

DEVENDRA **BANHART** × BRIAN **LICHTENBERG** × DAVID GORDON **GREEN**

mean magazine VOL.2 ISSUE 15

# mean

NEW WAVE, NEXT WAVE

## KATE BECKINSALE

**DANCES**

IN ANNA KARINA'S  
SHOES

×

## DEMETRI MARTIN

**IMAGINES**

IMPORTANT  
THINGS

×

## SAM ROCKWELL

**STUDIED**

FROM EVERY  
ANGLE

×

THROUGH THE LENS WITH

**CLOVERFIELD**

**BREAKOUT**

LIZZY CAPLAN

WAVES OF FUTURE PAST:

## ELO & GOBLIN

×

ESCAPE FROM/TO  
ESCAPISM:  
TRIP OUT WITH

**LAUGH-IN'S**

GEORGE  
SCHLATTER

MIKE  
WATT

**SILVER  
JEWS**

VASHTI  
BUNYAN

THE **NEW**  
**PORNOG-**  
**RAPHER'S**  
DAN **BEJAR**

& NEW ART  
FROM BENJY  
**RUSSELL**







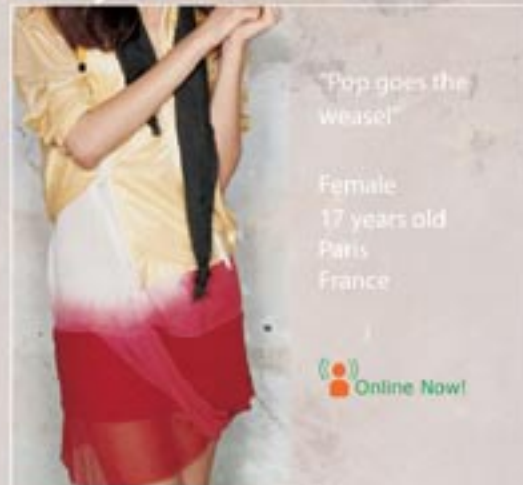
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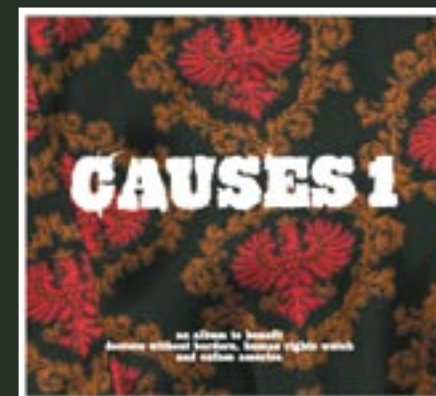


WAXPLOITATION

PRESENTS

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**bright eyes** - *coat check dream song (exclusive live version)*

**cornelius** - *wataridori 2 (exclusive version)*

**david sylvian** - *late night shopping (exclusive chris vrenna remix)*

**death cab for cutie** - *world shut your mouth (rare julian cope cover)*

**the (international) noise conspiracy** - *washington bullets*

**the cure** - *the walk (exclusive live version)*

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“HOFFMAN and HAWKE give SEISMIC PERFORMANCES.”

—Entertainment



(Out of 4 Stars)

—Leah Rozen, *People*



(Out of 4 Stars)

—Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times*



(Out of 4 Stars)

—Lou Lumenick, *New York Post*



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(Out of 5 Stars)

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of *Mean* is like a party. We've got Kate Beckinsale dancing around in her PJs and giggling at gross-outs, and Sam Rockwell in the bathroom writing jokes on the mirrors, and Lizzy Caplan's taking Polaroids of everyone, and Demetri Martin's staring into the fridge to see all the things in there, and Xiu Xiu's hanging around in the back with Jeff Lynne and Goblin, making fun of the music we're playing, and Brian Lichtenberg's cutting the sleeves off our clothes, and Moby's telling us about neuroscience, and George Schlatter, the producer of revolutionary '60s sketch show *Laugh-In*, is our foxy grandpa giving us all gorilla hugs. It's a weird mix of people, perhaps, but they are all so interesting and bring so much joy in their own ways that it would have sucked to be cliquy and keep some of them out.

I would be the person answering the door and putting out more snacks. My name is Mya Stark, and I'll be your editor this evening. About me: I was born and raised in Los Angeles. I've been writing for *Mean* for a long time, beginning when it was still a little zine, and growing up with it to its current state of sleek, urbane adulthood. I also write and direct films. I like rocks, plants, animals, light, the universe, the sense of smell, science and people, at their core. Also, my last name isn't real: I chose it in honor of Iron Man, Marvel's most existential superhero, during a period of heavy listening to Ghostface Killah's album *Supreme Clientele*. That about sums me up.

So why'd we have this party? Or at least, why'd we have this party metaphor? This issue, in a special section, *Mean* explores escapism—i.e. everything that's fun and fantastical in popular culture—and its role in human life. However, we're not trying to be puritanical and automatically disapprove of escapism just because it's enjoyable. Instead, we're digging a bit deeper to find out why humans are so drawn to "tripping out," particularly during such difficult periods of history as the Depression, the Cold War—and right now. Is it despair, or the inability to make a meaningful connection to reality? If we find our reality without meaning, rather than escape, should we protest, or what else can we do?

For the climax of this issue-long arc, we commissioned a photo story from artist Benjy Russell, based on his explorations taking pictures of pure light as a physical, concrete object. We also orchestrated the writing of a collaborative poem inspired by David Bowie's "Sound and Vision" and featuring the wisdom of lyrical minds ranging from the Silver Jews' David Berman to the Minutemen's Mike Watt—and in this way we began to wonder whether beyond escapism there might lie a possibility for a different kind of reunion with reality, a reunion so ecstatic that it could still the pain of fear and ego and separateness that we seem to be trying to run away from. Have fun everybody, and thank you for coming. We'll hang on to your keys.

Mya Stark  
Editor in Chief

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what moves you



# LOOK

CLOSER

## THE BEAUTIFUL, “DISGUSTING” ART OF JUNG HONG

BY VALERIE PALMER

“If you stand on our roof, there’s a river that runs behind us and you can see all the mills along the river have been bought up by developers,” Jung Hong explains. While Providence, RI has long been a haven for artists due to the abundance of cheap, raw space, the times are changing. Artist collectives like Hilarious Attic or Looney Bin are now endangered or extinct in this new climate of luxury living. Something not unique to Providence unfortunately. To add insult to injury, many of these renovated spaces are being marketed as *artist lofts*. “There’s this weird idealized view of what or who an artist is,” says Hong, a part of the Hilarious Attic crew. “They don’t even understand what it means. Aside from not being able to afford it, no artist could go into one of these spaces and actually work in it. It’s too clean and everything is fabricated for you. That’s not really what we’re looking for.”

Jung Hong has been an integral part of the Providence art community since she graduated from Rhode Island School of Design in 1999. Over the years, she’s shown her work at galleries such as New Image Art in Los Angeles and Cinders in Brooklyn, and last year her work was featured in RISD’s ambitious retrospective *Wunderground: Providence, 1995 to the Present*. Her work covers a wide variety of media like silk screen prints, collage pieces and sculpture. In fact, she’s created a series of sculptures over the years with one of today’s most loathed pieces of garbage: the plastic shopping bag.

Don’t get the wrong idea, Hong isn’t standing on a recycled soap-box or hugging papier mâché trees. In fact, when she first began working with plastic bags back in 1999, the last thing on her mind was a grand environmental statement. Like any resourceful, creative person, she simply noticed an abundance of free material. “Plastic bags are always around in everyone’s life, in your home or wherever you go,” she explains. This abundance made a distinct impression on her when she first moved to the States with her family in 1986. In Korea and other parts of the world, plastic bags are not handed out for free. In a sense, this simple item embodies the carefree, disposable consumerism that is so uniquely American.

And the symptoms of this abundance are everywhere—caught in chain-link fences and snagged in tree branches. “They’re disgusting, but a plastic bag is also really beautiful,” Hong says. “As a material and what it does to the ocean and the animals and the fish, it’s horrible, but as an object that can hold water or air and float...they’re like jellyfish when they’re blowing in the wind.”

Early on, Hong turned her graceful vision into reality by stitching pieces of plastic bags together by hand, like a 21st century American quilt. In 2002, she stepped things up a notch by silk-screening colorful prints on the plastic bags before she cut them up to adorn sculptures like *Sugar Man’s Pajamas*. By layering the bags like flower petals over a steel frame, Hong produces something resembling a hoop skirt covered in tiny ruffles. Each layer builds upon the other, and the entire piece is suspended by a cable from the ceiling, allowing viewers to enter the interior. Her *Supermarket Spirit Ship* is a billowy vessel that contains a little world of lights, plants and porcelain figures in its interior, rewarding those who dare to peek up its skirt. Another piece, *Best Dressed Chicken*, contains a basket full of chocolate Barbie-doll heads as a prize for those who venture inside its bell-shaped curves.

Each of these delicate, ethereal sculptures seems to float straight out of a fairy tale, and while such a transcendent result might surprise some, it all makes perfect sense to Hong. “I think if you take anything in the world that is disgusting and you collect lots of it and you put your energy into it and make it into something, it can turn into a beautiful thing,” she explains. “Because how can it not when you’ve worked with something and touched it for so long?”



# MEANOPTIC



# MEANOPTIC



## THE MAN FROM GALACTIC HAT

DEVENDRA BANHART REVEALS THE SECRETS HE DOESN’T KNOW

BY REUBEN PERELMAN

It is befitting that Devendra Banhart skyrocketed to fame releasing albums on a record label called Young God Records. Perhaps Banhart did not skyrocket to fame so much as hijack an old crop-duster to a certain selective notoriety, but the fact remains that Banhart has more than a little of the mystic in him—the young and wild and bracing kind, not the old-Santana-burned-out-on-LSD kind. He is 26 years old and about as high in the indie-rock firmament as one can get without selling a song to TV or buying into convention. His albums smear folk music across nightmare lullabies, with a healthy dollop of psychedelia used to glue on pop melodies, or maybe just as a huffing agent. Banhart recently ended a short tour for his most recent opus, *Smokey Rolls Down Thunder Canyon*, with a concert at MOMA in San Francisco. Inside the galleries, while the band played their music—all reverberant thunder and whimsical warbling—thin, delicate paintings by Devendra vibrated quietly to themselves on the wall, alongside works by Paul Klee, in an exhibit called “Abstract Rhythms.”

As I started researching this piece, I became rather nervous reading past interviews, filled as they were with non sequiturs lobbed casually into the conversation—little friendly numinous grenades scattering the wits of rattled *Pitchfork* writers like so much dandelion fluff in the wind. It turns out I needn’t have worried.

Devendra is a bright guy, and it quickly became obvious that he was pretty knowledgeable about the art world. His is not the pedantic knowledge of an art school grad student or an obsessive *Art in America* reader (case in point—he referred to Diego Rivera as “Frida Kahlo’s fat husband guy”). Rather, Devendra exhibits the kind of fast-talking infectious enthusiasm of a man who knows a lot of artists personally, who enjoys going to galleries; a man genuinely thrilled with the simple freedom of the empty page.

Banhart falls in the long, fine tradition of rock musicians who at some point attended art school, whether they finished or not. The list is long and, at the top, quite impressive: David Byrne of The Talking Heads, all the members of Wire (with the exception of Robert Gotohed) and Bryan Ferry of Roxy Music, to name but a few. Banhart spent two years attending the San Francisco Art Institute, which, save for a lone class with the writer Bill Berkson, he labeled “a disappointment.”

“When I went home to my shitty little hotel apartment, I didn’t have access to 16-millimeter Bolex cameras and printmaking tools, sculptural tools, easels—that kind of stuff,” Banhart muses. “I wanted to get the fuck out of my parents’ house, and they gave me

a full scholarship.” This may all sound rather mercenary, but show me an artist deeply fulfilled by the institutional bureaucracy of art school and I will show you a tired hack. Survey Banhart’s output, and it is clear that his dissatisfaction with art school did little to dim his inner romantic, or his productivity.

“I wanted to be a painter. At the same time, I was writing songs and poems. And, basically, I just felt like the things I could sing, I would draw and the things I couldn’t draw, I would sing, and sometimes they were both the same thing.” At the risk of sounding contrived, Banhart’s art is indeed very lyrical. For those readers familiar with his music, the kinship should be apparent (indeed, some of the work in the MOMA exhibit was used as the album art for *Smokey*). The aesthetics of the paintings are rather naïve, yet their deft execution belies oversimplification. It is easy for watercolors to suggestively hint at soft and pleasing landscapes, fog and clouds and nebulous beauty abounding. Banhart resists these impulses in favor of something more controlled and more ambiguous. I find the painting of the “galactic hat” redolent of *The Little Prince*, infused with both childlike wonder and an ancient and quiet sadness. As Banhart says about the painting: “It just gives me the blues, that sort of loneliness of space.”

Look at the sidebar and it is clear that Banhart draws a great deal of inspiration from artists near and far, alive and dead. He calls his musical collaborators “The Family,” and it seems that he feels a similar sense of kinship and community with his fellow visual artists (indeed, there is more than one musician/artist crossover on the adjacent list). One month out of the year (“sometime in the winter,” qualifies Devendra) he participates in Mail Art Month. “I’ve got maybe like 50 addresses of people all over the world,” he says. “It’s either a full package or just a postcard of pieces, and it’s either a collaboration or I send a piece, they send a piece. I feel like it’s the most physical aspect of my collaboration and exchange with the people in my life who also make art.”

There is something very apt about the image of strange, unearthly watercolor paintings sitting in a burlap mail sack, or a piece of sculptural detritus plastered with stamps making its way through the U.S. postal system, waiting to be delivered to close friends in distant places. “I sometimes feel like my work is like letting someone in on a secret that I don’t even know,” says Banhart. And for a moment, over the crackle of cellular static, I feel like we both grasp something important, something powerful and secret and unknowable, and yet we both know it. We just don’t know what it is.

A few times I tried to gently wrap up the interview, mindful of the long transcription job that awaited our overworked *Mean* intern, but Devendra would come out with another influence, or three: “Oh please, please,” he said, “There’s a chance that somebody who doesn’t know one of those people might get hip to them so that’s really the purpose! I beg you. The most important thing about this interview is that we can mention as many of these people as possible.”

Well, we try not to disappoint here at *Mean*, so here, in no particular order, is a jumble of the friends and influences, often overlapping, that came up during our conversation: Paul Fey, Adolph Wölfl, Rudolf Steiner, Joseph Beuys, Chris Burden, Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse, Raymond Pettibon, Cy Twombly, William Blake, Bill Traylor, Henry Darger, Margaret Kilgallen, Alicia McCarthy, Chris Johanson, Joe Jackson, Daniel Higgs (“one of two people in the world [from whom] I’ve actually purchased artwork”), Barry McGee, XYLOR Jane, Keegan McHargue, Sarah Kane, Kiki Smith, Paul McCarthy, Jeff Koons, Genesis P-Orridge, Hermann Nitsch, Yoko Ono, Andy Goldsworthy, Lita Albuquerque, Frida Kahlo, Frida Kahlo’s “fat husband guy,” Rufino Tamayo (“he beats them all”), Agnes Martin, Matthea Baim (“she’s at the top of this list—I have many of her pieces”).



# MEANCHIC

## EVERY GARMENT TELLS A STORY

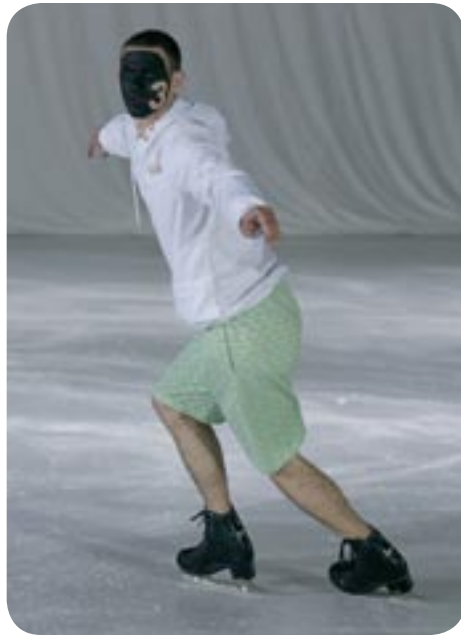
THE CINEMATIC UNIVERSE OF PETER JENSEN BY GRAHAM KOLBEINS



**Peter Jensen** is quietly conquering the world of fashion. He has a unique ability to seduce even the most stoic critics with his idiosyncratic designs, which have been inspired by sources as diverse and unconventional as Sissy Spacek, Mink Stole and the 16th century Princess Christina of Denmark. Standing out from the crowd is a skill that Jensen developed early on, growing up in a Danish fishing town of fewer than 10,000 people. “It was a very natural thing for me,” says the designer. “I liked dying my hair, you know, orange, red. I *liked* looking a bit strangely.” It’s no surprise, then, that you won’t find safe, trendy looks on the runway at Jensen’s shows. His style develops in surprising new directions every season, with audacious, imaginative concepts that never fail to delight.

After fleeing to Hollywood as a teenager, Jensen relocated to the UK, where he debuted his first women’s wear line only two years after graduating from design school. The collection took inspiration from the life of fallen child star Mary Miles Minter—the Dakota Fanning of the silent film era. Minter was at the height of her success when her director (and secret lover), William Desmond Taylor, was shot and killed in his Hollywood bungalow. Minter’s mother quickly emerged as the prime suspect in the case, elevating the story from mere murder mystery to a tabloid scandal of epic proportions. Disgraced, Minter quickly abandoned her Hollywood career and lived out the rest of her days in lovesick solitude. “It was a fascination with how this whole system—machinery—builds you up, but there are certain rules that you certainly can’t break,” explains Jensen. “And one of the rules that she broke, unfortunately, was that she was growing up.”

Jensen’s collections are rife with this type of narrative influence. “Every season has its own little story and character to it. It’s sort of a little imagination—a film I make in my head, I suppose.” Gertrude Stein, Cindy Sherman and Ingmar Bergman’s character “Fanny” have all been given the Peter Jensen treatment, with collections devoted to their various virtues. “They’re not obvious fashion icons, are they?” Jensen posits. No, these unassuming muses are overlooked heroes, each with her special brand of quiet femininity. They’re subjects of media scrutiny, victims of systematic repression and survivors of untold adversity. “I quite see them as strong women, I have to say,” says Jensen. The designer’s admiration for such characters is often coupled with a sly sense of humor. For instance, his Spring 2005 collection was presented by skaters at an ice rink—a dazzling love-note to leg-bashing ice skater Tonya Harding.



Lately, Jensen has taken inspiration from John Waters (and one of Waters’ own offbeat muses, Mink Stole) for a collection that channels the notorious filmmaker’s middle-America pastiche. Using a palette of flat pastels, the first half of Jensen’s Spring 2008 collection looks to the untrained eye as if it could have been pulled from the closet of one of Waters’ bland Baltimore housewives. Closer inspection, however, reveals Jensen’s clever finesse: No matter how ordinary or outrageous the look he puts together, each article of clothing on its own makes a completely wearable, modern and lovingly prepared piece. As the models continue their strut down the runway, the collection’s looks become dark and rebellious—a tribute to John Waters’ malcontent anti-heroes. Jensen’s appreciation for cinematic spectacle is relentless and essential to the work. Echoing the program notes, which outline a character named Taffy (“neglected daughter of übercriminal and beauty icon, Dawn Davenport”), heiress/bank-robber Patricia Hearst’s daughter Lydia comes strutting down the runway at the show’s climax, sporting one of the collec-

tion’s most glamorous looks: a shimmering amethyst blue prom dress with a huge bow emanating from her chest like an ectoplasmic manifestation.

The thrift store-chic Hawaiian shirts and drop-crotch jeans of Jensen’s current collection are hardly his first foray into gauche Americanisms. Last year’s spring collection was based entirely on the work of Tina Barney, seminal photographer of the late ’80s New England prep set. The looks were in some cases almost identical to the conservative formalwear in Barney’s photographs, but with a muted irony that illustrates the designer’s amusement with the often indecipherable nature of America’s restrictive aesthetic codes. “As a European, you probably always have a fascination [with] America,” says Jensen. “You get fed so much about America here, so you’re curious, obviously.”

As deep into the world of vintage tackiness Jensen may delve for inspiration, his clothes always remain startlingly contemporary. There is a very modern sense of sex appeal to the garb that’s easy to miss when you first glance at a look inspired by Christina of Denmark or Sissy Spacek. This isn’t Gucci sexy; it’s coy, indie-rock sexy. Jensen says one of his goals is to dress Jenny Lewis. “It’s a more covered-up version of sex appeal,” says the designer. “I don’t necessarily think that you have to show all this cleavage and this and this and this to be sexy. I think that’s quite unnecessary.”

It’s often noted that Jensen has a keen knack for balancing art and commerce. He’s the rare designer with his head in the clouds and his feet on the ground, with a style neither ordinary nor impractical. His outfits may come to us from the alien context of a spectacular filmic universe, but they cross over into our own pragmatic realities with a seamlessness that’s hard to find in other avant-garde designers. “That’s important for me: people-wear,” says Jensen. “I just like it to be *clothing*. I absolutely hate the fact that some people think that they’re an artist, or what they’re doing is art.” Aspiring more to the accomplishments of Vionnet and Chanel than Viktor & Rolf, Jensen values craftwork over reckless flamboyance. “I’m certainly not going to buy a Balenciaga jacket and put it in a frame when I go home. I want to wear it, and for that matter, like it in that way. And if I make it dirty, well, that’s what I do,” says Jensen. “I think that’s very American, as well.”

You can find Peter Jensen’s clothing at Opening Ceremony in New York and Los Angeles, among other retailers. Check out [peterjensen.co.uk](http://peterjensen.co.uk) for more information.

# MEANCHIC

## A BIT OF ATTITUDE

INFILTRATING THE MAINSTREAM WITH LUELLA BARTLEY BY GRAHAM KOLBEINS



**“Geek-chic”** is a **deceptively** complex figure of speech in the multi-layered fashion world. When the high fashion racket abandons last season’s trends like so much toxic afterbirth, they’re condemned to a life sentence in thrift store limbo—but not without the possibility of parole. Fashion rebels never fail to unearth amusing, and sometimes beautiful, bastard-child styles, callously cast aside from the mainstream in the name of progress. Inevitably, the industry catches on to any sort of widespread “geek” revival, and the undead style is quickly reincorporated into the dominant power structure, re-packaged as retro and wacky, and drained of its formerly uncool appeal. And then the whole process repeats itself in a feedback loop that erodes the meaning of signifiers like “geek” and “chic” faster than a rapidly melting Arctic glacier.

But before we spiral into a bottomless pit of Marxist despair, let’s keep in mind that sometimes a geek revival can be executed with far more sincerity and finesse by a legitimate designer than by the snarky neighborhood hipster who thought of it first. Such is the case for Luella Bartley, whose Spring 2008 collection calls upon the art-nerd stylings of the cult-hit indie film *Ghost World*. When a designer can take inspiration from a flatly ironic style and imbue it with such an appealing sense of glamour and playfulness, you know they’ve got to be doing something right.

Luella’s latest collection is no fluke: Bartley has been in the fashion spotlight since her debut in 1999, when she left a career in fashion journalism at UK *Vogue* to start her own line. Scooping up all kinds of awards and accolades over the past eight years, Bartley has always been on the ball with her sly street fashions. With fans ranging from M.I.A. to Lily Allen, and collections influenced by bands from The Clash to The Raveonettes, the girl Luella seems to invoke in her work is just your everyday Brit rock star, with a clever ensemble for any occasion. Luella has been propelled even further down the path to superstardom with a massively popular line of accessories, and widely lauded collaborations with Mulberry, Target, Sony and many other brands.

We asked the eponymous designer to give us some insight into her background, inspirations and future plans.

**What were some of your earliest fashion inspirations? What was it that sparked your interest in designing?**

I remember my mum floating around in Chinese dressing gowns and bright red crimped hair as a child—very Stevie Nicks. My mum would hate me for that, but I always thought she looked very exotic and ethereal, and I loved it. I also remember pictures of my great-granny looking very proper and aristocratic on horseback, and thinking how beautiful she looked. But it wasn’t really about fashion then. I got into fashion quite late on. I was a really uncool teenager, so maybe I’m trying to make up for lost time.

**Do you miss the world of journalism at all? What did you learn from fashion criticism that has informed your tremendous success on the creative end of the spectrum?**

I miss writing and the discipline of that. You really have to use your brain in quite a singular way. But the thing I love most about designing is the team effort, and bouncing ideas off people I really respect, and the development involved in that. It’s more about character and creating a story than pure journalism, and that’s what I have taken from my time as a writer. Being involved in fashion criticism made me realize that there might be a place for my point of view.

**Your work alludes to a wide array of rock music influences. Who were your favorite musicians growing up? Are there any up-and-coming artists that you think more people should know about?**

My mum again informed my first music influences—all the usual ’70s suspects, like the Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan. I have been very lucky to have some very inspiring music people in my life. Justine Frischmann of Elastica, who I lived with, gave me a great education in music. M.I.A. was living there at the time, too. Now I’m always eager to find new music, and musicians inspire me all the time. I love the last band that played at my show, Sister, who are releasing their first album soon.

**Has anything surprising happened as a result of your exposure to a much broader audience with the Target collection? How has it impacted the way you work on your own personal line?**

Just the amount of attention from America—and the pleasure of working with a company like that—a huge, corporate company that sincerely makes an effort on a philanthropic level. Oh, and suddenly having an advert featuring little old me just before the Golden Globes—bizarre...

**What are you planning for the future of the Luella empire? Do you see handbags and accessories becoming your main focus, or do you want the clothes themselves to become the most important aspect of your work?**

I am very keen for the clothes to become a bigger part, as indeed they are—sales are up, which is great, and we are really getting into our stride with the ready-to-wear. It just seems to get better. The accessories are also important, and the main focus is to keep having fun with all of it and creating new ideas, and hopefully to make a strong business out of it. We have a few more ideas up our sleeve, too—watch this space...

**What’s the most important thing that you’d like your customers to take away from the experience of wearing your clothing?**

A bit of attitude.





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MEANCHIC

## SLIME O' THE TIMES

BRIAN LICHTENBERG: M.I.A., ECTO COOLER AND CLOTHING AS CANVAS

BY AMI KEALOHA + PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADAM COHEN

"I WENT BACK TO PUBLIC SCHOOL AND THEY OFFERED A CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION CLASS. I WAS MAKING THINGS OUT OF FEDERAL EXPRESS ENVELOPES AND FREE MATERIALS, BECAUSE I VIEWED IT MORE AS AN ART FORM."

**Holographic fabrics**, acute angles, daring cut-outs, a rock-star following—they're all signatures of Brian Lichtenberg, 28, part of the rising new generation of L.A. youth currently dazzling the world with their neon-bright hues and headlong optimism. Raised in the Los Angeles suburb of Torrance, Brian also takes cues from architecture, Japanese street style and his own teenage years of thrifting and wearing vintage.

The result of this fusion is a seven-year-old line that boldly experiments with proportion, patterns and shapes—pairing skintight armor-like leggings with slouchy patchworked sweatshirts, adding loops of fabric to the hem of a tanktop, and attaching hoods to nearly everything. With a cult fan base that includes reigning ladies of avant-pop Annie, M.I.A. and Peaches, Brian's well on his way to becoming the Vivienne Westwood of Hollywood, as some have put it, or maybe, more appropriately, as his MySpace URL would have it, "Brianciaga."

**You took a pretty unconventional path to becoming a fashion designer. How did you get started?**

I went to a private school my freshman year. It was the first time in my life that I had to wear a uniform. I just never really thought about your clothes as identifying you as you. And when you go through your teenage years, you rebel and you start thinking more for yourself. I mean, I had to wear khakis and polos. Before, I wasn't a fashionista or anything, but it was such a turning point for me when I began to care more about my appearance.

Then I went back to public school, and they offered a clothing construction class. I was making things out of Federal Express envelopes and free materials, because I viewed it more as an art form, and also I was really influenced by Björk at the time. I admired her and her style. I think it was in an MTV interview that she was wearing a Hussein Chalayan dress, and she said, "It's paper, and I just fold it up and pop it in my suitcase." I loved how clever the idea was.

That's when my mom broke out the old Singer. It didn't work very well, but it's what I had to use at home. I was using a lot of paper. I colored on it with glow-in-the-dark crayons; I did Spirograph embroidery. It was kind of like a canvas to push my ideas further. I also would take tissue paper and do abstract pixelated images. They were very "wear and tear."

It wasn't until years later that I started making clothing out of everyday materials like cotton and wool and rayon and things like that.

**You're known for dressing such stars as M.I.A. How did that come about?**

I've been a fan of her music ever since "Galang." I remember a friend sent me the link and I was like, "Who the fuck is this?" It was the same vibe I felt when I first heard Björk's "Human Behavior." It's those kinds of moments when I'm impressed and obsessed—it's a huge emotional thing.

One day, me and my friends were just walking down Melrose and there were people casting for a video. We looked on his clipboard and it's M.I.A.! A couple days later we're on this bus to spend the night in the desert to shoot "Bucky Done Gun" and get paid for it. It was kind of amazing.

Fast-forward to this past summer. A friend of mine was working for M.I.A.'s management company and suggested I give her some stuff. So I went over to my friend's house the night before she played here and dropped off a couple pairs of the hologram leggings, and a tank top and a necklace.

The next day at the show, my friend comes running up to me—M.I.A. was wearing my stuff onstage, and the dancers were wearing it, too. It was incredible; it was that amazing feeling. She loved it and wanted to make it a staple on her world tour. Ever since then, she's been wearing my stuff.

**It seems like it's a perfect fit. How do you balance this sexy, rock-star thing with the more inventive, avant-garde side?**

I'm not trying to make something sexy. That's not really my mindset. But I do like things that are sheer and drapey and maybe body-conscious. It's not overt. In the last show, when I saw it all together, I was like, "Wow, that was a lot of skin."

**Tell us about your latest collection.**

I like to play around with drawing fonts, and I drew my name with all these drips. I was even thinking about Ecto Cooler, those Hi-C drinks—I just love the name and the idea. It's so hilarious. I was thinking about that, and I started getting into all these slime concepts and it was about the time that we started thinking, "What are we going to do for spring?" So, it was like, let's make this work.

So I looked at "You Can't Do That on Television," *Ghostbusters*, *The Toxic Avenger*... anything that had a drip. It's cool to think that this fleeting moment, or a small drawing, or something from your childhood—which I think is in a lot of my work anyway because that's what we all reference, our past—can be a collection.

**So what's next?**

We're working on producing a resort collection—it's this collabo I did with my really good friends Grey Ant. Then we're making Peaches another outfit for her New Year's show. There have been talks for a while, but I'm supposedly going to be doing a collabo with M.I.A.—Brian Lichtenberg for M.I.A. She's already coming out with her own clothing line, so this is going to be a side project because she really liked the [hologram] leggings. She's worn them a lot. I'm excited because anything that I can do with her is really cool.

MTT





# SNEAKERBOXXX

BY STERLING BARTLETT

Within the ever-growing world of globo-collecti-consumer-culture, footwear fans these days find themselves living on easy street. The sheer number of companies producing sport/lifestyle-based footwear is staggering; there's no shortage of new styles, colorways or limited editions, nor any apparent slowing of new companies jumping into the market. One only has to go as far as eBay to find the footwear of their dreams. Per contra, if you're already in on the joke, and even close to your A-game, then you aren't just going to flip out over a simple "limited edition" tag affixed to the lace loop. You are going after the big game: Shoes that round out an already stunning ensemble, shoes that give a silent shout-out to a cultural meme that few are even aware of, or perhaps even a pair of sneakers that suggest, "My other shoes are bespoke Italian driving loafers that cost more than you make in a month." So with our ears to the streets, and our eyes on the prize, we bring you five new investment opportunities sure to bring big returns in this, our current "bull" sneaker market.

## GOURMET NFN CEASE

Do these silhouettes look familiar? With a tip of the cap to the Jordan legacy, Gourmet brings together a love of some of the most classic, iconic lines ever to grace a hightop, juxtaposed against a stunning choice of materials: namely, the loose-knit dyed canvas utilized for prison footwear. [gourmetinyourface.com](http://gourmetinyourface.com)



## ADIDAS ANDREW POMMIER SERIES

Okay, first of all, everyone likes Mr. Dassler's "Weltmarke mit den 3 Streifen." Second, each of these are functional skate shoes, and what better way to alter a tried-and-true model into a highly skateable machine than to slap a vulcanized sole on it? After all, it's the footwear choice of slash dogs the world over. Finally (and this is the kicker), this series features the artwork of none other than Andrew Pommier, a renowned fine artist/illustrator whose graphics have graced the pages of magazines, the bottoms of skateboards, and now this limited run from adidas. Go Andrew! [adidasskateboarding.com](http://adidasskateboarding.com)



## PF FLYERS X CANVAS ALBIN

Coming at the theme of the sneaker as art from a totally different angle is a new venture between the PF Flyers footwear company and the Canvas Boutique & Gallery in Malibu, CA. The shoe itself, called the Albin, is a lighter, lifestyle-based design that was chosen from PF's new lineup to reflect Canvas's refined customer base. As most footwear co-branding ventures revolve around street art and established sport silhouettes like basketball, or skateboarding models, Canvas turned this notion on its ear to create a slimmer, more well-rounded piece that one could pair with a suit just as easily as with broken-in denims and your favorite tee. [pfflyers.com](http://pfflyers.com)



## REEBOK PUMP & BALL OUT

The original Reebok Pump was released in 1989 as an innovative basketball high-top. Almost 20 years later, they are still the benchmark for ill kicks. Reebok's latest offerings from the "Pump Up, Air Out" department are no exception. This spring has us looking at an epic black-and-gold Omni Lite Pump, as well as a Court Victory Pump, dipped in colors that conjure images of terrycloth sweatbands and sporty male short-shorts. Reebok's RBK division seems to be working overtime as well, and they are proving it with the release of the new Ball Out III (pictured). This is a straight-up simple, functional, lightweight baller, but with a twist: Ballistic nylon uppers and a robin's-egg-blue sole make this one a showstopper.

GOURMET PHOTO COURTESY GOURMET, ALL OTHER PHOTOS BY GARRET CURTIS



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MEAN/BEAT

TOTALLY RADD!!



ADAM VILLAGEN

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Personality								
Technical Skills								
Unconquerable Factor								
Reigns To Chess								

POWER RATINGS

TEENAGE SENSATION OF RUSSIAN CHESS THEORY...  
...DISAPPEARED INTO SOUTH-EAST ASIA AT THE AGE OF 17...  
...REAPPEARED AS A CONCEPTUAL ARTIST IN NEW ZEALAND... ART CAREER ULTIMATELY DERAILED BY THE SPECTACULAR FAILURE OF HIS SKYDIVING MORTUARY PERFORMANCE...

TOTALLY RADD!!



TYLER THACKER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Electronization								
Stomachility								
Equipment Destruction								
Skewball								

POWER RATINGS

THE UTOMAN BANDIT... ...FLIES ON THE WINGS OF THE INVIS-IBLE, INSANE... ...AT THE AGE OF 9 HE STARRER IN THE ILL-FATED PERCUSSION MUSICAL "KID STOMP"...  
...TURNED FROM A LIFE OF ART THEFT TO MUSIC AT THE AGE OF 19... ...BANNED FROM THE NATIONS OF FRANCE, BELGIUM, DENMARK, AUSTRIA AND MADA-GASCAR...

TOTALLY RADD!!



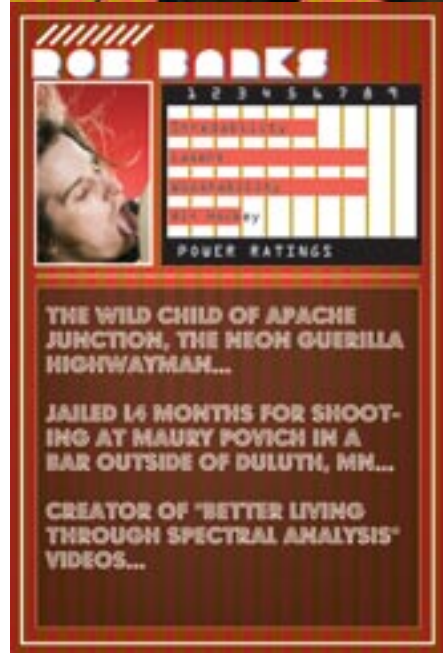
ROB BANKS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Unconquerable								
Reigns To Chess								
Unconquerable								
Reigns To Chess								

POWER RATINGS

THE WILD CHILD OF APACHE JUNCTION, THE NEON GUERRILLA HIGHWAYMAN...  
JAILED 14 MONTHS FOR SHOOT-ING AT MAURY POVICH IN A BAR OUTSIDE OF DULUTH, MN...  
CREATOR OF "BETTER LIVING THROUGH SPECTRAL ANALYSIS" VIDEOS...

TOTALLY RADD!!



ROB BANKS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Unconquerable								
Reigns To Chess								
Unconquerable								
Reigns To Chess								

POWER RATINGS

THE WILD CHILD OF APACHE JUNCTION, THE NEON GUERRILLA HIGHWAYMAN...  
JAILED 14 MONTHS FOR SHOOT-ING AT MAURY POVICH IN A BAR OUTSIDE OF DULUTH, MN...  
CREATOR OF "BETTER LIVING THROUGH SPECTRAL ANALYSIS" VIDEOS...

## YOU ARE TOTALLY RADD!!

IT'S TIME TO MEET THE POP-TASTIC, PROG-  
GNOSTIC, HYPER-BOLIC ART-ROCK PARTY-  
BAND OF YOUR DESTINY

BY REUBEN PERELMAN + PHOTOGRAPHS BY MYLES  
PETTENGILL + ILLUSTRATION BY CASEY BASICHIS

**You are totally radd.** We all are, on occasion: triumphant at the end of a thrilling ping-pong game, or ecstatically scarfing down Cap'n Crunch in front of a nice Saturday morning cartoon, or acing an English exam when the only studying you did was smoking a joint while listening to Depeche Mode in your car. Look—most of real life is pretty bland in comparison to the emerald palaces of our imaginations. Real life is day jobs and traffic and heartbreak and going to the bathroom. For a few brief moments, we'd all like to experience the thrill of imagination as it meets reality in a blinding flash, like potassium hitting water (remember science class?). This is precisely the experience breaking superhero band dynasty Totally Radd!! brings, to whomever dares rise to the challenge and listen.

I remember the first time I myself had this experience. It was a few years ago, at an art opening at the California Institute of the Arts, and a man they called Neil Schuh (at that time TR!!!'s lone member) was playing in a small, packed, red-lit gallery. He shredded maniacally on the keytar along to a backing track, and attempted to drink an entire gallon of milk during the show. I think he made it about 1/3 of the way through before vomiting. It was a compelling performance.

The spectacle and musical grandeur of the band has increased exponentially in the intervening time. Now comprised of guitarist Rob Banks, drummer Tyler Thacker, and laptop jockey/vocoder magician Adam Villagen alongside Neil, their music has become to pop songs what St. Paul's Cathedral is to that little Unitarian church in a strip mall near your house. To fully do justice to the roaring majesty of a Totally Radd!! song would require more superlatives—and hyperbole—than would fit on this page. Here's a stab at a recipe: take two parts pop song, one part prog rock, and combine them in a mixing bowl with a pinch of irony. Next, pour in a bottle of earnesty (it's the one that looks kind of like a whiskey bottle). Whip up some electro-glam until it can retain its shape, then fold into the mixture. Bake in the furnace...of love. **TR!!!**

TOTALLY RADD!!



NEIL SCHUH

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Arpeggio								
Envelope Velocity								
Portamento								
Ham-Pong								

POWER RATINGS

WOLF MAN FROM THE WOODS OF WISCONSIN... ...STUDIED BEETHOVEN WITH THE LAST TRUE VIKING IN MILWAUKEE...  
BEST FRIENDS AS A CHILD WERE FERRIS BUELLER AND THE PUN-ISHER...  
...SPENT THREE YEARS ON THE EXPERIMENTAL NORTHERN SKI PATROL UNIT OF THE NSA...  
...ENJOYS PIGEON HUNTING AND MAKING BARLEY WINE...

TOTALLY RADD!!



NEIL SCHUH

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Arpeggio								
Envelope Velocity								
Portamento								
Ham-Pong								

POWER RATINGS

WOLF MAN FROM THE WOODS OF WISCONSIN... ...STUDIED BEETHOVEN WITH THE LAST TRUE VIKING IN MILWAUKEE...  
BEST FRIENDS AS A CHILD WERE FERRIS BUELLER AND THE PUN-ISHER...  
...SPENT THREE YEARS ON THE EXPERIMENTAL NORTHERN SKI PATROL UNIT OF THE NSA...  
...ENJOYS PIGEON HUNTING AND MAKING BARLEY WINE...

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music playing \_ Bob Dylan  
" don't think Twice "

the light warm breeze by the ocean  
smell of salt water in the air  
rays of sunlight warm my face  
as shades of red and yellow  
reflect off my lightweight  
organic cotton t-shirt

you do know

it is all about the t-shirt  
++ R I C H A R D K I D D ++

+ + R I C H A R D K I D D + +





# PAIN DIVISION

DON'T LISTEN TO ANYTHING XIU XIU HAS TO SAY BY DANIEL REHNBERG

If you haven't heard of Xiu Xiu, I couldn't say you've been living under a rock. Nor should I say you need to turn over more rocks, because they aren't under one either—but maybe you have too many rocks in the way. The abundance of new music out there makes it a daunting task to sift through, and yes, it can get discouraging, with the swell of homogeneous indie-pop, wave after wave of over-hyped Brit bands, and stagnating electronic acts. Same hooks, same structures—same singer? With this sameness echoing through our collective soundscape it's hard to get excited, or feel much of anything at all.

But when you hear Xiu Xiu, you know that lead singer and main creative force Jamie Stewart is feeling it for you, and if you listen long enough, you might start to feel again, too. From the early goings, there were walls of noisy, and at times cacophonous, electronics; percussion, from gongs to gamelan; various strings throughout, from lulling acoustics to pounding autoharps. Jamie's voice is just as varied. He gives us quivering, breathy whispers, throaty controlled yelps/yells, and everything that lies in between. All this is not nearly as unfocused as it sounds, especially when it comes to the lyrics, which are brutally revealing, painfully honest and always deeply personal. As a group, Xiu Xiu has grown with every album, ever exploring, but always Xiu Xiu. Once you've heard one song, you'll know when you hear them again.

Jamie has been the nucleus of the band since its inception in 2000, but eight years later Jamie is acting more like shop

steward, finally happy with the solidified line-up: Ches Smith, Devin Hoff, and Jamie's cousin Caralee McElroy. Three-quarters of Xiu Xiu live in the same apartment building in the depths of Oakland where you would never see a UC Berkeley student wandering around. I dropped in on Jamie and cross-hall neighbor Devin at an exciting time for them, as they were getting ready to release their sixth full-length album (*Women as Lovers*) in six years—not to mention a slew of EPs—while hard at work on a new one.

**Mean:** On this album, there seems to be a progression with new instrumentation and arrangements, and maybe a regression to older Xiu Xiu sounds and influences, with songs like "White Nerd," that underneath has a subdued Joy Division sound.

**Jamie:** [*Laughs.*] That was totally on purpose. It's funny that you pick "White Nerd" specifically, because I was like "All right, we're gonna do the Xiu Xiu—Joy Division song, it's going to be called White Nerd." With everything else, I don't think it's particularly conscious—I don't think we're smart enough for that. It's just this messy, fumbling, hopefully forward-moving attempt to get a song done, and a couple weeks later we listen to it and hopefully we still think it's something we'd want to listen to the next day. I'm not disputing that it could be the case, but there was nothing conscious behind it.

**Devin:** I think having Ches more involved in the writing process and having more organic drums on it harkens to something before our collective past. But then, may-

be not, it kind of leapfrogs, because then you had the whole electronic thing.

**Jamie:** Yeah, that's where I started.

**Devin:** It's brand new for Jamie.

**Jamie:** Having real drums is totally new for us.

**Devin:** We just discovered having drums in a rock band. [*Everyone laughs.*]

**Jamie:** Next, the wheel.

The critical consensus seems to be that *The Air Force* was your best and most accessible album.

**Jamie:** That's funny, because I never felt that way from the few reviews I read. But I'm glad people like it. [*Laughs.*]

It seems to be a theme with bands now, to become more accessible as they evolve.

**Jamie:** That depends on the band. My favorite currently working band is Deerhoof, and their last record is my favorite. And I've been an obsessive fan since *The Man, the King, the Girl*. I think they are definitely getting better, which is remarkable, because they were unbelievably good to start with. There are a lot of bands that have gotten to be super-dumb—this is going to be like a sacrilege for me to say—but New Order sort of blows now, and they changed my life in the past.

I'm thinking bands since the turn of the century. [*Everyone laughs.*]

**Devin:** i.e., "You're old."

**Jamie:** [*Laughing.*] Okay, I don't really care about any fucking bands. This is my biggest gripe with the current crop of hit bands. It's entirely about the records they didn't even listen to but read about, taking the components of what

made up records that 30, 20, or 10 years ago were really cool and really interesting and really original, then heaping a bunch of stupid cocaine-fueled party attitude and laziness on it, and somehow expecting people to suck their collective Day-Glo dicks.

Why do you think that is? Do you think people are maturing later?

**Jamie:** I don't know what the deal is. I don't know why people seem to be uninterested in putting effort into making music and pushing themselves—to just think it's completely cool to ride on the backs of what people did in the past without expanding on it. I can name our influences like *that* [*Snaps.*], and it would be really clear what we're ripping off. I don't know whether we're successful at it, but a big part of the band is [about] attempting to add to what we listened to, rather than dilute it, or turn it into bullshit party music, or this sort of faux neo-shamanistic, ecstatic, ivy-league, upper-middle-class bullshit. It makes me unbelievably mad that that's what those bands seem to be about.

**Devin:** It's just sampling. They may as well be DJs. You can see the exact song they pick it up from, which is really weird.

Like, that's a Smiths song, and that's a Joy Division song, that exact part is from this song.

**Devin:** That's exactly what I've been guilty of at times, even on the new record.

**Jamie:** YEEEAHHH!!!! Devan—incredible quote.

**Devin:** Never mind...I take it all back.

**Jamie:** We're total, full-on hypocrites.

**Devin:** We'll call it "accidental sampling." Shit—that's not me at all. Oh well, it sounds good.

You've fielded so many questions about the theme of your lyrics. Does it get tiring to keep explaining it?

**Jamie:** I think I just don't explain stuff when it gets disagreeable. I've just gotten less and less revealing.

Do you find it cathartic to get it out? Do you have to do it?

**Jamie:** I don't find it particularly cathartic. It clarifies things. There will be things going on that I don't emotionally understand, I think. By turning it into lyrics, it doesn't make me feel better, but I can at least wrap my head around it. Which means it's possible to go on living in some constructive, as opposed to destructive, way. At this point in my life, I definitely have to do it—it's become such a deep part of how I process emotions. [For instance], some things were revealed to me recently that were extraordinarily dark and painful about my mother. My immediate response was, "How am I going to be able to turn this into some music?" Otherwise I would go on the massive drinking binge for like, three months. I didn't know how to get through it without that. It was a relief to me that there was something I could do immediately to walk through with this information that I had been given. I think I had been doing it all along, but this was the first time I realized it was my regularized process for getting through life.

Do you ever want to say "fuck it" and do a dance album?

**Jamie:** Oh, luckily the upside of Xiu Xiu is that we can if we feel like it. [*Laughs.*] But it wouldn't be any fun.

**Devin:** An un-fun dance record, the record that sounds worse with cocaine [*Laughs.*].

Your name is borrowed from a movie [the Chinese film *Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl*]. I find that your music often evokes cinematic images for me. Does film ever inspire your music?

**Jamie:** It has almost as much to do with film dialogue, in a different way from literary dialogue, that is strangely ripped off by the band. With cinema, in a finite amount of time, you have to try to get a point across. In order for it to be interesting, it needs to have some immediate emotional impact, in a relatively confined space and time. I think the way the dialogue is organized in cinema, at least the stuff I'm interested in, that becomes essential. Trying to compose lyrics in that way has really come from trying to get something emotional across without being vague about it, although obviously sometimes it is. My girlfriend just pointed out to me that she wishes the lyrics were more linear sometimes, and I always want them to be. The point of them is to be something you can follow, but it's impossible to do that sometimes.

I don't ever find that I follow them, I just pick out little bits and I get a feeling.

**Jamie:** That's always something I really like about Ian Curtis' lyrics, just because I want to make sure we mention Joy Division at least seven more times.

**Devin:** I was going to say, it's a band rule.

**Jamie:** It's hard to tell what the songs are about consciously, but they certainly feel like they're about something, and I want to try to do both things at the same time. I don't know if I'm a good enough writer to do that. It's something I'm aspiring to.

**Devin:** Sometimes I have a very concrete image, but I might be wrong, because I never ask you.

**Jamie:** It's not important to me at all. It's just that people get some kind of image, it doesn't have to be what it's really about. People don't have to relate to the lyrics in the same way that the band relates to them.

**Devin:** Music, I've learned this year—and I've been a musician all my life—music actually has a use value. It's actually, tangibly useful for people. It can help you to party, sure, but if you are going through some kind of deep personal crisis, and you feel alone, it can actually help you. It's a tangible thing: I put on this record, I went to see this show, and now I feel better and now I can deal. There's this literary theory, if you externalize pain through art you can look at it; otherwise, it stays inside of you and eats you. So you have to get it out. Music has so much to do with pain. It doesn't have to be explicit pain. Charlie Parker wasn't playing blues, but there's a biting, desperate feeling in that music that frankly isn't KC and The Sunshine Band.

So to bring it back to Joy Division one more time...

**Jamie:** YEAHHH!!!!

**Devin:** What do you mean "one more time"? We have six more to go.

I read that you went to school for social work—

**Jamie:** Ian Curtis did the same thing, he did social work, we had the same job...OH MY GOD WE HAD THE SAME JOB!!!!

Did you just realize that?

**Jamie:** YEAH!!

**Devin:** [*Whispers.*] And Jamie's epileptic. **Jamie:** Nooo, I'm just a complete pain in the ass, I just feign epilepsy...

You were able to work through the notion that it was okay to do music as your life's work, to do what one wants or needs to do, rather than what one thinks they should do. Any advice for anyone else in that situation, from someone who succeeded in doing what they wanted?

**Jamie:** Not to quit doing it, because it doesn't happen immediately. The internal decision to allow myself to try it for real...I've been in bands since I was 14—I wanted to do it, but I wasn't completely going for it. And it wasn't until 2002 that Xiu Xiu started going. The five years between deciding to do it and it actually happening was a long, long time. This is an incredibly dumb thing to say, because Ian Curtis would never say this—God this is so retarded. But it's so true. Just don't quit. If you really mean it, continue to do it. Which apparently he didn't do! The man was a genius, so don't listen to anything I have to say.

111





## LAMBENT RIPPLES ON THE GOLDEN COAST

BY REUBEN PERELMAN + PHOTOGRAPH BY GRAHAM KOLBEINS

### FOUR MENTAL SNAPSHOTS OF JOHNNIE NEWMAN:

**Photo #1:** Johnnie Newman is sitting in a dark, post-collegiate-looking apartment, an infomercial visible on the small TV behind him. At his feet stands an acrylic bong, and he is hunched over a keyboard attached to a computer. In the light of the computer monitor his face looks very pale, and it glitters with a manic intensity.

**Photo #2:** Johnnie Newman, wearing reading glasses and looking unconcerned, is handing a sheaf of papers to a very tan, very conventionally attractive man on a living room film set. In the background, a very conventionally attractive blond in a sequined dress is sprawled on a settee reading *No Exit*.

**Photo #3:** Johnnie Newman is hunkered down in a batter's box, looking younger here, a clean-cut kid, but bravny, with a glint in his eyes that bespeaks the twitchy, murderous anticipation of a good hitter about to tee off on some poor sophomore relief pitcher.

**Photo #4:** Johnnie Newman is standing on a wooden dock. He is wearing boat shoes and a Hawaiian shirt. He is smiling through a short blond beard. In one hand, he holds a drink with an umbrella in it. The other arm is thrown around Kenny Loggins, who is smiling and pointing at someone outside the frame.

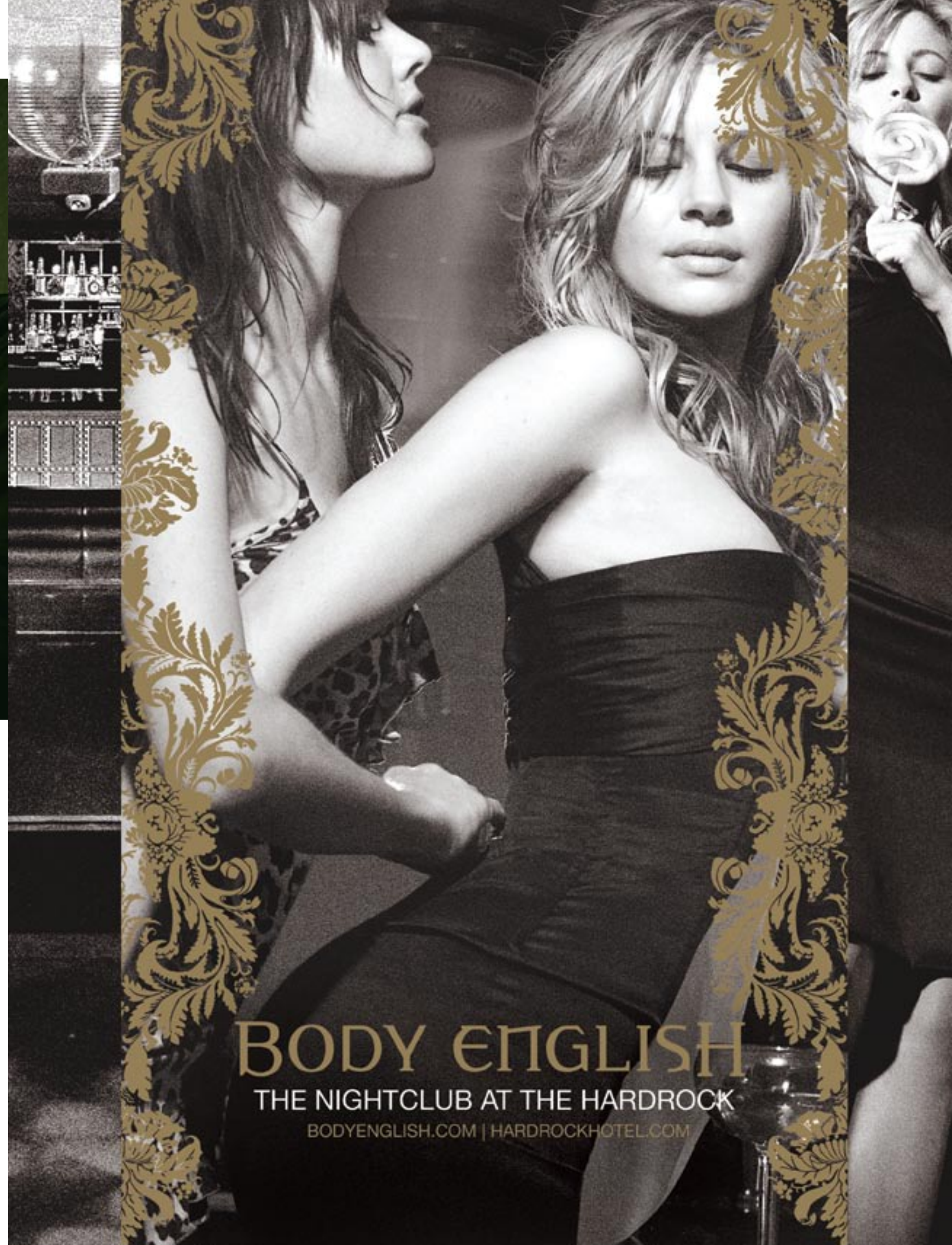
**Okay, so maybe** that last one strayed a little outside the objective pastures of history. To the best of my knowledge, Johnnie Newman has never met smooth-rock legend Kenny Loggins. But Newman's biography is nonetheless colorful and idiosyncratic, and upon meeting him, it was a pleasure to discover that he is one of the most thoroughly normal people I've ever encountered in Los Angeles—against all odds.

His parents met on the set of *Guiding Light*, and he supported himself as a writer for *Days of Our Lives* after graduating from college. He was a high school baseball star. He was in a band called Tarzana with DJ Lethal and the former keyboardist for Ima Robot. His backstory vacillates between the mundane and the absurd with such frequency that his equanimity seems the only sane response. And so the junior-high Metallica fan begat the college-age Aphex Twin-esque knob-twiddler, begat the current incarnation, whom I can best describe as a blue-eyed soul man for the cynical century.

Newman's music evokes the smooth rock of sunny California in the late '70s, and he is refresh-

ingly unrepentant on this point. "I love smooth '70s: Steely Dan, Fleetwood Mac. I mean, those sounds just feel really good to me. Old Michael McDonald stuff, too. I actually kind of like so-called corny music—I like music that isn't very cool. Like 'This Is It' [Loggins & McDonald *Keep The Fire*, 1979]. It's really well-crafted and earnest." But don't confuse the tunes he admires with elevator music. In his live group, Newman plays the piano—not a keyboard, but a piano—and he plays it forcefully enough that it will often slide around the stage slightly during his set. "I like not being terribly good at the piano, too," he demurs. "It keeps me out of the way of a lot of stuff. It keeps me out of prog rock."

And the Loggins connection? It may be more than just one writer's pipe dream. "I would love to sneak onto some big band's lineup and open at 6 o'clock at some weird state fair for Kenny Loggins." Kenny Loggins, if you are reading this issue of *Mean*, and you don't have an opening act for your May 16th show at the Marin Veterans' Memorial Auditorium in San Rafael, CA, please, I implore you, talk to Johnnie. **■ ■ ■**

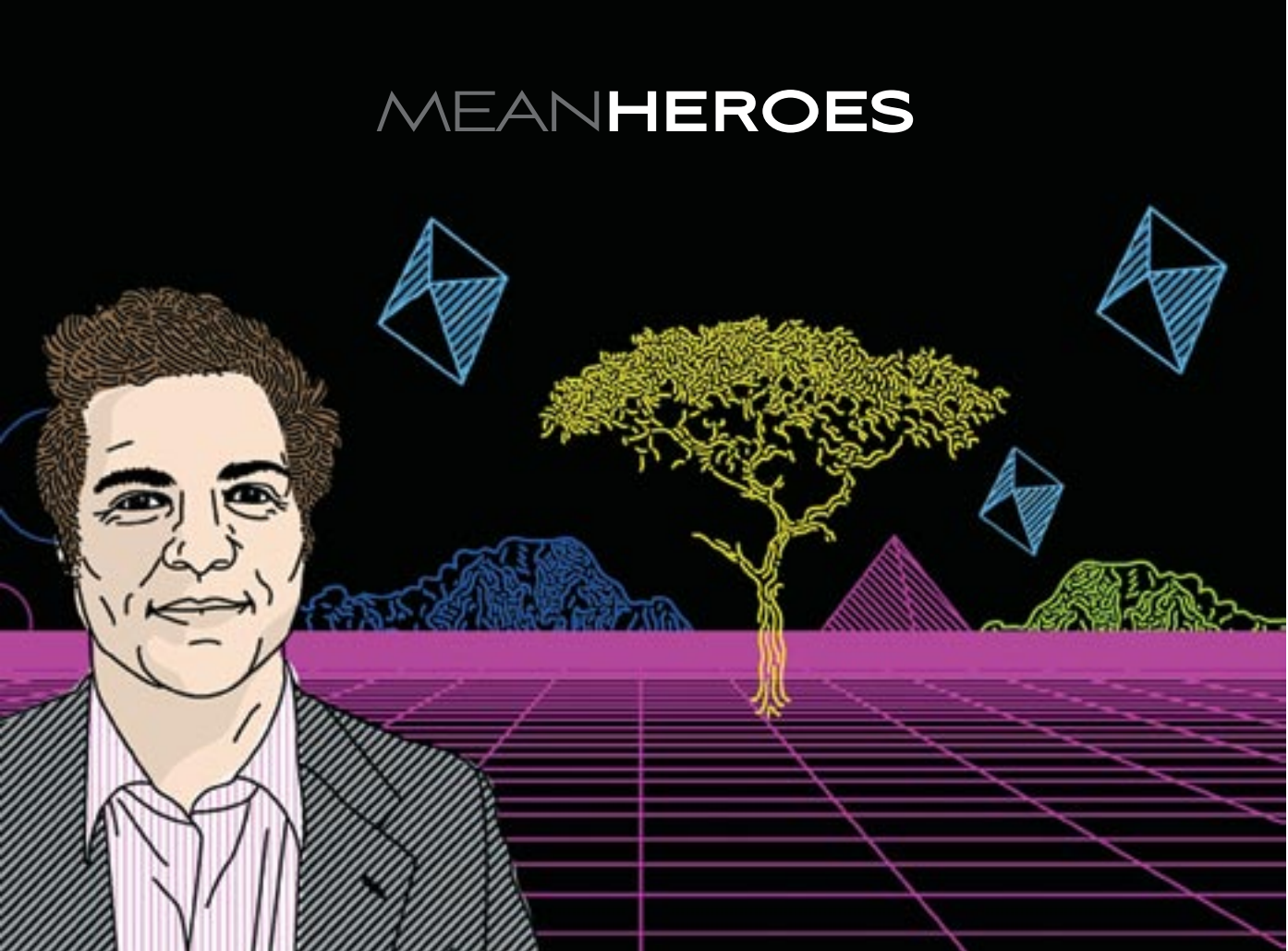
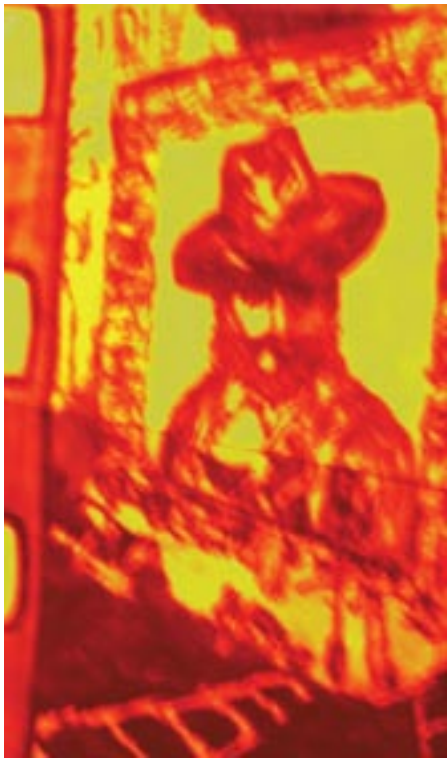


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## CROOKED COWBOY AND THE FRESHWATER INDIANS

ON THE TRAIL TO INNER SPACE WITH “PORTISHEAD IN CHAPS”  
BY REUBEN PERELMAN + PHOTOGRAPHS BY MYLES PETTENGILL

**Follow me, dear reader,** down the dusty Arroyo Seco, along Figueroa Avenue in Highland Park, Los Angeles. Take a left at Avenue 57 and pull into a parking lot. Go to the back corner and look for faded white lettering on a brick wall that announces a certain Mr. T’s Bowl. Descend the stairs and find yourself in a strange amalgamation of bar, diner and derelict bowling alley, awash in red light. Next to curtained-off lanes, a seven-piece band spills over a low stage and onto the floor.

The band is in the middle of a number, a feisty bit of two-step twang with wordless vocals. At the end of every verse, a moan of feedback beckons the band to explode into a feverish climax, and just as you think the song must spiral off into abandon, it just as quickly hunkers back down into its tight and menacing shuffle. The song ends, and as the last hit is still wallowing in its lush reverb, the bassist puts down his bass and turns to the MPC sampler sitting on the chair next to him. You barely have time to wonder if a drumbeat or pre-recorded synth loop is imminent before gamelan bells ring out incongruously, ominously, and the band lurches into a martial apocalyptic dirge that sounds like something Ennio Morricone would write after spending 10 years in a Balinese rock cult.

The sound. The sound is a very physical thing—immense without being cacophonous, echoing without being murky, possessed of a great and terrible clarity and power. The Freshwater Indians are not a particularly loud band, but they are certainly one you can feel in your chest. Have you ever heard of a hug machine? Essentially an iron maiden with cushions instead of spikes, it was created by Temple Grandin, a high-functioning autistic woman best known for designing slaughterhouses. This is the best anal-

ogy for what the music of Crooked Cowboy feels like.

The man playing the gamelan line on the sampler half sways, half bobs his head, his whole upper body really, not in rhythm with the music, but to some beat that only he can hear. Occasionally he will half-sing, half growl into the microphone in front of him. This is Bron Tieman, songwriter and chief wrangler of the Freshwater Indians, a rotating assortment of musicians averaging one keyboard player, two vocalists, two-and-a-half percussionists and the odd extra guitarist or cellist. You get the sense that Bron knows a lot of musicians.

“A sense of community is so important to what we do,” says Bron. “I have to really trust these guys—I don’t want to always be telling them what to play and what not to play.”

“You tell me what to sing,” interjects Kate Hill, Bron’s girlfriend, and owner of a voice that could entice Eurydice to stay underground just a while longer.

“Maybe a little bit,” acknowledges Bron, his eyes twinkling above a scruffy beard.

In many ways, Bron’s musical past resembles that of one of the lone riders who populate the imagery of his songs. Bron was a founding member of the avant surf-rock lounge band The Blue Hawaiians. Upon their signing to Capitol Records, he “walked and bought a ticket to Poland and rode trains for six weeks to understand why the hell I was pursuing music.” He toured America with Soul Coughing and played lap steel for Everlast when he “went country.”

This eclecticism carries over to Tieman’s own music, which appends just about every prefix known to man (psych/space/experimental/noise, etc.) to “country-rock.” “Someone once called it ‘Portishead in chaps.’

I liked that.” His backing band, the Freshwater Indians, is both motley and talented enough to accommodate Bron’s fearsome whimsy. The Indians fluctuate from four to eight musicians, coalescing around a core of singer Francoise Blound, drummer Nick Murray, keyboardist Neil Schuh and percussionist Tyler Thacker.

“I’ve been writing songs since I was eight,” says Bron, after mentioning he was kicked out of the eighth grade for lighting an M-80 in math class. “Lately, I’ve been taking songs I wrote on a guitar or something and re-creating them using sampled sounds. I might bring it back to the band after that,” says Bron. “Layers of translation, you know? I just love vinyl. Old stuff. I’ve been getting really into the sounds on some Mexican records from the ‘50s and ‘60s. You can’t get those sounds anywhere else.” In Bron’s hands, the samples seem less a knowing wink and nudge to cognoscenti than they are an evocation of musical territory that exists somewhere outside of time.

“I’ve actually constructed songs completely from samples before,” Bron says, before quickly qualifying that. “I’m not sampling a drum break or a melody, or even a lick. I’ll spend hours looking for the right kick drum sound or an E6 chord. This can take days, or weeks.”

The Crooked Cowboy took the Freshwater Indians into the recording studio in December, with an ambitious plan to release five singles in as many months. You get the sense that he knows the iron is hot and is itching to strike again and again.

“That isolated musician, alone in your living room, making a record—yeah, I’ve been there. Hell, I have a whole album that no one’s ever heard and likely no one ever will...Fuck isolation, I want to go to Disneyland.” ■■■

## EVERYTHING IS EXPONENTIAL

WAXPLOITATION HUMANITARIAN JEFF ANTEBI BY MYA STARK + ILLUSTRATION BY KEIL CORCORAN

**There is suffering** in the world. I hate that. You too? Yeah, I thought so. What should we do about it? You don’t know? Crap—me neither. There seems to be so insupportably, unfathomably much of it, everywhere you turn these days. Besides, it’s like, really hard to understand how all that different suffering is fundamentally caused and therefore how it could be prevented, what with Hume picking the last crumbs of cement out from between the bricks of the universe and those fucking butterflies flapping their wings all over the goddamn place. Not to mention which, I’m hung over. Oh, you too?

Yeah, I thought so.

Which is why I wanted to talk to Jeff Antebi.

Jeff Antebi is a heavy-duty music-industry guy. He started the label Waxploitation, which also functions as a management firm, and has handled artists ranging from Al Jourgensen of Ministry to E-Swift of Tha Alkaholiks in their careers as producers. Jeff brought you Danger Mouse and his Gnarls Barkley and Dangerdoom incarnations, and in general, seems to be doing a bunch of important, high-level stuff. For instance, on the day we spoke, he was about to leave for China to aid in the fight against global music piracy. When asked how he planned to do so, he replied, “By making eye contact with people.” Intimidating indeed. While I confess that I may be taking that quote on a little pleasure trip out of its context, the point I’d like to make is this: Jeff Antebi is a man of respect, a man who does big things.

So I decided to ask him what to do about suffering in the world. Well, not out of the blue. Because of an album he made called *Causes 1*, for which he got artists like Animal Collective, The Black Keys, Bloc Party, Bright Eyes,

Death Cab for Cutie, The Cure, Teargas & Plateglass, Spoon, and The Shins to contribute exclusive tracks. But not just to change the lives of salivating indie-rock creeps. To change the lives of people suffering in Darfur. Maybe he knows what we should do. Read on to find out.

**You’re balancing business, the needs of art and the need to be committed to causes. How is it that you started to do that?**

Well, at some point in the last five or six years, there started to be a lack of boundaries between the things I do professionally and the things I do in my personal life. It just didn’t seem like there was a need for me to split the two. I try to keep out of politics. My pursuit is really humanitarian, not political. So nonprofits that I tend to promote are very, very neutral. Doctors Without Borders. Human Rights Watch, Oxfam. I think oftentimes people don’t participate in this kind of project because they don’t have an obvious avenue that they know how to pursue. And so, I try to keep it really simple in my own life and only focus on Darfur. I have lots of requests to contribute to other things, but I’ve made a commitment to not do that, even though I think it confuses people sometimes.

**Focus does seem important or else you get overwhelmed.**

Exactly. It’s so easy to have no impact.

**Individual people can probably get more energy into one small thing than each one of us trying to solve all the problems all at once.**

There’s nothing wrong with picking one thing and trying to learn as much as possible about it. I think that people don’t give themselves enough credit for the amount of

good it does to simply know what’s going on somewhere and be able to talk to someone about it. Everything is exponential. I’ve just found a really simple way to allow people to make a very small financial contribution. We deal very specifically with retail stores that are part of the CIMS, the Coalition of Independent Music Stores, and they’ve been incredibly generous. No one here is making a profit, which is outstanding. Instead they said, “No, we’ll give you full retail and we’ll just add 99 cents,” so that when a kid or an adult buys this CD at retail, it’s the equivalent of making an \$8, \$9 or \$10 donation. Cynics would say “Oh, well, they’re only giving a dollar to this charity.” But [the retailers’ offer] was surprising. I didn’t think to even ask. They volunteered it. You know, I continue to do what I do because of things like that. If you provide someone with the platform to supply you with their generosity—I live for those moments.

**Right. And they can surprise you.**

I get surprised all the time. People just need a platform. It’s not like those retailers are going to put together a CD. So I think someone like myself or other people who are doing similar things—it’s something that we’re good at; it’s easy for us to do. I’ve been doing it for a decade so I have a good Rolodex. It’s easy for me to just blast a couple thousand people and say, “Hey, can you participate in this?” If just one percent does, I’ve got a compilation. Then other companies pitch in—like Spectre is doing our college radio promotion for free. If you provide people with something they can add their particular expertise to, it [takes] barely any time. It doesn’t take much for someone to go, “Hey, let’s give them a free ad.” And not once did anyone [fail to] volunteer something when I asked for it. ■■■





## FREAK SHOW AT THE BAKE SALE: THE INCOGNITO

**Lizzy Caplan swears**, in her charmingly sardonic voice, that fans never recognize her. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that she looks very different in real life from most of the dry, sharp-as-tacks characters she plays in movies and television, including her best-known role, the goth-y Janis Ian in *Mean Girls*. At 25 years old, Lizzy's already managed to carve out her own niche as the snarky, brainy foil to, as she puts it, the "boring, doe-eyed ingénues" littering most mainstream fare.

In recent months, Lizzy has appeared as one of the more familiar faces in the J.J. Abrams-produced sci-fi thriller, *Cloverfield*, which used a clever viral marketing campaign to create a near-frenzy leading up to its release date. When she's not making wisecracks look easy even in the face of monster attacks, she's tackling meatier roles. In director Wayne Kramer's *Crossing Over*, she teamed with a heavy-hitting ensemble cast (Harrison Ford, Sean Penn, Ashley Judd) to take on the hot-button topic of immigration. And in her modicum of downtime, she's even developing a short film with an actor pal which will allow them to exercise their creative muscles.

*Mean* caught up with Lizzy and got sarcastic—as well as sincere—about working with comedy king Judd

Apatow, dreaming of '80s teen movies and learning to love her fellow actor.

**Tell us a little bit about working on *Cloverfield*. Was there a lot of excitement on set, especially once the viral campaign took off?**

Totally. It was very unlike any experience I've had before—shooting it, the audition process and everything. Nobody had the script. We weren't allowed to read the script until we agreed to do it. And there were a lot of confidentiality agreements to be signed and all of that. J.J. is such a huge powerhouse with a certain fan base that it's totally insane to me how much internet activity happened. I was a little nervous because it started getting really crazy. We still had five months to go until the movie actually came out, and I didn't know how they were going to sustain [the buzz]. But all the little leaks that they put on the internet, really the whole advertising part of it, is one of the coolest things.

**You've worked with some pretty big comedic heavyweights like director Judd Apatow. What was that experience like?**

Well, I worked with him on *Freaks and Geeks* and it was like the first thing I did. I was so terrified to be on a set of any kind that I really had no idea what I was doing. So I don't think I contributed all that much to that series—which is *totally* genius. Judd is probably the smartest person around; he knows good comedy and is also giving a lot of opportunities to young people with scripts—especially *Freaks and Geeks* alumni. My friend, Jason Segel, who played Nick on that show, just finished shooting his movie with Judd [*Forgetting Sarah Marshall*]. It's really kind of awesome, because Judd is making the funniest movies by far right now, and it's kind of like a renaissance of comedy.

**For people who've gone through more "alternative" phases in their adolescence and young adult years, your character Janis Ian was such a treat to watch, especially in a popular film. Did you feel that response from your female audience?**

Thanks! I agree. I think that it was a really well-written character. I'm good friends with Daniel Franzese, who played Damian [in *Mean Girls*], and he's very recognizable, so he and a lot of the people from that film were

## LIFE OF LIZZY CAPLAN

BY JESSICA JARDINE + PHOTOGRAPHS BY LIZZY CAPLAN

swarmed by fans afterward. Whereas I don't think one person ever came up to me just on the street, because I guess I look different in person than in the movie. But people sent me stuff online saying that it was important for the weird girls in high school. So, that's good. [Playing Janis] was a strange situation for me, individually, because I went to a performing arts high school where there were a *lot* of freak shows. It wasn't all *that* interesting to have black hair and wear big, weird clothes. As time goes by, I kind of wish I did have that thing where, you know, it was like, "Oh my God! The football player is *such* a babe! I wish he was *my* boyfriend!" But nah, none of that for me. Actually, I was recently in Connecticut with some friends, and we went to this really posh boarding school football game. It was so cool! It was like being in one of those '80s high school movies. The football players really were such babes, and everyone had so much spirit. It was rad.

**Everybody was painted up in team colors...**

Yeah, totally! And we were like the creepy 25-year-olds that were kind of leering at the bake sale and trying to hit on the high school boys.

Some would say that a lot of that high school cat-tiness in *Mean Girls* is parallel to so much of the rampant meanness in Hollywood, especially among actresses. Do you see that, especially as you've had to navigate your own career through this crazy, celeb-mania phase we're in?

Well, I think that that's like a *totally* other realm of celebrity that I'm not involved with [*Laughs.*], but I agree with that. It comes up a lot, how much like high school it is, and definitely, at every audition, I'm the one in the corner with my sunglasses on, not talking to anybody. Every single role I've ever gotten has started with the first dinner, where everyone goes out and ends up saying, "I thought you were such an asshole! You looked so mean! You didn't talk to anybody!" Don't get me wrong—I have friends who are actresses I adore, but it did take me a long time to even see the point in having actor friends, because I just sort of stereotyped them as awful people—which is not true! But I do think it's weird that some of these girls seek it out to a certain point, and then it becomes something that leaves a bad taste in their mouths, as well as everyone else's.

And surely people assume that because you did a movie with Lindsay Lohan, you guys must obviously hang out like every single day.

Oh yeah. She's here right now.

**You guys just totally braided each other's hair and gab all day long.**

Oh yeah! Pedicures, hair braiding, everything.

**What are you most excited about on the horizon, both work and non-work related?**

I guess the thing I'm really looking forward to is that T.J. Miller, who was an actor in *Cloverfield*, and I are going to do a short together. He's totally hilarious, and just doing something that's completely for us will be nice.

**Like those great short films [actor] Michael Cera and his best friend do, *Clark and Michael*?**

Yeah, those are awesome. There's really just something so fulfilling about this group of young comics who are pumping out shorts for no other reason than just to make each other laugh.



THE  
HIGH-HEELED  
MIND OF

# kate beckinsale

YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHAT'S IN THERE

KATE PORTRAYS GODARD MUSE AND SERGE GAINSBURG SONGSTRESS ANNA KARINA IN "ROLLERGIRL"  
BY MYA STARK + PHOTOGRAPHS BY KURT ISWARIENKO







**This is what Mel Brooks** said, regarding *Young Frankenstein*, in a 1975 issue of *Film Comment*:

*I think [Mary Shelley] was the first person to discover womb envy. I think I'm the first person to call it that, but what it is, is that most men get even with women for being able to have children by saying "I can paint, I can write," and women say, "You're full of shit. Look—a baby." And of course, she's the winner.*

Neener neener, if you aren't a girl. If you are one—up top, bro.

Kate Beckinsale can do both. Well, I don't know if she can paint, but she can write and act, and has fully given birth and stuff to an entire child. (Child's name: Lily, for future reference.) She's also really, really fucking smart and funny; and if she weren't so distractingly beautiful, there might have been a chance someone would have actually noticed this. Instead, when you look her up on YouTube, there are fan videos devoted entirely to her ass (which must be fairly surreal for a person who was educated at Oxford, but that's where the sense of humor must come in handy).

Here are the stats: her parents were both actors, very well known in Britain, and her first role was in Kenneth Branagh's adaptation of *Much Ado About*

*Nothing*. She broke through stateside as the female lead in Michael Bay's *Pearl Harbor*, and after that became associated with babedom and vampires via the *Underworld* franchise and *Van Helsing*. (But she doesn't really like vampires that much. Sorry, nerds.) She played legendary beauty Ava Gardner for Scorsese in *The Aviator*, and now she's taken a leap into something even indie-er and arty-er with director David Gordon Green in *Snow Angels*.

*Mean* met up with Beckinsale at an ocean-side café for what began as a serious conversation about motherhood, brain chemistry and the battle of the sexes—and ended up devolving into a discussion of sex in high heels, why women should be grateful to David Beckham, and something that sounded suspiciously like giggling. Warning for the squeamish and/or vegans: A half order of oysters was definitely harmed—or at the very least, licked—in the making of this interview.

In *Snow Angels*, you play Annie, a mom who goes through the most horrible thing a mom could possibly think of going through: the loss of a child. But before that, you really see the character struggle as a single parent—it was one of the more honest portrayals of how hard it actually is, and how you can't be perfect all the time as a mom.

Yeah, exactly. I'm a privileged person, but when I had Lily, I didn't have any help; I was a single mom. And if I had a boyfriend that beat me up like Annie did—well, I don't understand how more people don't drop children out of windows, in a funny way. It's so amazingly stressful to be a single parent with a baby. Every mother has been through the moment when you realize, "I need to leave the room before I snap," and Annie doesn't get to go away.

Having read that you had kind of an angst poetess-type adolescence, I'm wondering how becoming a mother affected you as an artist—the self-expression, or whatever, that made you want to write and act in the first place. It just feels like you become very much second or third or fourth in the queue of your own priorities. You can do the sort of 12 hours of sobbing in front of the mirror when you're 14 in a way that you can't do when you have a child. *[Laughs.]* Especially if you've been somebody who's an artist, and used to being entirely selfish, and navel-gazing, and thinking that your feelings and thoughts are profound in a specific way. But when your baby is born, if you have any kind of sense, you put that first.

So it seems like it pushes you to the background...



But you're also forced to squarely confront everything about yourself. If you're woken up 10 times a night, how are you going to respond? Sometimes, if the child's sick, you can't even hardly go to bed. And I'm someone who doesn't like to be woken up once in a night—but the fact that this relentlessly goes on and on and on for years, and you still love this other person more than you can imagine loving anybody, then you learn something quite interesting about yourself, you know what I mean?

My god, I remember turning up on the set of *Pearl Harbor* and all the boys had been to boot camp and I had a 14-month-old baby, and had been told that I had to be in the gym four hours a day. On top of the not sleeping, and all this physical activity that I loathed, and working and doing stuff, I was so tired. And on top of that, the boys kept saying, "Wow, it was so tough, you have no idea." I remember thinking to myself, "You went for five days; I haven't slept in 14 months. You want to go toe to toe?" I don't understand why, evolution-wise, that's happened; babies ought to be sleeping from the get-go. Unless there's some specific level of love that you have to get to by being broken down.

Isn't that like Stockholm syndrome?

Maybe it's something like that. *[Laughs.]* You have to be like Patty Hearst. I would rob a bank for my

daughter. If she were in jail, I'd break her out.

Your child is like a cult leader who's brainwashing you. I think if I told my mom this, she would be like, "Duh."

I like this mother of yours.

But think about how it used to be in village cultures, with everybody sort of all together in the longhouse. At least nobody was getting any sleep, so it's fair.

And I do think that's how it's supposed to be. Just culturally, we've made it very hard on mothers. Now we have to not only have careers, and perfectly meaningful relationships, and our body hair under control also, but the lion's share of the psychological well-being of the child is on the mother, too. With a few token husbands who are pitching in—which I do think is on the rise, I have to say. I had my child almost 10 years ago, when none of my friends were having kids, and now they are, and I'm amazed by how much work their husbands do. I guess they just took time to catch up.

We happen to be the half that provides the bigger investment in reproduction because of the large size of the egg cell, but then it just carries through the rest of the process. It's really unfair.

On the flip side, in terms of supply and demand, sperm is de facto less valuable.

That's what I'm raising my daughter to totally believe—that men are completely insignificant. But they are. We're special, and we're in a culture that doesn't recognize the specialness.

Recently, I saw *Lake of Fire*, Tony Kaye's documentary, and it really made me think. When he went along with a woman who was having an abortion, you really saw how that "choice" was just part of an overall way of living, where the guy who got her pregnant broke her jaw, and all these terrible things. She felt she needed a man so much, she was willing to take any kind of bad treatment.

I read something really interesting about abusive relationships. There was the woman [Erin Pizzey] who invented the term "battered wife," in the '60s or '70s, and she had a shelter. It was very controversial over here, and didn't go down very well with feminists, but her theory was that there was a weird rush that the woman would get at the moment when the guy would turn; that she was actually addicted to being hit. They all had grown up with abusive backgrounds, so in their brain chemistry— »



I'M TERRIBLY SQUEAMISH. TERRIBLY SQUEAMISH. I CAN'T EVEN COOK A STEAK. MY DAUGHTER, ON THE OTHER HAND, CAN KNAW ON A BONE LIKE HENRY VIII.

Yes. Any kind of pain releases substances in the brain that are exactly like morphine. They're called endogenous opiates.

She went through all their backgrounds, and they were full of this kind of stuff. So how, as an adult woman, if you've grown up basically being given a crack pipe every six days, then what—you suddenly get into a healthy situation where you don't want it anymore? It seemed to make complete sense. She would treat the couple—she had a shelter for men and a shelter for women—and she'd try and treat the two in terms of their mutual addiction to that.

So that instead of blaming themselves as people, their moral character, they could blame this sort of addiction.

And try to get through it together—

—with their higher selves that do love each other.

It really makes sense. And I thought it was a shame it didn't catch on. I guess it came out at a time when feminists essentially desired to blame men as being evil. But there are women who, because of their backgrounds...Me, hit me one time and I'm done. But there are smart, successful women who are not able, with just their neural pathways, to not go back, because it's home, it's what you're used to. You can't blame just men for that, for somebody's life.

I think feminism can sometimes hold you back in a way, because it's still an outside force telling you what you are.

I do think about the whole slogan, "A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle." It turns out fish kind of like bicycles.

I am at the place in my life where I'd rather feel—not that I need men, but that I want them, and can enjoy them.

I have four brothers, and I did have that feeling: I don't need men, I can kick your ass. And I still have that feeling to a dangerous degree. I just think I could handle myself. Especially having done a few action movies, it gives you a false sense.

"I'll just vampire you to death."

Yeah. The fact that my husband is bigger and stronger than I am is annoying, because I don't think of it.

That's why I think we should be taught knife fighting.

We should be taught something. You know, the elbow can act like a knife.

I don't think it's going to work in a dark alley. But you can always stab someone in the guts. Then they'll be surprised, and you can run away. Right. On your Manolos.

Yeah, and who thought of those? Men.

Well, apparently, during orgasm, a woman's feet move like this [makes tiptoe gesture], and that's the reason they invented high heels. So next time you're having an orgasm, pay attention to your feet and you'll see.

Barbie, dude. Slut. Why can't we invent some

clothes for men that would be like that?

Do we really want to see men in that state? They're thinking about sex every six seconds. Do we need them to think about it any more?

They are starting to have a little more clothing like that.

Thanks to David Beckham.

[Loudly, into mic] Thank you, David Beckham.

[At this point, we have to order something or they take the table away from us. We decide to get oysters. Which neither of us has ever had.]

Am I going to have to give you the Heimlich maneuver? They're very snot.

Snot?

It looks a lot like mucus.

Nah, I'm tough. I once ate a chicken heart. It was, like, beef jerky-ized, but it was still really gross, because in my imagination I could feel it beating.

I went to the Philippines and they eat 1,000-year-old eggs there. It's not actually 1,000 years old, but it's basically a rotten egg, and it's got a fertilized chick in it, and they just eat it. That is a smell that you can't even fathom.

Did you eat it?

Hell no! I was in the same city as other people who ate it, and I nearly died.

[The waiter comes back to ask if we want a full or half order of oysters.]

Just one, and a spittoon, please... I'm terribly squeamish. Terribly squeamish. I can't even cook a steak. I'm terrible with all of that stuff. My daughter, on the other hand, can gnaw on a bone like Henry VIII. There are areas where she's so like me, and then there are areas where I see, "Oh! You're not like me at all!" How does that happen? You can see she must be a separate individual. I don't control everything.

That was my mom, too. I think it was very hard on her, believing that she had to give me this perfect upbringing so I'd grow into a person who would be so well-adjusted that I'd never have to suffer. That's not possible.

I completely empathize with that. Babies show up as themselves. I really do believe you can fuck a person up terribly by being a bad parent, but they arrive kind of 80 percent baked, and that 20 percent is crucial, but they do show up with their personality.

That, perhaps, is why you suffer—to make you who you are.

You can't say that as a parent, that you want them to suffer. You can't. It makes you crazy, it just makes you crazy. I very often get up into her bed in the middle of the night and squeeze her.

[The oysters arrive.]

These look like a nightmare.

[Something on the tape that sounds a lot like giggling.]

Oh no. Ooh. Let's smell it.

I can't. That's when you unclog the drain. That's what's in there.

That's it. I'm not licking it. I'm not licking it. Okay, maybe I'm licking it a little... I can't help it. It's gonna happen. Not that one!

I'm really worried. Lick it, lick it, lick it, lick it.

[Stark licks oyster, looks horrified.]

Are you all right?

It's just salty, I'm fine. It was just salty. [Laughs.]

Do you eat oysters every day, and are you putting on a show just for me?

No! I was an Orthodox Jew. These are totally forbidden.

I'm so Jewy, even though I'm not. I can't tell you how much I ask my poor husband, "Please, can we become Jewish?" and he says no. Everybody I like is Jewish. All the stuff that makes you crazy makes me crazy. It's a family joke: Whenever we get to the airport and there's all the Hasidic Jews, my daughter goes, "Look, there are your people, Mommy." I'm such a wannabe Jew. My daughter's a Buddhist, though. I think she likes the whole reincarnation idea. [Pours lemon juice on oyster.] It didn't even quiver. It's dead.

Aren't you supposed to eat them while they're alive?

I can't do raw. I can't do sushi, even. Anything that has that vaginal quality to it. I'd rather an actual vagina than that, honestly.

Oh no... [Stark raises oyster to eat; stops and stares at it.]

Oh my god, she's doing it. I couldn't do this if you paid me a huge amount of money. Are you going to chew it?

No.

[A pregnant pause on the tape. Then, jubilation from Beckinsale.]

You did it! Did you do it!? Is it down? Did you feel it go down?

I did. I felt it go down, and I'd like to describe my sensation as: I just tasted a lot of lemon juice—and my nose is running—and I'm afraid. I can't believe people do this for pleasure.

It's supposed to be an aphrodisiac. People do this on a date.

Maybe it's like an animal mating display, where the males show how gross of a thing they can eat.

If this is the benchmark, my husband would run screaming from this. I can't believe you did that.

Look at all the self-respect I have now, though. It would be just my luck to be the one to go into anaphylactic shock and die on tape. You actually are talking to Woody Allen right now. That's what would happen to me—I bow before your skills there. I can't believe it. You did quite a big one, as well. You didn't do the most bulbous, but you did do one of the largest.

■ ■ ■



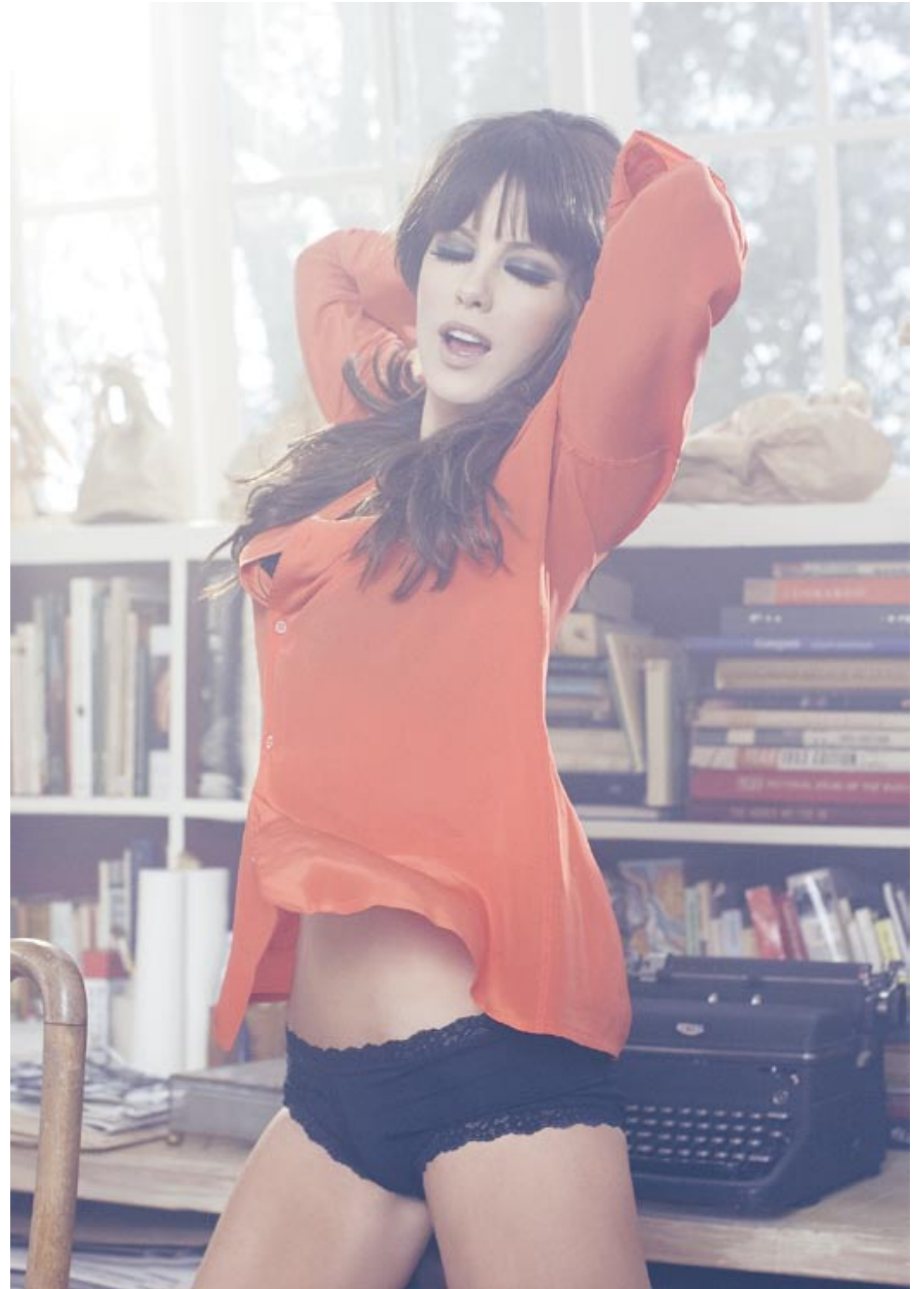
















STYLIST: Rachel Zoe

Shirt, vintage orange button-up dress shirt, Decades  
Bra, Alia black vintage, Resurrection  
Shorts, Hanky Panky black boy shorts  
Striped socks, stylist's own  
Shoes, Christian Dior black Mary Jane  
Watch, vintage Cardin, Resurrection  
Eyeglasses, vintage



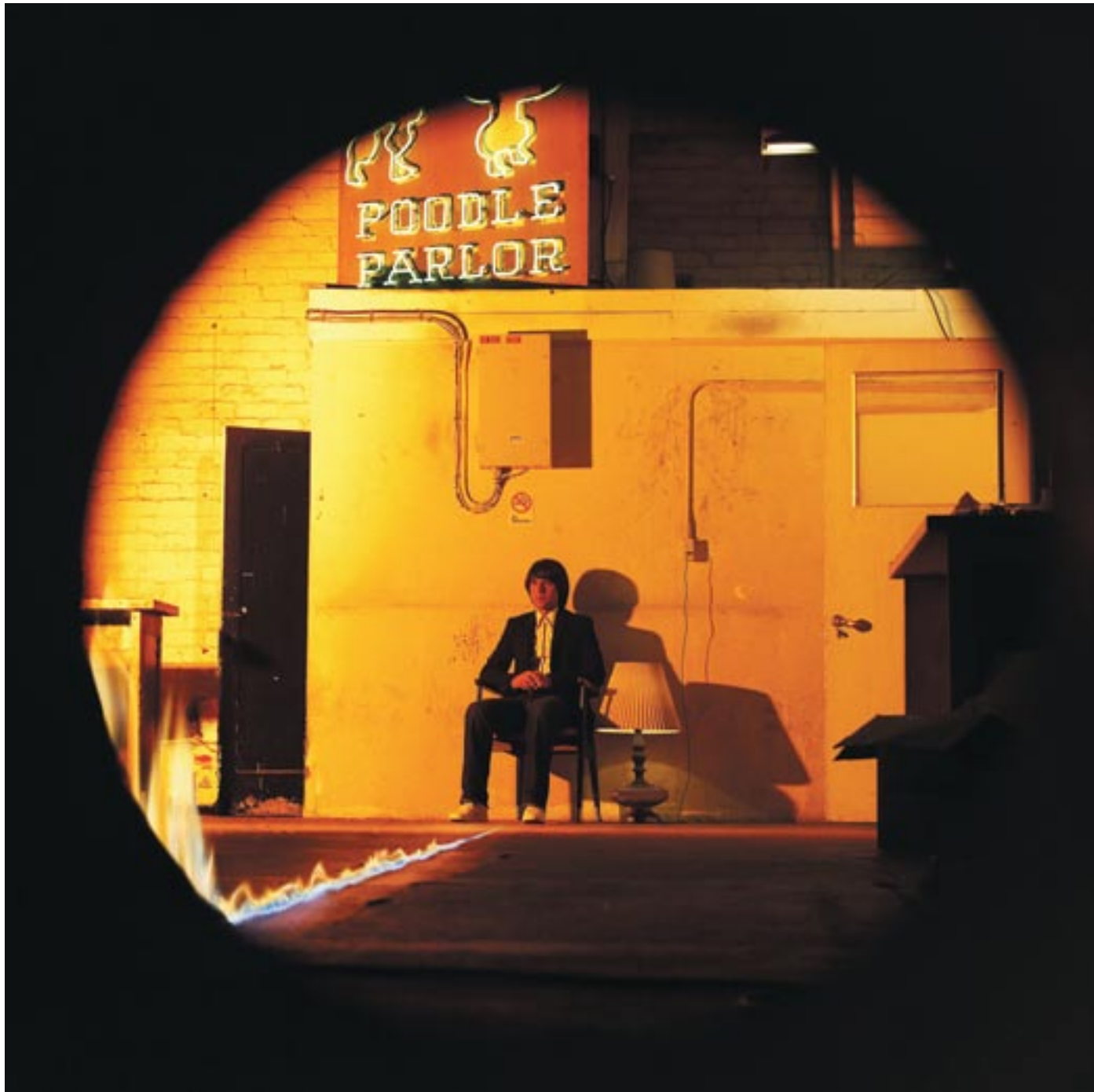
# games

persons  
play

THE ELECTRIC DAYDREAMS  
OF DEMETRI MARTIN  
BY SPENCER MORGAN + PHOTOGRAPHS BY KURT ISWARIENKO







**Demetri Martin likes things.** And stuff. And games. And palindromes. And also cake. And audiences like him. He's surreal and ambidextrous and brilliant and he bravely dropped out of law school to confuse and charm the New York alternative comedy scene, and later, the world—with his Steven Wright-esque one-liners: phrases so meticulously turned they make you think he must have some kind of verbal workshop at home equipped with the latest in linguistic lathes and puzzle saws. He's written for *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* and is a correspondent for the current standard-bearer of American comedy, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. And, in the words of his most recent Comedy Central special, he's *Demetri Martin. Person*. Which kind of sums up his appeal: his point of view on the world startles and delights with its simplicity, and takes you beyond the merely personal to the universal, to the abstract realms underlying everyday reality, to...things.

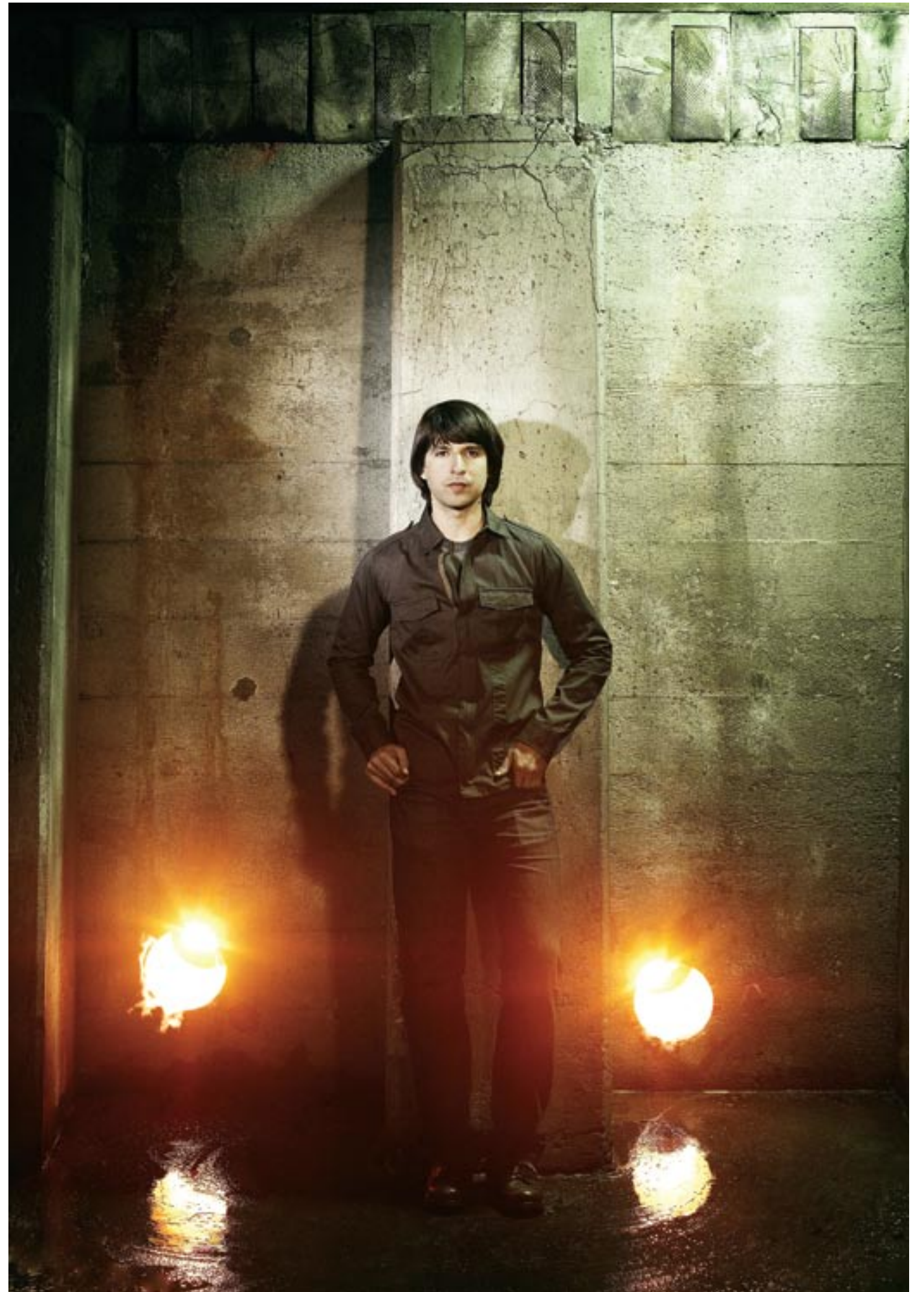
*Mean* correspondent Spencer Morgan (a noted person himself) sat on some things around a thing and ate things with Demetri as they discussed things, such as his upcoming series, *Important Things with Demetri Martin*. Arriving on Comedy Central as soon as time permits (following the end of the writers' strike), this free-form sketch show is exactly what it says it is: each episode examines one "important thing" of Demetri's choosing. And if past *Daily Show* alums' career trajectories are any indication of the shape of things to come, Demetri may be ready to amass a nation of new fans, especially once his upcoming films *The Rocker* and *Kids in America* hit theaters later this year. Read on, and find out a thing or two about chairs, the science of joke writing, and...unfamiliar cookies? —Mya Stark

**Tell me about your nerdiness. How did that manifest itself?**  
Well, salamanders, for a while. I also got obsessed

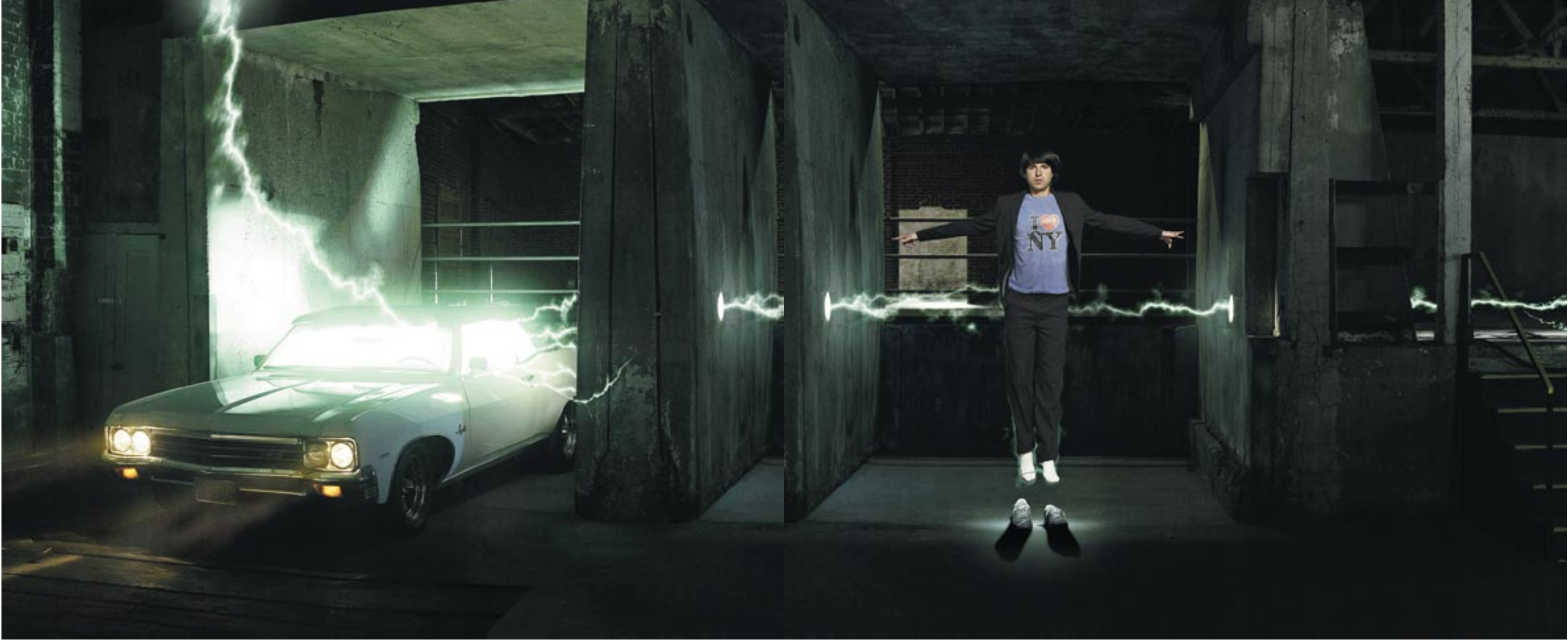
with go-carts and treehouses. We had a little phase there, my friends and I. But then it was more like getting into something new. Like breakdancing. Skateboarding, for a really long time, and then I took it to dunking a basketball. I was never really athletic, so it was more like an activity. And then puzzle books. That led to palindromes, which eventually led to joke writing. It's a similar activity in a weird way—there's a rule that you follow, and apply to different situations, the solution being a punchline, almost.

**Could you go into that any more? The science of joke writing, as you see it?**

When I started I was drawn to Steven Wright, Gary Larson. Later on, I discovered Woody Allen; I never saw Woody Allen's films as a kid. I didn't know that he wrote things. But then I found out—I was like 25. Some of my favorite *Far Side* cartoons don't have any words in them, just snapshots, just a little







scene. It seems like Woody Allen jokes [and] Steven Wright jokes are really pretty short: an idea that might conjure an image or a scene in the listener's head. Of course, there's also finding stuff on stage, improvising. It's a weird truth serum, when you're standing in front of an audience. You have ideas, and you're like, "That'll be awesome!" Then you get on stage and immediately you're like, "It's not funny. You're terrible!"

**The arc of your career is definitely an interesting one. Was there a day during your law school experience when a voice was telling you, "It's time to get the hell out of here?"**

Here's how it went. I bought a TV for \$298 that I had in my tiny room in my law school dorm. I didn't like law—I was not happy in law school, so I watched a lot of TV. I remember one Thursday, I skipped class. And I'm just sitting on my futon, watching this television that was probably four feet from my face. It was pretty big, like 31 inches or something, right in front of my face, slightly convex screen.

I made it through daytime TV somehow. Once I made it to the evening, I watched the whole evening lineup. When I was done, I had watched over eight hours of TV. The futon had a valley, you know? Inactivity, in a terrible way, induced inactivity. I remember thinking, "I've got to do something. I just wasted a day of my life. This sucks. All due respect

to that day's lineup on NBC, this is not a good use of me as a person, of my brain."

I remember that being a low point: thinking, I need to be excited about how I spend my time. The time I have is definitely limited, what am I going to do with it? I shouldn't have any more days like that, unless I'm sick or something. So I basically stopped watching TV in '96. Now when I'm on the road I'll watch it, when I'm falling asleep or whatever. But I pretty much avoid it, 'cause, you know, it's kind of like cookies. Like cookies that I'm not familiar with. If you randomly watch TV [programs], a lot of them are not so good, but if you find one that's good, then you view too many of them. It's as though I've found a brand of chocolate cookie that's acceptable, that's reminiscent of cookies I really like. But if I eat too many of them, I feel shitty.

**From what I gather, your big break was getting the job at *Conan*.**

I don't know. I think I'm still breaking. Very slow fracture. A series of hairline fractures that might culminate in a compound fracture?

**Your experience at *The Daily Show*: what did you learn from it? What were your favorite bits?**

Jon's a great editor. He has a very sharp comedic sensibility, and cuts through the crap really quickly. He's another voice that has influenced me that I re-

ally respect and value. Also, relevance. Jon's comedy is much more relevant than my comedy: time and place, society and stuff. I'm not really tackling the war. I told them, you know, I don't do stuff about the news. I don't watch the news. I don't really know that much about the news. I kind of purposely avoid it; it's really irresponsible. I like to daydream: I think about chairs, coffee cups, small talk and things like that. So from Jon, I learned how to anchor things, instead of living in randomness. Use a little bit of autobiography or personalness, and then a little bit of culture, or universality. I'm drawn more to things that aren't so time-specific.

**I'm a big daydreamer myself. What is your favorite time of day, or activity when you feel the daydreaming really flows for you and you can get some effective daydreaming?**

When I first wake up. The first hour and a half I'm awake. Anything that I like doing, I can do better, for whatever reason. Drive better, write jokes better. The afternoons, nice free-form daydream usually. Then in the evenings, I'm not that productive usually. At night I'm useless. I've pulled very few all-nighters in my life. I need sleep. A lot of it.

As for activity, I like to look at things that have a lot of things in them. Like those shelves over there, all those cans in them, as opposed to looking at that [wall]. Which is fine, too. There are a lot of

bricks and everything. Every now and then I like to come up with a random sequence of letters that doesn't immediately get in the way of any specific word. Almost like a word find, but it has no words in it. I remember reading something about da Vinci where he looked at the cracks and irregularities in plaster and it would give him ideas for forms and anatomical structures. I guess you can find that in anything—everything has interest to it. This artist named Tom Friedman, who I like, has this one piece called *Thousand Hours*. It's just a piece of white paper that he stared at for a thousand hours.

**That's a long time.**

And then you go in the gallery, and it's there. It's freakin' awesome. It's a counter, it makes you think about the fact that this guy actually did this. And now you're doing it: what portion of a thousand hours are you logging? I like it 'cause it's more about process.

I think a lot of my own creative process, when I try to analyze it, comes down to games. It's just games that I create that I can play, any time or place, really. They usually yield something productive.

**What are your aspirations for this new show?**

I can't write it yet 'cause I'm on strike. It's a Guild show so I can't hire anybody.

**Tell me whatever you're allowed to?**

My aspirations are to make some really funny episodes. Some will be short films, sketches, songs, music videos...

**Do you see this as an opportunity to get personal and do the kind of weird shit that interests you? I mean, it's your show.**

Yeah, it would be nice. It's a nice way to see how things can be funny in different forms. A lot of times, if I have an idea, I'll try to let the idea dictate the form. It's different from working somewhere like *Conan*, where you meet with the head writer and he says, "We need 2,000 jokes. Be back at my office in 45 minutes." So that's cool, because you learn, "Okay, I'll squeeze it out of my head when I have to." But if you're daydreaming, it's nice to let the ideas lead you. Random things: there's a drawing, there's a drawing, there's a poem, there's a poem. There's a standup joke, there's a standup joke. Oh, there's a scene-scene-scene. And then later, I can group them and cluster them, so I can pick through my personal library of ideas. If I do a new stand-up set, I can sift through and see what works out. A TV show is a nice way to have a greater basket to collect those things in, so thematically I can look through it. Every week it's a different important thing. The pilot's about chairs; examining chairs, and how they're an important thing, using a cartoon music video. Also, I get to act in my own show. Instead of

people saying, "What do you do with *him*?" Don't worry about what you do with "him." I'll tell you what I'd do with "him": this is what I'd do.

It all comes down to the day. You wake up. Then you have this window of time. Then you go to sleep, and it restarts. So, during this window, you have to ask yourself: "How is it enjoyable and productive for me?"

**I'm curious, looking around this room...what's going on in your mind?**

For like, jokes and stuff?

**Whatever you were writing down—**

I'd just say, the cakes really caught my eyes. I like red velvet cake a lot.

Most of the stuff never becomes anything. It all becomes more of a game. If the game is to be perfect, you can't really win it. If the game is to come up with a lot of shit, then...

STYLIST: Joshua Mittleman  
FIRST SPREAD & SECOND SPREAD, LEFT PAGE: Button-down shirt, Alexander McQueen; Sport coat, Marc by Marc Jacobs; Jeans, Dimitri's own  
SECOND SPREAD, RIGHT PAGE: Jacket, Rag and Bone; T-shirt, American Apparel  
ABOVE: Suit, Marc by Marc Jacobs; T-shirt, vintage  
FOLLOWING SPREAD: Sweater, Penguin; Jeans, Superfine







# AN ACTOR PREPARES

## ART AND CRAFT WITH EDDIE REDMAYNE

BY AMI KEALOHA + PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHANNA FISHER

**For a newly minted** heartthrob, 25-year-old actor Eddie Redmayne comes across as refreshingly well-mannered, cheerful and even somewhat earnest in person. On the heels of an acclaimed performance in *Savage Grace* and the completion of *The Other Boleyn Girl*, *Powder Blue*, and *Yellow Handkerchief*, he conveys a genuine enthusiasm for his craft, speaking freely and eloquently about its struggles and rewards, with infectious optimism.

It's clear that this young star is no dilettante, however; though Redmayne's breakthrough role in *The Good Shepherd* was just over a year ago, his dedication and approach is in the same league as actors many years his senior. »







There's been quite a bit made about your years at Eton, but what about your art history degree? Does that play a role in your work?

It does, actually. What I love about acting is that you don't choose the character. For me, it's about trying to completely immerse in the world, whether that's through music or reading or art—which is what it tends to be for me, because I have a visual instinct. *Savage Grace* was all about the era. I looked at photos of these people and paintings by [the main character] Barbara Daly Baekeland. Also in *Savage Grace*, the character Tony had this Moleskine with drawings, and I created that whole thing because I love the practical side of it as well.

In *Yellow Handkerchief*, [my character] was an adopted Native American kid, a complete weirdo, almost ADD, but he does all these visually spectacular things with cameras. So I did this road trip that he did, armed with about 30 disposable cameras, and made this kind of collage book. What's fantastic about the history of art is that you use this object as your focal point to contextualize something and look outside of it. Beyond the acting side of working in film and theater, that's what's interesting. You've got this thing you focus on, and hopefully that broadens your own interests.

I love continuing to learn, basically. Maybe I'm making it sound too rigorous; I don't mean that. I just mean it's a lovely way of furthering yourself. Often, in acting, when it comes down to the moment of filming the scene, you hope what you learned is in you somewhere. It's all about instinct and the moment.

That's something I often wonder. How do you balance the cerebral side with being in the moment?

I didn't train for this. I just started doing theater and learned a lot. There's much more of a sense with theater directors that you're learning your craft; you're learning, and yet you're also working. You think of yourself half as a professional and half as a student, and you're trying to negotiate that.

Interestingly, doing a lot of American things, it's about the history and the context, but it's also about working with a dialect coach. You're literally analyzing each word as you go through. That's really frustrating, and you get over the top of it and you kick it and suddenly it's in you. It's there. I often build a character up through those stages, starting it really technical and then try and free it up. You forget about it in the moment, but you hope that something stuck in there.

You've played a string of psychologically intense characters. How does that affect you?

Sometimes it's exhausting, sometimes less so. I remember moments of feeling like a real fraud when I was doing this play at the Globe. The character has a breakdown for 40 minutes, and after doing it on stage for months, there were moments when I was in tears on the sofa, thinking about the fact that I had friends coming for lunch the next day. And you try to not do that, but film does keep you on the front foot because you really only have those matter of moments to do it. On a film set there's so much going on, there's lots of new people and there's all this stuff being done to you, and it doesn't feel that intense because everyone's just chatting....You've actually got to learn to focus all that energy into those moments, and that I do find quite exhausting, some characters more than others.

In *Savage Grace*, the climax of the film, when the mother seduces the son, was rigorous. But Juli-

anne Moore kept it wonderfully light by being one of those actresses that kind of jumps in. She didn't have to build into it; she could just throw herself at it. So between takes, she'd be sort of in hysterics. I love the relaxed quality of that. You're just chatting away and then suddenly you're—bang!

So do you prefer theater or film?

The film thing came completely out of the blue. I was nervous and didn't really know where I was or what I was doing. Initially, I couldn't wait to get back to the stage, but the more confident I got, or the more I learned, the more I was intrigued. But frequently in film, I end up relying on devices, little tricks. I'm in a stage now that I need to go back and do a play and be wiped out by some director who will tell me that in no way am I being honest. That's the rigor that I need.

You seem to be taking it all in stride. How do you stay so grounded?

To be honest, every actor—every artist, I suppose—however good they are, at some point in their lives gets hit with criticism. I never understood why you'd raise yourself through arrogance when the fall is going to be harder. Don't get me wrong—I know I'm seriously lucky to be in the place I am. I suppose since it was never really my dream, it seems such an unreality. I just keep running with it and loving it while I can.

Also, that's the thing about film—you get to see your performance. If you screw it up onstage, you can go sort it out the next night. Whereas on film I look at some of the stuff I've done—and I don't just mean this in a neurotic actor kind of way—that's seriously bad. That's the most depressing thing, but it's actually happening less for me now these days, when I'm like “Oh, maybe I actually can do this.”

So, what's your biggest challenge at this point? What do you want to improve?

My biggest challenge is being able to live this absurd life. I have a long-term relationship and it's amazing, but often you're away for half the year and when you come back you're kind of out of work. So in theory, when you're supposed to be happiest because you're back with the person you love, you can be neurotic and frustrated.

What do you love about acting?

When I did “Twelfth Night,” I was 19 years old and I had never done much; never done anything professionally. I was there with Mark Rylance, who is 45 years old, and a formidable actor, Sam Wanamaker, and another actor who's 65 years old. They're at the top of their game, you're a complete novice, and yet you're treated on the same level.

I've got to say, working with William Hurt and Kristen Stewart, who's 17 and so beyond her years, and working with all these people and also different nationalities—we feed off each other, and I think that's an amazing thing. William, kind of like me, likes rehearsal and rigor. Others, like Maria Bello, work on instinct. And all this sort of tension and creativity that comes out of those things combining is great—really fun.

STYLIST: Ilaria Urbinati

PREVIOUS PAGE: Coat, Marc Jacobs Collection camel, Marc Jacobs, NY; Pants, Oliver Spencer theobald cream flat-front linen trouser, Oliver Spencer, NY; Shirt, Modern Amusement port henley, Neiman Marcus

THIS PAGE: Jacket, Opening Ceremony black & white oatmeal stretch double-breasted, Opening Ceremony, NY; Shirt, Trovata Padre Columbian white cotton woven, Trovata, Newport Beach; Pants, A.P.C. black velour tuxedo pants, A.P.C., NY; Fedora, Modern Amusement patchwork, American Rag, Los Angeles

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# WEST TING with the MUSE

THE ACT OF CREATION  
AND THE CREATION OF ACTING  
WITH SAM ROCKWELL

BY ERIC SPITZNAGEL + PHOTOGRAPHS BY KURT ISWARIENKO





**We're not going** to be another one of those magazines that calls Sam Rockwell "quirky."

Oh sure, it's probably true. Just look at his résumé. From his first acting gig in the 1989 horror flick *Clownhouse*, where he played a mental patient dressed like a clown, to the upcoming black comedy *Choke*, where he portrays a sex addict and historical war reenactor who chokes on food to pay his mother's hospital bills. His film work has been consistently...well, you know the word we mean. It rhymes with perky.

Not convinced? Consider his other movie roles, like the lawn-mowing social outcast in *Lawn Dogs* (1997), or the Davy Crockett wannabe living in a half-built mobile home in *Box of Moon Light* (1996). There's also the game-show host tricked into becoming a CIA assassin in *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind* (2002), and the two-headed, solipsistic former President of the Galaxy in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (2005). Sam Rockwell may be a lot of things, but he's not the chiseled and humorless Hollywood leading man or the lovable and innocuous boyfriend in a romantic comedy. He's something altogether more...

Please don't make us say it.

We called Sam at his home in New York to ask about his latest films, *Snow Angels* and *Choke*, and, much to nobody's surprise, we didn't discuss either movie for very long. Instead, we talked about private detectives and Kevin Bacon's super-cool walk, and why you shouldn't own a computer even if your friends think you're crazy.

We're not entirely sure what Sam was doing during the interview. At several points during our conversation, we heard flushing and the unmistakable grind of a blender and what sounded like something being crushed under a boot. We didn't ask questions because, honestly, even over the phone, Sam Rockwell scares us a little bit. In a good way, we mean. In a... okay, fine, we'll come right out and say it... in a *quirky* way.

Are you satisfied now?

**Both of the characters in your upcoming films could be described as a little depressing. There's Glenn from *Snow Angels*, a suicidal born-again Christian who just wants his wife back. And then there's Victor from *Choke*, a con man with a Jesus complex and a penchant for fucking strangers in church bathrooms. Why are you drawn to such troubled characters?**

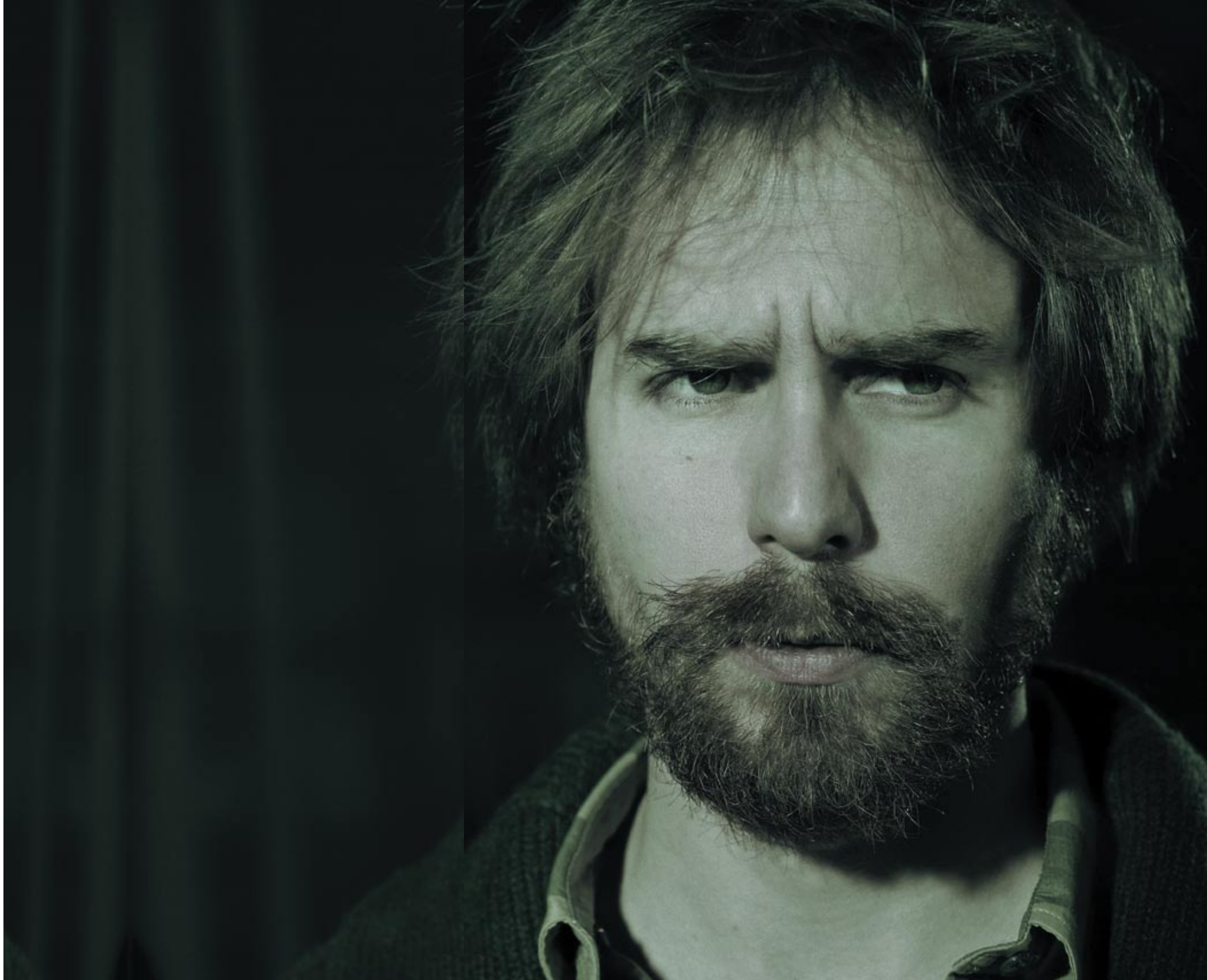
I don't know. I've always been attracted to outsiders. I guess because I've always thought of myself as an outsider. When I was growing up, my favorite movies were *The Deer Hunter* and *Taxi Driver*, stuff like that. I didn't really relate to conventional heroes or good guys. I liked characters with real problems.

**When you approach a character like Victor in *Choke*, who believes he's a direct descendent of Jesus Christ, do you keep him at arm's length because he's such an obvious nut-job, or do you find a way to identify with him on a more personal level?**

At least in the beginning, it's all analytical. But as you get more involved, you have to start identifying with the guy on some level. And if you can't relate to him, you find your substitutions—the "as ifs"—and do whatever it takes to make it work for you. If the script isn't personal enough, you do what's necessary to make it come to life for you.

**But you're not a method actor, right? You're not going to go out and have sex in a church bathroom just because Victor did?**

No, I wouldn't do that. I don't think you need to do that. I think the imagination is enough. »















Unless you’re just doing it for your own kicks. You could always call your girlfriend and say, “Hey, I’m doing some research for a movie. How soon can you meet me at the Catholic church downtown?”

[Laughs.] I’ve done some nutty things, but I haven’t done that. I have enough weird experiences to draw on.

Such as...?

[A long pause.]

You’re just going to tease us, aren’t you?

[Another long pause.]

Okay, fine. *Choke* is only the second adaptation of a Chuck Palahniuk novel. Does it feel like there’s a lot of pressure for this movie to become a cult hit like *Fight Club*?

Naw. It’s nothing like *Fight Club*. This is a guerilla version of a Chuck Palahniuk book. *Fight Club* had a bigger budget and a lot of special effects. We don’t have any of that shit. We were low-budget and we shot the entire thing in 25 days.

Is that short?

That’s extremely short. The schedule was exhausting. And the scope of the film is huge. It’s like *Boogie Nights* with all the different locations and

costumes and set pieces. Three months would’ve been more realistic. It was a tough shoot.

It sounds like it was draining both physically and emotionally.

Very emotionally draining, yeah. The part of Victor is like a modern Hamlet.

But a way more fucked-up Hamlet who likes raping elderly women in senior retirement homes.

Oh yeah, definitely. A fucked-up Hamlet, to be sure.

Speaking of which, *Choke* the novel has a lot of explicit and sometimes violent sex scenes. Was there anything that had to be changed or edited for the film version?

I’m sure there was, but I think we were pretty faithful. Clark [Gregg, the director] wrote a great screenplay. It’s been a while since I read the book. I don’t know what we left out.

Let’s cut right to the obvious question. Did you keep the scene involving anal beads?

[Laughs.] Oh yeah, that’s still in there.

Seriously? Good lord, man. You are a dedicated thespian.

There are anal beads, I’ll just say that. I don’t want to give anything else away.

*The New York Times* once described your childhood as a “footloose upbringing.” Did you grow up in a small Midwestern town that banned dancing and rock music?

[Laughs.] I don’t know what they were talking about. I might’ve told them that I related to the character in *Footloose* because I was a city kid and a couple of times I had to move to the suburbs and I never felt comfortable there. But it was never really a *Footloose* upbringing.

So you’ve never been involved in any dance competitions?

Well, sometimes I’ll go to a party with a bunch of white people and, you know...

You’ll bust a move?

Yeah. I can dance. I like dancing. It’s funny, I just worked with Kevin Bacon on *Frost/Nixon*, and he was so cool. He’s got the coolest walk ever. I think I stole his walk when I was The Kid (his character in the 1996 movie *Box of Moon Light*), and I just can’t shake it.

What is it about the way Kevin Bacon walks? Is there a lot of swagger in his shoulders?

Yeah, there’s a little bit of that Jimmy Caan shoulder thing. It’s a very authentic, genuinely cool walk. It’s

not put on. It’s for real. You can’t pretend to do a walk like that.

Is it true that you made your stage debut at age 10, doing an improv comedy sketch at an East Village theater?

Yeah, yeah. It was with my mother. It was a skit about *Casablanca* and I did a pretty good Humphrey Bogart impression.

Would you do a little Bogart for us right now?

Uh, okay, let’s see. [Speaking vaguely like Bogart.] “Sam, I thought I told you never to play that song again.” Oh man, that’s terrible. I can’t do it anymore.

Try Humphrey Bogart asking somebody to have sex with him in a church basement.

Okay. “Sam, why don’t you come down to the basement with me?” [Laughs.] That didn’t sound like Bogart at all. That was a little more Edward G. Robinson.

And when Edward G. Robinson asks you to come down to a church basement, you probably shouldn’t go.

Yeah. Nothing good can come from that.

Every actor has had crappy day-jobs as they’ve waited to be discovered, but you probably had the best crappy day-job ever.

Really? What are you talking about?

When you worked as a private detective’s assistant.

Oh, yeah, that. Actually, I was just an intern for a private detective. But yeah, I did that for a couple of months in the early ’90s.

How do you land a job like that?

It was a complete fluke. I was roped into it by another intern. We were both students in the same acting class in New York, and one night I bumped into him at a restaurant and he was acting really quiet and mysterious. So I said, “What the hell are you doing?” And he said, “Shhh, I’m following somebody.” He was on a job, which seemed so cool to me at the time. Then he called me a couple of days later and said, “You wanna make \$50? We’re gonna tail this chick that might be having an affair.” And that was it.

Well, who could blame you? Nobody in their right mind would say no to an offer like that. That was in 1991, so \$50 was a little more money.

Even if there was no money, c’mon, who doesn’t want to be a part of a spying mission? Please tell us that you were in a van with “Flower Delivery” painted on the side

and you were both dressed in Dickies overalls.

It was nothing that cool, I’m afraid. We were in a car and we followed her to a hotel. I think it was a girl, it might’ve been a guy, I forget. Somebody was suing somebody for more alimony and they needed evidence of marital infidelity.

Was the job always that exciting?

I didn’t find it exciting at all. It was too sleazy for me. I didn’t have the stomach for it. And it was too boring. The rest of the time I was just doing paperwork. Once I went out to Queens to do some research. It was pretty boring stuff.

So you were never in a smoky office in Chinatown with a yellow neon sign flashing in the window and no overhead lighting?

No such luck.

You never used words like *dame* or *moll*?

No, sorry. I use them now, though. All the time.

Let’s play a game of free association. I’ll say a few random quotes from Chuck Palahniuk’s book, *Choke*, and you tell us whether you agree or disagree. Okay, let’s try it.

“A good addiction takes the guesswork out of death.” »





I like that sentiment. It's very Victor. He's a great anti-hero.

**"Art never comes from happiness."**  
[Long pause.] Ummm... I don't know if that's... I don't know if I agree with that. [Another long pause.] Yeah, there is a lot of pain in art. It's probably true. Great art can be painful. But I don't know if that's an absolute.

**"We can spend our lives letting the world tell us who we are. Sane or insane. Saints or sex addicts. Heroes or victims. Or we can decide for ourselves."**  
That's the last line of the book, isn't it? I think that's very true. You just have to be who you're going to be without any apologies. As long as you don't hurt anybody, you're fine. It's amazing how often people judge you for the weirdest things. Like, for instance, I don't have a computer. Sometimes when I tell people that, they get angry about it. "Why don't you get with the fucking program?!" Or some people think it's adorable or quirky or lovably idiosyncratic. I don't really care either way. That's just who I am. Maybe someday I will get a computer, but I'm not going to get one because of expectations.

**"Without access to true chaos, we'll never have true peace. Unless everything can get worse, it won't get any better."**  
Yeah, I think there's some truth to that. Again, it's about expectations. People can screw themselves up trying to live up to the expectations of strangers.

**"Even the worst blowjob is better than sniffing the best rose, watching the greatest sunset, hearing children laugh."**  
I don't know. I'd have to think about that one.

**Seriously? Wow. You must've seen some jaw-droppingly beautiful sunsets.**  
[Softly.] Yeah, yeah.



STYLIST: Lara Backmender @ Magnet  
ASSISTANT STYLIST: Nicole Olson  
INTERN: Emily Kellerman

SPREADS 1 & 2:  
Sunglasses, vintage from Cherry  
Shirt, Loden Dager  
Cardigan, Loden Dager  
Jeans, Earnest Sewn  
Suspenders, vintage from What Comes Around  
Boots, vintage from What Comes Around

SPREAD 3:  
Shirt, Tim Hamilton  
Jeans, Vintage Lee from What Comes Around  
Boots, vintage from What Comes Around  
Watch, Rockwell's own

SPREAD 4, LEFT PAGE:  
T-shirt, Splendid Mills  
Jeans, Vintage Lee from What Comes Around  
Boots, vintage from What Comes Around  
Watch, Rockwell's own

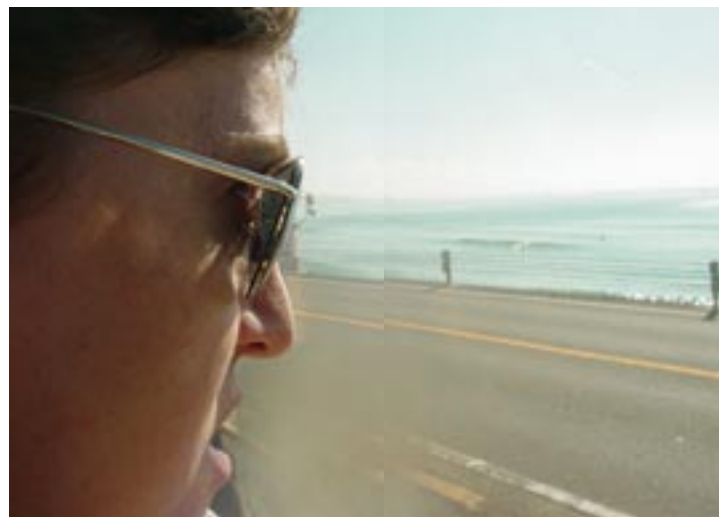
SPREAD 4 RIGHT PAGE:  
Shirt, Woolrich Woolen Mills  
Jeans, Earnest Sewn  
Boots, vintage from What Comes Around  
Watch, Rockwell's own

SPREAD 5 & 6:  
Cardigan, Fred Perry  
Shirt, Polo Ralph Lauren  
Jacket, vintage from What Comes Around  
Jeans, Vintage Lee from What Comes Around  
Hat, vintage from What Comes Around  
Watch, Rockwell's own



# HOW TO BREAK JAWS, LEARN TO GET NUTTY AND FIND HAPPINESS WITHIN

BY MYA STARK + PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID GORDON GREEN



# WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA, DAVID

# GORDON GREEN

# ?

**The American auteur.** An endangered, and in these sad days, often altered, beast. When was the last time there was a fresh crop of young, studly dudes making movies their way, shakin' up the Man, going wild all over your screen? Not since the rise of Tarantino and his gang, back in the 1990s. This is a fairly significant bummer for those who are interested in seeing films that reflect an individual's viewpoint on our world (which is all "auteurist" filmmaking really is, so you can put away the freedom fries).

And it means that David Gordon Green, film-history-wise, was a fairly lonely fellow when he hit the scene in 2000 with *George Washington*, the feature he made just after graduating from North Carolina School of the Arts. Received by critics with what bordered on relief that American cinema could still produce a voice so clear, a vision so beautiful, he went on to make two more films, *All the Real Girls* and *Undertow*, racking up the Terrence Malick comparisons apace—Malick even produced *Undertow* for him.

Now he's back with *Snow Angels*, his most ambitious effort yet. Adapted from the novel by Stewart O'Nan, the film is a tense, yet sensitive, finely drawn portrayal of a troubled American family, touching upon fundamental issues like parenthood, male-female relations, religiosity and loss. Working with such talents as Kate Beckinsale and Sam Rockwell, in addition to brilliant usual collaborators like cinematographer Tim Orr, he's crafted yet another work of beauty, while managing to grow and deepen as a storyteller. It's only a matter of time before Green pings Oscar's radar.



# I MAKE SOME THINGS AS A SORT OF WEIRD PSEUDO-THERAPY, AND I MAKE SOME AS A KIND OF EXPLOITATION...

*Mean* scratched the surface of this increasingly important artist, and found...a guy with braces who loves bad movies—we're talking *Troll 2* bad—and anything with Shelly Long? Get ready, there's nuttiness ahead.

So, uh...how are you?

I'll tell ya, I'm two things. One is, I just got back from Tokyo and I'm jet-lagged. And I just got my braces tightened, and then I have to get my jaw broken tomorrow at 5 a.m.

What for?

They have to reset my jaw.

Why, did somebody punch you?

I have an underbite.

Your braces are cool, though. They're almost like grills. Are you going to look the same after your surgery?

I'm going to be much better looking. I'm going to look just like Bob Saget.

I read another interview with you that said that you like B-movies, and I wanted to ask which ones, because it's not the association I'd naturally make when looking at your films.

Which ones? Like what genre of B-movie?

Well, what are some crappy movies you like?

I only like crappy movies. Like a few weeks ago down here, they had a midnight screening of *Troll 2*. Have you seen that?

That movie is so bad, it's surreal...in an almost "high art" kind of way.

Non-intentional high art. What else? Most of what I like is critically considered garbage. I like '70s drive-in movies. Garbage-y kind of garbage, good garbage. Like, *Eat My Dust* is really good. Anything with a Carradine in it I really like. *Purple People Eater*. Would you consider *Frozen Assets* a B-movie—with Shelly Long? [It's] about a sperm bank. Anything with Shelley Long in it is good, too. *Sky Bandits* is pretty interesting. Have you seen *Uphill All the Way* with Mel Tillis? You say '70s B-movies and you get a little hipster, so that's why I have to counter that with "No, no, no—we're talking bad."

What's the appeal of it, do you think? Escapism?

You don't bring any baggage to it. To me, it's truly like you're checking out. You're not intellectualizing anything. You're not relating to anything. You're not identifying with a certain character. You're not emotionally invested in anything. It's like watching a basketball game of a high school that you've never heard of. Or escapism as a comfort, 'cause you'd rather watch it on the news than actually get out there and get your hands dirty. You'd rather see it on the Discovery Channel than go to Africa.

Oh, speaking of Africa—I actually have a friend who's there on vacation right now, and he said a hippo came out on the lawn of their cabin

or whatever, and sprayed a 20-foot jet of hot poop into the air.

Awesome.

Totally. Nature. It's mind-blowing. Did you know the hippo is the deadliest mammal? They kill more people annually than lions. But I want to go back to something you said before I got all distracted—about the pleasure of escapist films being that you're not identifying with the characters. In *Snow Angels*, I found myself identifying strongly with Sam Rockwell's character, which was uncomfortable, to say the least.

I do, too. It gives me bad dreams thinking about it. But that's good. I mean, I don't make movies for the same reason I watch movies. I don't make movies for escapism—well, actually, I just did [*Pineapple Express*, coming out in August], because I needed it emotionally, like psychologically. *Snow Angels* took me to a crazy place, an upsetting place. But I make some things as a sort of weird pseudo-therapy, and I make some as a kind of exploitation, because you get to do whatever you want and you can make it cool. The opportunity to actually, like, blow up cars and have a car chase and shoot a bunch of guns and go to a firing range and learn how to, you know, get nutty. So every movie has its own kind of excuse for having been made. If I couldn't justify it, I'd stop doing it. You don't love a paycheck.

That's the cool thing about your work. It doesn't feel like any of your movies are made for the paycheck.

Yeah, that's pointless. I don't need any money to live. I live in a great little colorful, strange, low-income neighborhood in New Orleans. I could live off anybody in L.A.'s lunch money. Easy. So, yeah, I don't need to waste my youth with that. Which I guess is over, but I'm hanging onto it on a daily basis.

What do you want people to feel when they watch your films? When you do these nutty things, is it for you, or is it for your audience?

This movie is for the audience. I made three movies for myself and they're really rewarding and were absolutely essential in my development and growth and understanding of the craft, and understanding of myself, but they're all very self-indulgent. I'm enormously proud of the stuff I've made. I'm enormously ashamed of the failures along the way. But I guess with *Snow Angels*—and maybe it was because I wrote it from arm's length [adapting it from a novel]—I felt from the moment that I inherited it, I want this to be a movie that affects people. Like, it would be selfish and self-destructive for me to make it for myself solely. I want people to feel what I felt when I met these characters. I want them to feel what I feel when I'm touched by the sincerity of the humor and the tragedy that these people are faced with. I want them to look at themselves, and see themselves in

this movie. It's a juggling act—it's a juggling act of tone and theme. It's the birth of love, and the death of love, and that's an overly ambitious and overly simplified way to say what I see in the movie. But I see seeds of the first time I saw beauty, and I see seeds of the first time I saw death. And I know this can be monumental if handled with sincerity and subtlety, and it can be disturbing and manipulative and plastic if handled without that.

I keep coming back to Sam Rockwell's character. What really drew me to him was all these tiny moments where he's trying to make things go right, and failing, and I've felt that way, too.

I know. There's so many moments of my life with that kind of false optimism. Sam and I talked about how it's a guy who's looking at the world around him to make himself happy, rather than finding that happiness within yourself.

Coming from working a lot with your film-school friends, how did you approach collaborating with super-famous actors to achieve these incredibly realist, nuanced performances?

Don't talk much. And occasionally, if I have a question, I'll ask them a question, and if I have a song I want to play, I'll play them a song. But I think just being with somebody, if you cast the right person, and they're smart and insightful and intuitive, [it's enough]. I've never worked with a jerk or an idiot. Which is great, I hope that lasts. The principle is that everyone knows what their job is. I don't like people telling me what my job is. Makes me feel like, "Why did you hire me?" If I walk around with Kate Beckinsale—the woman is brilliant, and beautiful, and insightful and is a mother, and is in a relationship, has been through all the successes and failures, and has so much to bring to the role of Annie—what am I gonna tell her? So, literally, it's about being there, being with her in the space, in the environment, in the costume. Talking through it. I just make a list of things in Annie's house. Make her a list of 100 things that I [imagined I] saw in her house, regardless of whether those ended up as props or not, or you ever see them in the shot. Things like, Annie has six umbrellas at the door. Why? Just in case she lost one, she'll never be without. I'm not scratching my head trying to get someone like Kate to an emotional place. She'll get there herself without me poking her on the shoulder and bothering her.

When you make films, is it out of the desire to communicate? To show people something?

Ultimately, I think it's communication. To me, if I was a great writer, I'd write a book. If I was a great photographer, I'd take pictures. I'm not great at any art. So I like to surround myself with great artists and technicians, and put images together because I got taste. I've got taste like a motherfucker. If I can communicate to the different department heads, we can gather our ideas and communicate to the audience. That's the big idea.



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# APPRECIATION

## JEFF LYNNE, A SYMPHONY

SECRET MESSAGES FROM THE MAESTRO OF ELO    INTERVIEW + ILLUSTRATION BY TYLER THACKER



**The year: 2025**, approximately 55 light-years away from the planet they call Earth. In a spaceship powered by sun-light and space-marijuana, volunteer teenagers are interrupted from their make-out sessions by their captain, ELO legend Jeff Lynne. “We need more bleedin’ star power!” he bellows, stopping the ship in its tracks, and resets its navigation system for foreign coordinates. “Where are you taking us?” the crew sings in unison. Distant chimes, flexatones and ambient string swells seep into the room as if coming from the skipper’s very mind itself.

Captain Lynne, a magnificent silhouette of a British gentleman with exceptionally curly locks, slowly turns to his rapt audience. One hand on the Record button, an acoustic guitar in the other, he croons: “All hands on deck! Zip up your trousers and prepare for hyperspeed!” Backing vocals crescendo in and out of phase with a brilliant flash of light, and then—ZOOM! In a split second, the good ship Electric Light Orchestra thrusts forward with such unanticipated magnitude that its entire crew is sent hurtling into the future. The go-go dancers and stony beardedoes become mothers and fathers, but worst of all...the space-drugs fly off the table and into the electric-yellow shag carpeting.

Millennia earlier, or possibly later, I was listening to “Mission (A World Record)” from ELO’s 1976 release *A New World Record* when I noticed a peculiar fleck of glitter through my telescope. It turned out to be the following Q&A, which I don’t totally recall actually happening [Ed. note: *Oh, it happened.*]:

JEFF LYNNE: You sound like you’re in a giant echo chamber. I’m in a large concrete box. I’ve been listening to The Idle Race’s catalogue. I was excited to learn that not

only did you contribute most of the songs, but you also got your first production credit on the second record. From so early in your career, what drove you to the other side of the glass?

When I first started to listen to music, when I was 13 or something, I was listening to Del Shannon and stuff like that. You’ve got to know that in those days, you’d only see rock n’ roll on the telly once a week. I used to wonder, How the hell did they get it all together? Who made the sounds, and why did it sound like it did? I got a little tape recorder in my parents’ rooms in Birmingham and started teaching myself as I went along. All I ever wanted to do was make records, basically. I was never totally fond of playing live—I wanted to get in the studio all the time, because of the fun I had in there. Making weird noises, using strange rooms, hearing what kinds of sounds you could get off the same instrument by mixing it 10 different ways. I might put a mic up me pant leg. It’s just the most creative place. I’m the happiest I can be when I’m in the studio in the middle of a project.

You’ve said that your father helped turn you on to the grandeur of classical music.

He loved it, so I had to listen to it ‘cause it was always on—on his record player, and on the radio. There was only one radio in the house. But the reason he was good at music was he had a built-in musical instinct. He took me for a walk one day and said, “Look at that pipe over there.” It was a great big sewer pipe, just waiting to be put in the ground. A big long metal pipe. Probably about three foot diameter. He said, “Listen to this.” And he went, “Baa ba baa baa...” and of course, it made a big, long chord—it was fantastic. So I tried it, and went,

“WHAM!” He showed me how to do a major, a minor, the different types of chords. I didn’t know what they were, either. Wow, it was the most drastic, quick explanation of what harmony was. It’s so simple, it’s a standard pipe. Here was giant reverb, in the street.

Besides the sewer pipe, what was your first instrument? Me father bought me a guitar for two pounds.

*Out of the Blue* has often been regarded as the seminal Electric Light Orchestra record, including the hit songs “Turn to Stone” and “Mr. Blue Sky.” The record was also unique in that it was accompanied by the infamous tour where the band played inside a giant facsimile of the ELO spaceship. There must have been a wide array of obstacles, traveling from town to town with a large flying saucer.

Yeah. It was so hard to set the thing up. We did that show every other day, because the truck—I think it was like 11 trucks or something, semis—could only get to another gig in, like, two days. It was much more difficult to play in the flying saucer, but obviously, visually spectacular.

The late ’70s saw ELO take a well-received turn when releasing an unabashed disco record, *Discovery*... I can tell you it was called *Disco*? *Very!* I love the force of disco. I love the freedom it gave me to make different rhythms acro ss it. I enjoyed that really steady driving beat. Just steady as a rock. I’ve always liked that simplicity in the bass drum.

Despite the polished, danceable glamour, it featured one of ELO’s more roots-rock tunes, “Don’t Bring Me Down,” which almost feels like the antithesis of disco. “Don’t Bring me Down” is a loop of a drum track. It’s just two bars from another song; the loop would have been, I don’t know, seven, eight feet long. So we were all in the studio with analogue tape wrapped around mic stands and pencils until you could finish looping, record it onto the multi-track, for like four minutes. It was like a drum machine before its time, basically.

Do you work from a home studio?

Yeah, I’ve got the whole Pro Tools thing. Everything gets routed to analogue disc—old, fat, English analogue disc. That’s really where we make the basic tonal adjustments.

How do you feel about the contemporary models of pop mixing, including songs being locked to a virtual grid, digital time-stretching and auto-tuning? It’s kind of marvelous, really. It defies all the laws of physics I was ever told about recording. It’s amazing: all these algorithms that have been invented to change the way sound works. I think the technology is wonderful, and I’m not averse to pitching the odd note here and there, if the take is great. There’s only one note that’s a bit off? Shimmy it up a little bit. ‘Cause the performance is more important, I think, than the pitch. But luckily I’ve always been able to sing a tune pretty well.

How have drugs affected your music-making over the years?

I couldn’t get high until the early ’80s.

Speaking of the early ’80s, one of my favorite ELO records is *Time*. It seems to tonally and lyrically personify the themes of science fiction that had lingered in and out of earlier recordings.

I’ve always been kind of into sci-fi. Not like monsters and all that, but time travel, technology. It’s a reflection of that interest. I love science. I’m just a layman. Don’t know much. But what I do learn, I really enjoy.

Finally, it has been rumored that you wear your iconic sunglasses to dinner...

Not only do I wear me sunglasses to the dinner table, I wear them to bed as well [Laughs.].



# APPRECIATION

## THE PECULIAR SOUNDS OF GOBLIN

LOST IN TRANSLATION WITH LEGENDARY ITALIAN PROG-SCORE ROCKERS    BY BRET BERG



While their name remains somewhat obscure state-side, the rock band Goblin’s prolific soundtrack efforts in the golden age of Italian trash cinema cemented their reputation as a dark, funky force to be reckoned with. In an era bursting with evocative music from heavy hitters like Pino Donaggio and Ennio Morricone, Goblin quickly distinguished itself with its scores for Dario Argento’s *Deep Red* (1975) and *Suspiria* (1977), which elevated the band to superstar status in their native country. Goblin’s impressive body of work, combining both film music and stand-alone LPs, has left in its wake a thick, quizzical discography. But be assured: The band’s highs and lows are equally entertaining.

As was the process by which this interview with bassist Fabio Pignatelli was conducted. A request to Goblin’s record label in Italy brought back a cheerful-seeming, if hard-to-understand, reply. It seemed that the band wanted to conduct the interview by email, with our questions translated for them into Italian. They would reply in their native tongue, and their answers would then be translated back into English, for you, the *Mean* reader, by a consortium of friends and friends’ moms. After all that, we weren’t quite sure what the questions were anymore (and are therefore presenting them here in the potentially idiosyncratic Italian that Fabio received)—and the answers now read a little like the psychedelic poetry that emerges while goofing around with an online translation program. Yet somehow, all put together, it seems to make perfect sense—trust us, it’s better this way.

Molti compositori italiani, lei compreso, durante gli anni 70 e 80 includevano nelle loro musiche sia elementi rock che di musica dance. Ripensandoci, erano più efficaci gli assoli di chitarra o le linee di basso funky?

You can’t say what’s better between a rock guitar solo or a funky rhythm but you can determinate what’s better for the movie scene you’re working on. This is the way we always used to work, but for the age we had at the time, maybe it’s better to talk about instinct!

Si è mai spaventato o anche solo colpito da una musica da lei composta per un film?

Usually I’m not that impressionable, but I have to admit that when I saw the preview of *Suspiria*, with the soundtrack as well, I had a thrill.

Trova un legame o una corrispondenza tra lei e il regista/compositore John Carpenter o pensa che sia stato lui a prendere molto in prestito da lei e dal suo stile?

I think I can’t say that Carpenter could ever have “borrowed” our style! I mean, he is one of the directors that I estimate most. The fact that he’s a Goblin’s fan or that



he could have been inspired from our works can only be a honor!

I Goblin (e tutti i progetti a loro collegati) facevano un grande affidamento su sintetizzatori, strumenti e tecniche di registrazione tra le più nuove e all'avanguardia di quel periodo. Lei li considerava sempre al massimo livello di tecnologia musicale o, magari, aspettava per vedere se qualcun altro trovava nuovi strumenti o tecnologie?

Are you asking me if we used to wait for new technologies to create or invent something new? We always tried to move with the times, but, we preferred working on our inspirations or on our ideas more then on technology. For example, our use of synthesizer have been overstated in just few cases. We used a lot of experimentation during the recording sessions, we had a lot of fun looking for new and uncommon things. I especially liked looking for particular sounds or peculiar sound effects, all of them invented while recording our music.

Le altre bands prog rock italiane, contemporanee a lei, (Le Orme, PFM, New Trolls) erano a favore e rispettavano le sue colonne sonore o le disprezzavano? Nel caso non approvassero o apprezzassero le dispiaceva o non se ne interessava?

I never heard anything about that. But, anyway, I think I wouldn’t care.

Le band prog, vostre contemporanee, rispettavano il vostro lavoro o no ? Same as my last answer.

Che era la tua prima reazione quando hai sentito la tema de *Tenebre*, completamente rieditare nel canzone recente di JUSTICE, si chiami “Phantom?” AWFUL!!! They didn’t ask for any permissions. All around the world, a lot of times this has already happened and we really don’t know what to do!

Perchè non c’erano uscite ufficiali di registrazioni live dei Goblin durante il loro momento di maggior successo?

We didn’t play live very often and at that time a live recording session was really really expensive, so, we never thought about doing one. The live record, released in 2000, I think it has been recorded by a fan in the 1975-6 using the inside microphone of a mono tape recorder!!!!

Dato la grandissima quantità di materiale che dovevi produrre in un breve periodo di tempo, di solito tu lavoravi su materiale ancora non editato e montato, sul lavoro finito o andavi in studio con solo una serie di indicazioni scritte/verbalì?



It depended on production requirements. Sometimes we had the time to compose music, other times we didn’t, so, we had to do everything inside the studio. And this is what happened with *Profondo Rosso* and with a really short time on our disposal.

Inoltre, data la scarsità di tempo a disposizione, le tue produzioni finite erano più il lavoro della tua band live o il risultato di molte sovraincisioni?

It was a good mix of both things. We used to play a lot but we also cared very much, when time was enough, about recordings.

Durante gli anni “70” moltissime band progressive europee sembravano estremamente simili a band inglesi o di oltre oceano, mentre le gran parte delle band italiane avevano un suono nettamente e distintivamente “italiano”. Quale pensi sia la ragione?

Because we are Italian!!!! Our musical culture, for better or for worse, is anyhow different from the other ones and it brought us playing an “Italian prog,” with an obvious British inspiration. They invented it and we, as Italians always do, customized it.

Ho sentito voci che dicevano che, praticamente, il più delle volte in italia i compositori di musiche per film, venivano pagati non quando avevano completato la colonna sonora ma solo quando si iniziavano a vedere degli incassi al botteghino. Andava veramente così?

Thank you for the asking it. It’s sad but true!!!! In Italy, except for a “composition reward,” you (the composer) get the money only if the movie has an income. In your country the movie’s production pays the music to the composer and then, he also get the royalties (music ones included) depending on the distribution and the income. And if the movie doesn’t get one.... no money!!! I think the American solution is more fair (it happens also in Japan): because, even if the movie doesn’t collect money, everyone (actors, screenplayers, photographers, ecc.. ecc..) get paid except for us? At that time we didn’t know all these things so we gave all the royalties for U.S.A. (Japan and other countries) to the movie’s production, that got all the money from the sale of the movies in various countries. Basically, we don’t get any royalties from the screenings of our movies (television excluded) in those countries!!!!

Ciao  
Best Regard  
Fabio Pignatelli



# SOUND&VISION

## 50 WAYS TO LEAVE YOUR BODY

AN ODE TO BOWIE FEATURING PHOTOGRAPHY BY BENJY RUSSELL  
AND WORDS BY A CONSTELLATION OF SONGWRITERS

**The Surrealists invented** it: A group of people write one poem together, but no one sees another's contribution. They do it according to predetermined rules so it will link up afterwards to make (surreal) sense. *Mean* brought together a group of extraordinary lyricists to create an exquisite corpse to go with the following images from a larger photographic study, *50 Ways to Leave Your Body*, by noted artist Benjy Russell.



what is the role of lore in the rule of law?

(David Berman, Silver Jews)

ESCAPISM



**gold, cyan, shattered, white**

(Daniel Snaith, Caribou)

**oh, what sound do noises make?**

(Dan Bejar, The New Pornographers, Destroyer)



ESCAPISM



to leave something on the earth that will  
stay around after we are dead...

(Yeasayer)

and the moon is new again before  
I remember to turn around before it

(Vashti Bunyan)

# MOBY EXPLAINS IT ALL

## ON ESCAPING TO THE REALITY WITHIN

Sound and vision makes us feel, takes us places. David Bowie and Brian Eno knew that. Any committed music-maker does. But how many are able to explain why in terms we can understand with our intellects, as well as our hearts? As it turns out, **MOBY** is one of them. In fact, he's got a degree in sociology, and when we sat down to speak with him about the theme of this issue, about all our mixed-up, out-there ideas about escaping from, and connecting to, reality, he was able to explain it way better than we were.

So, we took out the questions, removed a few stray clauses, and are pleased to present what's basically a complete and beautifully-argued essay on the topic of escapism and the path to a deeper reality.

Uh, rock on, dude.

—Mya Stark

**What are the two** least desirable situations any person can find themselves in? Being buried alive, or being in prison. And the reason is because you're stuck with yourself, with no distractions. Escapism, at its best, is something that makes you almost forget that you're yourself. Think of going out to dinner with someone. If you feel self-conscious, that's not good. But if you feel comfortable and relaxed, you're probably not terribly self-aware at that moment. And that's great.

I think it's sort of Calvinistic, this notion that there's something bad about escapism. I mean, if someone's form of escapism is, I don't know, pedophilia or burning crosses or shooting crystal meth into their genitals, there is. But then, any escapist behavior taken to an extreme is going to be unhealthy. Like me with trashy airport fiction. If it got to a point where I was locked in a closet reading it, and not bathing, and not going outside, and not interacting with people, then one could say, yeah, that's negative escapism.

The best type of escapism is when I feel like I'm using all of my faculties. Like playing volleyball with friends, or playing in the basement with my rock band, or even water skiing—things where your whole body and mind is being used well, and you are able to lose sight of yourself.

The most meaningful way of answering the question is to say (and this is the grad school existentialist answer)

that the human condition prevents us from ever actually connecting with what reality is. Meaning that we're so limited by our senses that we cannot perceive reality, let alone connect to it. The best you can come up with is what philosophers might call a "collective subjectivism": if everyone agrees that something's real, it's probably not really real, but we might as well just say that it's real. A Buddhist would agree with that, and say that reality is yourself, at its most still point. Which is why they sit around and meditate all the time, to try and connect with that center stillness.

I would say that there definitely is stuff out there. The true nature of what it is, is unknowable. You know, just because it's 14 billion years old, and when you start getting into the world of photons and quanta and string theory and whatever, the nature of existence is beyond our comprehension. The best that we can do is look at it phenomenologically: we can't understand the nature of existence. The best we can do is to understand our relation to it. And we do that with our brains.

My friend Eddie's dad is the chairman of this program called the Institute for Music and Neurological Function, started by Oliver Sacks, and I got involved through him. What I've realized is that music actually can do remarkable, almost miraculous, things to the brain. For example, patients who've suffered serious brain trauma, who have lost the ability to speak, but can still sing. And I've seen it up close; I've seen videotape of an 85-year-old man who's been wheelchair-bound for 20 years, and you put on his favorite song from when he was 15, and his toes start tapping, and he stands up, and he kind of shuffles around. Turn off the music, and he sits back down. The brain is that fluid.

For the longest time, people thought that by the age of eight, you have all the brain cells you're ever gonna have. And now they realize that no, the brain does keep generating new brain cells. There are certain types of behavior that promote neurogenesis: exercise, learning, lack of stress. So if you do those—you know, walk a mile, learn something new every day—your brain is going to keep humming along, and stave off Alzheimer's and stave off dementia, hopefully. Which is encouraging, especially because I spent a lot of my life drinking too much.



ESCAPISM





you fell, I caught you...amazing!

(Mike Watt, Minutemen, FIREHOSE)

ESCAPISM





# PHWOOM!

AN INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE SCHLATTER BY MYA STARK

**Cue: Groovy dance music.** *The scene is a cocktail party in full '60s swing: men in sharp and out-there suits, women in mod miniskirts, everyone dancing and smiling and having a grand old time in front of a vibrant Op-Art backdrop. Suddenly, the music swells, then holds its breath, and an adorable, bubbly, blonde chick stops frugging long enough to turn to the camera and deliver the following bon mot with an aura of indefatigable innocence:*

*Goldie Hawn: I don't see why there should be any question about capital punishment. I think everyone in the Capital should be punished. [Giggles.]*

How cute! Sweet, ditzzy little Goldie just said she'd like to have our entire federal government put to death, on prime-time broadcast television, during the Vietnam War! Isn't she precious, Mother?

Wait—wha?!

Can something be escapist and utterly subversive at the same time? If it manages to be both of those things, can it possibly be stopped from reshaping our minds, our culture, even our world? That may be exactly what's already happened due to a sketch-comedy show that aired on NBC from 1968 to 1973. If you're too young to have seen it, you've still been impacted by it due to the influ-

ence it had on *The Muppet Show*, which borrowed a lot from its format and general *joie de guerre*. This show was called *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In*, and it launched the careers of Goldie Hawn, Lily Tomlin and random one-off guest Richard Nixon (potentially true story)—but it was producer George Schlatter's happening, and it freaked him out. And in the process, its sly drug references, warm-blooded sexual innuendo, groundbreaking fast-cut style and waggishly lefty bent freaked America out too, and changed it forever. Simply because it made being anti-establishment seem like so much fun. Kind of like when Republicans discovered sometime in the '90s that if they smoked cigars, ate red meat and objectified women, they could be cool again. And we all know where that led. So settle into the conversation pit, let it all hang out and smoke 'em if you got 'em—as *Mean* and George Schlatter plot the next wave of the televised revolution.

**My main question is, How the hell did you get this show on the air?**

It was an accident. Here's the story. I produced a lot of television shows. The *Dinah Shore Show*, Judy Garland's show—a whole bunch of television shows, plus specials with Sinatra, Lucy and a lot of people. I was producing the Grammy Awards,

and at that point, nobody knew what the Grammy Awards were, and we got Frank and Tony Bennett. NBC wanted me to do it again, and I really didn't want to, and I said, "I would do the Grammy Awards if they would just let me do one show my way." My frustration, having done that much variety, was with the box. It was four walls, and pretty much an extension of a motion-picture set, or night clubs, or theater. So I said, "Let's break the walls." So we began to do the show, and [the network] realized this was a 200-page script—it made no sense. It was all just bits and pieces. Then they wanted to fix it and have "guest stars." This show was not about guest stars. This show was about just being funny. So for the pilot, nobody even came near the studio. They were just terrified of this crazy thing that was going on. So we ran it for 'em, and they said "It's funny, but what's the show?," and we said, "That is the show." It reflected my own Attention Deficit Disorder. We didn't have a word for it back then. I know now it was Attention Deficit Disorder, which came as a result of my own boredom.

**We're definitely at a point now where stuff on TV is boring again. Like, really really really boring. Hecka boring. And it's annoying.**

Well, partially because of the control that the corpo-

rations have on it, you know? For instance, we are totally unaware of the total control over us that the pharmaceutical industries have. But that's not the way it has to be, and strangely enough—or encouragingly enough—that can be overcome better with humor than any other way. If you can say something funny, you can have more penetration. And unfortunately we're not doing that. Bill Maher is doing that, Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert—and then on the other side, you've got Dennis Miller! Dennis Miller—who was a very funny comic—one day got a ride on Air Force One and became a Republican. I was there that night, and I said, "Dennis, what the hell are you doing?" and he said, "No *Democrat* ever gave me a ride on Air Force One." "That's what it took? Shit, I would have bought you a ticket!" So everybody's got a different agenda. Dennis was a very funny comic, but now...

**He's a ranter—they have them on the left and on the right. It doesn't seem to change anything, because all it does is back up whatever opinions the audience already has...It's really boring to me compared to something like *Laugh-In*.**

Part of it was we were having a good time, too. We were all young, outrageous...we were all pissed off.

Strangely enough, the very things that created the climate and the soil for *Laugh-In* exist today. We had an unpopular president, we had an unpopular war. We had major companies lying to us, we had nuclear energy—a big threat at that point. Well, we have all of those things now. The youth was disoriented. We had the sexual revolution. We had all of that—but now, there's just so much sex that it's almost becoming boring. We've gotta find some way to put some of the magic back.

**I actually haven't asked you the one question I came in to ask—but I think we kind of answered it a little, anyway. But more specifically: What is the role of comedy in society?**

The role of comedy in our society—comedy is the panacea. Comedy is maybe the ultimate answer. 'Cause you can say things comedically that you can't say straight. Comedy serves a very vital function if it's not misused. But it's dangerous—that's why it scares people. People don't get mad at actors, they get mad at a comic. But people more and more are aware of it, and they all do jokes. Diane Sawyer goes out and does five of the funniest minutes you ever heard, and then does her speech. I'm doing a book, and in the book I say that comedy is part of our basic human structure.

When a child is born, you don't have to teach it how to eat, sleep, cry, or how to laugh. But for the rest of its life, we tell it what to eat, when to sleep, not to cry, and to be careful what it laughs at. But one of the basic ingredients of a child is laughter! The child will look up—they don't know what it's laughing at—but the kid is laughing, and they say, "Oh, it's gas." I don't think it's gas, but if it's gas, well, he's learning to appreciate a fart joke at an early age! I mean, a baby laughs. Look at him, he's laughing. It's natural. It's the most rewarding thing in the world. I did this interview once, where we got into this thing about the similarity of laughter and an orgasm. Some people can make you laugh all the time, and some people can never make you laugh. And as soon as you laugh, you want to laugh again. And when you realize that, you say, "Stop, you're killing me!," right? And some people laugh out loud, and some people laugh very quietly. I have a whole thing in this book about the similarity, and when you get into it you realize it's that thing, it's that "Phwoom!" ■■■

## ESCAPISM



# REVIEWS

## PORTAL TO POP CULTURE LIMBO

ANTHOLOGY RECORDINGS RELEASES LOST TREASURES  
BY GRAHAM KOLBEINS

*“Don’t try to make me believe that you’re not a dirty little beast who’d like to hurt everything around you, and be hurt by everybody—and you’d love it! And it’d make you practically die, and you’re creaming in your pants just thinking about it, baby, aren’t ya?”*

**Such is the question** posed by Tom Zacharias, long-forgotten Swedish porn-funk mastermind, on the opening track of *Belinda*, a mind-blowing piece of uncomfortable aural erotica that would have been lost to the sands of time if not for Anthology Recordings. When you first hear those kooky Scandinavian beats and glibly juvenile lyrical admonishments, you find yourself in a moment of revelation that could only exist in a Web 2.0 world.

Ever since pop music’s inception, there have been brow-furrowed critics skeptical of the medium’s value as an art form—naysayers who cite pop music’s intrinsic disposability as its greatest defect. Is it hard to blame them? After all, the pop industry depends on its customers’ fickle loyalty—fortunes are made by convincing “the kids” to put down last month’s chart-topper and buy into “the next big thing.” The castaways of fame and fortune have for decades been confined to the languorous purgatory of dusty thrift-store record crates and the vast libraries of obsessive rarity-collectors.

The advent of compact discs breathed new life into a small fraction of previously forgotten recordings, as the production cost for reissues dropped considerably from the vinyl days. But CDs can go out of print almost as easily as records, and the problem of contemporary music’s expendability remained. But now, broadband connections, the proliferation of digital music players and a quietly growing label called Anthology Recordings are changing all that.

Established in response to the lack of obscure but influential titles on digital outlets like the iTunes Music Store, Anthology is the first all-digital reissue label. Since setting up shop in the fall of 2006, the label already offers more than 100 albums of rare material for download in a high-quality, non-restrictive format. The albums Anthology reissues come from a carefully selected, truly eclectic range of genres and cultures. Titles range from New York post-punk (China Shop’s *21 Puffs on the Casette*), to Thai surf rock (*Thai Beat A Go-Go*), a compilation released by Swedish label Subliminal Sounds in 2004), to Turkish psychedelia (Bunalim’s 1969 self-titled debut).

Anyone who’s casually flipped through a used-record crate knows the true gems are few and far between, lost between instrumental albums of Christ-mas standards and multiple copies of Peter Frampton’s *Greatest Hits*. Given the variety of fantastic cover art that adorned even the crappiest of records in the days of 12-inch vinyl, buying an unfamiliar

album on artwork alone is at best a risky endeavor. So perhaps the best feature of Anthology is that you can listen to samples of each song on an album before you come to a decision. In fact, browsing the Anthology site and listening to every sample in sight isn’t a bad way to while away a few hours in front of your computer screen and discover a bunch of amazing bands in the process.

Since you may not have such liberal amounts of time on your hands, *Mean* has chosen three favorites for review—but there are dozens more like these on Anthology’s site, and likely hundreds more will soon surface from their long sentences in obscurity, former prisoners of their own physical boundaries. Thanks to the internet and a few devoted reissue fanatics, these cultural artifacts will survive long after their vinyl counterparts have warped beyond recognition. Pop music has transformed from a disposable medium into an invincible one, no longer subject to the worries of unit production costs. All hail the new digital age, gate-keeper to our forgotten past!



### C.A. Quintet

C.A. Quintet’s *Trip Thru Hell*, like many of the albums on Anthology’s roster, comes from the wildly fluctuating late ‘60s. Somewhere in St. Paul, Minnesota, singer/producer Ken Erwin and his trusty band-mates were departing from the saccharine-sweet love songs of their contemporaries, instead taking Twin City listeners on a *Trip Thru Hell*. In the album notes, Ken Erwin relates that it was after being expelled from catechism that he realized he was destined for Hell, based on the rules of the Bible: “You know, rules like not swearing, and so forth.” It’s pretty unusual in the world of rock for a front-man to claim cursing as his biggest sin, and it’s this same sort of Brandon-and-Brenda-Walsh morality that makes the dark rollercoaster ride of *Trip Thru Hell* so quaint and fun.

The album begins with a nine-minute instrumental experiment that descends into a vaguely sinister drum solo before rising to an extremely rad bass-line that becomes the oft-repeated theme for the record. The remainder of the album is composed mainly of exploratory pop songs that meander in all the right directions. The original seven songs on *Trip Thru Hell* are supplemented with 12 previously unavailable cuts, including the groovy “Dr. of Philosophy” and the goofy “Bury Me in A Marijuana Field,” which contains the lyrics “I can go out in a blaze of glory / when you roll a joint out of me.” The most enjoyable track on the album may be the band’s foreboding cover of Screamin’ Jay Hawkins’ “I Put a Spell on You”—an impressively eerie take on a song that so many have done wrong.



### The Daisy Chain

When The Daisy Chain formed in mid-‘60s Orange County, there were no serious girl bands to speak of anywhere in America. Perhaps due to their novelty, the group (formerly named The Ladybirds in tribute to Lady Bird Johnson) received marginal local success, playing L.A. hotspots like the Cheetah and Whisky A Go Go. The problems in *Straight or Lane* are obvious enough to make clear why the band never hit it big, but the creativity present in its muddled pop songs is captivating and endearing. “Run Spot Run” reads like a poem written on LSD, performed in a gloriously blasé, slightly tone-deaf manner and accompanied by an excited flute soaring above a chorus of cosmic whistles. The very next track, “Unhappy for Me,” brings you back down with an embittered love song that would sound almost like a ‘50s pop ballad if it weren’t being carried away to a deranged, questionably transcendent place by an insistent trumpet and flailing organ interludes. The Daisy Chain broke up before putting out another album, but it would have been interesting to see where they would go with all the oddball potential outlined in *Straight or Lane*.

### Tom Zacharias

Perhaps the most entertaining album I’ve come across on Anthology Recordings is Swedish psycho-savant Tom Zacharias’ mid-‘70s pornographic funk-fest *Belinda*. It’s like the no-holds-barred grandparent to Peaches’ raunchy dance music. Vaginal dryness? Foot fetish? Scat? Incest? Zacharias wants to take you there, and in such a hilarious, gloriously groovy way that you’ll be booking the first ticket to Stockholm to find out what they’re putting in the water.



Only in the midst of the sexual revolution could *Belinda* have had a prayer of finding success, despite its exclusive availability through Swedish porn shops and mail-order advertisements in porno rags. When Zacharias placed similar ads in the pages of said magazines’ American counterparts, however, he failed to tap the market. Not surprisingly, the readers of *Hustler* and *Screw* were unenthused about the idea of exchanging their American dollars for Kroner in order to acquire a sound-unheard Swedish sex-themed funk album.

The story of Tom Zacharias’ life is too unbelievable and intricate to summarize here—but I’ll try. According to the liner notes for *Belinda*, Zacharias went to school with the king of Sweden, became a tennis champion at an early age, and then dropped out of the sports world to become a Lenny Bruce-esque performance artist. At various times in his life, Zacharias also worked as Sweden’s first male pinup boy, erotic novelist, prolific recording artist, and “star of a bizarre televised enema championship.” Drawing comparisons to Blaxploitation film soundtrack music, *Belinda*’s heavy beats and funky grooves can fuel any dance party, Hollywood orgy or hippy happening. It’s also worth noting that Zacharias’ follow-up to *Belinda* was a much tamer album that was awarded “Children’s Record of the Year,” only to be crushed commercially by the wildly popular Smurf records. One can only dream of how our childhoods would have turned out if we’d grown up on Tom Zacharias instead of The Smurfs.

anthologyrecordings.com

# REVIEWS

## CYBORGS, NINJAS AND CASSAVETTES

CANNON FILMS AND THE WEIRD WORLD OF ‘80S INDEPENDENT CINEMA  
BY RICHARD SHEPARD + ILLUSTRATION BY ALEXA SHAPIRO



**In the 1980s**, the decade before Harvey, Quentin, Sundance and the emergence of the indie-film cult, Hollywood was a depressing landscape of over-cut, over-wrought action crap like *Top Gun* and lame, humorless, diaper-changing comedies such as *Three Men and a Baby* and *Captain Ron*. The glory days of ballsy, director-driven movies—back when studios had the *cojones* to make *The Godfather* and *The Deer Hunter*—were dead, replaced by corporate gloss and directors who had no vision other than the bottom line. Truly cutting-edge filmmakers such as William Friedkin, Michael Cimino and Francis Coppola floundered—they had trouble getting their passion films made, while hack helmers of challenge-free celluloid had hack directing gigs coming out their hack asses. It was the era of *Harlem Nights* and *Days of Thunder*, Shelley Long and Bette Midler. It was the era that made Bruckheimer a king, Jennifer Beals a queen, and the cineplex a cement sarcophagus of emotionally barren shit projected at 24 frames of flatulence per second.

But among the dreck there was hope. Spike Lee was hustling to make his films using short ends and charm; the Coen Brothers were raising 10 grand at a time to get *Blood Simple* shot; and a young Harvey Weinstein was eating a chili cheeseburger with a side of chili cheese fries, thinking of ways to make a buck in the movie biz by bucking the movie-biz system. If you’ve read any of the plethora of books about the era, you know what happened next: how Sundance and Tarantino and the whole idea of “independent films” came of age, collided and exploded—and suddenly a film of quality could actually get financed and released.

Miramax and the brothers Weinstein usually get all the credit for the radical shift, but I’m here to talk about two other tough Jews who were at the forefront of financing interesting independent movies at a time when interesting was about the last thing the studios wanted. Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus, and their famously shady film company Cannon Films, were making movies right in the heart of Hollywood, right in the middle of the ‘80s. They produced some of the more sleazy pieces of exploitation crap ever made, along with—out of nowhere—some of

the most interesting director-driven films from the era. They were Bob and Harvey, only with more venom and less luck.

Now, those of you who know about these things might be saying, Cannon Films—weren’t they responsible for the *Missing in Action* movies? *Death Wish* parts 2 through 4? All those Dolph Lundgren, Jean-Claude Van Damme, and Chuck Norris cheapo action atrocities? Yes. They made those bad movies. And more, such as *Rockula*, *Cyborg* and *American Ninja 3*—barely serviceable genre retreats that pushed no boundaries except those of good taste. But Golan and Globus also produced several extraordinary films that would never have been made in the studio system at the time—artistically motivated, director-driven films of quality.

If you wanted to Netflix three movies from that Cannon era for a weekend of intoxicating movie pleasure, you could do a lot worse than the following:

» Barbet Schroeder’s *Barfly*. In this epic love poem to drunks and drunkenness and all things Charles Bukowski, Mickey Rourke (pre-disastrous face lifts) plays Henry Chinaski, a dreamer and man of letters, whose life revolves around filthy flophouses, barren bar stools and occasional jags of writing bottle-inspired poetry. The film is outrageous, funny and moving and shows a glimpse of a pre-TMZ Los Angeles, when drinking still meant something. Faye Dunaway, in her last great performance, devastatingly plays a lost soul who still has a bit of love and fight in her. *Barfly* is dirty, paunchy and full of bourbon-filled meaning. This is a love story for those who hate love stories. It’s a classic. When a way-too-old drunk prostitute proudly says, “Nobody swallows paste like I do,” you know you’re not in the phony, depressing Hollywood-land of Tom Cruise’s *Cocktail*.

» John Frankenheimer’s tough, sexy, exploitative and tremendously fun *52 Pick-Up*. Adapted from Elmore Leonard’s equally great novel about blackmail, sex and murder, this film is a riveting thriller with mind-bending acts of violence, cruelty and tension, and tons of fantastic gratuitous nudity. Roy Scheider, Ann-Margret, Vanity, a seriously twisted Clarence Williams III, Edward Bunker

and John Glover make up the cast. This was made five years before “Reservoir Dogs,” and you can almost feel Tarantino taking notes, ripping things off, and being inspired by this pulpy bit of fiction.

» Andrei Konchalovsky’s *Runaway Train*. This brutal, searing film features a performance by Jon Voight so vivid and raw that I dare you to turn away. Voight and an equally good Eric Roberts escape from a horrendously dirty prison and hop on an out-of-control train. The film has a visceral thrill reminiscent of *The French Connection*, only it’s more cheesy and fun. It’s also incredibly tense—watching it, you feel like you’re actually on board that speeding train, and Jon Voight might actually kill you. Word is they are going to remake it. It’s guaranteed that the new version will be slicker, more expensive—and will suck. The original is crazy, weird, thrilling and was written by a former inmate, Edward Bunker. To remake it would be a fucking crime.

Among other gems from the Cannon oeuvre, I would also list the forgotten, but haunting, *Shy People*; Norman Mailer’s bizarre *Tough Guys Don’t Dance*; Godfrey Regio’s mind-bending *Powaqqatsi*; Robert Altman’s *Fool for Love*; and the last great film from the original king of independent cinema, John Cassavettes, *Love Streams*.

While the brothers Weinstein would perfect the system of funding small films with niche audiences, Golan and Globus did it first. Eventually, however, they were forced to shut their doors—sued by the many producers and filmmakers they had fucked over, and seeing the big studios start to make money-making schlock genre movies even better than they did. It’s too bad. History is written by the winners: Harvey and Bob sold Miramax to Disney for half a billion dollars; meanwhile, Menahem and Yoram, the original champions of the indie art film, haven’t been able to get a movie financed since 1994. ■■■

*Richard Shepard wrote and directed The Matador, starring Pierce Brosnan, and The Hunting Party, with Richard Gere. He recently won an Emmy Award for comedy directing for the pilot of Ugly Betty.*



# MEANGEAR

BY ANDREW VONTZ



## Forum LRG Limited

**Be the smuggest** slider on the helicopter in the Chugach this winter with this limited-edition run of 679 sticks. A collaboration between Forum and hot urban-apparel hit-squad Lifted Research Group, the elitist aura doesn't stop there. The LRG's core is crafted from a new material called Organic Mac that's made from a type of tree that grows four times faster than normal trees in cruddy soil conditions. The idea being that Forum's keeping the snow falling while it's chopping down trees. Organic Mac has pop, and it's light, too—the LRG is the lightest board in its class. As quoth Fischerspooner, looks good, feels good, too, \$599, [forumsnowboards.com](#).



## Sennheiser CX 500 Ear Buds

**The audiophile's dilemma:** choose big, DJ-style headphones capable of reproducing a broad spectrum of frequencies with killer bass response and have to deal with lugging around a substantial physical object attached to an iPod; or pick ear buds and get a little less snap, crackle and pop in the listening experience. Like many ear buds before, the Sennheiser CX 500 attempts to combine the fighting styles of big cans and tiny buds. The CX 500 buds seal tightly in the ear canal with the help of three sizes of bud covers. Once sealed, listeners will be delighted to hear rich, full sound with bass that doesn't sound like a 2-year-old beating a Cheerios box with a wooden spoon. Want your iPod to sound better? Get these. \$129, [sennheiserusa.com](#).

## Bontrager Speed Limit Brakes

**The invasion** of the fixed-gear people in urban environments from New York to San Francisco and all points in between has brought with it blinged-out bicycles with deep section rims, custom paint jobs and top tube pads for hardcore, knee-clutching skids. Here's an upgrade that makes sense for those who prefer smooth, evenly modulated braking over destroying their knees, and a sense of understatement when it comes to flossin'. The boxy, industrial look of the Speed Limits belies their feathery 270-gram weight, and, like a Rolex peeking out of the end of a shirt sleeve, subtly conveys a big pimpin' aura without leaving you lookin' OG'd (overgolded). \$179, [bontrager.com](#)

## iBike Pro Power Meter

**Power output expressed** in wattage became the gold standard for measuring and improving cycling performance about 15 years ago. But first-gen bike computers that measured power were about as affordable and easy to comprehend as the flux capacitor on Doc's car in *Back to the Future*—not so easy unless you happen to own a magical nuclear-fusion Cuisinart, right? Easy to install, intuitive to use—and affordable—the clean, minimal-looking iBike cycling computer gauges power output and a half-dozen other measurements, including incline, wind speed, distance, speed, calories burned and altitude. While it's so loaded a pro rider could use it in the Tour de France, it's sexy enough that *Dwell*-reading urban riders will be able to one-up their annoying friends who won't stop with the *Minority Report*-style iPhone demonstrations, and it doesn't take a graphing calculator to figure out what the numbers mean. \$429, [ibikesports.com](#)

# WHIPLASH

BY RYAN STAFFORD

**This is not our first** fuel crisis, folks. The auto-makers and we consumers are at a vital crossroads to prevent another potential aesthetic disaster. Remember the K-Car? The Cadillac Cimarron? The Yugo? Those eyesores were the result of the last major fuel crisis. The art of the automobile was left behind as the '70s came rolling through. It took nearly 20 years to get the sexy back (if you'll excuse the Justin Timberlake reference). [*Ed. note: No.*] Now let's see if we can keep the sex and cut the gas....without breaking the bank. Here are some '09 models to dream of:



## Honda Fit

**Looking at this** car makes you feel like Sigourney Weaver in *Ghostbusters*, standing in your kitchen, looking at your average 14-cubic-foot fridge. It seems like a normal little box on the outside, but opens to reveal a vast winter wonderland and Zuul standing atop a mountain. Add wheels, take away the snow and the demon, and you get the same sense of wonderment from the Fit. Interior large enough to transport your 42-inch plasma home from Costco, yet tiny enough to parallel park in the formerly wasted space between the red zone and that dude who didn't pull his car all the way up to the line.



## Was that an Audi?

**Americans have a** hard time grasping the idea of subcompact cars. We have a medieval mentality, in which big and fat equals rich and important (Cadillacs, Hummers), and petite modesty is reserved for working-class serfs (the Yaris and Civic). Attitudes are changing as we become more aware of conservation, and we're starting to adopt the European eye for the small car. High-end automakers are stepping up and scaling back to allow their drivers to say, "Hey, I'm important, but I choose to drive a small car, so back off!" One shining example of this is the Audi A2. All the sport-luxury looks of your standard Audi, delivered in a tiny (dare I say cute?) package. Also be on the lookout for the A1 in the next several years. This "one" (pun intended) [*Ed. note: You're fired!*] has the Mini Cooper in its cross hairs.



## Lexus IS F—Too Fast for Love

[Hello. Editor in Chief Mya Stark here. I'm a girl. Against the best interest of myself and others, I also drive a car. As such, I thought it might be interesting to get my perspective on one of the vehicles we cover, for a change, so I had our reluctant and talented Whiplash columnist Ryan Stafford interview me about my recent press-junket experience with the brand-new, exciting Lexus IS-F high-performance sports-car thingy.]

Ryan Stafford: This is pretty groundbreaking for Lexus. This car has so much power! It could blow a Porsche Boxster out of the water. I understand you had the opportunity to take lessons and actually drive this thing yourself on a major California racetrack. That must have been incredible!

Mya Stark: Uh. I didn't go over 50 m.p.h. on the racetrack, actually. Whenever I go too fast, I get a phobia that the wheels are gonna leave the ground.

[pause] You do realize that's completely impossible. At least according to the laws of physics. Or else we'd be able to fly. Yes. I...do.

Okaaay...Well, how about the handling? Pretty wild, huh? The steering's really tight. It hugs curves. When you roll over bumps, you feel the road—it's got sports suspension. You can't even hold a cup of coffee in this car. Did you love it, or what?

Actually, you can turn all that stuff off, kind of like the AUTO setting on a high-end camera, and it feels a lot less terrifying that way, because it makes it all smooth, and your butt's just like, snoozing in those sweet leather seats, and you can blast some jams and chillax...and so that's what I did.

You "turned off" the entire sports-car experience? Yeah. But I totally loved the car! [*facepalm*]





GAMES

## THE UNTOUCHABLE

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV COULD BE THE CRIME EPIC OF THE DECADE, AND HERE'S WHY  
BY JAKE GASKILL

Just so we're all clear on what awaits us when that *Grand Theft Auto IV* (Xbox 360, PS3) logo appears on our television sets come release day: four New York-inspired boroughs and a Jersey-esque portion of a city in which to live out our lifelong fantasy of being an Eastern European gangster with a badass name like Niko Bellic; one load screen (That's right—once the game loads, you will be free to traverse the entirety of the city and seamlessly enter buildings without ever having to see another load screen again. Lucky you.); a rich and sophisticated AI system powering the city's varied inhabitants; a deep, brutal and epic crime drama for the ages. When added up, these elements have the potential to make Liberty City (*GTA IV*'s re-imagined version of *GTA III*'s Liberty City) the most believable game environment ever created, and *Grand Theft Auto IV* one of the truly great crime dramas of our time. Not to put any added pressure on Rockstar North or anything.

From what we've seen so far, it seems as though Rockstar Games is hoping to make *Grand Theft Auto IV* the purest example of what happens when a franchise stops being over-the-top and starts being real. If it helps, think of the game as Rockstar's *Batman Begins* moment. Instead of continuing in the same over-the-top style that the franchise was mired in, Rockstar decided to cut the bullshit and get back to the spirit of their first revolutionary title in the series, *GTA III*. (Let me make one thing perfectly clear: The past two *GTA* installments didn't even come close to distancing themselves from the series' roots the way *Batman Forever* and *Batman and Robin* did. *Vice City* and *San Andreas* are still two of the best games of all time, while those two cinematic vomit-fests I just mentioned and dare not mention again are reason enough for the creation of a real-life equivalent of Lacuna Inc.)

As the true descendent of *GTA III*, the franchise's newest installment represents the culmination of every addition, subtraction, tweak, risk,

innovation, evolution, devolution, inspiration, homage, rip-off, success, failure, controversy arising from hidden programming codes being found by diligent hackers, and all the rest of the jazz that Rockstar has faced over the past seven years with regard to practically every one of its titles. Since *GTA III* was released, we've had to suffer through more imitations than a Jonathan Winters retrospective. Some of the most obvious offenders were *True Crime: Streets of LA*, *True Crime: New York City*, *Scarface*, *Saints Row* and *Crackdown*. While the *True Crime* series did an impressive job of recreating its two title cities, and it was fun to leap tall buildings in a single bound in *Crackdown*, these clones just didn't distinguish themselves enough to be considered anything but filler between subsequent *GTA* games.

The most recent *GTA*-esque game was Ubisoft Montreal's *Assassin's Creed*. Despite its sci-fi twist, repetitive mission structure and a 12th century setting, *Creed* gave players the opportunity to experience a fully realized next-generation gaming environment the likes of which had never been seen before. While *Creed* had a clear distinction between fantasy and reality, Rockstar is hoping to heavily favor reality in their new game. Gone are the days of the over-the-top *Godfather*, *Scarface* and *Boyz n the Hood* references. No more jet-packs or aircrafts with which to torment the friendly skies. It's all about believability this time around, and that means a starker and grittier narrative tone than previous entries in the series.

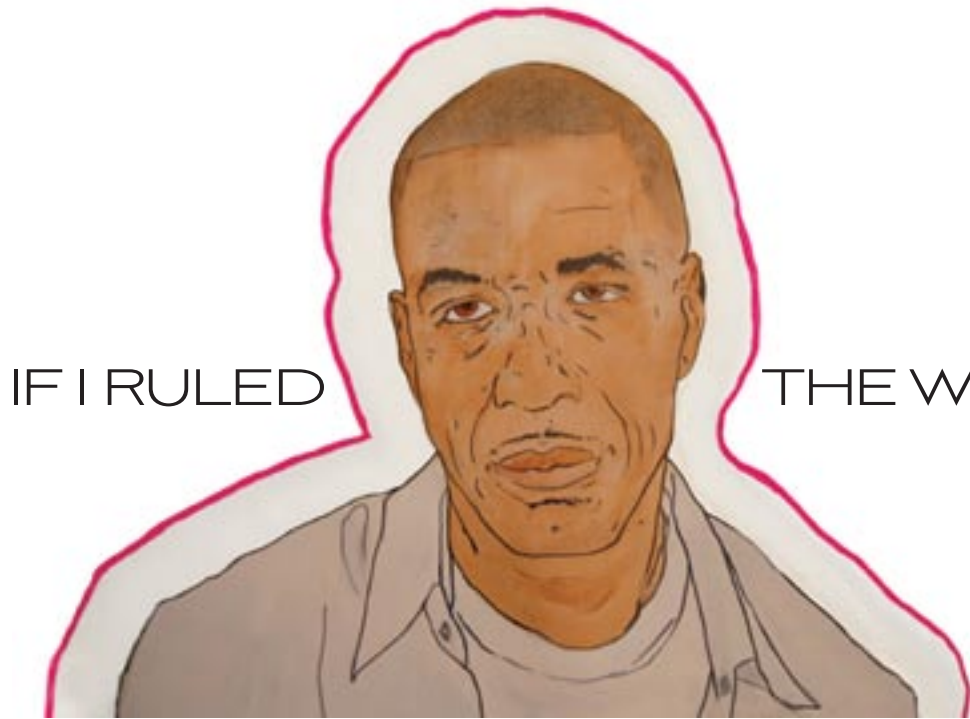
Now, I don't mean to suggest that *GTA IV* will be replacing *War and Peace* or *The Sound and the Fury* on high school English curriculums anytime soon. Chances are Rockstar will be unable to entirely separate itself from the crude humor and laddish content that has become a staple of the franchise. But the hope is that those elements will now be reduced to their most essential properties and used in ways that make contextual sense, rather

than serving as a cheap way to appeal to the lowest common denominator of gamers.

But all of this is really just skirting around the fact that *GTA IV* is shaping up to be the true torchbearer of next-gen gaming. Sure, we've seen larger cities and, yeah, we've carjacked enough poor bastards to see the whole sequence ("I'm taking your car," punch the driver, toss him out of the car, slam the door, hit the gas, run over a prostitute, repeat) in our dreams, but this is a new *GTA* game we're talking about, and nothing is ever run-of-the-mill when Rockstar puts out one of these babies. Just for nostalgia's sake, in *GTA III*, I used to drive a car to a choice spot overlooking a particularly stunning vista and just listen to the radio for hours on end. The game-world itself was so engaging that I was content just being a normal citizen doing what the other normal citizens were doing before I assaulted them and stole their rides. *GTA IV* will be the next evolutionary step of this formula, and that means more to do, more to see, more to hear and more grand theft auto-ing than you'll know what to do with.

Clearly, Rockstar doesn't want *GTA IV* to be another excuse for developers to flood the market with more and more rip-off, hack-job, open-world titles. They want to inspire developers (and all those interested in the future of storytelling) to create games that push the medium forward in every possible way. That means not just relying on flashy visuals to mask deplorable gameplay or dooming a quality story by opting to employ sub-par voice talent. It means postponing a jeans-creaming holiday release date until the game is as solid as it can be. It means putting in the time to flesh out the story and develop the characters more fully. It means striving to create experiences that transcend the medium itself by telling stories that players remember, in the same way they remember a favorite movie or novel. Rockstar is no stranger to setting the bar high; however, *GTA IV* might just burn that bar to the ground and piss on its ashes.

## MEANSANITY



IF I RULED

THE WORLD

DEBATING MATTERS PRESIDENTIAL WITH J.B. SMOOVE BY STEVEN J. KNEZEVICH + ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN TAYLOR DEMPSEY

For those of you who have been sleeping on *Curb Your Enthusiasm* this last season, there's at least one very good reason to wake up and shake the cobwebs off your TiVo: Leon Black. Leon is many things: He's the L.A. relative of the Black family of hurricane survivors who've come to live in Larry's house; he's helping Larry get in touch with his "long balls"; and he's also self-declared President of Hittin' That Ass. As the character has stated that his role model in ass-politics is Barack Obama, and it being an election year, *Mean* decided to ask the man in Leon's smoky back room, J.B. Smoove, some of the same questions the real-life presidential hopeful has had to face on the campaign trail. Or rather, we asked him some questions, and he was really funny and cool, and then we were like, "Holy shit, we could print the exact questions Obama answered, verbatim, and it would make total sense. That would be boss." And so we did.

What makes you think you're qualified to be president of the United States? (*60 Minutes*, February 11, 2007)

If J.B. Smoove was president, I'd run on a different type of campaign. People want a leader, but they also want to see a handsome dude! Someone with style, class and a bit of finesse that can make decisions on the fly! I'd go over to Iraq and put on some little shorts and a tank top and set up a basketball court in the middle of the desert. We'd play some horse! After I was back, I'd say, "The leaders and I over there got into a game of horse. Of course, your leader won and we resolved our issues and got it over."

Some people say politicians will do whatever it takes to win. Do you think that's true? (*National Journal*, November 8, 2007)

Hell yeah! These cats will do anything to win! If I was running, I'd do damn near what I gotta do to win. I believe in slinging that mud! If I find out something about you, I'm gonna tell the nation who you really are. The nation needs to know who you're hiding behind. If the other guy went into the men's bathroom and he's clicking his heels, I don't want to find out after the fact! Do you wear thongs? Are you an old man who wears thongs? What is under your trousers? Don't be lyin' to people. If you're dumb, tell the nation, "Look, I'm dumb! I'm running the dumb-ass campaign on the dumb-ass platform." If

you're smart, you're gonna pull smart people. In the last two elections, the dumb people took over, and they're populating the world, man! We gotta get back on the handsome campaign! Dumb people are normally some ugly-ass people! There are a few exceptions here and there, but generally they are not the most good-looking people in the world.

[If you were elected], could I come and have a slumber party in the Lincoln bedroom? (*The Tyra Banks Show*, September 27, 2007)

It'd be like a full-time party! I'd hook it up like a hotel and redesign that joint, make it into one huge-ass bed! Snazz it up with TV monitors, snacks, sodas and mini-refrigerators. But you gotta pay for it. By charging you to stay, I'd keep the funds rollin' to pay off the deficit. Even if it's \$25 at a time, so what? Everyone says that they're gonna fix shit too quick! You can't rush it and take money from health care and the schools. You gotta fix these dumb-ass kids. They'll be smarter, and more handsome, and will keep my campaign going. I'd keep those after-school programs open and keep the prisons up and running! Ugly people, go to jail! Visit someone in prison one day, you'll see that they turn ugly!

When you formulate your position for where we go from here, which experts would you consult with? (*The New York Times*, November 1, 2007)

I'd keep it real and bring in Marvin Gaye. He'd keep it mellow and keep it cool. He always asks questions! All his songs are questions. His most famous song is "What's Going On?" and that's what the people want to know. And Marvin made a song about it! Every time I come out to address the nation, I wanna hear [sings] "Whaaaaat's gooo-ingggg onnnnn?" Then tell everybody what the hell is going on!

What kind of person would be a defense secretary candidate or a candidate for national security adviser? (*The New York Times*, November 1, 2007)

I might send out The Incredible Hulk. He's also Bruce Banner, and if he's hurt or something's bothering him, he turns into The Incredible Hulk and fixes shit! That's the kind of guy you need. He'd make great security, too. What is he, eight feet tall? He'll choke the shit out of you and you'll get the message. He'll pin your ass up!

But you need a Bruce Banner too, because he's a nuclear scientist. I'd use him in North Korea and China. If he gets over there and finds something that ain't supposed to be there, guess what? He's gonna turn into The Incredible Hulk and beat somebody's ass! After he's done, he'll calm down and, as Bruce Banner, do his damn nuclear physicist job again. But they get one motherfucking check, not two.

How do you balance working life and your family life? (*VIBE*, August 2, 2007)

You gotta find somebody that's just like you. I give 250 percent, and my wife is just like that. I don't care if it's lovemaking or cooking muffins, it's 250 percent every damn time!

What do you like to wear? Will you be wearing Air Force 1s on Air Force One? (*VIBE*, August 2, 2007)

A man should be wearing some grown man's shoes. I like cowboy boots. I don't wear no pointy-ass shoes. You can kick somebody's ass with a boot! I could pull a boot off and slap somebody upside the head with it. You can't do that with a loafer! Am I right or am I wrong here?

Is America ready for an African-American president? (*Chicago Tribune*, June 30, 2005)

I think America is finally ready for a black president. If Leon can go on *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and pull the races together, Obama can do it in the White House, man! All he needs to do is get HBO On Demand and catch up on last season's *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. Watch Leon's style, man! Watch how decisive he is in his opinions! Leon never pulls back. America is ready for someone to take the initiative. Run on the black-man-doing-his-motherfucking-thing platform. Not only is America ready, but the world is ready for something different.

Finally, have you personally experienced twisty balls? (*Full disclosure: Barack Obama has not yet been asked this question*)

I got long balls, too! Most tall, skinny guys got long balls. That's what I told Larry. Stubby, little fat guys got tight little balls because they got fat on their thighs that holds them up. If you're long and skinny, your balls dangle! You got danglin' balls! When I sit down in the bathroom to take a crap, my balls touch the water sometimes.





# social networking

## AND ME

### C. BRIAN SMITH IS HELPING YOU GET COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT YOURSELF IN THE THIRD PERSON

**A young Harvard Knight** has, once again, valiantly thrown his crimson sweater vest across the rancid puddles of yesteryear in an attempt to modernize our otherwise primitive society.

Join me (and 63 million of my friends) on Facebook: The Social Network of the World. Okay? I'm going to poke you now.

"But C. Brian, I've been poked before."

Not like this.

"But C. Brian, haven't I always been a member of The Social Network of the World?"

Not without extreme sacrifice. For thousands and thousands of years, we have relied upon archaic, primal methods of communication like "talking" and "listening," which required us to "smell" and "see" and, at times, "touch" the person with whom we were communicating.

Let's face it, there just aren't that many people you want to smell and see and, at times, touch.

Thanks to Facebook, you'll never have to again.

You might, with a furrowed brow, reply, "I don't know, C. Brian. I mean you're right—I do hate talking and listening (and traveling, eating vegetables, thinking progressively...) but I haven't the slightest idea how to navigate this vast new world of which you speak."

Luckily for you, in this vast new world of which I speak, I am extraordinarily socially networked. And I am here to help.

Getting started:

#### 1. Upload a photograph of someone who looks similar to you, but more attractive.

Remember: You will never have to "see" anyone ever again. So find someone you always wanted to look like and dive into that sheet cake! Get some on your face and leave it there—it just doesn't matter anymore.

#### 2. Remember every person you have ever met in your life. They'll soon be in touch.

This might sound daunting, but so did refrigeration. Consider it a tremendous opportunity to pick right up where you and your 9th-grade lab-partner left off. Now you'll know what he's up to! Mine is a paralegal



in Atlanta and a "big-time Huckabee man." I know because I receive a dozen or so appeals from him to support Mike and many other evangelical causes. My social network has quite literally led me closer to Jesus Christ.

#### 3. Get comfortable talking about yourself in the third person.

C. Brian is most excited about Facebook's "status" feature, which allows C. Brian to constantly update C. Brian's social network with minute-by-minute reports on C. Brian's everyday activities, emotions and desires. On Facebook, nothing is insignificant. C. Brian just made a cup of coffee. C. Brian is watching Judge Judy. C. Brian wonders if his parents got divorced because he's gay. C. Brian really wants sheet cake and C. Brian will have some!

#### 4. Prepare to slay zombies.

Now this might seem slightly off topic, but one of the most formidable obstacles in developing a strong social network comes from—you guessed it: a pack of Zombies, Renegade Slayers and Undead Assassins. You will invariably be recruited to join a friend's Slayer Army and you must do so immediately. While there appears to be absolutely nothing at stake in this bizarre, unending contest, and while I've yet to find anyone who can succinctly explain "the point," the

U.S. itself has waged entire wars "just because," and so should you. Stop asking questions. Start buying fake weapons and slaying clip-art vampires.

#### 5. Rank everyone you know by humor and attractiveness. It could be an ego boost.

You will be asked to judge your friends in a variety of categories. To make the process easier, Facebook will ask straightforward questions, like "Who do you think is uglier, your college roommate or your 10-year-old niece?" Answers will be sent to everyone you have ever met, and soon they will know exactly how ugly and unfunny you consider them to be.

#### 6. Take yourself much more seriously.

Gone are the days when you softly chortled to yourself, "Oh, that Kramer is such a hoot," and not just because the actor portraying him thinks black people should still be hanging upside-down with forks up their asses. Again, on Facebook, nothing is irrelevant. Simply type a few words, check a box and in moments, co-workers, ex-lovers, online trysts—everyone—will be alerted: "C. Brian has updated his favorite films. He now likes *Juno*!" Check another box and people are notified that "C. Brian is interested in men"—an accurate statement which is worthy of its own, separate e-mail.

C. Brian! How, exactly, did we survive without Facebook?

A new vast world is hard to wrap your head around, I know. I am sure you are wrestling with a host of different questions. But at the forefront is the issue of intimacy. "How will I demonstrate affection toward my lover when I am unable to touch him or her?" Simple. You send a chicken or a wrench and write a steamy love message on a "wall" that everyone you've ever met will be able to read and comment upon.

But whatever you do, be sure to poke each other every day.

And then poke me.



Check out C. Brian Smith on Facebook! Go to facebook.com and search for C. Brian Smith! C. Brian Smith! C. Brian Smith! Facebook! C. Brian Smith!



**PF-FLYERS**





ALL NEW SEASON

“Uh-huh.  
We’re going to the  
motherfuc  
moon.”



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