*, in which an undercover drug agent suffering from a split-personality disorder is asked to spy



Journey Into the Mind of Philip K. Dick
by Emmanuel Carrere
Picador

Where do you begin to understand the man called “one of the most valiant psychological explorers of the twentieth century” by *The New York Times*, a man who at one point may have believed Russian scientists were transmitting into his sleeping mind thousands of abstract impressionist paintings? Who for a few months shared his consciousness with that of Thomas, an early Christian who’d lived almost two decades earlier in Jerusalem? How, exactly, do you get into the mind of the man who changed reality paradigms the way runway models change clothes?

French novelist and screenwriter Emmanuel Carrere recognizes the essential truth of Philip K. Dick’s character: his obsession with putting the world back together again. Dick’s characters were often fix-it men who somehow stumbled upon a higher, stranger reality. It’s a role Dick played in his own life, as the fumbler after truth. Carrere’s book is a biography, literary critique, and character study rolled into one, a choice necessary given his subject’s lack of distinction between life and fiction. Dick wrote not to tell a story, but to construct a world, a universe, as he put it, “that doesn’t fall apart two days later.” Through his fiction, as in his life, Dick tried out one viewpoint after another, often shifting mid-sentence. Carrere’s book perfectly

on himself, have to share shelf-space with the less impressive *Solar Lottery* and *Vulcan’s Hammer*. His Hugo Award-winning *The Man in the High Castle*, an alternate future story in which the Axis powers won World War II, is followed the next year by *Clans of the Alphane Moon*, best summarized by “blah.” The real tragedy of Dick’s confinement in the genre ghetto is that had he been better paid, more of his 44 novels might rise to the level of his talent.

Even so, virtually all of his work stands above his contemporaries’ rayguns and scantily-clad astrowomen creations. *Ubik*, one of his best novels, features a spraycan cure-all, named, of course, Ubik. Ubik is the weapon of choice against entropy, the force of time that grinds us all done into nothingness. Dick opens each chapter with an advertising jingle invocation of this miraculous product: “Has perspiration odor taken you out of the swim? Ten-day Ubik deodorant spray or Ubik roll-on ends worry of offending, brings you back where the happening is. Safe when used as directed in a conscientious program of body hygiene.”

Where *Ubik* predicts the creep of advertising lingo into every facet of our lives, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* satirizes our increasing reliance on consciousness-tweaking via drugs. Palmer Eldritch is the anti-Prozac, a weird pilgrim who invents a new drug, Chew-Z, which promises to free users from their mundane lives. Instead, it plunges them into a world controlled entirely by Palmer Eldritch.

captures that obsessive pursuit – and rejection– of enlightenment.

Philip K. Dick was a born metaphysician and an explanation junkie, the kind of guy who solved the puzzle of reality a new way every day. And like any other junkie, he pursued his fix with a solipsistic single-mindedness alien to everyone around him. Carrere doesn’t shy away from making Dick a strange figure with a voracious intellect, equally likely to quote early Gnostic Christian texts as the latest advances in theoretical physics.

Balancing that tendency, however, is Dick’s almost desperate need to experience humanity. As he responded to critics who labeled him bitter, “Perhaps they are bothered by the fact that I trust what is so very small.” For each “great truth” that he tried on, straying further away from typical human experience, there was in him the countervailing force toward that “very small” – simple human empathy, being able to put yourself in another’s shoes, ultimately to care that we are all in this together – that grounded his flights of speculation.

Philip K. Dick put it this way: “The two basic topics which fascinate me are ‘What is reality?’ and ‘What constitutes the authentic human being?’” The tension between those two questions, deftly managed in *I Am Alive* is what makes Philip K. Dick the man, and his work, so endlessly fascinating.



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time
by Mark Haddon
Vintage

Mark Haddon’s debut novel follows fifteen-year-old Christopher John Francis Boone, an autistic boy who copes with the strange world around him by reciting prime numbers in his head, as he investigates the murder of Wellington, a neighbor’s poodle.

His autism leaves Christopher emotionally detached – he describes Wellington’s body: “The dog was dead. There was a garden fork [pitchfork] sticking out of the dog. The points of the fork must have gone all the way through the dog and into the ground because the fork had not fallen over. I decided that the dog was probably killed with the fork because I could not see any other wounds in the dog and I do not think you would stick a garden fork into a dog after it had died for some other reason, like cancer, for example, or a road accident. But I could not be certain about this.”

This uncertainty leads him to investigate Wellington’s murder. The investigation leads him to uncomfortable truths about his broken home. As new evidence piles up, the emotionally awkward Christopher must use all of his coping mechanisms to find his place in the world.

Christopher – emotionally obscure, humorless, (“I cannot tell jokes because I do not understand them”), and ultimately selfish – has a real voice; perhaps Haddon’s greatest achievement is not turning his main character into a freakshow. In doing so, he manages what all great fiction strives for: to bring the reader inside another soul in a way that enlarges our definition of humanity. 🐕

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Japanese director Takashi Miike doesn't make movies about "normal" people.

His characters are always lost souls and outsiders. From brainwashed Yakuza hitmen ("Ichi the Killer") to near-insane detectives ("MPD Psycho") to shattered, incestuous families ("Visitor Q") and love-starved women ("Audition"), they are people on the fringe, making their homes in the dim margins of society, respectability, and even sanity.

Perhaps best-known to American audiences is "Ichi The Killer." Our introduction to Ichi comes from a squad of Yakuza goons who complain they've been reduced to cleaning up after the superstar assassin. The next scene finds them in the hotel room of a rival boss, marveling at the floor-to-ceiling explosion of blood and entrails. It's always like this, they sigh.



Ichi the Killer

With his comic use of gore and violence, fascination with the criminal underworld, and whip-smart dialogue, it would be easy to dub Miike the Japanese Quentin Tarantino. But where Tarantino's characters meticulously follow the Elmore Leonard Handbook of Cool, Miike's protagonists are often desperate failures; far from romantic outlaws, they are outcasts and losers looking for a place to belong. In "Ichi" we expect a hyper-cool Yakuza assassin – an Asian Leon of "The Professional" – but instead we find a pathetic, emotionally stunted victim.

Again like Tarantino, Miike has made a number of what would be called "genre films." "Ichi" is his Yakuza crime movie; "MPD Psycho" his police thriller; "One Missed Call" his by-the-numbers horror movie. But where Tarantino, ever the obsessive video clerk, seems to have slipped into a quagmire of too-eager film in-jokes with "Kill Bill" Vol. 1 and 2, at the expense of his characters and audience, Miike makes genre films that fit no genre. Tarantino's strength, most notable in "Pulp Fiction," is his ability to reconfigure genre tropes to create something relatively new; Miike's complete disregard for genre opens up entirely original spaces.



MPD Psycho

His "horror movie," for example, "One Missed Call," begins as a "Ringu" knock-off and by its (admittedly oblique) conclusion has morphed into a comment on the scars every family inflicts on its members. "Audition" masquerades as a romantic comedy. For the first two-thirds, we get to know a Japanese widower who is finally ready to love again. He begins dating a pretty, demure young woman, both suffering the exhilarating awkwardness of love's first blush. They seem destined for happiness, and we want them to be happy. Only in the movie's last 20 minutes does it become truly horrific. But Miike isn't playing the M. Night Shyamalan card, turning every film into an ego-stroking exhibition of his own "cleverness." His stories often move strangely, unpredictably, but not in a way that's illogical or dishonest.

Nor does Miike belong to the realm of exploitative "shock cinema." "Visitor Q," perhaps his most taboo-breaking film, opens with an incest scene. Shot on a handheld digital video and punctuated with still frames, it's brutally real, but doesn't revel in the apparent depravity of its subject matter; in Miike's morally challenging cinema, the "sick" and "depraved" are merely a starting point in the search for essential humanity.



Audition

"Visitor Q" continues a satirical riff on the reality-tv phenomenon, as the failed reporter who has sex with his own prostitute daughter returns home to an abusive son and drug-addicted wife. Accompanying him is a mysterious visitor, who simply watches the decaying family. It would be easy to turn that scenario into a plodding morality play – think "Requiem for A Dream" – but the director shows a genuine concern for his characters. They prostitute themselves, get bullied at school, continually fail to live up to their dreams, but they remain human. It sounds strange that the most comic necrophilia scene ever filmed is the catalyst for healing this broken family, but that's the kind of surreal logic Miike employs.

For all its blood and horror, lost and depraved souls, Miike's work ultimately reveres the ability of people to grasp their own humanity, in whatever form that takes. In an interview with midnighteye.com, Miike explained, "There are terrifying things in life, too, and they are all made by human beings. Everybody has those things inside themselves. So by filming human beings, it naturally becomes a horror movie." Horrible, but horribly human. 🍷





Uncle Goddamn

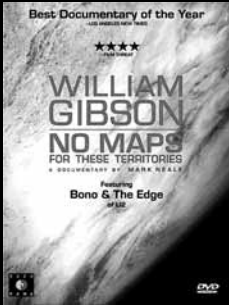
For anyone who finds “Jackass” too cerebral, this is your video. If you don’t have the patience to sit through two minutes of setup before someone gets shot in the chest with a paintball gun, then you’ll love the condensed ultraviolence of “Uncle Goddamn.”

Back in the late 80’s, a group of rednecks from my home state of North Carolina picked up what must’ve been one of the region’s first video cameras (cue Strauss’s *Also Sprach Zarathustra*) and turned it on to themselves. What that primitive device captured challenges our most sacred notions of evolution and human decency.

The star of this cavalcade of mediocrity is Uncle Robert, aka Uncle Goddamn. This charming fellow earned his namesake when he awoke from an alcoholic torpor, found his pants on fire and hollered “Goddamn!” That’s Uncle Robert’s natural reaction to any misery which befalls him.

And befall him they do! The cinematic sadists take special glee in torturing Uncle Goddamn, who spends most of his daily beer haze on the couch. In a sequence called “Tin Man,” they spray paint his face silver before wrapping his head in packing tape. The eternally blitzed Uncle Goddamn occasionally rouses himself to lament, “There ain’t no goddamn sense in this.” So true, Uncle G, but that’s why we can’t look away.

You might think watching rednecks torture out of sheer boredom would get tedious. You’d be wrong! But even if you are right, “Uncle Goddamn” is only 43 minutes long – slightly longer than your average episode of “Jackass.” So go ahead, challenge yourself.



No Maps For These Territories

The concept behind “No Maps for These Territories” is simple: pick up visionary sci-fi writer William Gibson in a limo in LA, drive him to his home in Vancouver, and film him talking the entire way. British director Mark Neale captured over 50 hours of Gibson’s thoughts on media, technology, and the feeling of hopeful anxiety that pervades a society that has been, in Gibson’s words, “growing a prosthetic, extended nervous system for the last 100 years or so.”

According to Gibson that nervous system is changing us into “that which perceives a mediated reality.” He recalls his own experience with television: his father brought home a black box that showed only static. Then there was a test pattern, and the neighbors marveled. “And then came television!” – the *fiat lux* of the of the information age.

Gibson’s a fascinating personality, despite a Virginia drawl and a genial manner that undermines his insight. Neale lets him talk at length, occasionally overlaying scenes of the urban mediascape or an interview with fellow sci-fi writer Bruce Sterling. (U2’s Bono and The Edge make weirdly incongruous appearances; apparently Bono is a big *Neuromancer* fan.)

Gibson’s ideas, though, are the real star. The man did, after all, invent the concept of *cyberspace*, and has spent the last decades searching our increasingly bizarre present for clues about our future, and who we will be when we get there.

Gray Matter

In 2002, the Austrian government announced it would be burying the preserved brains of over 700 handicapped children. The brains, kept in jars lining the basement shelves of a Vienna hospital, had been harvested during the Nazi occupation of Austria, in a “euthanasia” program designed to rid the country of genetic undesirables. Since then, the collection – the largest in the world – had provided researchers with invaluable information about mentally handicapped brains.

When he heard about Austria’s plan, documentary filmmaker Joe Berlinger (of “Metallica: Some Kind of Monster” fame) asked the questions any of us would: Why had it taken so long for Austria to prepare a proper resting place for the brains? Why had the medical community allowed research to continue on Nazi-obtained body parts? Finally, what had become of Dr. Heinrich Gross, the Austrian doctor who’d overseen the organ harvesting? Why had he never been held accountable even after publishing research on the brains well into the 90s?

Berlinger went to Austria to view the burial ceremony, gaining special access to “the brain room.” It’s a shocking sight to see row upon row of jarred human brains, then hear that the man responsible is still well-respected in the medical community. Gross served a few months in prison following World War II; in 2000, at 84, he was declared to too frail to face trial for his alleged crimes. Berlinger’s investigation through Austria’s medical, judicial, and political communities uncovers a country afraid to confront its darkest past, and one sad old Nazi still profiting from that fear.



Blade Runner

Harrison Ford needs to make more movies like this, and less like “Six Days, Seven Nights” and “Sabrina.” One of the greatest science fiction movies ever made, “Blade Runner” accomplishes something nearly impossible in the genre. It so thoroughly explores it’s highly original concept that there are really no other movies quite like it.

The plot is simple, but allows for a great deal of depth. Harrison Ford is a cop who must track down sophisticated androids who’ve become aware of their superiority to humans. Oh, did I mention it’s directed by Ridley friggin’ Scott. Yeah. The world he creates is simply amazing. As you watch the movie you get a sense that the future will probably be pretty close to what Scott has created – a neon-crusted gem that’s like Tokyo on steroids. The cityscapes alone make this film worth watching.

Fortunately, the film provides some substance to go along with all its style. You begin to wonder what it is that defines life as Ford starts blowing away robots that are, in some cases, really, really hot. What’s more, he actually begins to have an affair with one of the latest models, played by Sean Young. Of course, there’s more to life than sex. Like violence, for instance. And this movie certainly has plenty of it.

And it’s not that crazy, flashy stylized violence. Ford shows shades of Indiana Jones here as he frequently gets his ass kicked by the stronger, faster robots in the same way he would later get his ass kicked by Nazis. It’s his determination, not his strength or finesse, which wins out in the end. He’s tough, but not invincible. It is only at the end that you realize that it is pain, above anything else, that separates the boys from the droids.

“Blade Runner” delivers on all levels. There’s romance, violence and intrigue. The movie drags at some points, and at times Scott goes overboard with making things look shadowy. What qualifies this film as one of the sci-fi classics is that it improves after the first viewing. “Blade Runner” is a movie that must be viewed three or four times to grasp the subtleties and complexities stratified throughout it’s seemingly point-A to point-B plot structure.



Total Recall

Without a doubt this film delivers Gov. Schwarzenegger’s finest action performance. It was during that graceful period where he had learned how to act on camera but was still juiced out of mind. He was a hulking, ass-kicking catch phrase beast in this movie, although the strength of the film lies not with the Governator, but with it’s realistic portrayal of life in the future.

It’s a science fiction wunderkind capable of causing thoughts and reactions. The plot twists are legitimately unexpected as we descend farther and farther into the secret world of Douglas Quaid (or is it Howser), a man who tries to have false memories installed through a company known as “Recall.” The catch is that the memories are supposed to be of a secret agent’s daring adventure on Mars, which has long since been colonized. Quaid suffers a schizoid embolism (a great fake disease for getting out of work) and realizes that he really is a secret agent before the people at Recall wipe his memory and dump him in a cab.

Confusing? Yes, but only slightly. Immediately after escaping from Recall everyone Quaid knows tries to kill him, including uber-babe Sharon Stone. The action in this movie is some of the finest American films have ever offered. There are limbs snapping and heads bursting and a midget stabs a man in the crotch.

Quaid eventually makes his way to Mars and meets up with a lost love involved in a resistance movement against the sinister Vilos Cohagen, the ruthless rich guy who owns Mars and charges people for air. The movie gains strength at this point as director Paul Verhoeven (Starship Troopers, Basic Instinct) delicately explores the notions of reality. Is Quaid actually experiencing these things, or are they just a memory gone awry? How real is reality anyway, given that our experiences are based on memories that are flawed? A woman with three tits can’t possibly exist, or can she?

This is a movie that a lot of people could legitimately enjoy, but are quick to dismiss it since it appears to be nothing more than late-80s action trash. While it does borrow heavily from the genre, “Total Recall” uses an injection of honest-to-goodnes science fiction imagination to take the film beyond testosterone heavy gun fights and catch phrases. Yet, it is the underestimation of this movie by the general public that help make it a masterpiece.



PHOTO: ALLISON DIESEL

AFTER A SUCCESSFULLY RUN OF “You’re Drunk, Again” and “Where My Money At, Bitch,” the My Neighbors Repertory Theater completed their trilogy, “Our Gradual Decline Into Mutual Disdain and Self-Loathing,” with last night’s staging of “It’s Over (Get Your Stuff Out My Apartment).” It was a mesmerizing performance, and one this reviewer suspects will be their last.

Some critics found the two previous installments emotionally dry, as though the actors were simply going through the motions. This repetition was exactly the point, of course, and I can’t help but feel some people missed it. My upstairs neighbor and unrepentant philistine, Jim, for example, begged, “Would you two please shut up? Some of us have to work tomorrow!” Jim and I obviously differ on this point – where I found “You’re Drunk, Again” to be a provocative jaunt that successfully melded Brechtian satire with a genuine, almost Tennessee Williams-like sensitivity, my colleague heard only the constant screaming and shattering of glass. Alas, Jim, our aesthetic sensibilities may never find common ground.

Where “You’re Drunk, Again” showed the heavy influence of Brecht and Beckett, “Where My Money At, Bitch,” seemed more in the Dadaist mold. Again, repetition served to heighten the emotional tension – as an unfamiliar male voice repeated “Where my money at, bitch?” with a combination of menace and resignation, the audience was left adrift, wondering: Who is this man? Where is his money “at”? Who is this “bitch”? Headly questions to contemplate at 3 a.m. on a Tuesday.

“It’s Over” brings all these threads together. A near-epic, it lasted a grueling three hours, from 8 to 11 PM on Sunday night. Given the intensity of the first two installments, it felt clam, almost resigned. A recurring motif, uttered by the anonymous female half of our doomed lovers, is, “Whatever, whatever...whatever!” In that simple repetition we can hear the passion, the loss, and finally, the resignation that marks the trilogy’s end. Kudos go to the male lead for not stepping on that line, even after the thirtieth time.

Some breakups are like an atom bomb: one minute everything seems fine, the next your clothes and comic book collection are out on the grass, flaming. Others are more like a coal mine fire, smoldering underground for months before one gust of air provides the fuel to start an inferno. “It’s Over” is the latter type; its heat is just below the surface, always threatening to

ignite.

After three hours, the two combatants are exhausted, two weary boxers leaning on each other as their arguments become more and more nonsensical. Toilet seat operation, inappropriate restaurant glances, the constant presence of a hectoring mother – all the trivia gets dragged out in a last-ditch attempt by both parties to score points.

The play ends with our male protagonist wondering aloud, “How did this happen?”

The woman responds, “What the [police siren] did you expect, melonfarmer?”

When he responds in a low, surprised voice, “I don’t know,” of course he means, “I expected us not to end up like this, two shadows unable to communicate with one another, held together only by our fear of both the unhappy past and the unknown future.” I admit I cried.

Bravo, neighbors. Bravo. ☺



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After downing a bottle of Robitussin DM, I discovered a not-so-stunning revelation for the future: It is only a matter of time before smoking becomes illegal in Pittsburgh bars.

Ha ha ha.

Not a bad idea, I guess. Smoking's bad for you, leedle boys and girrrls. And you've probably been aching to have local government jump down your throat while you're sipping a Yuengling at Thirsty's to make sure you don't enjoy a square... Right?

No? Well, regardless, with all the health problems and cancer associated with smoking, doesn't it make sense to quit? Well of course it does. But those aren't the only issues at play here, are they. If they were, after all, do you think Phillip-Morris would be a multi-billion dollar corporation?

If you really *are* dedicated to quitting smoking then the first step is determining how you want to approach it. Do you want to go "cold turkey" or just slowly cut back? If you plan on quitting all at once, and you smoke more than ten cigarettes a day, you are going to need to use a nicotine replacement. As I'm sure most of you are aware, there are a number of over-the-counter products available to slowly wean you off nicotine. As a general rule, if you smoke 10 to 20 cigarettes in a day, a good starting point is either the 2mg gum or the 14mg patch. If you smoke more than 20 in a day, go with the 4mg gum or 21mg patch. In both cases, you can use the products individually or in combination.

When using the gum, chew a piece slowly until you release the nicotine, then sit back and savor the flavor. In the case of the patch, it can be worn for 16 to 24 hours a day, and should be replaced the following day with a fresh patch. If you wear it while you sleep, expect some lucid dreams and general weirdness.

nice – and apparently bupropion helps to alleviate the symptoms of abrupt nicotine cessation by doing the same.

In addition to medication therapy, counseling can work wonders in helping one quit. One should avoid situations that make you want to smoke, such as bars and keg parties. While you'll look totally gay, it's best not to tempt yourself in the early stages of quitting. Finally, there are many different counseling sessions in the Pittsburgh area that can help.

These include the following:
For Pitt students: 412-383-1830
UPMC: 1-800-533-8762
Tobacco Free Allegheny: 412-578-7910



No. But whatever.

We're getting away from ourselves.

You should quit smoking.

Even though it's going to be difficult keeping comfortable in the bar... And even though you'll need one whenever you're stressed out... And even though you'll need one while you're driving in the sunlight with your arm hanging out the window...

Not to mention post-coitus...

I didn't say it was going to be easy. It, in fact, won't be easy at all. It's gonna suck. But the benefits you will experience from no longer smoking are huge. First off, you'll be able to walk up a flight of stairs without wheezing like an old bastard. Quitting now – [eh-hem] – greatly reduces your chances of getting lung cancer, emphysema, or chronic bronchitis – three fates worse than death. You're going to lower your blood pressure by quitting, which inherently reduces your risk of heart attack, stroke, and all sort of bad news like that. In addition, after just two weeks of not smoking you greatly reduce your risk of developing heart disease. And though you may think those little handheld voice box things that make you talk like a robot are totally sweet, that shit will definitely grow old after a while.

And whatever you do,
DO NOT SMOKE WHILE WEARING THE PATCH.

Otherwise your heart will explode in a bloody mess in your chest.

But, seriously. If you must have a smoke,
TAKE THE PATCH OFF FIRST.

Besides the gum and patches, there are also nasal sprays and lozenges that can be used. As for prescription medications, the mainstay of therapy is Zyban. Funny thing about Zyban is that the active ingredient is bupropion – the same thing found in the antidepressant Wellbutrin. Basically it works to help quell nicotine cravings by aiding in the transmission of dopamine in the brain. Dopamine is responsible for a feeling of well-being in individuals – i.e. it will fuck you up and make you feel

A few side notes when it comes to smoking: It really doesn't make much difference in the long run if you smoke light cigarettes or regular ones, and the same goes for menthol vs. non-menthol cigarettes. On a long enough time scale any type of cigarette is going to kill you. Lastly, anti-smoking commercials are completely worthless. One has to want to quit smoking to do it successfully, and if one is curious about starting in the first place, they are going to do it regardless.

Also: If you are reading this seriously in a futile first attempt to quit, you are probably going to fail. Sorry diligent smoker, but that's just the way the ball rolls. ☹

FOR BAAAAD BOYS ONLY.



Anatomically correct inflatable sheep (also available in Black)

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www.Bpartyshop.com

Tales of the Apocalypse and surviving the aftermath have been told and re-told throughout history. Though Hollywood has inadequately prepared us for avoiding the morally inevitable by cashing in on the triumph of vice, it has also inadvertently given us a veritable how-to guide for surviving in the all-too clichéd post-apocalyptic wasteland. It's important that some people survive, so that when the audience leaves they feel smarter than the rest of the world. The goal here is that you want them thinking "I'd totally survive an apocalypse, no big deal." I too think this, but then again, I am probably a lot smarter than you. Why, I bet you'd actually try and trust the surviving government to save you. HA! Haven't you ever seen "Demolition Man"? Don't you know that those people start wiping their asses with seashells and having virtual sex with Sandra Bullock? But, since I'm a swell guy, I've decided to share with you the fruits of my research. After all, you're reading Deek Magazine. The apocalypse needs more people like you.

First and foremost, guns are a necessity. Nevermind that man's inhumanity to man is what leads to the nuclear apocalypse in novels like *War Day* or movies like "A Boy and His Dog," it is just plain Commie-red to suggest that guns are dangerous, let alone unnecessary in a world ravaged by war. After all, if 80% of the population is nuked like a frozen burrito just imagine how many spare guns and bullets that leaves the rest of us. It's enough to give Bob Dole an unassisted erection.

You'll need the guns too, because if you pussy-out and become some hippie-dippie agrarian socialist striving for harmony in a chaotic world of violence and mayhem you'll eventually be raped/tortured/enslaved by the roving gangs of racially diverse motorcycle outlaws. As the great Walter Sobchak once said, "Pacifism is not something to hide behind." Liberal guilt gets you killed in the future.

Let's not forget what could happen in the event of a zombie invasion. Ever seen "28 Days Later"? Yeah, there're no guns in England; that's why all that shit went down. If that movie was set in America it'd be called "28 Badass Minutes." Bullets can kill everything, including change. They just need to be aimed at the right people. (See: Yoko Ono)

Being strapped like a 16th-century epileptic isn't enough, of course, because it's tough to burn a ride on scorched, radioactive earth. You'll need some form of transportation, and all the horses get eaten. Late-model sedans and pick-up trucks are popular. However, you won't turn heads unless you weld aggressive looking pieces of jagged metal to it. And don't forget the rack of halogen lights on your hood or roof; the frail ozone layer doesn't permit you to ignore atmosphere. Just because our greed and narcissism led to our Gomorrah-esque destruction doesn't mean we should abandon individualism. Why, that's as crazy as saying that guns are dangerous and responsible for violence. Individualist or not, you're going to need company.

Fitting in is still tough to do, so get a jump on the post-apocalyptic fashion curve and invest in some durable leather bondage gear or tattered rags a la "Waiting for Godot." If you're already a shiftless hobo or Lucy Liu you're good to go. Stock up on aluminum foil suits, too. Just in case the future gets a little techie.

Fortunately for the men-folk all surviving women appear to be prostitutes or mutants or both ... see "Total Recall." (I know it isn't post-apocalyptic but there is something miraculous about a woman with three boobs.) You'll likely meet one that will lead you to the charismatic head of an underground organization determined to overthrow the handful of technocrats who run all government and civilized areas. They also run the mines/factories/sewers that enslave the downtrodden people he represents. Or she'll give you some kind of super-clap. Remember, mutant sex is sweeter if you wrap your peter.

I know some of you are saying "But Mo, isn't there a strong possibility the world will solve all its problems and we'll live in harmony?" Oh yes, definitely. Take a look around

you now; I think it's obvious to everyone that social progress is being made on a global level. It's all perspective. Some see a genocide in Darfur, I see the potential for solving America's obesity epidemic. Nothing like being gang-raped and mutilated by Islamic zealots to make you go "Zounds! The mixture of blood, semen and tears creeping down my throat sure does suppress my junk-food cravings."

Whatever you choose to do, be it lead a proletariat revolt or wear the assless chaps for a biker gang, remember that nothing will change. No matter what you accomplish you'll be left with a looming sense as the end credits roll during a sunset that everything will get fucked up again.

Unless (SURPRISE!) the apocalypse actually turns out to be biblical. Then you better bet on black. You'll end up better than the saps who read the Book of Revelations instead of renting "Escape from N.Y." Who do you want slinging lead next to you in a wasteland gunfight, Snake "Cycloptic Badass" Pliskin or Jesus "Pussy Sandals" Christ? ☺

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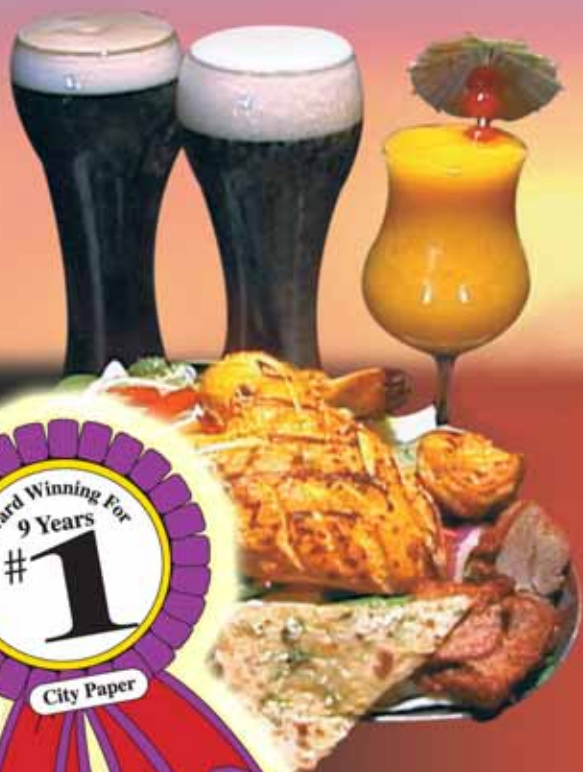
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11pm-1am

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- Sunday Dinner Buffet

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(412) 682-3000

Monroeville - 3813 Wm. Penn Hwy.
B.Y.O.B. (no late nights)

(412) 372-0400



1/2 OFF
Drinks
5pm-7pm