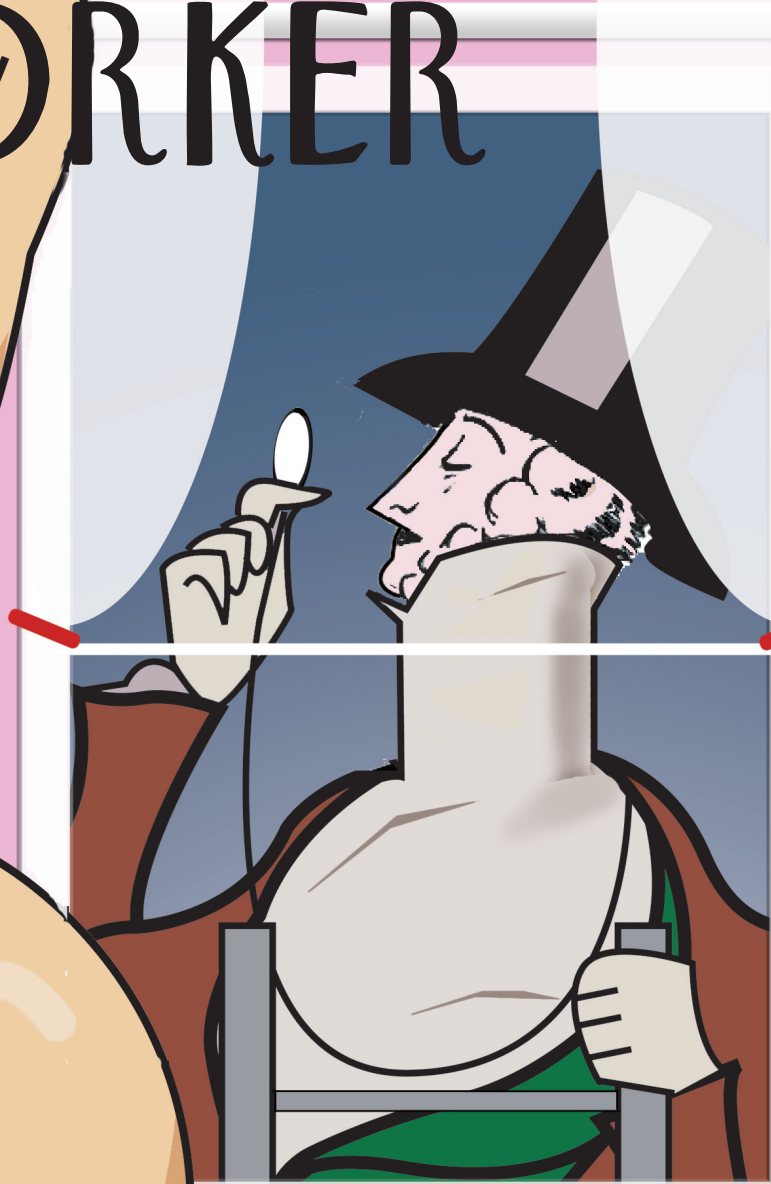


A JACK-O PARODY

THE

FALL 2006

NÜ YORKER





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THE NÜ YORKER

A JACK-O-LANTERN PARODY,
FALL 2006

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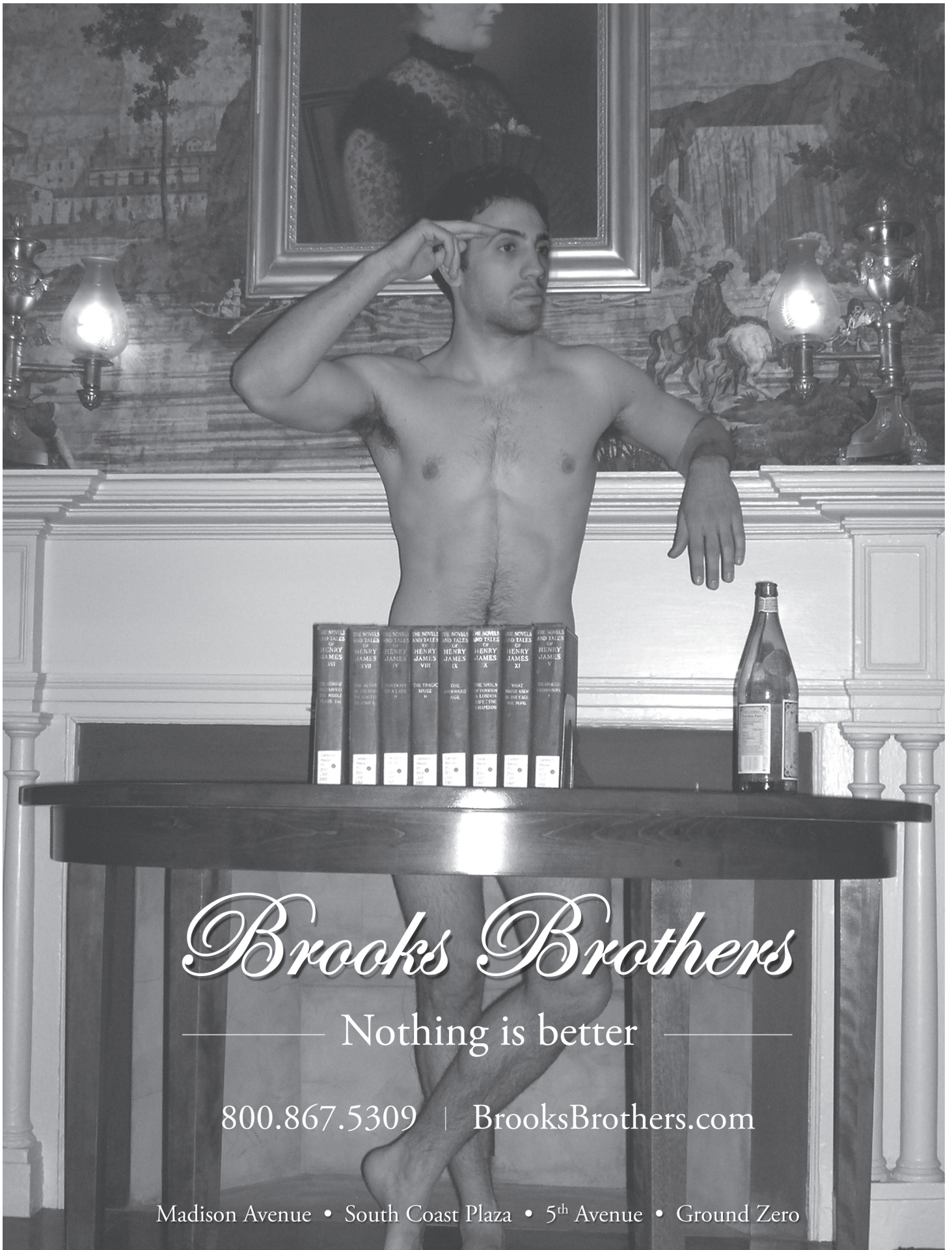
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CONTRIBUTORS

Matt Gens '06 ("A Model Patient," p. 48) is a Recanati Professor of Medicine at Yale. He has nipples on his butt.

Christopher Laakko '06 ("I Put the Mad-Dog in an Actual Mad Dog," p. 14) is a writer and has been since 2nd grade.

Cole Entress '06 ("Nuttin But a G-Thang," Interscope Records, 1992) has written eleven books, including "Parry Hotter: A fan-zine with spice", the rights to which have recently been optioned as a movie.

Frederick Meyer '08 ("I Defend Myself Vigorously Against Those who Dare to Call Me a Homosexual, and You Ask Why?" p. 12) is a gay writer and illustrator. The tenth book in his "Really, guys, I'm not!" series is forthcoming.

Owen Parsons '08 ("Goings on About Town") is a writer personally responsible for some goings-on about town. For instance, he micterated on a subway-dwelling vagrant, and much to the amusement of the crowd, then gave a soliloquy.

Alexander Rogers '08 ("Shouts and Murmurs," p. 8) is the author of 22 collections of poetry, most of which are about how his high school girlfriend is totally a dumb bitch for dumping him.

Justine Sterling '07 ("Foreign Correspondence," p.8), is about to complete her fourth critically-acclaimed graphic novel, seemingly oblivious to the fact that she draws ugly pictures.

Mike Trapp '08 (Songwriter-Turned-Vagrant-Songwriter) can't wait to meet you, and then pester you until you throw him some change.

Dylan Kane '09 (Sleeping With Laakko), might have his first-ever poem "Rainy Sadness" on p.12.

Alex Fidel '09 ("Drinks") speaks for himself, thanks.

Other people (Wrote things) and I'm sorry I didn't record their names. Blitz us about it, and we'll happily but slowly publish an errata on the website. Thanks for contributing...suckers. ♦



Steven had always dreamt of marrying a mermaid. Be careful what you wish for.

THE MAIL

SWAYZE SWAYS ME!

A hearty bravo for your recent interview with the incomparable Patrick Wayne Swayze! (“Nobody Puts Swayze in a Corner” November 2005) I wholeheartedly agree with your writer, Arthur Filgate’s, assessment that for too long have the bourgeois American people failed to appreciate the subtle talent of this great thespian. However, I must respectfully object to the statement: “Mr. Swayze’s style evokes memories of post-World War Two Italian Neo-realism.” Who does Mr. Filgate think Patrick is, Aldo Fabrizi?! No, his style is clearly much more reminiscent of French Poetic Realism of the late ‘30s. His characters are marginalized everymen who face their inevitable fate with a blend of pessimism and stoicism that suffuses the entire *mise-en-scène* with searing poignancy. His performance in *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar* compares favorably with Jean Gabin’s *Pepe le Moko*. I am counting the minutes until his opening night performance as Jean Valjean in the off-Broadway production of *Les Misérables 2: The Search for Javert’s Gold*. Once again, kudos for such an interviewing coup.

William Courreges
Hollywood, CA

THE WORLD OF FICTION

Dear Editor:

When I read the short story “Ludwig’s Intransigence” in the February edition of *The New Yorker*, my belief in the superiority of your publication was most decidedly reaffirmed. Although “acclaimed” pieces of short fiction may be found in inferior publications such as *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper’s Magazine*, only works such as Davis Lindquist’s exquisitely paced narrative of a sensitive homosexual artist combating his own inner demons while struggling with the suicide of his best friend (a writer) deserve publication in the

City’s foremost arbiter of literary taste. In a manner hauntingly reminiscent of Jackson Freiberger’s “Blanton Gorge,” Lindquist uses harsh, spare prose like a giant, razor-sharp razor, cutting society deep and hard in the chest and digging until he reaches its heart – a dark heart; a heart, if you will, of *darkness*.

Lindquist wastes no time in introducing us to our main (indeed, only) character, a gay artist whose hobbies include drinking gourmet coffee and smoking Nat Shermans. Although he spends the duration of the narrative pacing in his cramped studio apartment, the artist’s physical confinement is contrasted (vividly, I shall say) with the unbounded freedom of his mind, which touches on such universal topics as life, death, and the place of art in society. A single tear falls from his jaded eye at the climax of the story, a scene worth repeating here: “Adrian coughed, once, then again, symbolically excising the cancer of self-doubt from his system. Yet he could not help but think again of Jorge. What a senseless death. It was his job as an artist to make sense of it, though. Make sense of it for the rest of the world. His task was monumental. Emotion overcame him, but for only a second. Then he became solid again. Somehow, grief made him more real. But what was reality?”

This is strikingly similar to the end of “Blanton Gorge,” in which the protagonist, an alcoholic writer, contemplates suicide while standing over the titular gorge, but decides not to dare the precipice because of his obligation to the rest of the world: “No matter the pain, the horror, the grief, he would live on. His life was hard. It had been hard from the beginning. It would continue to be hard. The agonies of prep school had magnified themselves a hundredfold when he had awoken as a writer, but he was strong. The butterfly had to fly. It could not stay in the chrysalis. He knew his purpose; it was to be the voice of the oppressed, flying through the air on colorful wings. Like a butterfly. Like a butterfly.” Both characters realize their commitment

to art – a powerful affirmation of the strength of the artist (however afflicted by angst) to overcome the striking depression and ennui that hinder him. Lindquist, like Freiberger, uses the English language like a rapier-thin, lightning-quick blunt object. Brilliant. Simply brilliant. Lindquist might very well be the “next Freiberger.”

One hopes that more of Lindquist’s wonderfully Freiberger-esque work will appear in the pages of your august publication. One also hopes, however, that more authentically Freiberger-esque pieces, such as Jackson Freiberger’s “Blanton Gorge”, will appear in *The New Yorker* first. Although Lindquist’s work is impressive, it is, in the final analysis, a knock-off incapable of measuring up at all to Freiberger’s original. Lindquist seems to think that he can pass off his “brilliantly written” story of an “impassioned, lonely artist, tortured by self-doubt but ultimately resolute” as *innovative!*

His scheme is all the more shockingly bold because Freiberger himself mined that territory thoroughly in his ludicrously groundbreaking “Blanton Gorge,” submitted to *The New Yorker* a full two and a half months ago! There’s nothing more embarrassing than a Johnny-Come-Lately trying to pretend he’s the creator of an artistic theme, yet that is precisely the unfortunate position in which Mr. Lindquist finds himself. One hopes he will have the good grace to come forward and admit that his story, though excellent in its way, was, in truth, a dull retelling of motifs explored in “Blanton Gorge.” (Lindquist did add one extra wrinkle by making his protagonist homosexual, but we all know that was nothing but a hackneyed attempt to “shock” the public with “sensational” material. And may I add, it has been done better.)

Until Lindquist can come up with some ideas of his own (as worthy of emulation as Mr. Freiberger’s are), one can only suggest that he stick to his “day job.” One can also hope that *The New Yorker* will give the creator of the *original* “brilliantly written, philosophical story about a solitary, depressed artist” his

due by publishing “Blanton Gorge” in the next issue of the magazine. Or perhaps just by printing a small apology acknowledging that “Freiberg was first.” Or at least by sending the author a small note indicating that the story was received but regrettably did not meet current publishing needs.

*Jackson Philips Freiberg
University of Iowa Writer’s Workshop*

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Dear Sirs:

I must take issue with your publication of an interview with me in your latest issue (“A Chat With Comedy Legend Jerry Lewis,” February 8-15). While it seems that author J. Roman Schendall had no intention of falsely portraying my recent activities, I do find it a tad askew that I never met this interviewer, never spoke to him,

and never learned of this interview’s existence until after its publication. I was, however, mugged in Central Park this past January of several items, including my suitcase with an up-to-date personal diary in it, from which it seems your author has gleaned this material.

I respectfully request that *The Nü Yorker* take more care in the future to prevent such editorial mishaps, and that neither my social security number, nor a photostat of my birth certificate be reprinted in any subsequent issues.

*Jerry Lewis
New York City*

CORRECTIONS NEEDED

Dear Editors:

While normally I find your publication both enlightening and thorough, I must object that in your last issue I noticed the rhetorical device

of metonymy used no less than three times. You wanna play with the big boys? Try using some zeugma, or, for god’s sake, synecdoche. Would that kill you? A touch of aposiopestic tone now and then might give your magazine a chance to catch its breath, and a few pithy and stichtomythic exchanges peppered into your droll interviews would turn even your driest letters into some f--ked up sh-t.

*Dr. Proctor
Manhattan, NY*

Letters should be sent with the writer’s name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to jacko@dartmouth.edu. They can also be mailed to Frederick Meyer’s Hinman Box, if you insist. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may even be completely re-written into libelous and incriminating screeds. All letters and their authors become property of the Jack-O-Lantern and will not be returned. It’s not like we’ll use you for anything sick, you know, we just need help reorganizing our office. We regret that due to the volume of unwanted correspondence we receive from peddlers of pornography and knock-off Cialis, we may delete your letter without even reading it.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S • M • T • W • T • F • S

3	4	5	29	30	1	2
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THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE MADELEINE T. MC~ BRIDE’S SURGERY

Dr. Slim Michaels has been called everything from horrifying to liberating for his steely, precise exploration of the problems facing women in hospitals. This hysterectomy should be no different. Be warned, however—seating is extremely limited and would-be attendees who cannot count themselves among Mrs. McBride’s close friends, family, or the group of second-shift surgical residents required to observe may have trouble gaining attendance.

NIGHT LIFE LE BAR AU MIME

Quite possibly the strangest club to open in the past four years, this dressy, French-themed dance spot is all the stranger because the strictly enforced silence extends even to the musical act and patrons.

ART PRISON TATS

Not an exhibition in the traditional sense, the Met has paid for about 40 convicts given life sentences to be released into their museum daily. The art on their shoulders, arms and sometimes even their faces

forces all gallery-gazers to re-examine convicted murderers—is safety worth the loss of these crude swastikas and leering skull-tats?

DANCE BLUE ANGELS ON STAGE

In their airshows, the Blue Angels’ hotshot pilots rely on the capacity of large, dangerous pieces of metal to awe a crowd. With their first dance show, however, the Angels pilots have extended their reach into a much subtler art form, to great effect. As their silver-painted bodies surge past one another, missing each other by inches and soaring literally feet into the

air, the audience experiences not only the astonishing beauty of flight, but also the terrifying power of the US military.

LECTURES YOU NEVER CALL, YOU NEVER WRITE

Oh, stop with the excuses—I don’t mind. It’s just that me and your father are all alone in this big house that he worked his hands to the bone to pay for so you could have a roof over your head, and me trying to raise you so you could go off and be a big important attorney. And when are you going to settle down and have children already? I’m not getting any younger, you know.

CRITICS NOTEBOOK

Dear Notebook: I want to remember this day forever—but don't worry, I already know I'm going to! First I tore apart *The Cataract*, an overblown morality tale adapted for



the stage by the felicitously named but inexperienced playwright Lisa D'Amour. Then I ate like a pint of Haggan Dazs! (Sp?) And then later at this totally awesome cocktail party, acclaimed critic/director/Hauptmann intellectual heir Jeff Cohen looked straight at me! I didn't even have time to blush! And then—Notebook, you're not going to believe me, but I swear this is true—he came over and we talked for like 10 minutes! He was totally chill and *totally* laid back. But guess what: when he asked me what I thought of Ionesco's *Bald Soprano*, I said, "in light of my personal belief that the principal function of the fine arts is to hold a mirror up to reality, I have little patience for theater of the *abs*" instead of "theater of the *absurd*!" (Yep, you guessed it—I was looking at his stomach!) I was utterly mortified, but he just laughed and said it was no prob. And then... oh, Notebook! He *kissed* me! On both cheeks! I almost melted!

I swear, I am going to marry that boy someday... as soon as he can transcend his facile reliance on contrived Hemingwayan sparseness to imply a depth of characterization not supported by his texts, that is!

Until next time, Notebook!

—Jailbait Jenny

THE THEATRE OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

The phone numbers for some of the entries below are incorrect. Can you guess which?

JAKE PLAYS X-BOX

A new work by Wallace Tinsley explores male angst, fascism, and Halo. Sean William Scott stars as an introverted time-traveling Canadian who journeys to take down Franco's Spain by capturing its flag. Directed by Gonicho. In Previews. (Lyceum II, 941 E. 54th St. 252-932-0026)

LA VIE DE DIEU

San Francisco's Big Sandwich Theatre Company carries its self-styled Latino-Danish slapstick comedy to this new show about God, who gets really fucked up on speed, races muscle cars, and bakes knishes. Directed by Jesus Noriega. Previews begin May 18. (The Fucking Theatre, 667 Pine Rd. 969-969-9969.)

NOW PLAYING

PINATA

Treats just pour out of this mood piece chronicling the life and times of Pédro del Jelamontoya, a 1930s fruit vendor who left his family behind to pursue a lifelong dream of robbing children's birthday parties. Newcomer Angelie Vivacia shines as the alluring "Sad Clown" who drives his getaway cart. Directed by Gustaf Svelton. (New York Yankees Playhouse, 39 Yen Plaza 123-456-7892.)

PACKAGE

In Phillip Singsong's touching drama, Walter Phlum, played by David Coulier, struggles to gain respect as a new professor in the Princeton mathematics department in spite of his penchant for silly voices and his abnormally large penis. Based on the graphic novel, *Monster Cock in New Jersey*, this play makes its presence felt. Directed by Ryuky Jones. (Steamer, 24 West East St. 852-617-2586)

Also Playing

CHILDREN

Hijinx Auditorium, 31 Gumdrop Plaza. 222-222-2222.

PIANISTS

Crapstorm Bazaar, 1260 Gruff Avenue. 617-983-5287

THIRD BASEMEN Aloiciousness, 137 McGruff Avenue. 716-389-7825

EVIL AND SIZABLE ORANGUTANS WHO ARE PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF BATHING, THE BASTARDS, BUT CONTINUE TO REFUSE TO BATHE ON THE DUBIOUS GROUNDS THAT THEIR RELIGION SHUNS SOAP. Apt 234, 1 B St. 243-879-2255

DANCE

NOT GENOCIDE

The 82nd Street Dance Project enthalls audiences across the U.S. with its lively assortment of gyrations and strides that defies any effort to describe it, save the words of its producer, Laurel Howdy: "Well, it's not genocide." (Long Island House of Pizza and Dance, 88 Pal Road, 339-876-3831. Through January 26.)

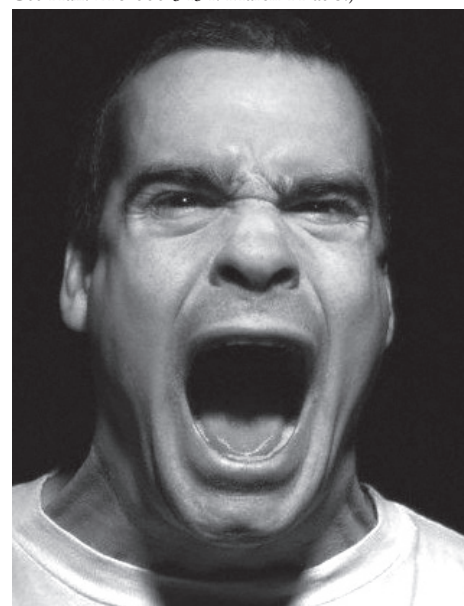
DRUNKEN STUMBLINGS

Iago Montedivatesso titles his latest dance creation to spite his many critics who accuse him of "just generally downing liquor and then loping around on stage for a couple hours." Regardless of whether one considers Montedivatesso's work to be art, however, one cannot deny that to see the man take thirteen shots of Grey Goose and spin is spellbinding. (The Alley, 7 James Drive, 317-956-7777. Through next week.)

NIGHT LIFE CONCERTS

ALBERT.

The prolific Croatian jam band brings its blend of psychedelic rhythms and unique percussion—that substitutes a seven-foot man named Igor saying "Boom." for a drum beat—to the Big Apple. Pants optional. (Carny Gee Hall. 216-000-3434. March 11 at 8.)



Igor, of Croatian jam band Albert, emits a "cymbal-crash Igor-Boom!"

THE VENETIAN STRING SEPTET

Quite possible the most insecure grouping of musicians ever to win a Grammy, these virtuosos spend fifteen minutes of every performance playing such beautiful music that it is as if their violins and violas caress the audience in song, and four hours agonizing whether all the cool trios and quartets are making fun of them again for being a septet. (Dave's High Rent Apartment. 777-777-7773. Feb. 27 at 7:56.)

CLUBS

Bouncers do not tend to appreciate the antics of literati, so refrain from having so much to drink that you would be compelled to taunt them for their lack of appreciation for Dostoevsky's early work. Or later work, for that matter.

SEALS

376 10th St., Brooklyn (817-569-7719) – Feb. 13-14: Stephen Hawking and the Batshit Crazy Astrophysicists might have spent the last ten months in rehab, but the Wyoming punk band still has the energy to leave fans foaming at the mouth for another injection of sound.

*Killed a hooker in SoHo?
Need to lay low for a while?*



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181 West 81st Street*

OTHER CAVEMEN

7 Judgment Rd. (376-218-9375) – Feb. 19-23:
The latest pop sensation out of Ireland, Kaiser Wilhelm Soft Taco is terrible. Just terrible. You'll see.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

GURGLESPEW MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 88th St. (212-324-0035) – “Beyond the Vision: Oh Sweet Crunchy Christ Did I Just Eat That!” explores the majesty of items that the renowned artist,

most recent photographic essay, chronicling ten bruised masochistic women in various nude poses, who only consented to sleep with and be photographed by the artist if he would first beat them with an assortment of sporting equipment. “Susan with Bowling Ball” is hilarious. Through March 5. (Open Fridays, 8 to 8.)

GALLERY • UPTOWN

Due to the recent riots, there is only one remaining gallery in the state, uptown. Please call this gallery



TABLES FOR TWO CAFÉ AL~SALAAM

5443 Park Street, Manhattan—Park Street near 54th already has more than its share of ethnic-cuisine options, as anyone who has returned from the area feeling uncultured, headachy, and still hungry can attest. New ethnic eateries risk getting lost among the Maori seafood joints and Papua New Guinean grub-and-pubs (the “grub,” in this case, being meant literally). The Café Al-Salaam, however, probably needn't worry. Its well-priced, authentic terrorist cuisine—prepared and served by natives of terrorist countries—is distinguished enough to keep it well above the fray.

Inside the Café, Americans of all ethnicities dine next to first- and second-generation terrorist American immigrants. The décor manages to successfully evoke the world of terror, without looking, as so many terrorist-cuisine restaurants do, like an *Aladdin* screen-shot. The mood inside is remarkably relaxed, and civilian massacres are surprisingly rare—in fact, the Café Al-Salaam has not yet played host to a terrorist attack.

The cuisine does not force those who are simply

out for a good meal to feign culinary sophistication; the kitchen provides successful takes on popular terrorist dishes such as baba ghanouj and tabbouleh. However, diners are encouraged to explore the menu's more esoteric offerings. Our server, Ahmed, a young man who holds dual American and terrorist citizenship, recommended the djedjad (chicken roasted with apricots). The apricots lent the chicken a complexity that I hadn't yet unraveled by the time I finished the dish, which was rather modestly portioned. I would have asked for more, but I didn't want to give Ahmed any reason to turn violent.

Also highly recommended is the lamb kabob with glazed fruit and endive squares. The lamb—a potent symbol of Christendom—is put to the flame and topped with honey-glazed dates and figs, both fruits native to the terrorist world. The salad is pleasantly bitter, with the endives used to achieve this effect doing double duty as an intelligent culinary choice and as a subtle nod to the “end-dives” of terrorist-hijacked aircraft. Dinner entrees \$18-\$25.

Philip Renald, consumed over a two-week span and subsequently regurgitated in disbelief. Its yak scrotum centerpiece, mounted on flypaper and shadowed with charcoal hues, is at once nightmarish and tantalizing. Through Feb. 2.

“Edgar James Watercolors of Your Mom Naked” is a tour de force of color, imagery, scenic beauty, and stretch marks. Through Aug. 10.

“Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Still Life?” done by the eccentric foot-painter Gaston DeChampignon, is a powerful futuristic series of canvases depicting a world in which tables with fruit baskets on top of them have been exposed to radioactive materials and now, colossal in size, are terrorizing major metropolitan areas. This critic recommends the oft-ignored jewel of the bunch, “Monstrous Bananas in Repose – A Tokyo Soirée.” Through Sep. 2. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 11 to 6, unless you bribe one of the security guards with cheap hooch and French Pastels.)

MUSEUM OF FUCK ME

Sixth Ave. at 21st St. (323-567-8432) – “Used Napkins: A Collage,” an Yves Touffant piece, is not his best work, but his portrayal of sub-shop disposable napkins soaked lightly in various energy drinks subtly evokes Van Gogh, in his Stupid Period. Through March 3.
“Maybe If You Punch Me First...” is Ralph Bumface's

for hours, as they hate us over there and will not return our e-mails.

KARL YODEL'S MUSEUM OF KARL YODEL

Yodel's objective, to portray the Loch Ness Monster as a pervert, is a bold one, but he mostly pulls it off with gusto. His vision of the Monster in a women's locker room with a cell phone camera is profound in its political message. Through Nov. 11. (Gagosire, 444 E. 10th St. 333-234-6586.)

READINGS AND TALKS

IAN TOWERS

Towers, a giant in the world of professional heckling, lectures on his work at the Tour de France, the NBA Finals, and the U.S. National Spelling Bee: Ages 13 and Under. (Bill Simm's Pub, 134 Hartford Ave. No tickets necessary, Feb. 27 at 8.)

BIG BIRD SPEAKS

Carol Spinney, the actor extraordinaire who dramatically portrays the friendly avian on Sesame Street, reads from his memoir, *Shit, I Love Gin*. (12 East 56th St. Tickets only available via scalpers. Feb. 10 at 7.)

HOMELESS GUY ON THE L AT BEDFORD.

THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF THE CITY

This short series of photographs represents only a fraction of the later works of Dusty Jacket, urban photographer and grand-master of misdirection. These works in particular represent the artist's later "Roaming Tartar" phase. Jacket, then almost 106 years old and suffering from a mind that had softened over that time, would walk many tens to hundreds of miles outside the city with nothing but a bag of moldy groceries, a camera and a growing sense of frustration. Some have called the viewing of this collection the exploitation of an old man nibbling on the last crumbs of sanity. Those people have been politely, but pointedly ignored.

BY DUSTY JACKET



St. Petersburg, Russia, the great search for hot dogs and turkey bacon (1998)

The coldest winter I ever spent was outside Petersburg while on my way to Dzitkel's Deli on 34th. What some people will do for decent kosher! Not as many drunks as I thought there would be, though. In fact, there was very little to be seen. In fact, it wasn't even that cold.



Amish Barn, outside Pennsylvania on the way to the Drugstore (1994)

Up ahead a little ways is one of those curious barns the Amish are so fond of putting up. I know what they say, but I have a sneaking suspicion no one actually uses those barns for cows now. Perhaps they never did.



Avenue of the Americas, NY, NY, while stepping out a moment to fetch the paper (1998)

All right, where the hell is everybody? Is it somebody's birthday or something? This is getting scary. It's nice being able to walk in the middle of the road a bit, though. Still, very scared.



HoboTown USA, NJ, my daily commute (1996)

Not today, zombies!



THE TÄLK OF THE TAÜN

THE SWEET LIFE DEPT. OF AWESOME STEVE



So I was sitting in this sidewalk café called Il Consigliere, which is Italian and a great place that you'll probably never go to because it's the kind of place exclusively for people "in the know," when I realized several inherent flaws in Rousseau's Social Contract. Then, though, I found several mental loopholes that put things back in order again and helped prevent another catastrophic social conflagration in France, which is a great country whose citizenry entertain a much better palate than most, especially when it comes to a good aperitif. I'd recommend you one, but you probably couldn't afford it, and even then you definitely couldn't appreciate it, unless, of course, you're my good friend, Bob Dylan, who happened to see me in the restaurant and rushed over to chat. I was about to leave for my desk, but I always have time for Bob. Besides, this silly little article is of such miniscule importance to me in the grand scheme of things.

Did you know that I was asked to write a regular Op-ed for the *Wall Street Journal*? Of course, I turned it down. Idle Wall Street petty-bourgeoisie chit-chat is so out of style this year. Not at all like my light blue silk turtleneck with matching synth-wool knickers for the summer heat. It's all the rage in Tokyo, you know. Actually, you probably don't. Then again, by the time you're done switching off NASCAR it might be available at your local SAKS. I'd tell you the brand name,

but it would require the use of my pronunciation program that I designed in my spare time and I'm really not in the mood.

Oh, Bob seems to have disappeared right when we were going to discuss the inconsistencies of modern Marxist imagery as presented in the comic ovarian scene of Cecil Landon's latest adaptation of Yowal Ulager's infamous short masterpiece, *Der Krud*. That Bob. I bet he also



Am I the shit, or what?

ran off with my Kia KCV-III. For most of you this is just a concept car, but for me it's a reality.

Oh, I just realized I left the latest glass work from master sculptor and former lover who may or may not be trying to get back in my good graces Raweena Svenna standing precariously on my personally designed metallic coffee table. I'm afraid I have to be off back to my splendid townhouse with an awe-inspiring view of the Park in order to secure that priceless treasure. After that I'll probably go to one of those luxurious clubs that you're not invited to and then have sex with whomever I choose. It was nice to

spend this time with you, though. Nice of me, to be specific. Ta ta.

—Hans Down

THE NOVEAUX POOR



He stands on the corner of 5th and Broadway, glowering defiantly at each customer to exit Brooks Brothers. His unattractive beard growth, odious smell, and large protest sign make it easy to mistake this homeless man for some kind of Earth First Activist. He's not here to berate you for shopping on 5th, however—and he's certainly not going to ask you for any money.

As customers pass him, he heckles them for buying disposably cheap, unfashionable clothes. "You look like a pauper," he sneers, aquiline nose upturned. These taunts should come off as inappropriate—they are, after all, uttered by a man who appears to have worn the same clothes for weeks—but they carry uncanny import. No one escapes his jibes unscathed, and the occasional brave customer engages this homeless man in heated debate. His opponents always lose, and he suggests they find some manners at Barney's, triumphantly waving his sign in the air.

"Why Lie?" it reads, "I need a Starbucks Green Tea Latte!"

This man's name is Corinth Wellshire, and I spend the rest of the afternoon trying to secure an interview with him. It isn't easy. Wellshire rejects the textbook homeless bribe, a bag full of McDonald's

foodstuffs, and tells me he needs to go to high tea. I should call him up, he says, when I start writing for a publication that covers subjects worthy of his time, like *Cigar Aficionado* or *Yacht Commandant Biweekly*. Is this some kind of joke?

I surreptitiously follow him down towards the Algonquin Hotel. Truth be told, it isn't hard—his prodigiously white gloves make him stand out.

When I stop him again, I have a tall Green Tea Latte in hand. He looks at it once, sneers again, and says "You could have gotten a Venti, you know." For some reason, I do in fact get him a larger latte. I have my interview. Wellshire insists on dinner at restaurant which I cannot afford and gratuitously places a second order of Peking Duck to go. At last, he begins to talk.

In 1979, Wellshire was born in upper Manhattan to exceedingly wealthy parents. At school, he excelled at polo and hurting feelings, taking over the family's exploitative diamond concerns at age 14. When his parents died, he took over their business and cut costs until his miners cut back—literally. A mutiny in South Africa effectively wrested away Wellshire's sole source of income (he refused to contact the police so as not to soil his good name), and his swift descent began. Flatly refusing to work in any job offered him—they were all "rank with serfs and petit proletarians"—his spendthrift nature and obsession with extravagant yachts quickly depleted his remaining wealth. The things precious to him—his membership in various New York society clubs, his solid gold tap shoes, and yes, even his flotilla of pygmy-staffed yachts—disappeared.

"But I never stooped!" he exclaims. "Not like you. Where'd you go to school, huh? Probably Grinnell or some sort of equally plebeian place. I hope you liked rubbing shoulders with nearly illiterate farm boys who think they read literature. I've kissed Milton's exhumed corpse!"

To say Wellshire has adapted well to his new way of life would be to miss the point that actually he hasn't adapted at all. After belittling the waiter for failing to bring us oyster forks, he demands silk napkins so that he can blow his nose. He throws his second order of Peking Duck on the floor, "to give those paupers something to do, so they can quit filthing [sic] up the place." When I offer to pick up the check, he scoffs and demands to

pay it himself. I pretend to go to the restroom and work out a deal with the manager.

Out on the street, Wellshire flicks out a switchblade and turns it on me. He tells me to give him all the yachts I have, or he will kill me. I ask him if he will settle for another latte. He will not, and he stabs me. Not for my yachts, or even to take my money, but because I have infringed his honor by paying for dinner. He turns to leave, kissing a silver cross he calls "Granpappy".

Before he goes, however, he tells a joke, his favorite: "How many people of bad breeding does it take to screw in a lightbulb? Shut up and get me another Porterhouse!"

—Buster McNutt

URBAN RENEWAL DEPT. OF OLD PROFESSIONS



Nubile Street has seen better days, and if Commissioner Ruff Ponsky gets his way, those days might be making a comeback. The disagreeable sidewalks and alleyways, where the city's finest vixens once plied America's oldest female profession, now lie dormant under the crushing dual blows of a local YWCA and, more recently, the addition of a Starbucks.

"Expensive coffee and exercise have ruined this neighborhood," lamented the commissioner at a recent conference. "Used to be that the whole area was a real



Commissioner Ruff Ponsky

culture fest. Italians with their cheeky accents, dark-suited Russians, and even the rare white fox, all mixed freely for the purpose of sharing something universal. Little Italy, China Town, Ire Land. Forget all that. This was a fair of the world, and I feel it's my duty to bring it back."

With that end in mind, the commissioner, riding high on a surfeit of support from frustrated area Baby Boomers and a surprising number of college students, has pushed through a series of legislative initiatives. The new ordinances would finally shut down the purveyors of coffee grounds and subsidized housing to make way for Mom and Pops willing to help revitalize the street's fleshy glory. Though some have questioned the feasibility of the program without a significant budget overhaul, Ponsky maintains that any short-term cost is worth stemming the tide of decay. "If I don't get these women back on the streets," he said, "then they're likely to stay inside. What a shame that would be."

Touring the street in his custom Ford Durango convertible with purple shag interior the commissioner's enthusiasm for change was as infectious as Syphilis. Pointing out areas with his gold-tipped Commissioner's cane, Ponsky predicted big changes for the little street. "You see this section here, with the park and the Children's hospital? Future site of a foreboding alley and adult video shoppe. "It'll be perfect with the right street tags," mused Ponsky almost dreamily. "And once the graffiti artists' caravans start rolling in, opportunity comes in their wake." Glancing from side to side as if in fear of an unknown interlocutor, he then whispered into my ear, "By 'opportunity' I mean whores. Shhh!"

Of course, whether or not Ponsky will be able to actually carry out his grand designs remains in question, as several woman's rights groups have filed a civil case against him on behalf of the neighborhood. At the heart of their case is the allegation that filling the street with strip clubs and sex shoppes at the expense of local restaurants and indoor tennis clubs will actually do more harm than good. When I mentioned the pending legal action, Ponsky first gave an incredulous stare. "Sorry, I don't take crazy people like that seriously," he then muttered. "Dissent, bah!"

—Phyllis Stein

THE FINANCIAL PAGE DRUG MONEY

A few weeks ago, Javier Contrabando, a legendary entrepreneur and leader in his field, was murdered outside his home in Bogotá by sniper fire. Before his untimely death, Contrabando had made millions of dollars for his country, employed thousands globally, and singlehandedly cornered an entire market with successful horizontal integration. Contrabando supplied medicine to millions who relied on it just to get through the day, and, what's more, he did it at a reasonable price. And now, because of unjust international laws intent on punishing ordinary people who are just having a good time after a tough week, Contrabando lies in a cold, shallow grave.

Contrabando's death precipitated a bad month for more than his friends and relatives. South America now winces in pain, and what was once a burgeoning developing country now fights to pick up the pieces and find jobs for its citizens. America, too, feels the effects: Contrabando's former customers are on the street, suffering, in desperate need of the medication that allows them to maintain their standard of living. Inflation in the market is rampant and everyone feels the effects.

Contrabando's death is simply the latest proof that the United States' unjust, unwinnable "War on Drugs" must end. The only real gateway drug is the American stranglehold on trafficking—and after all its repressive, protectionist, trade policies, the shit American industry produces doesn't even give you a very good high. Just the other day, I bore personal witness to a group of seven teenagers in the bathroom of a Wendy's trying to start up a makeshift meth lab with a crock pot, some diet pills, and a quart of motor oil. This will not stand: bathroom-made meth cannot produce an acceptable high to those who have felt the rush of the coca plant's sweet nectar. The America of the Founding Fathers would never reduce its citizens to inhaling fumes from a crucible full of cheap antihistamines in

fast-food lavatories. But, what choice do I have? I mean we. America, that is.

Anyway, Javier was a legend—a fucking legend. He'd singlehandedly man this plane filled with kilos of coke down to this place in the Keys, where we'd drive the stuff to this plastic surgeon's office in Miami. We'd stuff these broads' tits with as much of the junk we could, and then fly them up to New York so they could "pose" for our "talent agency." They got all the free yay they wanted, and we singlehandedly supplied the Tri-State area and half of Florida with its coke fix.

The oppression of narcotics salesmen anywhere silences the voices of businessmen and women everywhere.



Did Adam Smith not say, "As soon as government management begins it upsets the natural equilibrium of industrial relations, and each interference only requires further bureaucratic control until the end is the tyranny of the totalitarian state"? He did, and I know that because I read the entirety of *The Wealth of Nations* in one sitting and remembered the whole thing. Am I superhuman? No more than anyone else with a friend like Cokey the Pipe.

At any rate, the oppression engendered by the regulation of cocaine is everywhere. Take the lady across the street from me in Hell's Kitchen. She's got a daycare and one of the highlights of her day is letting the kiddies help her with her science project, which involves the white stuff and baking soda. She even puts the whole thing in a volcano, so that the rocks come out when you heat it at the right temperature. I've seen the kids there, they all fucking love it, or at least they used to before some bully with a blue suit locked away the volcano in an evidence cubby. Kids aren't

even allowed a peek inside the evidence cubby. Oppression.

And my heroin dealer, Eddie. Eddie employs the mentally handicapped, who otherwise couldn't find a job, and gets them multi-tasking with their "bicycle messenger" runs. He's a genius, man. But what is genius to do when Joe Law takes his private stash and grants him a jimmy stick to the face as compensation? See? That's what I'm saying: oppression. Or what about perfectly nice bums who happen to brutally murder someone for coke, and then have to go to jail—for years sometimes? If that isn't the spitting image of Gulag-Nazi hegemonocommunofascist oppression, then frankly, I don't know what is. I mean, we all kill someone for a score sometimes. It's what Adam Smith called "the invisible hand"—it pulls the trigger, or stabs a passerby, or chokes a doorman for another taste of nose sugar.

It's been four damn weeks since I've blown a decent line, and someone's going to have to pay. America is suffering, my head feels like America right now and the entire deficit could be cured if they employed me under Alan Greenspan as the International Alternative Medication Chair. I'd split the profits with the Red, White, and Blue and we could all be a little more productive. Everyone knows that blow makes you more productive. They used to put it in Coca-Cola, people! And once upon a time, a Pope endorsed cocaine-laced wine. Jesus Christ says cocaine is OK! Does America need a bigger authority than that? Get real!

I need some blow really bad. Seriously. These government guys are pricks and I need a fix. That rhymes. Shit, this meth is making that dog in the corner dance. Is that a dog? I think it might be my water cooler. Since when have I had a water cooler? Anyway, viva Javier! That's Colombian for "give me some drugs now!" Think of the kids forced to make do on eighth-grade chemistry and free fast-food tap water. Think of the deficit. Shit, I don't care. Get me coke!

—Cedric "Heels" McCoy

JACK "THE JOKER" NAPIER

Is it possible that Batman's arch-nemesis lives in the city, and forgot to have his public address listing removed from the phone book? This reporter thinks so.

BY S. KELLY TUNKEY

Sneaking into a master criminal's hideaway is no easy task, especially in New York, the criminal crucible of the Eastern Seaboard. I arrive for my interview with Jack Napier, known to terrorized citizens and antagonized heroes as "The Joker," well before sunrise on a Saturday. The groggy doorman puts up little resistance as I flash my press credentials and board the elevator. I release my grasp on the bottle of chloroform in my reporter's utility belt as the elevator doors shut. Surprisingly, the Joker's apartment is unlocked. Is it a trap?

I have no choice; the truth demands sacrifices. I gingerly push the door open, and tiptoe over the linoleum to the bedroom. I cannot shake the feeling that my own tragicomic doom may lie within. Many have asked—how does such a man sleep at night, with so many murders shrugged off with a bad pun? He snores lightly.

The alarm sounds, an eerie minor key rendition of that calliope circus medley. "Beep-Beep-Beep", but this time terrifying. But the Joker does not move.

Is he dead? Or merely playing a deadly joke?

In fact, he is only tired. Eventually one sinister eye opens, then another. Then the eyes close again. For 30 riveting minutes he lies motionless. The tension between us (he must know I am here) is so thick you could cut it with two knives, perhaps the same two knives he almost used to cut Commissioner Gordon before Batman stopped him. Maybe he still has those knives, somewhere. Somewhere like the kitchen, or the murder parlor. I check the kitchen first, and find some knives. I return, knives in hand, but the bed is empty. The trap is sprung.

I wait in the bedroom, clenching the knives, trying vainly to figure out how I became the target of the Joker's latest scheme. I am close to the truth, perhaps too close. I hear the Joker walk from the bedroom to the kitchen, loudly and deliberately.

"Fuck. No milk," he says with a tinge of anger. He is toying with me. I am the half-dead mouse to his sadistic feline. I hear the pouring of cereal. "No milk." he says, again, and then laughs, sealing my

fate. What madman, what maniac speaks of homicide in such warped metaphorical humor? Surely I am the milk, and there is none of me for cereal. Not yet, anyway. The police will not find my body.

The Joker eats his cereal, crunches loudly on something as whole grain as it is wholly evil, and finishes. He walks right past me and goes back to sleep, a torture artist in his element.

Joker walks into the living room and starts channel surfing. I see a horrifyingly prophetic list of victims flash across the screen in the next 3 hours of television. Ted Danson, The Beverly Hillbillies, Suzanne Somers—all come up in reruns that may as well have been tombstones. Peering silently around the corner, I see the Joker's eyes, usually bright with malevolence, droop and close. Is he napping? Or just waiting for me to slip?

Trap or not, this is my only chance to escape. I run from the bathroom and am on my way out of the building when I realize I am still holding two of the Joker's Chicago Cutlery knives. They glint like an eerie smile in my hands, and I know for my own sake I must return them.

I return to the sleeping ghoul, his face all the more hideous when not doused in pancake-makeup, and deposit the knives gingerly in his hands. Just then, the theme from Step by Step bursts forth like a paroxysm of evil laughter and the Joker awakes, now holding two knives! I don't know about the Joker, but I am going to kill those Step by Step guys.

"The fuck are you doing in my house?!" the Joker shrieks, likely knowing full well why I am here. "I'm calling the cops!" What is his sick game? I don't wait for the denouement.

"The joke is up, Joker!" I say. "Now hand over those knives!"

As if noticing the knives for the first time (as if, indeed!), Joker shouts a death threat or a eulogy (I am too scared to decide which): "Did you take these out of my kitchen? What the hell?"

"You won't get away with this, you fiend!" I shout, pulling a pen and paper from my reporter utility belt. I throw it at his face and try to run, but can't. Our deathly faceoff lasts until the boys in blue burst in and take me into protective custody. Officially, they charge me with breaking and entering, as well as assaulting one Jack Napier, but I think we both know the real heroes never appear on paper. Unless they have a reporter's utility belt. ♦



Haunting similarity. Left: Last known photograph of "The Joker". Right: my sketch of Jack Napier of the Bronx, who claims his natural smile is "a fucking coincidence"

I, SUB~MARINER

My neighbor's security system is no match for my resourcefulness and guile

BY JEROME GROOPMAN

Most notable anthropologists and evolutionary biologists have come to agree that man has separated and distinguished himself from the other fauna most prominently by his curiosity. Never one to buck a scientific trend, I have endeavored to live my life in the furtherance of this noble reputation. So, with the weight of our innate inclination plus my rather laudable respect for the import of legacy and tradition, it was with great gusto that I awoke one morning to see that the house next door had sold and I was to have a new neighbor.

Naturally, I have already mastered everything available to my local sensory purview to date, so this novel mystery so close at hand was a welcome relief from the daily search for new informational discoveries, such as newly launched blogs and newly released independent jazz and world music records.

For this reason, you can imagine my incensed surprise when my neighbor proved to be prohibitively private. However, after reevaluating my initial ire, I resolved to instead relish the challenge. I think you'll agree that this was the proper attitudinal recourse.

But how secretive Robert Henry Jenson (name obtained from intercepted mail and confirmed by notarized county property records) proved to be! Truly he is the most elusive of all quarries, the cleverest of all men! An Odysseus in our modern midst! A snake in the grass! A snake in our ointment! Vanishing cream!

Unresponsive to repeated knocks at his door and impervious to window-peering, the mysterious Mr. Jenson left me rather befuddled as to how to proceed. After a lengthy introspective info-séance, inspiration leapt into my (occipital) lobes. Indeed, his windows are obscured with what appear to be opaque blue tarpaulins, and his walls too thick and sturdy to permit the passage of sound, besting even my trusty stethoscope. With

no eyes, no ears, and crippling postnasal drip hampering my olfaction, I decided it was time to impersonate a Thai food delivery boy. For you see, Mr. Jenson was in the habit of taking all his meals and groceries by delivery.

I nearly applied for a job at the local Thai delivery foodery, but realized that I had of course already worked there at an earlier time in my Quest for All Knowledge and that my separation from their employ had not been on the warmest of terms. Instead, I ordered a #5 "to-go" (in disguise, of course), donned my old TastyThai Express uniform, and rang Mr. Jenson's doorbell at 5:30 p.m. on the button. His door opened on hidden servomotors and I stepped inside. Into an armored airlock! As the front door whirred shut behind me, I knew I was in over my head.

Or at least thought I was. But Fortuna was smiling upon me this day! Mr.

Jenson *had* ordered Thai that evening, and a #5 at that! A drawer extended from the steel inner door of the airlock, with payment and an ample tip. I placed the bag of food in the drawer and it retracted immediately. The front door opened behind me and the conveyor belt beneath my feet sprang to life, rudely and abruptly depositing me on his front steps. Strangely, at the time I felt only relief. I knew what was in his house: an airlock. Was this not success? Had not the requisites of absolute victory been met? Am I not triumphant and majestic? Have you never blinked?

No?

My curiosity burning ever more ardently, I resolved the more strongly to uncover the goings-on of that suburban mini-manse of mystery. The normal means were insufficient. It was time for Technical and Tactical Measures.

It was not long before I realized that the only way to penetrate Jenson's defenses would be from below. Having just finished memorizing the entire library of US Military manuals, I was current on several vehicular platforms, including the operation and navigation of Benjamin Franklin-class converted attack submarines. After a day of telephone calls, I was ready to sail with a skeleton crew of 25. Yes, this is well short of the typical complement of 143,



"Jesus Christ, you're a lion!"

NO.
SEX.

I traipse around
Central Park.

Yeats and Elliot and
Byron float along
On my tongue

Like the cans
That float on the
Pond here. I wax
Rhetoric,

Not sophomoric, like
The common folk.
Yet I do
Not
Get Laid.

I stroll down a busy
Street, laughing at
Those I see, so
Brainwashed

By the modern
Age.
MTV and People
Magazine cloud

Their vision

While they see not
The true splendors of
The city.

The books, the
Theatre,
The paintings,
Arranged on a wall

Above a staircase that reaches God.

Yet women won't fuck me.
I weep tears of literature.

—Matthew Gens

but this would be a brief operation and many of my friends were out of town that weekend.

I commandeered the USS *James K. Polk*, the only active Benjamin Franklin-class submarine in the Atlantic fleet. As it was stationed in Norfolk, Virginia, it was a short and uneventful voyage to Chesapeake Bay. As we sailed west and landward, I could not help but reflect on what a fine vessel the *Polk* was. She cut a clean and swift line through the dark and salty depths. I shed an appropriately dark and salty tear as I marveled at the enormity of my position in this world. My first mate saw this and was himself moved.

Land ho! The challenge: Mr. Jenson's house was located a full 67 kilometers inland of the bay. Not to fear, I had prepared for this problem. Realizing that my magazine did not contain enough ordinance to blast a channel to Jenson's location, I had carefully mapped out the local aquifers and taken density soundings, discerning the softest path through the supple earth. In a demonstration of superior application of nature's hidden lessons (which reveal themselves to those who know how to look), I reconfigured the *Polk's* sonar system to work like the echolocation organs typically used by

bats (*myotis ciliolabrum* in this case, to be precise). Painstakingly we tunneled beneath the earth, coursing through Gaia's veins, bathed in her di-hydrogen oxide ichor.

Progress was slow, of course, but inexorably and expertly I eased all 8,250 tons of the *Polk* through the warm, pliant countryside. Suburbia buckled before my mission. Baltimore and Silver Spring quaked with excitement. The very soil was in my thrall. I ruled Her, and she Understood. HAVE YOU NO CONCEPT??

And, suddenly (but not unexpectedly), we were beneath him. The recycled oxygen thrumming richly in my alveoli, I briefed my faithful crew, who had promptly responded to my summons to the galley. All was in concord. All was still in the aft quarters. We dined, knowing only a fool faces destiny/mystery on an empty stomach. We dined, richly.

After ascertaining the GPS rectitude of our position to a precision unknown to my ancestors, I executed the plan. I hoisted the very fucking periscope through Jenson's floorboards. I'm serious. You must never doubt. And I saw everything. All mysteries were revealed to my righteous lens. Jenson was in the business of DVD piracy, and a staunch Miami Dolphins fan. ♦

buy
fucking
EXPENSIVE
vodka!

*Imported direct from the
Arctic Wildlife Reserve.*



Jim's Pricey Booze

*It's not like you
can't afford it.*

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

SHOUT AND MURMUR!

BY JEROME S. SUCASA

Aaaaaaaargh!
Murmer, murmer, murmer.
Yeeeeeeeeee-ouch!

Tuttle-tuttle-tuttle-tuttle. FRUSTRATION-ATION-ATION! Roses are red, violets are blue, You love me, and I love... crew? I love, to spew? I achoo! Hm.

Bleeeeeeeeeeaargh!
BLOODY MURDER! [A low sound].

Baaaaaaazaiiiiiiiigh. Hoffa-hoffa-hoffa. Honey, I'm Hooooooooooooome!

This offer not valid in Kentucky.

No good son of a bitch.

SON OF A BITCH!

-sigh-Have you seen Cindy in those stupid shoes? She looks like a chicken.

Cindy looks like a chicken! HA HA HA!

Hrnxhkr! I can't believe you just said that, Emmit. Cindy's going to hate us!

CINDY YOU'RE A CHICKEN!

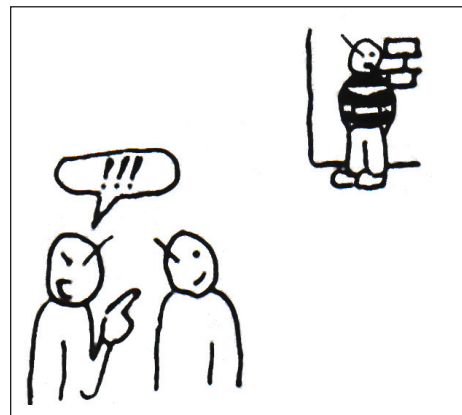
Stop, dude. She's going to hear us.

Weee-O-Weee-O-Weee!

I should have gone at the last station. I Crap. Now I'm gonna be late and I can already hear what—And what's with this guy next to me? I think he's nuts.

Garfield! GAAAAAARFIELD!
ALVIN!

Huh? Goddamn race relations!
Lawkschwanna lawkschwanna



lawkschwanna. Wakka wakka wakka! He he he he he he he.

Get her, you fools!

I always thought Fred was blind.

STDs! Like you were going to get out and push anyway, dipshit. Wouldn't want you to break a nail or anything. Jerk-off.

Last skate, so couples only!

OH, I'LL SPEAK UP ALL RIGHT!

I'll speak up as soon as you shut your pie-hole about my wife. I dare you, say 'funbags' again. See what happens.

Surf's up, dudes! Hang ten!

Good one, never-been-on-a-surfboard-in-your-life, Hal.

But I thought it was in remission! Tickets, please. Say Cheeeeeeeese... Or Die!

Lull-loll-lull-loll-lull-loll. Manchurian dynasty-more like Manchurian pie-eating contest.

Hip hip Hurrah! Gurgler, gurgler, gurgler, gurgle. BO-oring!

Hey, Bob, I don't think he's kidding.

PIZZA FOR BREAKFAST?!

Ich bin ein Berliner!

You guys need to get laid. I told you Cindy would hear us, dude!

You need to get an egg laid, Cindy! You Chicken!

I hate those guys.

VA-VA-VAVOOOOOOOOOOOM! Women's intuition, eh? I'd say it's more like women's inability to keep their mouth shut.

No, you're never lost, are you, you big idiot. I hope we run out of gas, that'll teach you right. Mother was right.

I bet you didn't need to buy fifteen pairs of shoes.

Sure, Rufus, just like you buy it for the articles. And like you wouldn't just lose it if I so much as smiled at a cashier in McDonalds.

Bitch.

Hypocrite.

Whore.

Tyrant.

I WANT A DIVORCE!

Food fight! Dribble dribble dribble buta buta boopoom. I got seventeen times! Mameluke; mamemaluke; mame-luke; mameluke. Brilliant! Well, why not Newport, Rhode Island. Bleeeeeeee-arghhhhhhhh! Gulp. Yooooooooooooo



And what, lay eggs on us?!
HA HA HA!

Eat at Joe's! Spsspspspspspspspssss. BOO-YAH!

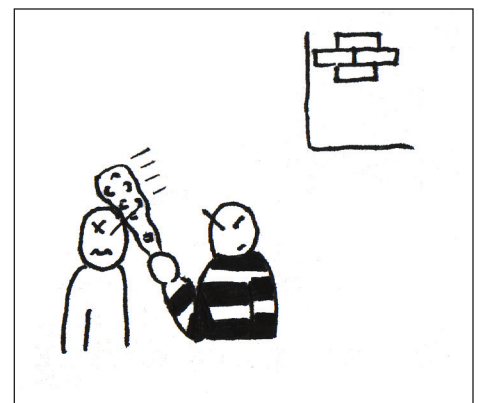
Patapatapatapata chirp chirp chirp.

You'll pay for this, Captain Planet!

Allegra is not for everyone, and some users have reported suffering cotton-mouth, chest pain, or srious heart problems while using Allegra. Symptoms were mild when compared to a placebo.

Sphincter says what?

I'm sure that's why you get paid \$2.15 an hour, moron.



oooooooooww! Now that I think about it, it really is sort of creepy isn't it.

Rape! That's not Maple syrup you fool, it's Mercury! Wispssswispssswispsss.

No, knee-socks are not sexy!

Oops.

Sure I'll call you. I'll call you a moron, ya moron.

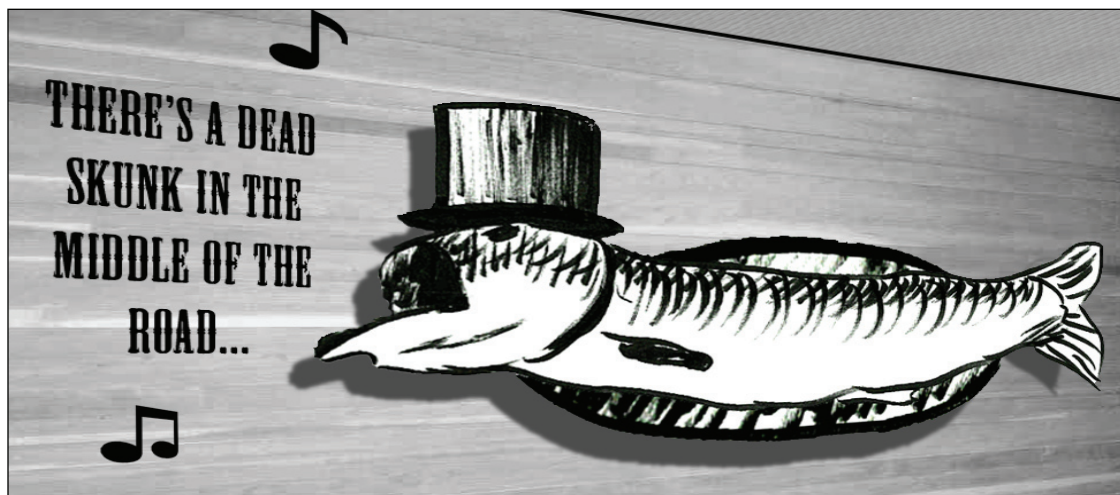
FREEEEEEEEEDOMMMMMM-MMMMMM!!!!!!◆

LETTER FROM A TRUCK STOP OUTSIDE NEOLA, NE

THIS PLACE SUCKS

You won't even believe it.

BY JAMESON SAMSON JOHNSON, JR.



Ann's Place Gas and Diner is a small A truck stop just off Interstate 80 in eastern Nebraska, with a parking lot for semis, a line of gas pumps and a squat white diner. Inside the diner are a long bar and a row of bright green barstools. Opposite the bar squats a row of vinyl-upholstered booths. Next to the booths, a wall of dirty windows looks out to the parking lot. On the high wall above the bar a mounted plastic trout twitches its tail and sings snatches of old Hank Williams tunes.

One evening in mid-February of last year, I entered Ann's Place, confident that one of its patrons would be a little-known genius, Washington power broker, or the like. I sat down at a booth. After a brief wait, I was approached by a thin, sandy-haired woman in her mid-fifties. She was wearing an apron and a shin-length skirt—the *de facto* uniform of Ann's Place employees—but the most immediately striking aspects of her appearance were her haphazardly applied mascara and Tweety Bird pin. Under the pin, her name tag said "Ginger B."

"Hello," I said, delighted to make the acquaintance of someone whom I presumed, by her ironic middle-American dress, to be a preëminent artist or cultural commentator. "What do you do? Direct campaign advertisements for a centrist offshoot of the Green Party?

Explore the cutting edge of tragico-absurdist sculpture? Train Puerto Rican prostitutes to work as sexual violence counselors in Spanish Harlem?"

There was a pause. "I'm your waitress," she said. "What can I get you?"

"Rhubarb pie," I said, a little disappointed.

I surveyed the room. Faded, menopausal women served coffee and cheese danishes from behind the bar. The customers were mostly overweight middle-aged men, although a few unkempt families and dull-looking teenaged couples sat in stony silence. Everyone in the restaurant was white.

I turned around and peered over the top of my seat at the lonely-looking bearded man in the booth next to mine. He met my gaze. "Isn't the political wrangling surrounding the proposed expansion of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's holdings fascinating in light of the dramatically increased museum security following the recent theft of Edvard Munch's iconic *Scream*?" I said, by way of introduction.

"Look, I don't want no trouble," the man said, and turned back to his soup.

"That's what the Met said!" I responded, and chuckled warmly. The man picked up his soup and moved to another booth. I was beginning to think something was wrong with the people of

Ann's Place. But I was determined not to give up that easily.

My waitress came back. "I forgot to ask you. Did you want your pie *à la mode*?" she said.

"Ah, you speak French!" I said, overjoyed. "*À quelle université avez-vous été instruit? Je suis un diplômé du Sorbonne!*" She left, shaking her head.

"And don't come back without bringing some goddamn intelligentsia!" I muttered after her. Could Ann's Place really be devoid of wealthy, hypereducated patricians?

Finally, out of sheer desperation, I decided to address the diner's patrons and employees directly. "Aren't any of you brilliant artists, scientists, or politicians?" I asked. Everyone stared at me blankly. My waitress brought me my rhubarb pie. It was still cold. And I had wanted ice cream on top of it.

"Don't any of you have quirky, off-the-beaten-track lives or careers that illustrate some obscure aspect of our society?" I said.

There was a pause. "I used to own a poodle," volunteered a gap-toothed man at the bar. Several of the other patrons snickered. The man looked hurt.

"Well, is anyone at least from New York City?" No one was.

"The hell with this," I said, and left without paying. ♦

SERIAL FICTION

ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE...AND BLOOD!

BY R.L. STINE, FROM HIS UPCOMING BOOK OF THE SAME TITLE


R.L. STINE
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ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE... AND BLOOD!

 Howell Book House

I slurped the sweet red liquid from the bottom of it. The blood warmed my throat, seeping into my insides. I'd never been happier as a bloodsucking beast than on this day. Bloody Marys are, after all, the perfect cure for a hangover. A perfectly ghoulish cure for a hangover. And I was dead.

... On the inside, which was why I was drinking! It was my fifth day in a row at The Cuckoo Clock before lunchtime. I needed to go back to work, but my Mary was teasing me, taunting me. I realized then that she had me in her spell, and I would never be free again.

... Unless I just put down my drink! And why not, I didn't like this place anyway. The bartender here, Uncle Tim, used to own a candy factory, until the FDA discovered he was sneaking Rohyphnol into lollipops. Pedophiles everywhere had been luring kids into cars with the stuff, and babysitters used them to shut the kids up so they could make love with some other fumbling high-schooler in the parents' bed. Now, he was breaking liquor laws in Brooklyn—and I realized that he was a zombie.

... In the sense that his appearance was extremely unkempt! Uncle Tim had rotten teeth that broke free from his lips every time he set one of those Bloody Marys in an ice-cold glass on a yellowed coaster for me. His smile chilled me down to my bones, making me want to drink even more to set those decaying fossils back into a world of inebriated apathy. Then a monster attacked me.

A monster called love, that is! I looked over at the lady next to me. Her red nails clutched her gin and tonic until she dragged them across her scraggly platinum mane. She noticed, and shot me a devastatingly cold smile with a seemingly chiseled eyebrow raised. I asked her for her name, and she stabbed a knife through my heart.

... With her words! "It's Monica, and I'll have another gin and tonic." I was surprised and stung like a bee by her coyness, until she flashed me a hint of a smile that made my knees give in. Clutching the bar, I

glanced at the tab and shot a few bills toward the bartender. I didn't have my wits about me, and the phone number she scrawled on a matchbook and shoved my way sent me into oblivion. She stood up, smoothed her miniskirt, grabbed her blazer and stabbed another knife (of words!) through my heart. "Call me if you want to buy someone another drink." As she was leaving, I ran after her (I hoped not too forwardly) as fast as I could. Then, out of nowhere I saw two bright yellow eyes and heard a blood-curdling scream.

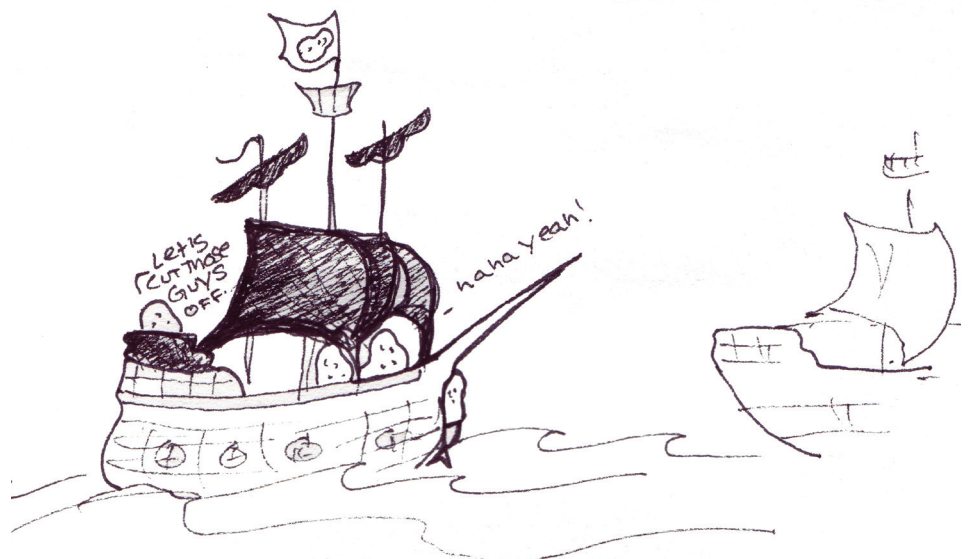
... A milk truck was coming right at me, and I was screaming at it! The milk truck swerved and just barely missed my body. I kept running and caught up with her, sweat pouring down my temples, just before she boarded the L on Bedford. I cried out to her and got on the train, just as a huge green demon jumped out of the darkness and chopped my head off with an axe.

... Psych! That's when I realized that her nails were filed to subtle but apparent points. Those red daggers slowly moved towards my suit, as an audible gulp escaped the confines of my throat. I felt tense as one of those kiddies' coffee-can telephone strings. I watched her out of the corner of my eye as she leaned over and grazed her fingers across my unbuttoned suit jacket, onto my Brooks Brothers shirt, and ripped my chest open, digging for my ever-pounding heart.

... That's a metaphor for her making out with me! But then she tensed, and I saw the fear in her eyes. She suddenly grabbed my shoulder, eyes deep as two black pools in the depths of hell, and told me that we actually were in the depths of hell. I turned and, although the Bloody Marys were starting to make me see double, I recognized the jagged, broken craters that dug into blood-red gums. Uncle Tim was in the back of the train. He must actually be the Devil, and he had tricked us into getting onto the train to Hell!

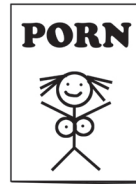
... Which sucked! The train stopped. My ears were ringing, as Monica yanked my arm and whisked me through the streets that were full of monsters and skeletons and other scary stuff. We sprinted across streets, dodging demon cars and demon hot-dog vendors until we made it to an alleyway. She pulled down a fire escape ladder and hoisted herself up the cold iron rungs. At any other moment, I'd be peeking up her skirt like an old, disillusioned, formula children's novelist but at this point I was in fear for my life. Then I felt a cold hand grab me.

... It was Monica's hand, pulling me up the fire escape! We climbed higher and higher and eventually we were back on the surface of the earth. "That was close," I told her, laughing. She smiled, then she turned into an even bigger monster and ate me. ♦



Dick-Tater-Ships

THE CRITICS



A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE SMITHSONIAN AND ITS ENVIRONS

I don't just critique art. I make it mine.

BY RICO DE LA ROBAR

Kleptomania is a psychological disorder linked to such broader-based conditions as depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and anxiety. Scientists suggest that it may be caused by abnormalities in the neurotransmitter serotonin. Typically, individuals affected by the disorder either exhibit it in sporadic short episodes, chronic action, or episodic behavior marked by alternating periods of remission and concentrated stealing. Being myself subject to the latter form of kleptomania, I came down with an episode of my own while on assignment to write a piece about the contemporary Smithsonian museum in Washington, D.C. Unfortunate for the Smithsonian, but quite lucky for my burgeoning collection of bric-a-brac.

Officer Jim Fatchins is a sizable man; the first comparison that comes to mind is an unkempt, younger Santa Clause. His majestic navy uniform glistening in the June Washington sun as it gleams off his sweat stains and spilled grease from a bygone steak grinder, donut crumbs sprinkling behind him as if he were en route to a woodland candy house and wished to leave a trail to find his way back, he trots down the busy sidewalk, pushing aside politicians and actresses, tourists and teachers. He pants, stops for a brief moment, pays a street food vendor for a Pepsi, gulps down half of it, notices that the vendor also sells fried dough, buys and eats that as well, and pushes onward. He will not catch up to me.

I had no particular need for the dress that Mamie Eisenhower wore to the

inaugural ball in 1953. It is a stunning ensemble, a luxurious faded pink silk piece with a modest, yet not prudish, V-neckline, covered in thousands of rhinestones. It would probably just wind up in the pile next to the CD rack in my apartment with all the other things, though, fighting for air with the replica of the Lombardi Trophy that a desperate Jim Kelly had made after his fourth straight Super Bowl loss, an assortment of railroad crossing signs, three diamond earrings from the local DeBeers store, a mounted buffalo head, and half the contents (at the time) of Woody Allen's underwear drawer. Currently the heap is

seven feet high.

Iremember vividly the wonderful conversation I was having right before I had the urge to snatch the gown. I was interviewing Joseph Mardrick, a grandfatherly-looking man who had worked as a curator in the Smithsonian for forty years, and in the First Ladies' Exhibit for the last three. "You'd be surprised," rasped Joe, "how much the young girls love this display. They come in, with practically nothing on, like their fathers didn't care that they were dressing like tramps, but when they see these beautiful, elegant dresses they just swoon. It makes me happy if I can be a part of instilling some real class in the kids today." I nodded, excused myself, and hopped over a velvet cordon.

As I tied my sportcoat around my hand like a wrap to precede a boxing glove, smashed the display glass, and fled with the fifty-year old wardrobe to the sounds of a piercing alarm, shocked bystander chatter, and snoring – from Mr. Mardrick, who had somehow just managed to doze off in his chair – I felt the old rush. All the panic just faded away into a smooth melody of Bach and Mozart, violins swaying to the rhythm of my loping feet as they (my feet) darted through a lobby, burst through a door and across a small patch of grass,



"I think Social Security is ruining our economy, don't you agree?"

"In fact--Uhp...wait...I just pooped a little."

SKIPPING CULTURAL STONES ON THE SEA OF ASPERSIONS

How dare you say classical Roman culture

Was superior to that of the Greeks?

You fool

How could you presume to arbitrate

One of the fundamental questions?

Your Romans practiced both literal

Epispasm

As well as the figurative, cultural sort

Concealing their frailty behind a Prepuce

of Augustan marble and Elegabalus'

Homo-finery.

As they coveted the Greek ideals.

Philaenis and Solon

Would you trade Athens for Ostia?

Sappho for Messalina?

Epispasm is a façade.

A facade doesn't have sebaceous glands.

LISTEN TO ME

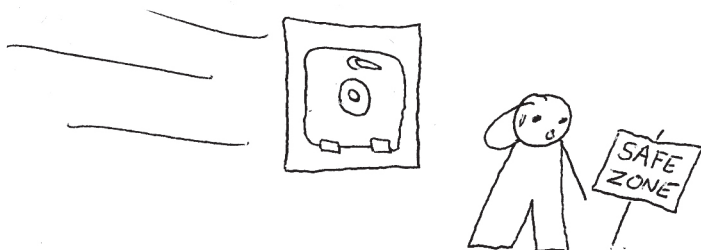
—Christopher Laakko

and hopped a fence. Somewhere along the way I acquainted myself with the aforementioned policeman, whom I dispatched with inconsiderable speed. I galloped toward the Holiday Inn, fabric fluttering like a flag.

Brit Hume of Fox News broke the story. "An unidentified perpetrator has reportedly stolen one of the gowns from the First Ladies' exhibit in the Smithsonian National Museum and fled authorities. Onlookers have described him as being of average height, white, of slightly stocky build, and likely armed." I knew I should have finished that banana before I started my interview. They probably mistook it for a pistol, and besides it had probably gone bad enough by now to be unappetizing. I probably don't eat enough fruit anyway. As I rummaged through my disguise kit on the soft bed, pulling out a fake beard, some dark tan makeup, and a ninja mask,

I took in the aromas of the flowers in full bloom outside my window.

I found myself in my apple-red Ford Mustang convertible, speeding around the beltway, Toccata and Fugue in D-minor blasting from the speakers, passing sport utility vehicles as the wind whipped by and loosened the false mustache from my upper lip. Maybe the cops would find me this time and put an end to my cycle. Maybe I would simply continue with my life as usual, writing pithy, descriptive reports of interesting locales, only to feel the familiar compulsion to steal a priceless artifact and have to skip town, submitting the text to my editor over e-mail. As I drove on though, my trunk stuffed with my luggage, Mrs. Eisenhower's old getup, and a box of napkins I had taken from a Quizno's after lunch during my departure, for once in a long time, I somehow felt at peace. That was a good toasted Italian sub. ♦



BUY FUCKING EXPENSIVE WHISKEY!

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UNINTELLIGENT DESIGN

In "The Land Before Time VIII", director Flan Booty proves to the world he's not afraid to pander to plebeians. My metaphors shall be his undoing.

BY J. MANUEL LABOR

Even so brave a cynic as Theodor Adorno, who first conceived of the monument to Fascist principles he dubbed the "culture industry"—an amalgam of the music, television and film industries woven together by a cabal of seedy Goy technocrats—could not have imagined in his wildest dreams the full-blooded tragedy that is "The Land Before Time VIII: The Curious Meteor of Death." If the gods of the culture industry have seen fit to spoon-feed the modern voyeur such a soy-encrusted cornucopia of wheat-free alternative, they would have done well to pump a little more vitamin C into the concoction. While they were at it, the so-called auteurs gripping the reigns at Universal/MCA could have also seen fit to drain their latest artistic tour-de-force of the pints of MSG that kept the plot hungry but the audience full-of regret at having to sit through another buffet-style sampling of all the classic jabs at early Cambrian humor that I thought had given up the ghost along with the Glyptodon or the Velvet Underground banana trick.

Chinese buffets are all the rage this year, as they were in the years past, and its not uncommon now for some uncouth so-and-so to slip in a sly reference in an otherwise bland bit of dialogue like so much five-flavor sauce on a Peking duckling. Do they realize this duck was lame well before the first serving was lapped up? Perhaps it is to be expected, given our bulging affair with the bulge, but the prices never seem to dignify the return of the repressed in the form of nightly stomach trauma. Even during the meal the luckiest patron will leave with the scant feeling of dissatisfaction that pervades the literary tableaux of modern feminist criticism. The "Chicken Amazing" was only so-so and the "Triple Family Delight" could have used a tad more delight, but these

are trivial complaints when compared to the wait staff. I shudder to think what our Founding Fathers would think of



"Would you like some tea?" asked Agnes.

"No, I couldn't possibly," answered Mabel. All the rest was silence.

this mess. As adherents to Plato's notion of a republic dominated by sensible savants, they naturally would be horrified by the misdirected democratization of service proffered by the promise of the buffet—the talented leaders and cultural critics unheeded by any authority or wait staff, forced to mingle with the minstrels, heathens and smallpox babies along with the rest of the hoi polloi in the never-ending struggle for the last bit of lobster tail.

Ground deposit feeders are disgusting. They stand as reminders of a past that evolution should have dictated we never see again, and yet our own

dear public's morbid fascination with them, the greasiest of nature's hairs in the pound cake of life, has doomed us to their consistent rehabilitation. How such an image can ever be brought into the social gallery is an enigma even the great Poirot could never have solved, drunk as he was on his own French self-satisfaction and wine. Like the glass of Lake Champlagne's Merlot '68 served with the grilled catfish at so many trendy restaurants as of late, an aardvark makes a piss-poor companion on any tale of adventure. Yet the customer just sits there like one of Romero's corpses, drinking

his Pinot when he well knows that the catfish would go down much quicker if he coupled it with a cafe of Pierre Montebloch's Pinot Grigio from just this year. He also knows his catfish has likely had its dribbling mandibles fornicating with the floor, the coffin of the natural world, where along with whatever ludicrous crumbles it inhales there will also be the chalky remnants of a million years of calcareous nannoplankton. The reality of the burial at sea, in which salty individuals flung their former comrades into the abyss of memory called the ocean by many and the realm of the second death by some Lacanians, also leaves open the possibility that chunks

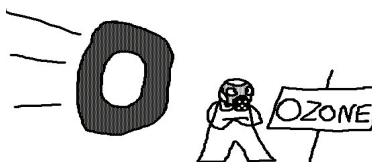
of a former seaman have made their way down dinner's throat. I tend to wonder why the Donner Party's supposed turn to people beef as a last resort for survival still draws gasps from an audience when this prevalent dining on ground feeders is merely cannibalism by different means.

Though its physical form has largely moved into the bargain bins and silicon dumps of the Western U.S., many still continue to have fond memories of playing MECC's "classic" role-playing game, "Oregon Trail" on their desktops or Commodore 64's. I don't, and it puzzles me to no end to understand the satisfaction some get upon reliving the moment some pre-pubescent 2-D sprite named Jimmy died of the croup near Salt Lake City. The sadism implicit in being granted total dominance over the paltry electronic lives of a party of nameless pioneers just never seemed to hit the player as he sped along on his way toward a better life. Well, the game's over now. You made it to Oregon, or maybe just Mississippi or Hell: perhaps you got all the way to California in one piece. Are the lives of the victims any better now than they were when they squandered those precious hours of their youth trying to ford the river with those stupid, stupid oxen? Probably not. So then what good comes of rekindling those good times, a plastic monitor your onnly companion, except as moments of pure kitsch? Where then does the schlock cease and the spirit of adventure begin to rise?

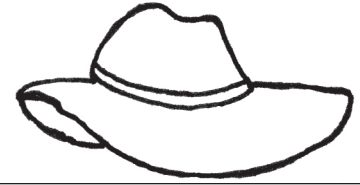
Certainly there is none of the stuff that makes a grand adventure within the contents page of magazines these days. If you were strapped in for a wild ride of intellectual growth and spiritual replenishment in the face of a world filled with Onychophorans posing as your peers and superiors, then you have come too late. No Doc, you better fill the De Lorean back up with as many Jiggowatts as you can muster because this certainly is not 1968. While you were sleeping, the Luddites and the technocrats got hitched, though I will let you guess which one wears the man pants in the relationship. They love each other so much, in fact, that they even shit together, and the result may very well be this magazine. Did you by chance leaf through any of the articles before getting to this one? Well, it doesn't matter, because everything,

from the putrid sentence structure to the arrangement of the same old staid photographs to the cookie-cutter graphic humor boxes, turned sour well before you had the misfortune of eyeing the cover and believing its promise. Did you not read the expiration date? I think I mentioned it before. 1968, the year I left grad school to start the first day of the end of my languishing existence.

Some men still prefer the truth of the Spen-blue tie on Tuesday, which is why it irks me to see that I have gone again with the chartreuse. What could have possessed me to do such a thing other than a clearly sagging moral sense? It was a lack of morals that saw me run from one woman's arms to another and straight out of graduate school with nothing to show for it but a passion for lashing out at those that only wanted to help. I did not ever mean to strike you in that way Lisa. I simply never got over the death of Sparky. That Corgi was more of a mother to me than my actual bitch of a Mom ever was. I could have made it though if I had better editors who knew when to shut up and let me have my way. "Brevity is the sole of wit..." Hogwash! I will show you. I will show you all. That is an idle threat and the presentation of it was such a sorry hodgepodge of clichés that I did not even feel inclined to add the perfunctory exclamation point to give it the air of excitement that it might have deserved. And to add an embarrassing Mai Lai massacre to this already despicable Tet offensive, the bed sheets have not been satisfactorily washed and dried to the strippings in several days. The resulting cake of ancient skin and human grease that has collected in the meantime would likely be enough to allow me to start a small grease-spoon diner if I had any initiative left. I would hang myself, but the rope available in most chain stores is scratchier than an ancient Sumerian LP of "Turkey in the Straw" and has a habit of glinting the wrong way in the morning sun. Yet that does not stop the companies from producing yards and yards of the same stringy mess each and every year. Where will it end? ♦



the temporary hat



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DEPARTMENT OF VANITY

MY FACE

Face it, I'm beautiful!

BY JOHN TERWILLIGER

There comes a time in every critic's life when he grows weary of seeing the same old collection of tired movies and uninspired plays that so dominate today's stage and screen. In those moments I wonder if my soul is doomed to endure this uninspiring existence for the rest of my professional career. Then I remember that I own one of the greatest pieces of art in the history of mankind, and it is this magnum opus that lights the fire of my soul and reminds me of the goodness of humanity. I refer to my face.

What great sculptor constructed this masterpiece? Leonardo, Raphael, Dr. 90210? I know some of you may be thinking, "I've seen faces before, and I'm not that impressed by them." Well, let me tell you, this face redefines the whole face genre. The role of eyebrows is played here by hair, whom we fell in love with in earlier appearances in "head" and "pubis". Hair reaches new levels of characterization here, as it portrays great

depth of emotion effortlessly. Simple shifts show us anger, surprise, and, my personal favorite, smarmy. The eyebrows performance is supported by an equally strong showing by the eyes. This dynamic pair silently conveys feelings like the old masters of the silent cinema. The nose is strong and very sharp, like a bodybuilder covered with knives. But unlike a bodybuilder covered with knives, it does not scare small children. It is humble, mainly drawing attention to the crimson lips and pearly whites beneath it.

Of course no work is perfect. In this case, the artist could have removed some of the material in the cheek and neck area, as it gives the face a "puffy" and weak look that seems to unreasonably upset my wife, but I can accept this because I'll be damned if I stop eating those delicious Hostess pies, and who are you to try to change me, you bitch.

So, while not perfect, my face is possibly the greatest thing to see this weekend, or anytime. ♦



"Fired BAD!"



My face: great work of art, or greatest work of art? I mean, your face sucks by comparison.

SUB-LEGAL PRACTICES

SCUMBLY YOURS

My publisher figured he'd make some edits to this here article.

I fixed my publisher up right good.

BY QUINCY MCGREGOR

Let's be honest, gents, the days when you could pull a good high class dame and her skuzzy chaperone off the sidewalk into a cozy lil' alley and give them both a right good muggin' is long over. What you've got now is you've got your trendy restaurants springing up all over good thievin' turf, and bringin' with them their yuppies with their cell phones and their starvin' musician boyfriends.

You ever try to rob a musician right proper? You've got to wait damn near an hour for them to work their hands into their skintight women's jeans, only to watch 'em come up wif a crumpled twenty, two ticket stubs and a Jolly Rancher. Some punk pulled that one on me last month, so I nabbed his kidney as collateral and sent him back out to the street corner to earn somethin' worth taking.

Where was I? Ah, right, the muggin's. Well, gents, even with all the problems I'm getting at here, it's still nice to think that at a place like the Upper North Bit, over on the corner of A Hundred and Fiftieth and Two Hundred and Ninety-Goddamn-Seventh, right across from the organ grinder's store and the overnight unwanted child drop, there yet endures a muggin' spot that generates prime revenue like in the good days of old.

Scumbly Alley was founded way, way back, a hundred years ago or sumthin', when one hobo was chewin' on another hobo's arm, and they got in a fight about it, and the one hobo started wailing on the other hobo wif this severed arm he found layin' about in the free marketplace. Then the first hobo wins, see, and all the cops come and get to shoutin', and so the bum what wasn't dead summoned up all his might and mugged *the whole police army!* Honest to God! Not just the ones there, either: some pigs woke up at home in bed finding that their wallets was missin' and Gramma Joe's gold fillin's was all tore out.

Anyways, Scumbly Alley is soaked in history. Mostly piss and blood, but also some real historical stuff, like when my buddy Tommy Pipes accidentally mugged



Another day, another dollar.

himself in the dark, and when Joe Lolito stole one a dem Methadone clinics while nobody was looking. Criminy, those were good times. Cops didn't care, they was muggin' half the saps that we were. One time this pig came up to me and said "Move along." Then he smacked an old lady in the face and ran off with her knitting bag.

Sos anyways, yesterday I was talkin' to Tommy Pipes while we took turns punchin' this jerk, and Pipes says to me, he says, "Quincy, I do declare that this location supplies quality hiding spots, dark shadows, and well-to-do yet harmless busybodies whose best defense

is curling up into the fetal position and sobbing hysterically. By Jove."

"Goddamn it Tommy, shut your fancy-talkin' mouth!" I replied. "Ya limp-wristed nancy boy!" Tommy and I got into a bit of a scrap after that one; he stabbed me in the kidney and I chucked his highfalutin ass into the harbor, God rest his pansy soul.

Which brings me to my next point: You'd better be watchin' yer filthy-sweater covered back if you're muggin' in Scumbly Alley, cause all the top-tier muggers are knowin' all 'bout it at this point, havin' scraped this here magazine off some upper-class literate type. It's got

a tight schedule now, appointments gotta be made well in advance and'll probably run you a few borrowed organs at the least. Small marks, though, for the best lootin' ground in this goddamn pit of a city. ♦

*- Please place all money you have on your person into an envelope and mail it to
Quincy McGregor
Behind the Steps,
Basement of the Fillmore Building
New York, NY 10118
Or he'll cut you. And then crush you the way this city crushed his simple dreams.*

CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Please, however, don't send us any of your hyper-sexualized drivel, or jokes about insipid pop icons like Jessica Simpson or, worse, F. Scott Fitzgerald. Perhaps this is not straightforward enough. Let us provide you with an example both of an acceptable punchline and an unacceptable one. It would be acceptable to provide this kind of punchline: "Dear, does this mean I'll be late to my Yoga retreat?" Do you see how this is urbane and yet subversive? Compare it to the following coarse and terrible punchline: "We trained Fido to fetch our divorce papers every morning." That, you bastards, is garbage. And we expect better. The winner gets a signed print of the cartoon.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"Don't blame me, I voted for Bush! Actually, I guess you should blame me. Actually, bite me in the face. Actually, dogs can't vote."
Red Erickson, Newfoundland



THE FINALISTS

"Let me give you a few pointers. They're my children."
Paula Paula Washington, Plano, Texas

"Look out! Three enormous crows are coming at us from behind that cloudbank!"
Earl E. Riser, Springfield, Hawaii.

"Ah, Central Park in the summertime! ...Hey, is that a chopped-up jogger?"
Lord Xenu, Molten Core, Earth

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



“

”

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