

**AL
SHARPTON**
TAWANA'S STORY

SPIN

**NICK
CAVE**
THE LAST
ROCK STAR

HÜSKER DÜ
AFTER THE FALL

ERASURE
JANE'S ADDICTION
BOB HOSKINS
J.G. BALLARD
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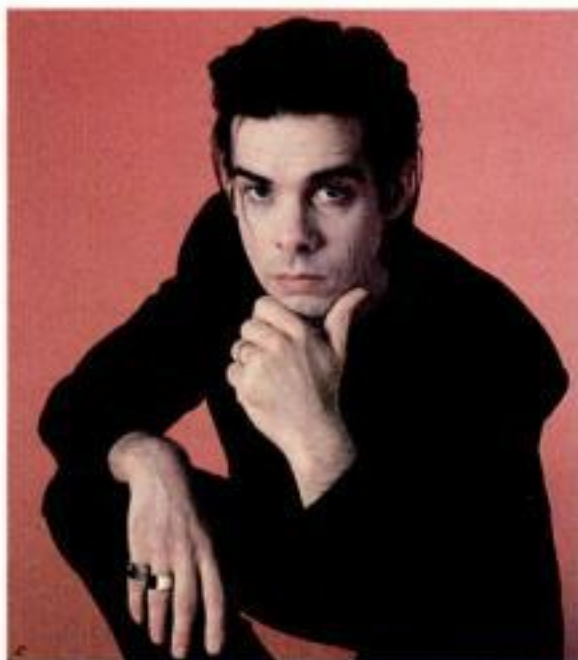
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This One



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TOP SPIN

When someone tells you the truth doesn't matter, it's insulting.

Today hype is hip, fashion has replaced issues, and MTV is more real than the evening news. When we contemplate Michael Jackson's face we know that reality is only a matter of manipulation. Everything, like Jessica Hahn's new torso, has been reconstructed to create a more provocative image. But we know this. So, what's the point? The point is we desperately want the truth, although we don't expect it. So when someone claims to deliver it, they had better not jerk us around.

Enter the controversial Reverend Al Sharpton, the hero of the Howard Beach racial conflict and the rap master of hyperbole.

When Philip Nobile brought the Sharpton interview idea to our offices, I cringed at the thought of rehashing the alleged gang-rape of Tawana Brawley. Sharpton's style smacks of the con man on the make. He has the rhetoric of Jesse Jackson, with little of the savvy and even less of the integrity. Why give Sharpton another outlet for his mau-mauing antics? The only image I could conjure was that famous New York Post photograph of the Reverend setting his 'do under a bonnet hairdryer. Fortunately, Philip was coming from another direction. His proposal was to treat Sharpton seriously, let him build the case he withheld from the Grand Jury. Philip remarked, "So far all we know is what's appeared in the *New York Times*."

The "Bonfire of the Inanities" story (page 44), originated on the Morton Downey Jr., Show. Philip, who as a college student travelled to Washington to hear Martin Luther King Jr.'s legendary "I Have A Dream" speech, was slated to debate Sharpton. But as he stepped up to the loudmouth podium to criticize from the left, Roy Innes of the right-wing Congress of Racial Equality flipped Sharpton backwards out of his chair. The ensuing riot on the set caused Mort to do a jig of Nielson ratings delight. After a commercial break-induced truce, Philip retreated rather than add more insult to injury.

Sometime later at the Downey Show anniversary party, Philip approached Sharpton, reminding him of their aborted confrontation, and asked him for an in-depth interview. The Reverend eagerly agreed, exclaiming that no other journalist had ever asked him for his side of Tawana's story.

The tribulations involved in arranging subsequent interviews made us think Sharpton was some difficult rock star rather than a professional activist. "He has a Third World sense of time and appointments," remarked Philip one afternoon while waiting for the Reverend to arrive. Philip gave a good example of a month of "journalistic torture: One day Sharpton said to call him at 9pm to get Tawana's phone number for a long-promised and guaranteed interview. When I called, nobody answered. The next morning he called me with the number, but said not to dial Tawana until he called back to confirm. But he never called. When I phoned Tawana myself, the number he had given turned out to be wrong. Next, I called Sharpton for the right number, but his assistant refused to interrupt a meeting for my request. Such are dealings with the Reverend."

The story in this issue, as powerful as the Grand Jury Report, took a lot of effort. Hundreds of pages of tape transcript were compiled in order to develop this document, one of the most revealing works of journalism on the case to date.

There are two kinds of liars. Those who lie for the sake of a cause and those who lie for the sake of themselves. When the Transcam committee confronted Oliver North on withholding truth from the Congress regarding explicitly illegal, covert financial and foreign policy maneuvers, he polished his medals and admitted his deceits with pride. The difference between North and Sharpton is that the Lt. Colonel, for better or for worse, placed his cause ahead of himself, where the Reverend put his own vanity ahead of his crusade.

We asked "60 Minutes" host Ed Bradley if he thought Tawana was telling the truth. He answered, "No." We then asked Bradley that, given the injustices blacks have suffered in the judicial system, does it matter if she told the truth. To that, the reporter, who himself has asked many a loaded question, again responded, "No."

I had expected Bradley to come down harder on Sharpton. On top of forcing New York State to spend half a million dollars on the investigation, the Reverend damaged the credibility of his cause. When he's at his best, Sharpton is a credit

to the civil rights movement. But by behaving more like Don King than Martin Luther King in this case, he has given critics an easy excuse to dismiss pressing racial issues along with the wild allegations.

I have no sympathy for the opportunistic Reverend, who tried to publicly ride the wave of a young girl's private confusion. All Sharpton

lost was his brief-lived credibility from the Howard Beach case. The real losers are his followers, who have been sold out for a handful of newsclips and a few seconds on the evening news.

Ed Bradley must be kidding. Of course the truth matters.

—Jonathan Himoff



Al Sharpton mouths off

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Little Suttie, won't you dance with me?

Comic Relief

Cheers to Mark Blackwell and Little Suttie [December] for blowing the lid off those assholes too quick to dismiss recent efforts by everyone's favorite Athens rock band as conforming and commercial. You may not like R.E.M.'s newfound fans, Steen, but that's no reason to give up on a band that still has a lot to offer, major label deal or otherwise.

John Drury
Washington, DC

Today I went out and bought the new *Spin* and the new R.E.M. album. As I left the store I ran into two friends who asked me what was in my bag. When I told them, they immediately got into an argument about whether or not this R.E.M. album was a sellout or something great. It turned out that neither of them had heard anything off of the record. When I got home I was looking through *Spin* and I came across the Little Suttie cartoon about R.E.M.. I couldn't believe it!

Blake Coughlin
Las Vegas, NV

Big Girls Don't Whine

My apologies to Jessica Bendinger, for I have succumbed to those top 40 "girls whose names end in 'y' and 'ie'

[Flash, December]! "No, not Debbie and Tiffany, my heart has been captured by Tracy and Natalie. Sorry they're not the "glam/biker/smart-tart" type you want. They're just plain smart, not little girl or biker window dressing, and that's enough.

Michael Haskins
Verona, NJ

A Plea for the Masses

It's a shame that so many places of business refused to sell the November issue of *Spin*. All because of a free condom. We are at the end of the 80s, everyone has to be made aware of just how serious AIDS is and how it can be controlled. I had a difficult time finding the issue, not for the free condom, but for the magazine itself—just because some people closed their minds to a cause.

Cathy Mastromatteo
Grantville, PA

Bob dear,
Please no more condoms. The stores in our area refused to sell the November issue because of it. I've collected every issue. I prefer to buy *Spin* from a store than to have it come ruined in the mail.

Sadly Missin' November
Grand Rapids, MI

Talkin' 'Bout My Generation

RE: Guccione's Topspin editorial in December, there's a spook in the White House and a shadow on the land—good, tough rock'n'roll can't be far behind. Moral courage and singular music have transformed more than one generation. Here's to it happening again. (It has to.)

Timothy White
Boston, MA

Hating the Yuppie

A million thanks for Legs McNeil's insightful article, "Yuppie Like Me" [December]. It reaffirmed my fear and loathing of all that is yuppie. I'd rather die than resign my soul to the empty, vain, and rapacious pursuits of Yuppie-ism. It just ain't rock'n'roll.

Tom Radwick
Exton, PA

McNeil's "Yuppie Like Me" ranks with Fitzgerald's "Crack Up" and Dylan's "Desolation Row." Get the boy to rehab, tho.

Dennis C. Barlow
Catatonic Park, NY

We Are The Disease

Thank you for the article, "The Runaway Greenhouse Effect" [December] by Drew Hopkins. I found it quite informative as well as thought-provoking and troubling. This is obviously a problem that should be the top priority of every state and of every nation. Put defense spending, balancing budgets, and housing problems on the back burner, or else this greenhouse effect will solve all these concerns in its own way.

When all is said and done, and I'm lying on one of those "cancer zone" beaches, listening to Skinny Puppy, realizing I am the disease, I think I'll be smiling as I fry—smiling at how silly man has become in all his reckless ambition.

Steve Hisada
Jacksonville, NC

Committed to The Cause

Thank you for your commitment to covering experimental AIDS treatments, alternative theories about AIDS, and the like. As an AIDS activist with ACT UP/New York, what I find even more enraging than callous, bigoted, and ill-informed statements about AIDS, is the overwhelming silence of the majority of this country's media. When it comes to this disease, most journalists forget what the words "investigative reporting" mean. My friends and I are grateful to you for your decision to discuss AIDS intelligently in every issue of *Spin*.

David Robinson
ACT UP
New York, NY

The *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* is preparing to publish a review article entitled "Human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome: Correlation but not causation" by Dr. Peter Duesberg (University of California, Berkeley). In the acknowledgements section of this paper, Dr. Duesberg writes "I am very grateful to... Celia Farber [Senior Editor, *Spin*]... for encouragement, critical information, discussions or reviews of this manuscript and, above all, for common sense."

Frances R. Zwanzig
Managing Editor
Washington, DC

Born Again

I would like to thank *Spin* and Byron Coley for his Underground column. If it wasn't for his column I never would have "found" Michael Hurley, Dred Foole and the Din, Savage Republic, Union Carbide productions, and artist Savage Pencil to name a few. As far as I'm concerned, Byron Coley is as close to God as you can come, besides Legs McNeil of course. So keep this kid out in the tall grass prairie happy, and keep up the good work.

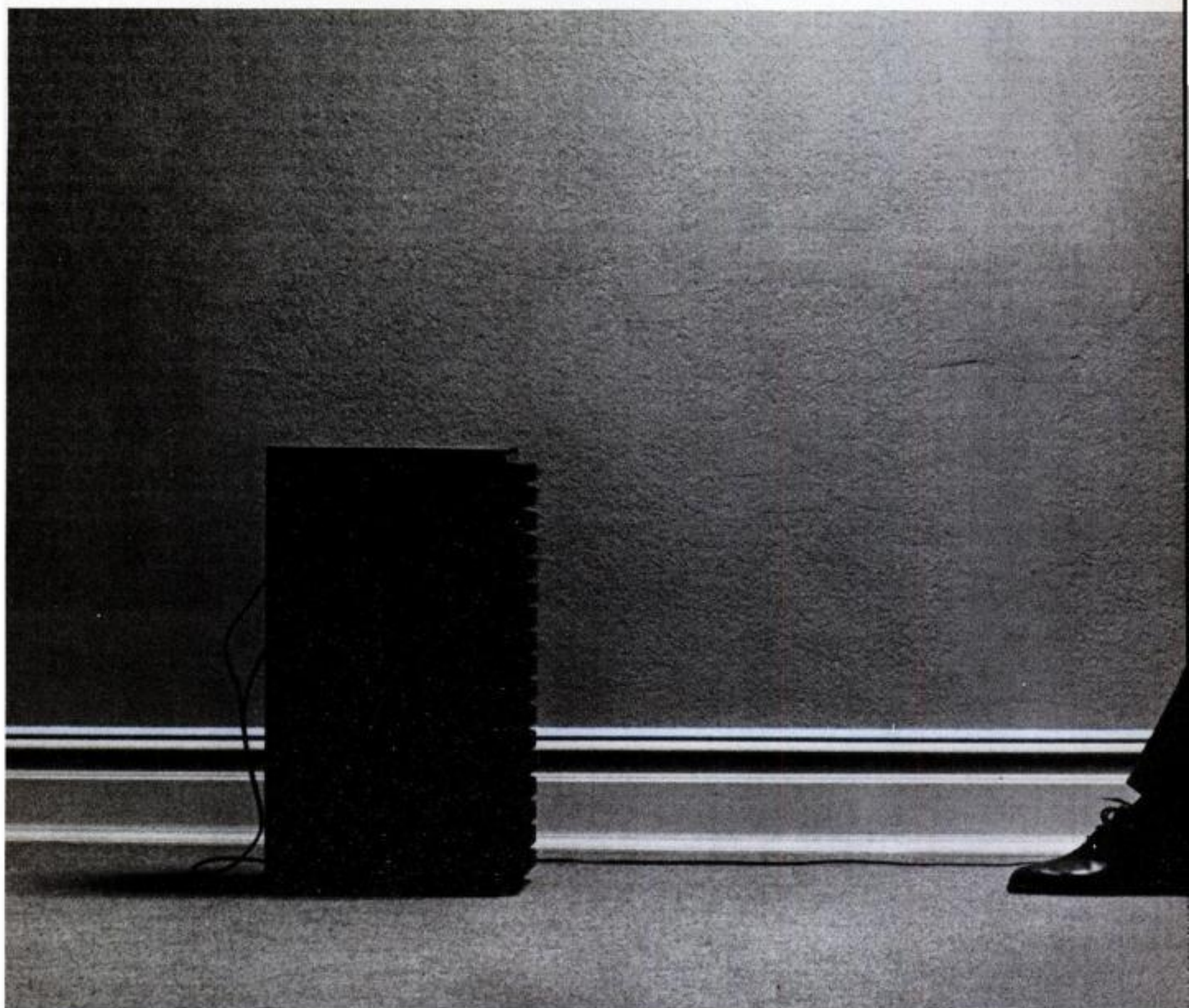
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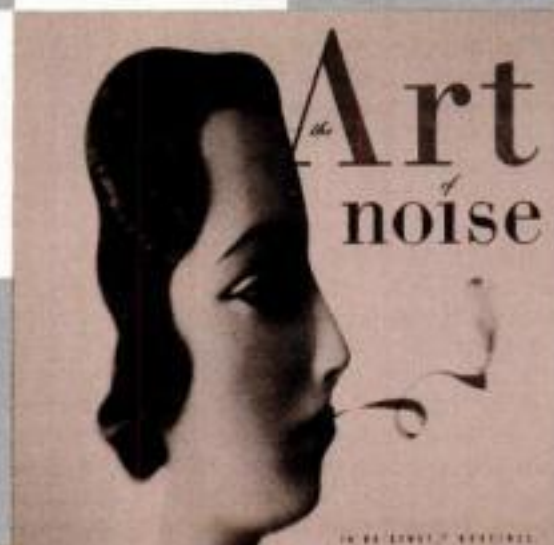
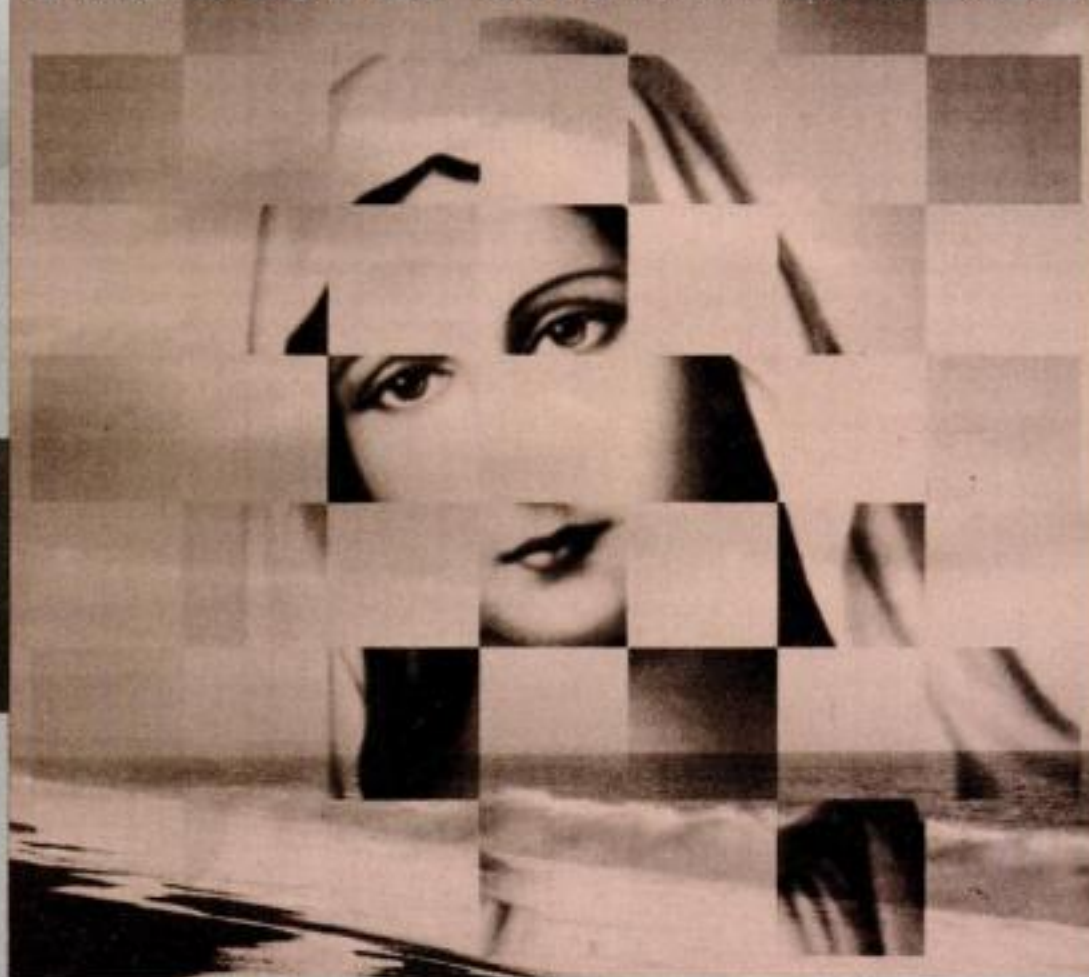
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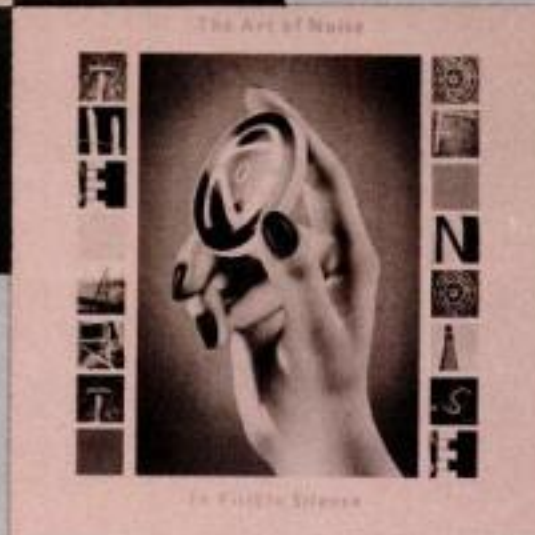
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DON'T YOU SING?

London—Nineteen-year-old British soul singer Mica Paris rushes the Prince stage at Camden Palace. "It was an hour before he went on and I'll never forget how I was feeling," says Mica (that's Mee-sha, short for Michelle). "I was wearing these heels and my feet were killing me—we were standing there for so long. And he came on stage; he had this tambourine in his hand, like taunting the audience with it. As I was wondering who he was going to give it to, he gave it to me! I panicked. But by the second song I'd finally gotten it together and I was having a good time playing it. He started into 'Just My Imagination,' the Temptations song, and I remember looking at my feet and thinking, 'Christ, I wish I could take these bloody shoes off!' Then someone said, 'Don't you sing?' And I looked up and he was talking to me! I just died."

The audience begins to chant, "Go Mica, go Mica," because they know her debut LP *So Good*. Prince announces, "This is Mica Paris, she doesn't come from Paris."

Mica dies again as she thinks, "How does he know my name?" Knowing more than her name and her double-gold UK debut, Prince hands Mica the mike. "I was singing," she says. "And he started falling on the stage with his guitar going 'nyew-nyew-nyew' and saying, 'God! She's just blowing me away!'—rolling all over the stage. Then, at the end, when he was doing his last song, he gave me the mike again!"

Next day, Mica receives a phone call; will she join the Purple Reign? The soul singer who began as a seven-year-old soloist in a South London church declines; she must follow her dream. The dream, however, does not preclude writing a song with Prince.

Not so very many years ago, after she'd left the gospel group The Spirit Of Watts and "paid a lot of bills" by doing session work, she became involved with Hollywood Beyond, a highly pop-oriented Mark Rogers project. But disillusionment set in as a result of what's lost of a good thing during production.

"So," says Mica, "I started writing songs on the road—you get so depressed and bored—and I demoed up these songs at a dodgy little studio in London and took a couple of dodgy pictures and sent them 'round to all the record companies, and I didn't like what they were saying. Some of them wanted me to be the female version of Terence [Trent D'Arby]."

But with Island, she found a company interested in her slow grooving R&B and a creative family with songwriters Peter Vale and Miles Waters. "We have such a good relationship together; we have such a laugh—and create great music." Putting all Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, Angela Bofill comparisons aside, Mica's voice commands with melisma and ease. She looks a modern-day Billie Holliday, if far less tragic, and she blows Prince away.

—Carle Groome

ROTATION HEAVY

A House, *On Our Big Fat Merry-Go-Round* (Reprise / Sire): Picking up where the Bunnymen died, the Cure married, and U2 became caricatures, A House is better than contraband, this much better than your-best-campus-band who only do it because they love music and they love girls and they'll never get on a major label. They've even got a song called "Freak Out." (Wright)

Diamanda Galas, *You Must Be Certain Of the Devil* (Mute): With AIDS haunting our love and our planet becoming a toxic desert, the angst of the early 80s has found its substance and become raw terror, making most music and art hollow and irrelevant. Diamanda Galas is an exception to this. Her primal music, at its best in *Devil*, gives voice to the outraged horror of our soul in a world spinning toward its doom. (Hopkins)

The Gipsy Kings, *Gipsy Kings* (Elektra): Lyrical, passionate flamenco guitar strum french kisses from some Spanish gypsies who hang out on the Riviera. If Brazilian music kicked ass... (Levy)

New Order, *Technique* (Qwest/Warner): The machines sound like machines, the humans like humans: warm and moist. Way deep in both melody and affect, the band of the Eighties gives lie to the impossibility of British pop. (Leland)

Randy Newman, *Land of Dreams* (Reprise/Warner): Seafood marinara over fresh pasta, Bordeaux '68—"wait," I said, "this is the best album he's ever done." More wine? Yes please. (Kehoe)

Roy Orbison, *Mystery Girl* (Virgin) Music for a broken soul. (Staff)

Tanita Tikaram, *Ancient Heart* (Reprise/Warner): Nonsense, young nonsense, quiet nonsense, fey nonsense strung into pearl beads as lyrics. It can drive you off if you pay attention, but you won't. You can't. A great talent with nothing to say and so much to sing. (Bull)

The Wonder Stuff, *The Eight Legged Groove Machine* (PolyGram): Not the typical British techno pop, these songs rock—but with an alternative appeal making them destined for College Radio Greatness. Program it in with Replacements and Pop Will Eat Itself. Oh, "A Wish Away" totally rules. (Reinhardt)

MUDDYWOOD TOUR '89

ZZ Top's guitarist Billy Gibbons and Chicago bond trader Howard Stovall got to talking. Gibbons asked Stovall if he ever heard an old Muddy Waters blues song, "Down on Stovall's Plantation." Yeah, he'd heard it; the plantation was his dad's place, and his dad's before that. So, Stovall asked Gibbons if he wanted to have a look at the place before it fell down.

Gibbons sent the wood he took from Stovall's Plantation—the cypress planks that had absorbed all that music—to the Premier Guitar Company in Memphis, where it was transformed into a guitar. It got a name, Muddywood. And then it began its journey.

Gibbons donated Muddywood to the Blues Museum in Clarksdale, Mississippi, but Muddywood did not want to stay. Moved by the spirit of the wood, Gibbons got together with the rest of ZZ Top, Sid Graves of the Blues Museum, Warner Brothers and the honchos at the Hard Rock Café. They conceived of The Muddywood Tour, hitting Hard Rocks throughout the world, commemorating each stop with t-shirts baring the ever popular Hard Rock logo. Never again should you scorn the wearer of one of those loathsome shirts, because the proceeds benefit the Blues Museum, which keeps the legend of bluesmen alive.

On the fourth of September, The Muddywood Tour kicked off at the Hard Rock Café Dallas, where two Walk of Fame stars were dedicated. One for ZZ Top, one for Muddy Waters. The appearance of The Zeez brought out



countless fans who wedged themselves into the club to hear Muddy's backup band rip through songs first played before most of the audience was even born. Muddy's family was there, so was Howard Stovall. Everyone was smiling; the blues and the cypress mojo had united people. And in spite of his mortal passing in '83, Muddy Waters was there, too.

Muddywood is now in London until March, when it will go on to Stockholm, then Reykjavik (Reykjavik!), Tokyo, Boston in midsummer, and New York in August. Til the tour gets close to you, you could go to the Blues Museum in Clarksdale. Fly to Memphis and head south on Highway 61. Or have a burger at a Hard Rock and wait.

—John Robert Tebbel

THE ART OF LUNCH

What could be more exciting than lunch with Tom Jones and the Art of Noise? Jones is a veritable dish—not necessarily beef or cheese-cake, but rather a curious combination of the two, like a Philadelphia style Hoagie sandwich. Art of Noise computer nerd J.J. Jeczalik does his best to balance the meal by acting like a vegetable.

The other half of Art of Noise, lovely keyboardist Anne Dudley, was unable to join us at Sam's Restaurant in Manhattan. But I seized the chance to ask Jones and Jeczalik about their recent collaboration, a dippy cover of Prince's "Kiss."

SPIN: Is there anything but camp value to be gained from this collaboration? Was that one of the primary considerations?

Tom Jones: Well, I'm serious. [laughter all around]

Art of Noise: You said "primarily." What happened to secondarily?

"What happened to secondarily?" What happened to answering the question? Jones says that making a record is serious business and any campness comes in afterwards. Jeczalik, however, makes me point out that the Art of Noise have worked with Duane Eddy on the remake of "Peter Gunn," revitalized the theme from "Dragnet," and that they have a penchant for this sort of revamping thing.

Art of Noise: We'd always thought it would be amusing to do a record with Tom.

SPIN: What do you mean by amusing?

Art of Noise: When I said amusing, I meant in terms of entertaining.

SPIN: Not like amusing for your own benefit?

Art of Noise: No. Not "tee hee hee."

Not tee hee hee, The Art of Noise don't laugh behind your back. They laugh right in your face. I figure that now's the time to ask J.J. about the original Art of Noise and the break up with Trevor Horn, Paul Morley, and their once fashionable record company, Zang Tuum Tumb (ZTT, tee hee hee).

SPIN: To quote Paul Morley: "Art of Noise, once a most joyous, secretive parody of 'the pop group' and what it might be, will be Art of Noise the pop group and what it must be."

Art of Noise: Sour grapes.

SPIN: Ah.

The waiter comes over to take our order. Because of a big breakfast, Tom isn't eating or drinking—or removing his Joe Cuba wraparound sunglasses—but he decides to hit his diamond-heavy pinky rings against a nice cold Corona when I get one. J.J. has the grilled shrimp appetizer as a main course.

Now, I have to admit that I don't give a shit about Tom Jones, but that song "It's Not Unusual" kills and he's got a hell of a voice (the Welsh tend to be very vocal). So I ask him if it's true that Elvis' Vegas act was based on his.

Tom Jones: He thought if I could do it—he saw similarities between us—that he could do it.

SPIN: Did the King give you any pointers? Teach you any karate kicks?

Tom Jones: No, no. He was into karate and used those moves on stage. But I'm not into karate. [laughs] That's where the similarity ends.

Art of Noise: The relationship Tom had with Elvis was based on the fact that one could take just a little bit of an idea and then develop it. The problem nowadays is that if I take your spoon and put it on my record, it's still your spoon; there's no development. I think it's a very interesting point, actually, and [puts his mouth right up against the tape recorder] worth mentioning in the interview.

This leads to a discussion of sampling which Jeczalik believes is ruining music in England. He has lots of other lucid things to say about the technology of rock. It's when he tries to be a pop star and wise guy that J.J. starts acting like what we used to call a dick when I went to school.

SPIN: Did you guys know beforehand that ZTT was based on all the futurist stuff Morley (former NME crank) was into?

Art of Noise: That's complete bullshit. Rubbish. Ignore it. Irrelevant. Actually, that's not true, it wasn't irrelevant. It was bullshit, but it gave Zang Tuum Tumb some sort of identity which it lacked.

SPIN: That's what I'm getting at. Now that they're gone—Art of Noise: Oh, we've cut the bullshit. We still have the identity.

SPIN: But aren't the bullshit and the identity inseparable?

Art of Noise: Yes, until you separate them.

Indeed.

—Bob Mack



SUPER HO

Driving north on Park Avenue, five guys crammed into a weathered copper Nova. From the back seat, Ricky Walters yells, "I was on MTV yesterday, Bill." He is holding a Heineken in one bony hand, a can of Nutrament protein juice in the other, bobbing his head to the sound of his new album, *The Great Adventures of Slick Rick*. He has a diamond embedded in his left front tooth.

"Oh yeah?" yells publicist Bill Adler. "You see it yet?"

"Huh-unh. Can't afford MTV."

"That'll change."

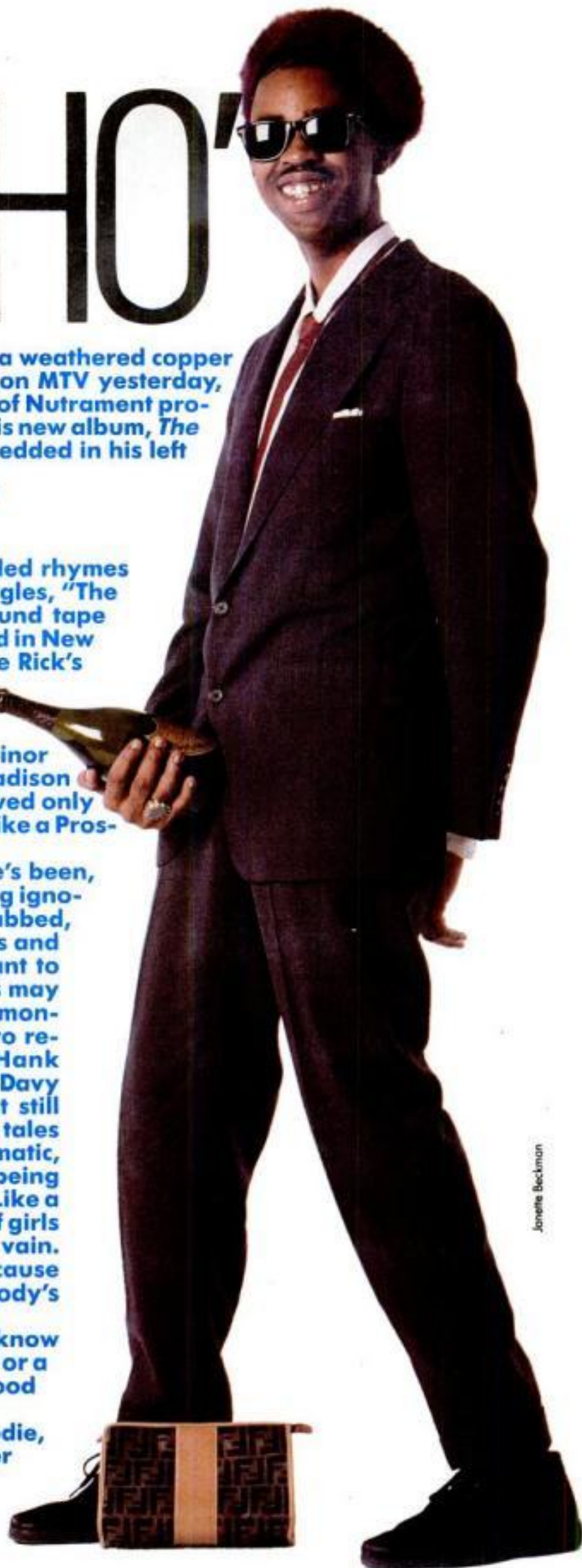
In 1985, as part of the Get Fresh Crew, Slick Rick traded rhymes with Doug E. Fresh on the last of the big-selling rap singles, "The Show"/"La-Di-Da-Di." Through an effective underground tape grapevine, "La-Di-Da-Di" became the biggest rap record in New York even before it came out. Rappers began to imitate Rick's comic, salacious style: his English accent, his mock dandy persona (Rick spends most of "La-Di-Da-Di" at his toilette), his bawdy stories (he spends the rest of it running from sex). Some came close, some even had minor hits with it. But from Rick, nothing. After a triumphant Madison Square Garden show, for which he claims to have received only \$600, he left the crew. Their unreleased rap, "Treat Her Like a Prostitute," died on the tape grapevine. Rick disappeared.

Four years later, he finesses the question of where he's been, saying, "People went around saying that I was just being ignorant, or on drugs, or that I got stabbed—well, I did get stabbed, but that was a long time ago. But if you was in my shoes and you made one record and it went gold, would you want to make a record that didn't go gold?" Whatever the facts may be, the one thing *The Great Adventures of Slick Rick* demonstrates is that in his absence, no one has come along to replace him. Co-produced against Rick's wishes by Hank Shocklee (Public Enemy), Jam-Master Jay (Run-D.M.C.), Davy D., and Jazzy Jay, the album collects the "mature but still ghettoish" ribald stories he's spun since "La-Di-Da-Di": tales of sex, drugs, guns, babies, and more sex. The most cinematic, "The Moment I Feared," ends improbably with Rick being gang-raped in prison. But the centerpiece is "Treat Her Like a Prostitute." Rick is many things, but not a libbie. "A lot of girls don't like it because they say I'm being too harsh or too vain. But really I'm just trying to look out for boys alone. Because girls ain't gonna look out for boys, except for somebody's mother.

"Say there's a girl that you like a lot, but you don't know nothing about her. The best way to see if she's a nice girl or a tramp is to treat her like a tramp first. If you treat her good first, you'll never know."

For Roxanne Shanté, M.C. Lyte, Salt-N-Pepa, Ms. Melodie, Latifah, Antoinette, and Sweet Tee, the field for answer records is wide open.

—John Leland



Janette Beckman

BAHIA GAL



Peter Bock/Ke

It's 1988 and high up in a New York luxury hotel Gal Costa is being polite, trying hard to indulge my comparison of her with fellow Brazilian singer and noted bananahead Carmen Miranda. "Well . . . maybe her repertoire. She recorded, uh, she was very Brazilian, recorded a lot of typical Brazilian stuff . . . also there's a certain mischievousness in what I do, in the personality of it, which Carmen Miranda had, a liveliness that came naturally. In that sense I can see the similarity, I guess."

Actually I was thinking of the giant flowers Costa sticks in her hair and on her thigh for concert encores, or maybe of the fact that Miranda's the only other Brazilian chan-

teuse to have ever outsold her on the international market. But hey, 25 years in the biz and the gradual shaping of her naturally warm, sleepy pop voice into one of the deftest and strongest on the planet have earned Gal Costa the right to set her own terms.

Not that that's always been her goal. In the beginning, while still working on hitting big in her native state of Bahia, she was proud to be thought of as a disciple of cool ruler Joao Gilberto, known to hip Brazilians as the author of the ultramellow bossa nova style, known to you as the guy who sang "The Girl From Ipanema." "I was fascinated by Joao Gilberto's cultivated singing, his technique," says Costa. "And I was very radical: I only liked bossa nova, and anything that wasn't bossa nova was mindless, a sellout—rock'n'roll, whatever."

Tropicalism changed all that. Spearheaded by Costa's hometown pals Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, the Tropicalist movement traded in bossa nova's radicalism of exclusion for one of inclusion. Anything went, as long as it wasn't *careta* (squaresville): rock, Bahian folksongs, avant-garde-poetry-cum-social-critique, ten-year-old Brazilian pop kitsch—even bossa nova. Her mind sufficiently blown,

Gal Costa switched allegiances, became "the muse of Tropicalia." "I was the singer who captured the whole thing, the feeling of it, the behavior." Her hair got shaggy, she did her concerts barefoot, she wore Amazon loincloths on her album covers. Very heavy.

But now it's 1988, and high up in a New York luxury hotel Gal Costa is sitting back in very unloucloth-like woollens and insisting she doesn't miss those old counter-culture days a bit. Having seen last night's concert, I can't blame her. No longer anyone's disciple, nobody's muse, she wrapped her voice around the last 50 years of Brazilian pop, completely at ease on the stage of Avery Fisher Hall, New York City's high temple of *careta*. And her audience, mostly expatriate Brazilians, was clearly there for her and her alone. The strong and sensuous Gal Costa who's emerged from under the shadow of past mentors inspires a passion that goes well beyond the artistic: men, some half her age, jumped on stage pleading for kisses, others cried out from the floor, "Beautiful!" "Gorgeous!" and the ultimate Brazilian praise, "Fine Bahian!" Carmen Miranda—a Rio native who got famous impersonating fine Bahians—had nothing on her.

—Julian Dibbell

WEST COAST

WRITE-INS



Robert Smith - 11



Iggy Pop - 5

Michael Stipe - 2
Springsteen - 1
Eric Clapton - 1
Mojo Nixon - 1

ROCK 'N' ROLL WRITE INS

EAST COAST

WRITE-INS

Martin Gore - 13



Sheila Rock

Bono - 6



Neal Preston/Cutline

Election Day 1988—it's over, finished, done with, there's nothing you can do about it. We'll be looking at George Bush's mug for the next four (maybe eight) years, Dan Quayle the only relief/terror in sight. But what if . . . what if Boy George had been elected president: there would be no drug epidemic because your relatives would immediately inform the police of your problem. Or President Springsteen—everyone would own a pickup, work in a factory, and drink beer all day long. What if . . .

Actual write-ins on voter ballots nationwide show that Americans had a better idea of who they wanted in the White House (and I don't mean Mickey Mouse). If only the masses had seen the 30 second sound bites in the form of a two and a half minute music video.

Close your eyes and dream of Election Day 1992.

—Robin Reinhardt;
additional research by R. Nadelson

Michael Stipe - 3
Morrissey - 1
Boy George - 1
Paul Weller - 1



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"The first time hard rock was used was when Moses was coming down the mountain with the Ten Commandments," booms Big Chick Huntsberry, ex-Prince bodyguard and the man behind Big Chick Ministries of Chanhassen, Minnesota. "He came down the mountain and the Bible says all the people were dancing to strange music. That was rock'n'roll."

If this chapter of the Book of Chick sounds familiar, it comes as no surprise that he is a member of the Assemblies of God—the same group that brought you Jim and Tammy Bakker, and Jimmy Swaggart. Unlike his fellow comrades-in-God, however, Big Chick is against efforts to censor or restrict rock'n'roll. "I'm not in favor of banning or anything," he says. "Most of these preachers haven't even heard rock'n'roll and they want to go around and put labels on it. 'Yeah sure', I say, 'you're an expert.'"

But because of his crossover from the dark side to the light, Big Chick can claim to be something of an

FROM HADES TO HEAVEN

expert: he's worked as a bodyguard not only for Prince, but for the likes of AC/DC on tours, in clubs, and in bars across the country. His size may account for such illustrious appointments. At well over six feet, three hundred and fifty pounds, and bench-pressing nearly five hundred, Big Chick (the name, incidentally, comes from his penchant for chicken) is an imposing figure.



Bill McCullough

"I was standing at this door," he recalls. "And a pale little hand reached around and shook mine. I asked the road manager who that was and he said it was Prince. Later I found out that Prince had told his manager not to hire me, saying 'that guy looks like he could eat me for breakfast. How am I going to tell him what to do?'" Big Chick has stayed in touch with His Purple Badness, and thinks Prince is "a little confused" by promoting prayer and then sex, but he hopes to coax Prince into joining his crusade. Still, Big Chick seems to recognize that rock and religion don't mix too well, especially where image is concerned. "After all," Big Chick

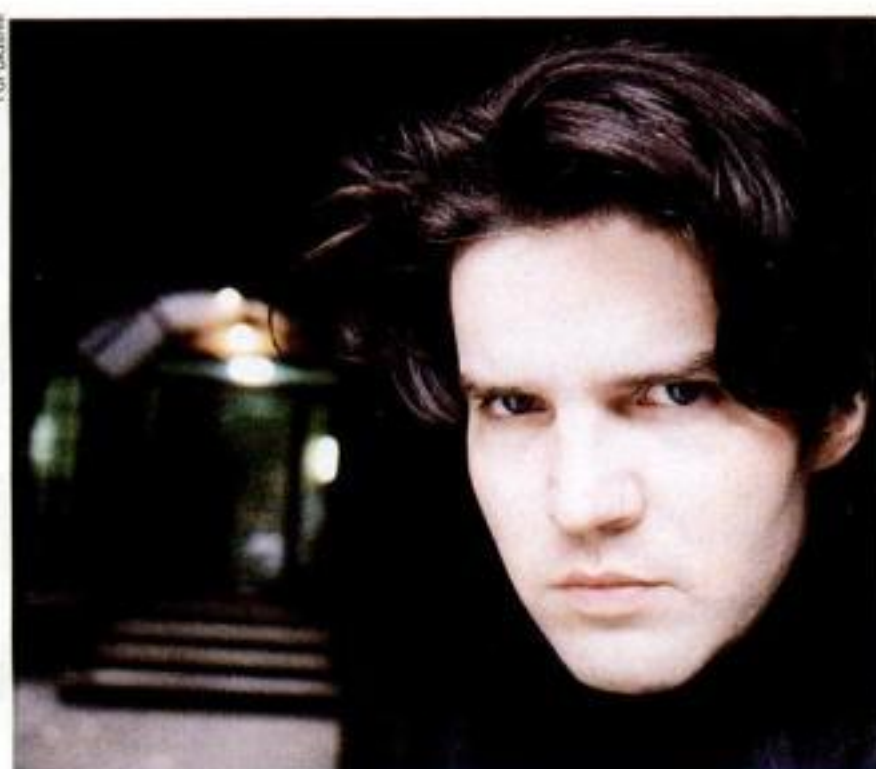
concedes, "he's got a product to sell."

"I literally ripped both ears off a guy once," he reminisces of his life as a bouncer in biker bars. But it was worse than that; many people, including his family and Prince, tried to help him get off the drugs to which he had been addicted for years. "It's so easy to get a hold of in show business. Roadies, limo drivers are always there to keep you supplied." Ultimately, it was the near death of his grandson that brought him around.

When speaking, Big Chick emphasizes examples from his own life to convince his audiences of the strength of God's message. "I've got friends who are addicts, convicts, or dead. I've been there. I know what drugs can do to you." Unlike the typical preacher, he doesn't invoke God in his lectures. In his anti-drug, anti-crime crusade, it is not a picture of Biblical vengeance but personal experience that serves as the persuasive example.

—R.E. Nadelson

Pat Blashill



Above the rainy November streets of Soho in a small apartment decorated with black recording equipment and photographs from Richard Avedon's American West series, Lloyd Cole is writing songs. The author and singer (with the Commotions) of several glowingly skeptical albums, Cole is not digging the mega hip or the nightclub scene of the Lower East Side. He is working.

The Englishman's decision to write in New York isn't surprising, given his history of peppering songs with references to America. The Mississippi, Sean Penn, a few cowhands, and Pirelli calendar girls are all featured players in *Mainstream*, Lloyd Cole and the Commotions latest record. What's with this fascination for the land of the free?

"I guess it's just extremes," he says. "There's more scope in the American environment for extremes to be visible in the street. Just around the corner from me, there's this extremely expensive restaurant right next to a place where these people sleep in cardboard boxes."

"And from an entirely selfish point of view, I feed off these things. I'm a

writer. Most of the stuff that I write is some kind of realism. If I'm not taking it from literature, then I have to take it from real life. In terms of America, as opposed to Britain, I guess I just like the sound of the town names and the street names better."

Cole channels his black-and-white realism into songs about the impermanence of affairs, or tragic characters longing for a youth now past. The personal politics thing. But in the social landscape of Reaganamerica, he sees an uncomfortable resemblance to Thatcherengland.

"In Britain, the thing that really upsets me is the fact that the government is basically attempting to Americanize our way of life. Our education system and our health system are being broken down. Each year slightly less money than it needs is put into it, so it deteriorates gradually. Things are being gradually and very cleverly dissipated. Our government is undoubtedly one of the cleverest there's ever been—such clever bastards, really. The thing which is sad is we don't have an effective opposition in Britain anymore. You know, when you're a socialist, you believe in things like honesty. There's no place for honesty in the political system."

If truthfulness battles muscle in contemporary politics, a similar struggle is scruffily illustrated in "Mr. Malcontent," a song Cole based on a character from "My Beautiful Laundrette."

"The character Daniel Day Lewis played had really big strong arms and a little tiny brain. You know, he was sweet, but... I just thought that's such a sad thing, to see someone who could become involved in the National Front just because he knew no better."

For the time being, Mr. Cole has left the Tories and the skinheads across the ocean. And like the *chiaroscuro* of his music, his conversation doesn't stay dark too long.

"Mornings in New York are so beautiful. I'm not a physicist," he says, smiling at last. "But I studied physics in school. And light travels in straight lines. Because you've got all these great long streets, these avenues that go from north to south, a lot of streets are so straight, I think you've got light traveling in straight lines for much longer distances. The quality of light's different in New York. And especially because of the skyscrapers, the light just seems to rush along the avenues. When you've got a bright day in New York, it's incredibly beautiful."

To Lloyd Cole, a perfect day in New York is a midday breakfast of huevos rancheros, a little reading, a late dinner, and about ten hours of songwork. He does get out to the occasional opening, but "what normally happens is I work until I run out of ideas or get too tired to work."

"One night recently, I started at seven and finished at ten the following morning. I made myself ill for the next two days, but I got an awful lot done. I felt like Prince."

—Pat Blashill

LLOYD'S WORK HOLIDAY

Brand new from Rykodisc, the company that brought you The Jimi Hendrix Experience's incredible LIVE AT WINTERLAND album, comes another collection of amazing, previously unreleased Hendrix. RADIO ONE (RCD 2007B/RALP/RACS) is The Jimi Hendrix Experience performing live in the BBC studios during 1967, the year of Jimi's explosion onto the international pop scene.

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BEAT REVOLUTION

When The Beatnigs perform, sparks fly. A startling attack on the senses takes a circular saw to a thin sheet of metal, sparks literally cascading in all directions. A basic drum beat decorated by conga rhythms, an assortment of industrial percussion (tire rims, iron pipes, and chains) are played at random, and a variety of sampled sounds turn into keyboard melodies. Complete musical mayhem. Vocals praise obvious heroes like Malcolm X; with the same

gruffness they assault targets such as the CIA and suffering. A Beatnig defiantly declares "Revolution Is Not Pretty."

"Ah, but it can be beautiful," says Michael Franti, the group's lanky singer and bassist. For all their apparent aggression, The Beatnigs enchant, greet each other with loving hugs, and infect their audience with their charm. At gigs, they join the entire crowd into a arm-linked circle for a heart-to-heart mid-set, or open the proceedings by distributing

bathroom tiles for extra percussive participation.

"What we're trying to do is bear witness to the human experience," says Franti. The Beatnigs, four black men and an Asian, chose the name because, "things in our society have not changed very much for a number of oppressed people since the time, in fact, of the beatniks. We use that word 'nig' as a reminder that we have to take it upon ourselves to promote change."

"I think that music can change things," Franti declares. "But it's extremely inefficient, because of the fact that it is an industry. If you're talking about changing an entire society, you're talking about hitting millions of people in a very deep and personal way. It's hard to do that unless you have the support of the major media."

The Beatnigs do have the support among rock's established political ambassadors: Jello Biafra invited them onto his label—Alternative Tentacles—after seeing a show in San Francisco, their hometown; Billy Bragg has taken them on tour on both sides of the Atlantic. Hear Television and The Beatnigs' possibilities seem endless, unless they decide not to explore them.

"The theme of this band," says Franti, "is to always question the status quo. When you think everything is going great, that's usually the time you should start questioning the most."

—Tony Fletcher

HOMeward BOUND

On Election Eve, Mitch Snyder and his fasting followers travelled to Washington, protesting America's indifference to the homeless. When Boogie Down Production's KRS-One heard of Mitch Snyder's fast and the subsequent march, Housing Now!, he got up. KRS-One was homeless for six years; his LP *By All Means Necessary's* gone gold and homeboy's got lunch money. But he hasn't forgotten. "You have to have been homeless once to know why these people are here," he said in D.C. "I couldn't pass this opportunity up." On Election Eve, the 47-day fast was broken.

Two thousand marchers chanted anti-



Bush slogans until distracted by Cher's arrival. When she was whisked into a police car, the march fell in behind. Four miles later, the concert-rally began in Senate Park. Dr. Benjamin Spock, guitarist Kenny Rankin, Travis Williams (formerly of the Green Bay Packers), Cher, and Casey Kasem gathered around while KRS-One rapped "Stop The Violence," spreading his plea for unity. Then Cher spoke.

"I come from a poor background," she said, in a voice recalling "Half Breed." "And I can't enjoy the wealth I've obtained while so many have no homes." It was a moment, however short-lived. She quickly departed, on her way to an "Uninhibited" perfume promotion somewhere in the Washington area.

After a Kasem closing, protestors sat down in the street, whereupon the DCPD descended, arresting 377, throwing them into a holding cell until each paid \$25 and got out. Perhaps a tad ceremonial, the demonstration was at least a valiant effort in a time of apathy. KRS-One now heads a "Stop The Violence" campaign, a movement to inspire activity on all levels.

—Lance Gould

DEAR ELVIS

The Monthly Advice Column

Dear Elvis,
Maybe you can clear up this mystery. I have this cat, named Huey, and I've been having dreams about him. In one, he was the Vice President. In another, he was sitting behind a big desk, wearing a suit and calling himself a "captain of industry." And just the other day, the strangest one yet—I dreamt he and I were sitting in a coffee shop eating bowls of soup, and he was wearing a little sailor cap and telling me that he was you, only somehow altered by space aliens so that you were now a genius and a telepath, as well as a cat.

I'm afraid. Can this be true? Are you my cat, or is he trying to trick me? And what can he possibly want from me that would make him deceive me so?

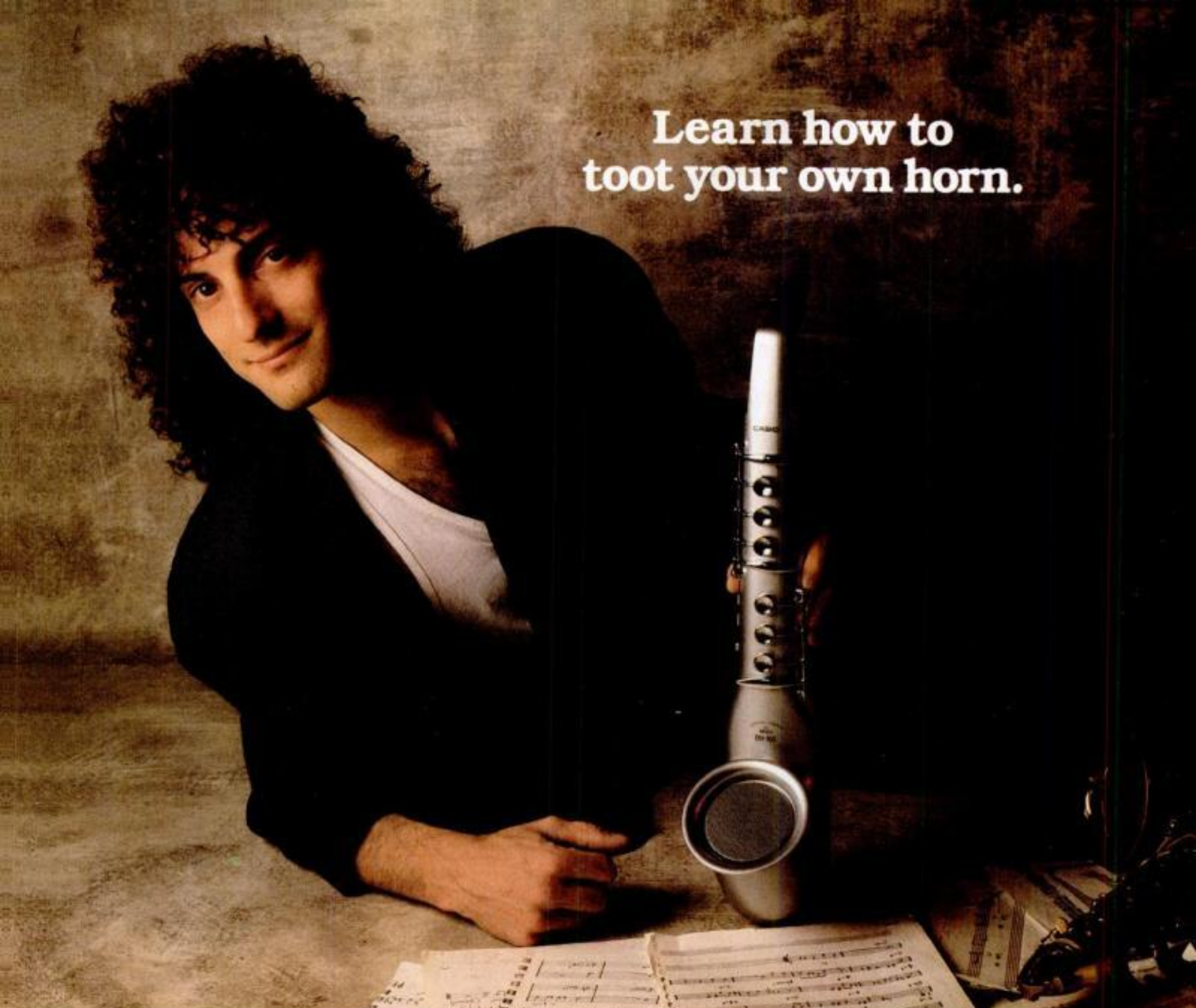
Respectfully,
Keith Dawson
Brooklyn, NY

Dear Elvis,
My annual income as a Wall Street stockbroker and cocaine dealer is \$3.2 million. I plan to purchase a large quantity of automobiles to give away as presents to total strangers this year. How much money should I put aside for this endeavor?
J. Danforth Whiteman III
Chicago, IL

Listen J.,
Something tells me that you're not telling the truth. I don't know what happened to honesty. Guess it got lost while a lot of other stuff was going on. But maybe it'll be rereleased and do much better than it ever did before. Then it'll be clearer, people will have a different perspective, and, yeah, some respect. And don't ask me about cars or strangers. A man makes one mistake and pays the rest of his life. No, longer than that. I wanted a very quiet life, something you don't understand. But if you do have all that money, you could consider making a contribution. Bitterness ain't got no value.

Peacefully,
Mr. Presley

If you have a letter for Elvis—and who doesn't?—send it along to SPIN, 6 West 18 Street, New York, New York, 10011. It will be Oujiaed to the King. His reply will be taken down and will appear here next month. Keep letters short; Elvis is a busy man.

A large photograph of Kenny G, a man with long, curly dark hair, wearing a dark jacket over a white shirt. He is leaning forward, holding a silver Casio DH-100 Digital Horn. The horn is a long, slender instrument with a circular speaker at the bottom and a mouthpiece at the top. In the background, there are sheets of music and a saxophone.

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Kenny G has a way with a saxophone that's put him at the top of his field with such hits as "Songbird".

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Shelia Rock



"There is no secret," says Liz Fraser, songstress for the notoriously ethereal Cocteau Twins. "We have our own beliefs, but not in the music." The trio creates landscapes of sound somewhere between new age and new wave, unintelligible lyrics and faceless album covers completing an ambiguous image. Adoring fans snatch up their extensive repertoire of imports, in spite of strangely limited exposure. Their problem? "People's ideas turn out more complicated than the music really is," says Liz who, in her frailty, personifies a bird of myth. The Twins have been placed on a pedestal upon which they'd never have dreamt of climbing. With their first U.S. release, *Blue Bell Knoll* (Capitol), they insist, it's just the music, nothing else, and leap down from their high place.

Fraser's vocals are at once angelic and incomprehensible; she sings of "spooning good singing gum" and "athol brose", as a devoted audience falls back in ecstasy, hanging on every "word." To one fan, the lyrics are "some sort of language only Liz understands." However, according to guitarist Robin Guthrie, "We have got no message." As he speaks, his eyes are cold yet jovial, focused beyond the immediate. "We're not here for politics or preaching."

On that point, the enigmatic trio will not compromise. Relax, the Twins say, it's fruits and gems to be savored, not Philosophy 101. For example, one cannot begin to guess what "Carolyn's Fingers" are grasping for, if anything, but "people can think what they want" says Liz, "as long as they don't wind up disappointed in us. We've got no control over that, really." Bassist Simon Raymond says bluntly, "There really isn't a mystery!" Except in that place to which followers are transported.

"Just listen to the music," Guthrie says. And you'll get there.

—Staci Bonner and Kalliopy Paleos

CHER'S BEAUTY TIPS

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THE BIMBO

SKIN NOT INCLUDED!

OOPS!!

THE RAMBO

SKIN NOT INCLUDED!

SKIN NOT INCLUDED!

SKIN NOT INCLUDED!

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Rad Hot.

**Katana
600**

Paint the town red on a five-alarm beauty known as the 1989 Katana 600. Experience a fusion of optimum performance and maximum comfort. Here is a hot machine that will truly elevate your desire to a fever pitch. You'll forge new adventures through twisting roads and city streets. And every eye that is fortunate enough to catch you will be green with envy. The engine, based on the track-tough GSX-R750, is compact, potent, and tuned to deliver strong torque in the low and mid RPM ranges.

But comfort is what sparks the Katana. A comfortable seat and riding position help take the kinks out of long-distance trips. And the fairing vents engine heat away from the rider for greater comfort. Another example of ergonomic genius.

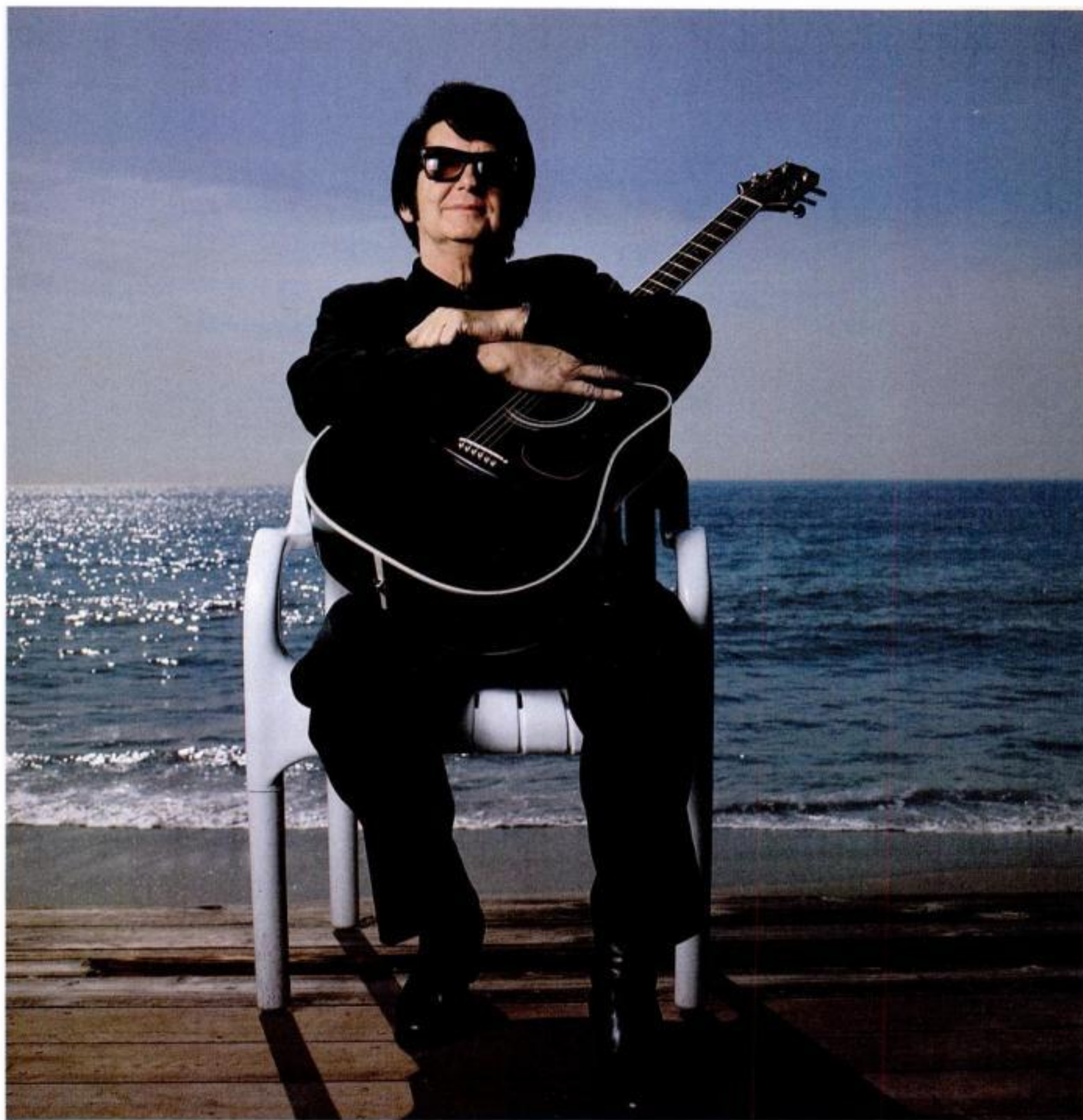
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ROY ORBISON
April 23, 1936 to December 6, 1988

Photograph by Ann Summa

Cryin' Over You

I CLOSE MY EYES

Elvis was bigger than life. His success was documented and laid out for him. He came to the first show I had in Memphis, and it was very nice. He sort of treated me like an equal because we were both fresh in the business. We got to be great friends and kindred souls. We both sang pop and rock'n'roll as opposed to country, so we were sort of battling for the same chart positions. We both had Number 1 records. We both sold in the millions. We already knew we were OK in our own right. Actually, I think what kept me from being threatened by Elvis were his great records. He made great records. I didn't like them all, but I liked a lot of them. I would have resented him had he not been delivering the goods. But he made great records.

The image, like the voice, came in stages. I never sat down with anyone and said, "Let's design an image." I started using sunglasses in Alabama. I was going to do a show with Patsy Cline and Bobby Vee, and I left my clear glasses on the plane. I only had the sunshades, and I was quite embarrassed to go on stage with them, but I did it. Then I took the shades with me to England when I opened for the Beatles. Going to England to open for the Beatles was not like going into Pittsburgh and trying to find out where you're going to play, do the show, and leave. Everybody was in England—the record companies, the artists, the entrepreneurs, all the media. It was an opening night to end all opening nights. I walked on stage with my sunglasses on, and all over Europe we were an instant success. Big time. I probably also wore something black that night, and that's how come the black outfits and dark sunglasses stuck.

—Roy Orbison

from *Off The Record*, written by Joe Smith, edited by Mitchell Fink, [copyright symbol] 1988 by Unison Productions, Inc. Published by Warner Books, Inc. New York

I THINK OF YOU

In 1970 I rode for 15 hours in the back of a U-Haul truck to open for Roy Orbison at the Nashville Music Fair. It was a summer night and I was 20 years old and he came out in dark glasses, a dark suit and he played some dark music. In '74, just prior to going in the studio to make "Born To Run," I was looking at Duane Eddy for his guitar sound and I was listening to a collection of Phil Spector records and I was listening to Roy Orbison's *All-Time Greatest Hits*. I'd lay in bed at night with just the lights of my stereo on and I'd hear "Cryin'," "Love Hurts," "Runnin' Scared," "Only The Lonely," and "It's Over" filling my room.

Some rock'n'roll reinforces friendship and community, but for me, Roy's ballads were always best when you were alone and in the dark. Roy scrapped the idea that you needed verse-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-verse-chorus to have a hit. His arrangements were complex and operatic, they had rhythm and movement and they addressed the underside of pop romance. They were scary. His voice was unearthly. He had the ability, like all great rock'n'rollers, to sound like he'd dropped in from another planet and yet get the stuff that was right to the heart of what you were living in today, and that was how he opened up your vision. He made a little town in New Jersey feel as big as the sound of his records.

I always remember laying in bed and right at the end of "It's Over," when he hits that note where it sounds like the world's going to end, I'd be laying there promising myself that I was never going to go outside again and never going to talk to another woman. Right about that time my needle would slip back to the first cut and I'd hear 'da da da da duhhh Pretty Woman/I don't believe you/You're not the truth/No one could look as good as you.' And that was when I understood. I carry his records with me when I go on tour today and I'll always remember what he means to me and what he meant to me when I was young and free to love. In '75, when I went into the studio to make 'Born To Run,' I wanted to make a record with words like Bob Dylan that sounded like Phil Spector, but most of all I wanted to sing like Roy Orbison. Now, everybody knows that nobody sings like Roy Orbison.

—Bruce Springsteen



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A LITTLE RESPECT

Article by Frank Owen

In a vast concrete arena, on the outskirts of Birmingham, the United Kingdom's ugliest city and the "poverty of desire" capitol of the Other Britain, Erasure's outrageously gay and extravagantly theatrical vocalist Andy Bell, prepares to take the stage. In those few months before the opening number "Chains of Love" (the gospel-electro chart hit that broke this synth-dance-duo in the United States) he ponders the irony of being out of the closet in an increasingly gray, gray, gray, anti-gay society.

How is it that gayness is so visible in the British pop charts and yet the government can pass a piece of legislation as viciously anti-gay as Clause 28, which silences gay voices in everything from libraries to local government? He decides it's because pop stars appear to be so personal to their fans—their best friend who occupies their dreams at night and greets them from the bedroom wall in the morning. For homophobia to work, gays have to be turned into something that is less than human, have to be depersonalized. But Andy knows that not even Thatcher has the power to break pop's spell whereby one single celebrity can be thousands of people's most intimate acquaintance.

Looking out into the audience he sees largely young girls but with a smattering of those hatchet-faced beer boys and lager louts, the younger version of which made his life a misery growing up in Peterborough, a dreary little town renowned for its railway and brick yards. He remembers how he would play only with boys younger than himself because those his age would tease him constantly, calling him a "sissy" and a "puff." He was an obvious target, never being one to hide his light under a bushel or his gayness in the closet.

He still remembers fondly the time a Scots Guards marching band appeared on his street with bagpipes wailing, beating a military tattoo. Delighted at this unexpected spectacle and determined to celebrate it in style, he rushed into his house, tore down his mother's curtains and made an impromptu kilt out of them. He still remembers the look on the face of Sergeant Major who led the band, as this eight year old would-be nelly followed them down the road.

He also remembers the time he saw Danny La Rue, Britain's favorite drag queen and an institution as dearly cherished as the Queen Mother or Morrissey, perform on the television for the first time. Convinced that the La Rue artifice was easy to imitate, he persuaded his sister to make him up, borrowed her parasol and party dress, and went out on the street, standing on the corner for all the neighbors to see. He was nine then.

Fourteen years later, he adjusts the fringed tinsel jock strap and with a hop, skip, and a mince appears on stage dressed to thrill in a pair of red lurex Doctor Marten boots, a sparkling electric-blue jacket, and a pair of those bicycling shorts that immediately reveal what sort of man you really are. On cue, almost as if someone backstage had pushed a button that causes instantaneous mass orgasm, thousands of young girls scream, sigh, and wiggle, calling out to the stage, "Ande-e-e. Ande-e-e." A triumphant entry that is a triumph over environment.

Some say that effeminate pop stars are so popular with young girls because they provide a safe version of male sexuality. Unsure of their way through the erotic minefield that is sex, such stars are a non-threatening guide, not like the macho monsters they'll have to fuck in later life. It's an argument that can be reduced to that joke about why did God invent gay men? To take fat, ugly women to discos.

A more accurate explanation is the generalized eroticism that pervades pop like a sexy goo. With pop, sex is in everything except sex. Things more abstract than bodies and flesh are sexy: the eroticism of death (nothing is sexier than a dead pop star), the eroticism of technology, of speed, of violence, of guitars, of glamour, of leather trousers, of bass frequencies, of photography, of Sony Walkmans. Girls (and boys for that matter) who masturbate to pin-ups of their idols are turned on not by the representation of the flesh but by the glossiness of the paper and the ultra-brightness of the lighting that makes the pop star appear so tactile, so indisputably real. Even ugly bastards like R.E.M., who claim not "to present ourselves in a way that is conducive to worship" according to their guitarist Peter Buck, become sexy after being im-

mersed in pop's erotic flow.

Back in Birmingham, Andy Bell is introducing "A Little Respect." "When I was a little girl, I asked my mummy, 'Can I be gay when I grow up?' and she replied, 'Yes, if you show a little respect.'" Sex is certainly in the air tonight, not located in any particular body, but everywhere. The girls screaming at Andy Bell are not being turned on by a gay man, but by pop itself.

After the show Andy Bell confides in me: "I'm sure they don't see me how they see Bros. I'm sure they don't

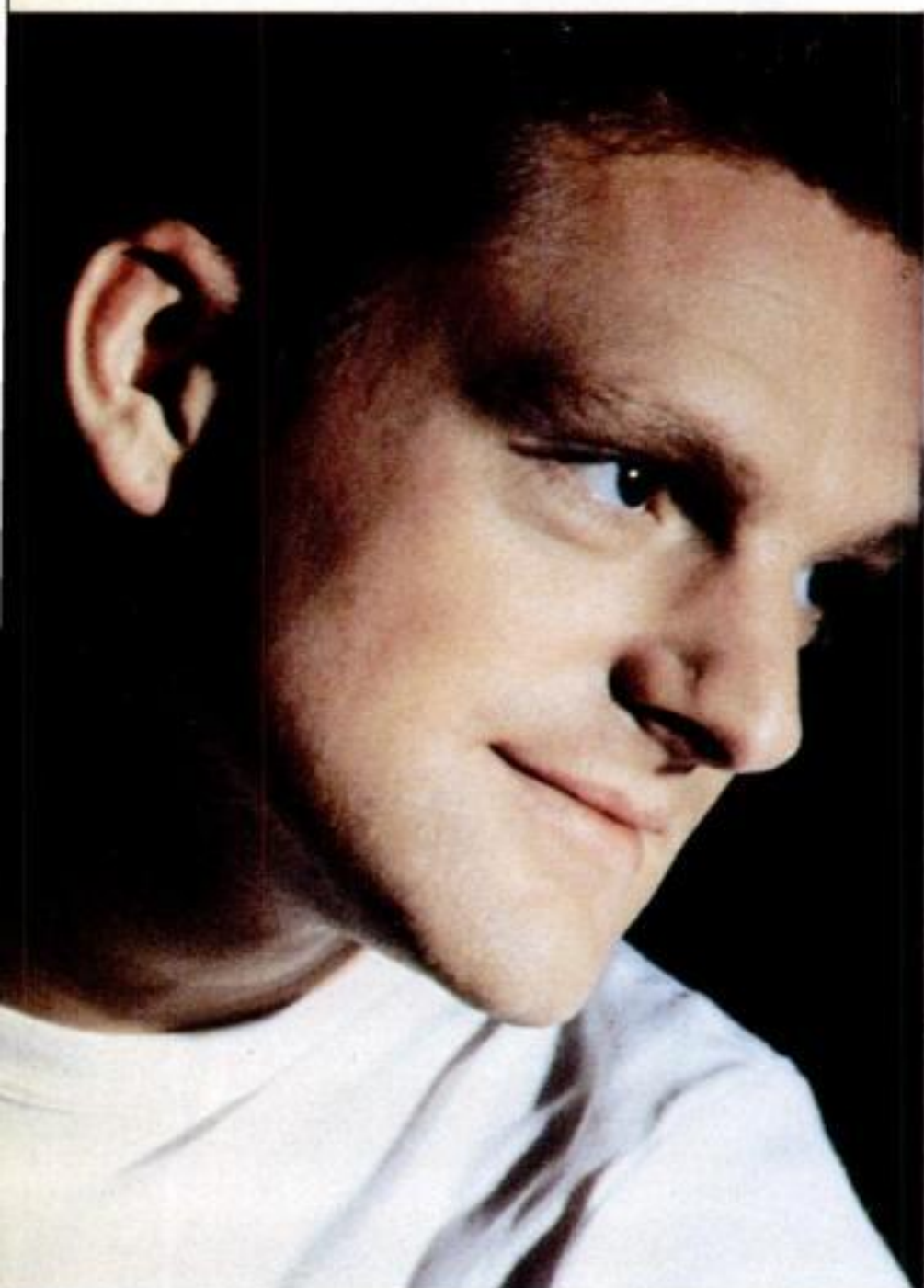
see me as a kind of sex symbol, I'm not sure why they're so turned on."

These days the British Invasion, Part II, that characterized the earlier part of this decade, has largely petered out. No more Boy George, no more Eurythmics, no more Thompson Twins. The British pop stars that make it big in America in 1989 have to Americanize in order to succeed. George Michael, once teeny-pop's delight, has had to re-make himself as a mature solo artist to capture the cover of *Rolling Stone*. Nowadays



Courtesy Sire/Warner Bros.

The two members of Erasure, synth wizard Vince Clarke and vocalist Andy Bell, spin tales of depressive wonderment over a mechanized beat. They sound like New Order or Depeche Mode covering Abba, but they think they're more like Simon and Garfunkel.



Erasure: Vince Clarke and Andy Bell

American radio stations because they ask us stupid questions like: 'What do you think about American girls?' I don't like our American Record company Sire and the way they take a perfectly good mix and say, 'Oh well, let's get a Mexican/Puerto Rican/Argentinian/Chilean mix because the Latin sound is really hot in the clubs at the moment.'

"I want to educate the public into liking our music, not play Puerto Rican music" says Clarke referring to the way Sire employed Latin hip hop's most innovative mixmaster Little Louie Vega to produce dance-oriented remixes of '87's *Circus* (released as the double album *The Two Ring Circus*).

Aren't you intrigued by the fact that before your current success, much of your support in America came from dance-crazy Hispanic teenagers who are as fascinated with European imagery and sounds as Europeans are with black and Hispanic pop culture? Aren't you enchanted by the nomadic nature of people's desires so that the music of one culture can appear in another culture, and in the process become transformed in a way the original artist could never conceive of?

"No. I'm not that interested."

Clarke's knee-jerk anti-Americanism is evidence that what really divides Britain into two nations is not economic disadvantage and class (the great North/South divide, Britain and the Other Britain, often portrayed in the British media as the characteristic geography of Thatcherism) but the division between those who are a product of their environment and those who triumph over it. On the one hand there are those who suffer from an acute poverty of desire, that drab stay-at-home Britishness that instinctively mistrusts everything foreign, and which inevitably manifests itself in the form of a virulent anti-Americanism (in Britain, anti-Americanism is the socialism of fools) that assumes the United States is the epitome of everything vulgar and commercial. On the other hand there are those who

suffer from too much desire, who react against the cramped in sense of Britishness with its images of beer and pigeons, wet leaves and dog shit, and often find in the supposed shallow products of American consumerism a sense of freedom and space, albeit illusory, denied to them back home.

Contrast Clarke with Andy Bell, who as a young boy spent a many happy hour lost in the luxuriant fantasies of the Hollywood musicals of the 40s: "I wish I'd been born thirty or forty years ago. I'd have much preferred to have been Fred Astaire. I wish it was still the time when they spent millions on making musicals. I remember as a kid seeing a film like *Top Hat* and sitting in school the next day, imagining the class room transformed into a Hollywood set. But it would wear off after a day."

If there's one thing that Vince Clarke is insistent upon, it's that Erasure isn't a synthesizer techno band but a songwriting duo, more akin to Simon and Garfunkel than Kraftwerk. Erasure, like Depeche Mode and Information Society, is a post-industrial folk band: a band that uses the technology of the present but the aesthetics of a previous era (songs, melodies, good lyrics, etc.).

"I never wanted to be a pop star but a folk singer. I think what Erasure does is a type of folk music. We write songs not tracks. When we write a song, we write it acoustically and transfer it to the synthesizer. I like to think what we do is memorable not because of the instruments it's played on but because of the song itself. Songs are more human, they go on forever. No one is going to cover a track in ten years time. But they will cover a great song. That American-style Janet Jackson music is not going to last. It's all in the production. Julio Iglesias is not going to cover a Janet Jackson song but he could conceivably cover an Erasure song."

In a time when the past seems more real than the present (when a Deadhead is as likely to be under 21 as over 30), Fairlight samplers and Roland drums machines are just as capable of being instruments of nostalgia as acoustic guitars and wailing, bluesy harmonicas. In 1989, it seems that it's not only U2 and Tracy Chapman who are interested in appropriating the mantle of Woody Guthrie.

he's less interested in manipulating girlie hysteria than manipulating signs of authenticity: the black leather jacket he now wears, the guitar he now sports and the pseudo-soul passion in his vocals. Even The Pet Shop Boys have had to drop much of their clever-clever English irony in order to succeed on the Billboard charts.

Erasure is the exception to this rule. Despite the success of "Chains of Love," they remain stubbornly British. Synth player Vince Clarke (whose greatest contribution to 80's pop was the plinkity-plonk lite-industrial

many compromises involved. I don't really like the music that comes out of America because it's so destructive and mindless and sexist. I don't like sound he defined with Depeche Mode, and who—with Allison Moyet's deep r&b vocals—attempted to humanize that sound with Yazoo) is well aware that America has learned to love Erasure, but he remains ever diffident about learning to love America: "I've never been fascinated with America like some British people. Breaking America has never been one of my ambitions because there are too



"I'm conscious of the ways I'm being sold," says Nick Cave. "Before it was dirty merchandise, and now it's clean merchandise. That worries me." Nick Cave, the latest candidate for rock'n'roll junkie saint, has emerged from detox with his despair intact. Now, after a film with Wim Wenders, a great new album, and a biblical novel (excerpted on page 38), he'd like to do what Charlie Parker, Hank Williams, and Jim Morrison couldn't: survive.

Hellhound on my trail

Robert Johnson sold his soul to the devil. Went down to a crossroads in the Mississippi delta on a moonlit night and bartered eternity for the devil's own blues. When he died before the age of 21, poisoned by a jealous husband who thought art should imitate life and not the other way around, he stepped into a middle ground between the literal and the figurative, more resonant than either. He became a romantic figure.

A cliché, as Nick Cave has said, is an idea that falls into abuse because it holds too much power. Gaunt, pallid, his jet black hair piled carelessly on his overhanging brow in testimony to some unseen violence, Nick Cave is a cliché every bit as much as Robert Johnson was. As much, for that matter, as Hank Williams—dead at 30 of a frozen heart, a triumph of art over life that is often mistaken for drug abuse—or Charlie Parker, Jim Morrison, Iggy Pop, Lou Reed, or Ian Curtis, who joined the ranks instantaneously when his feet never hit the ground following his one leap of faith. Nick Cave is the face that launched a thousand second-rate English gloom bands. From his barrelling misanthropy in the Birthday Party to the disturbing resignation of his scriptures- and blues-influenced new solo album, *Tender Prey*, he has lived a decade as a journal of baroque self-destruction that

writes itself across the public imagination. Whether he belongs in the above company in talent remains to be seen. At any rate, that isn't the point, any more than whether Robert Johnson really sold his soul to the devil; he belongs in their company more than in any other. Even before SPIN reported, in its third issue, that he was born with a stillborn twin brother, Nick Cave had emerged, with all the hokum and power it implies, as rock's last romantic figure.

"That story about the stillborn twin isn't true," he says. "I don't know where it came from. I was born with a tail, though." He speaks haltingly, in soft, broken phrases, with neither the arrogance nor the eagerness to please I might have expected. It has been about a month since he completed a heroin withdrawal program, suggested by the London courts as a favorable alternative to prison after his last arrest. His record company people, with whom he has had a long association, are amazed by how cooperative and productive he has been. After years of steady or unsteady work, he is midway through the final editing processes on his novel, *And the Ass Saw the Angel* (see excerpt on page 38), and preparing his band of underground all-stars, the Bad Seeds, for a spring American tour that in the past would have filled most involved

Photograph by Anton Corbijn

Article by John Leland

with deep dread. "The tail was just a twisted, grisly thing," he says. "It was taken off at birth. That's true."

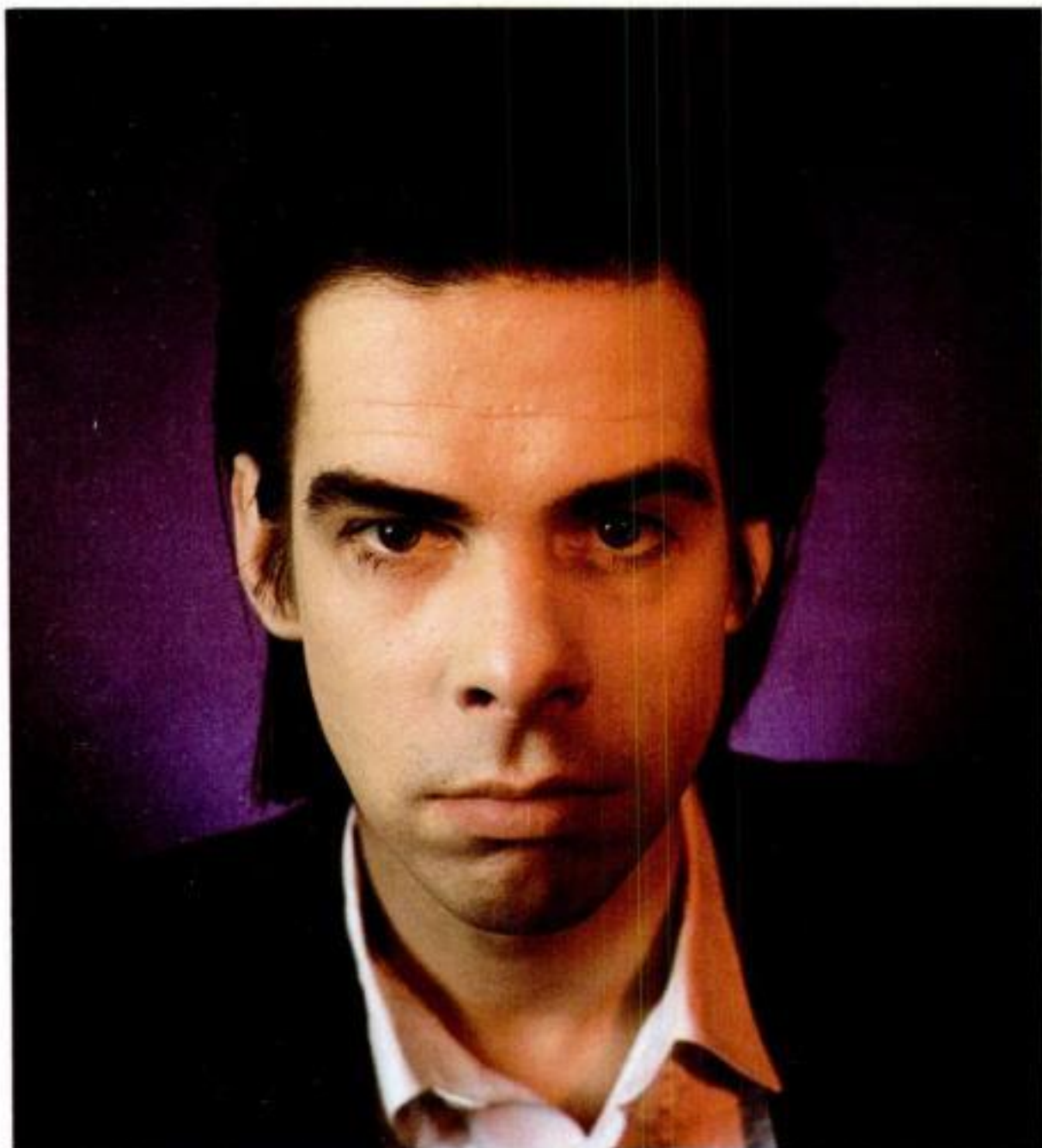
Nicholas Edward Cave was born, tail and all, 31 years ago in Wangaratta, a one-pub town in the Australian outback. The son of a high school English teacher, he sang without distinction in the Wangaratta choir and harbored boyish fantasies of becoming a criminal. "I was very competitive with my father," he says. "My father worked with the theater. He directed quite a bit. I figured that I worked in a creative field as well, and I knew more about things than he did, and he thought he knew more than I did. I would almost go out of my way to find out about obscure experimental theater that he didn't know about, so I could read it at the dinner table to impress him."

In his book, *Deep Blues*, Robert Palmer notes that before selling his soul to the devil, Robert Johnson declared his intention to his relatives, and even specified the crossroads to which he was heading. When Johnson then returned to the company of bluesmen Son House and Charlie Patton, whose derision he had fled a year previously, it was with unexpected technical prowess, but also something more. Working the blurry conjunction of fact, myth, and cliché, he sang with very real, fresh power: "Early this morning when you knocked upon my door/I said Hello Satan, I believe it's time to go." It was, beyond everything else, one of the most darkly funny rhymes he'd ever written, bested perhaps only by the one that followed: "Me and the devil was walking side by side/I'm going to beat my woman until I get satisfied." Boorish as autobiography, trite as literature, the rhymes demand some romantic middle ground; finding it, they resonate as richly as any in Western popular music.

Nick Cave's biographical particulars fall into a similar middle ground. On "Deanna," his new single, Cave appears as the devil, come to collect the title character's soul. As he told Jack Barron of *New Musical Express* (twice mediated, this story is perhaps the best way to read Cave), Deanna was a girl he knew when he was about eight. "We used to go on these day raids on the different houses around the town... and we used to eat their food, lie on their beds, and steal all sorts of stuff like letters, cutlery, clothes, and money... So one day we robbed a house and found a handgun which we took back to our little grotto. We, I should add, robbed... separately also. One day she was caught by this guy who was in this religious instruction teacher's house. The wife of this teacher thrashed her and the guy did something to her, but I really don't know what it was. The next day I was woken up by my mother and had to answer all these questions from the police. Deanna had gone back to the home and shot the strange man and woman."

Cave was finally thrown out of school—the school where both his parents worked—at age twelve, and shipped to a strict, all-male boarding school in Melbourne "to get some God beaten into me." As a boarder, he spent two years beating up the school's day students. When his parents moved to Melbourne, he spent the next years getting beaten up.

"My father died when I was still in Australia," he recalls, "when I was 19. I really enjoyed shocking him, and I'm sure that had a lot to do with why ultimately I failed at art school. I just really enjoyed bringing home paintings of subject matter that I knew would irritate my father. It was puerile behavior, really. I would put pressure on them to encourage me, so they'd have to hang them on the



Bladdyn Butcher

wall in the lounge room. By my last days in art school I was painting very stupid things. I had a couple of feminist art teachers, and I was painting musclemen looking up ballerinas' dresses, in the worst possible way I could. I didn't have much respect for the school by the time I was thrown out. They thought I was just a filthy, stupid, sexist fool. And I thought they had more of a sense of humor than that, but they didn't.

"I also had the band, the Boys Next Door, going at the time, since I was about 14. But the music was very separate. Even then, I never considered music as one of the 'serious' art forms. That's changed for me these days. I wanted to be a Painter with a capital 'P'—that's all I ever wanted to be."

Last May, Black Spring Press in London published *King Ink*, a small, expensive collection of Nick Cave's song lyrics, one-act plays, and assorted scraps of prose. Included is an essay entitled *H.M.S. Britain 1982*, about the growing number of bands whose existence stood as an homage to Cave and the Birthday Party: goth bands, batcave bands, depressive young men in whiteface and black haystack hair who played turgid melodramas, magnifying only the obvious elements of the Birthday Party, and only some of those (Birthday Party was one of the last bands of consequence to use swastika iconography). For a brief time, after their move from Australia, all wide-eyed and hate-

ful, the Birthday Party was one of the most loved and loathed bands in London, something more than a Sex Pistols addendum but less than an equal; they simply showed up too late.

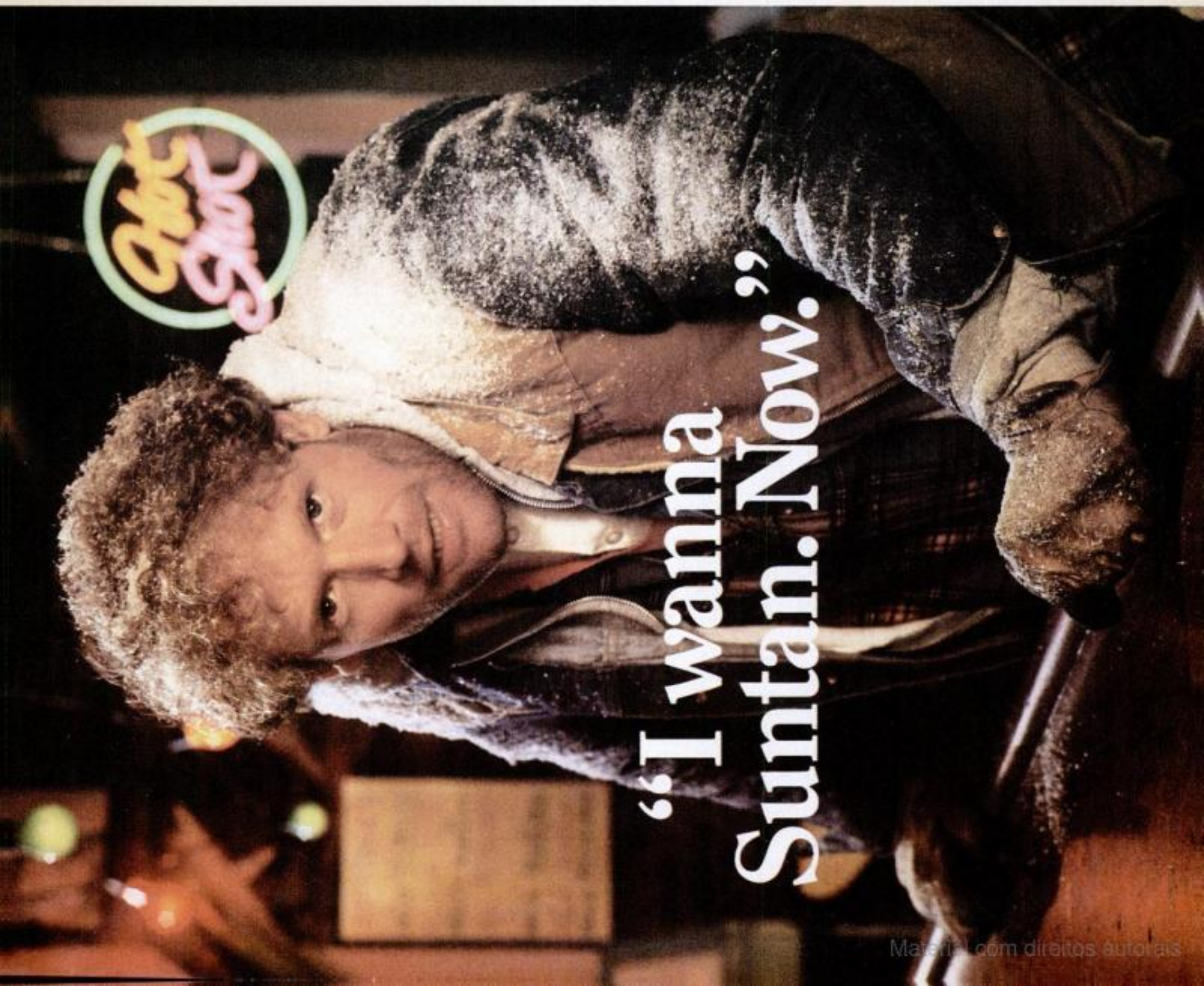
In *H.M.S. Britain 1982*, Cave rejects "the honorary title of forefathers to the 'New-Super-Death-Tribe,'" saying his unwanted spawn "REFLECT if anything... 'The Mood of the Times' if I may use this sickening expression, ie a desire for a bit more violence and so on... and in my most sought after opinion a group that REFLECTS anything other than their own idiosyncratic vision is not worth a pinch and anyway that is enough of that full stop. In conclusion, the Birth.P. are in essence a slug, nomadic, and their journey is slow and painful and always forward and their trail of slime is their art and so on and they are barely conscious of its issue which bears little resemblance to anything bar ourselves and we make no excuses for that."

According to the music tabloid *Sounds*, the Birthday Party ultimately dropped the album format because they felt their music was too intense to expect people to listen to for that long.

All clichés, as Nick Cave's career illustrates, are not created equal.

SPIN: Would you agree that your material so far has been very black-and-white emotionally?

CAVE: Yeah, but I've been that way myself. I have a tendency towards melodrama. I don't know what I can do about that. I enjoy that. I think it's there in



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most other sorts of music I enjoy. It's there in blues music, it's certainly there in country music. People like Tammy Wynette, for example. Billy Sherrill, who writes her best songs—if he's anything, he's over-romantic about what he writes about, melodramatic to the extreme. That sort of music really affects me. I don't sit there and smirk at it. It affects me right here in the heart. There's a lot of people who weep over what Tammy Wynette does, and they'd consider it an insult to call it kitsch. And I'm one of those people.

How do you consider your voice?

I've always had a lot of problems with my voice, so I've based a lot of singing on what I do best, which is basically express myself, and put character in it. But in the meantime, my voice has grown quite good in a sense, and I haven't used it in that way. I've been singing the wrong types of songs for my voice. I would like to try some things that are more challenging but still very simple.

Alan Vega of Suicide once said he thought that Iggy should be singing cabaret songs, jumping into a late-period Elvis model. It seems like the next step for you.

That idea is quite attractive. I would like to sing to that kind of instrumentation, and sing those types of songs. But at the same time I very much want to sing my own material. I'm tending to write much more classic, simple songs these days, and not be so concerned with showing off my word power. It's never been easy for me to write a simple song that isn't clever or whatever, and I would really like to be able to do that. I hope the next record I make will be more like that—a record of classic type songs—if possible.

But I don't like that word cabaret. It's got a camp element to it that worries me quite a lot. I don't want to become a parody of someone else; I don't mind being a parody of myself. I don't want to become a second-rate Tom Jones or something. He's one of my favorite singers. But I've watched a lot of talent shows in my days, where you have these Elvis impersonators, and some of them are really remarkable. But who wants to do that? I'd be quite happy to be able to evoke in the hearts of my audience the kind of emotions he evokes in the hearts of his. But not at the expense of my music.

Is it a mistake to identify you with you with your characters?

The characters are all autobiographical in a sense. I tend to prefer to use a character as a vehicle for saying something about myself to actually talking about myself in the first person.

Through the process of writing *And the Ass Saw the Angel* over the last three years or so—the book's very much about obsessions, and my obsessions grew as I became more involved in the actual writing of it. There was a definite parallel between what was going on with me, even though I was living in Berlin, a city, and what was going on with the central character, this mute boy who lives alone in the backwoods, is chastised by everyone, and obsesses about things, all seen through a paranoid's eyes. In a way, the book is an exploration of those particular obsessions. But the point is that it's very much removed from me in any superficial sense. The last thing I want it to be seen as is a kind of rock'n'roll diary.

Are you self-destructive?

I guess. Fuck, I don't know. These aren't things you sit around thinking about. If people need to believe certain things about me, I don't mind. I've of-

ten been accused of this, and I think it's quite wrong, but I'm not trying to sell myself in that particular way. I just feel comfortable about writing about certain themes.

Did you ever worry that if you straightened up you'd lose your edge?

I don't know about losing my edge, but I was often worried that I wouldn't be able to write anymore, or perform. I basically used drugs for those reasons, or I told myself that was why I was using them. So far, that's not true. I'm getting a lot more done these days, and can remember doing it, which is refreshing. I feel much better about everything I do now, because I know that I'm doing it myself, at least. It's much more difficult this way.

But the thing that struck me was that because people saw me that way, they assumed that I was happy to be that way, that that's the way I wanted

"There's a lot of people who weep over what Tammy Wynette does, and they'd consider it an insult to call it kitsch. And I'm one of those people."

to be, or that's the way I was selling myself. It goes far beyond that. It's something that I at the time had absolutely no control over. It was just a fact in my life, there was nothing I could do about it.

On Christmas Eve, 1954, John Marshall Alexander, Jr., a charismatic rhythm and blues performer who recorded with some success as Johnny Ace, became momentarily the world's greatest singer when he learned, with the aid of a revolver, to project from the mouth backward. It was a swift act, not more than a couple milliseconds plus cleanup time, but it made him a legend, his shadow stretching even beyond Hank Williams' more eagerly anticipated pre-show curtain call of one week later. A nation wept and accorded him a major hit record. He was No. 1 with a bullet. Then romance and greatness dropped their flirty ways, leaving Johnny Ace to become a macabre footnote to history.

In the years after Robert Johnson returned to Son House and Charlie Patton, there's no telling how many inconsequential bluesmen sold their souls to the devil, only to become inconsequential bluesmen with bleak prospects for the future; figure it was a period of crossroads gridlock, of heavy trading on the devil's big board, and not everybody got what he was paying for: the metaphor made flesh, the cultural made natural. Never mind that Robert Johnson was a poor black man living in the rural South; never mind that he was probably a great talent, a master of word and music, an inventor whose imagination turned to dark elements already in the air: the way he played and sang proved that he'd made a pact with the devil. Once the cultural (Johnson's art) became natural (his pact), Johnson slipped into myth. The romance of art as a projection of inner self-destruction proved too strong. People, it should be noted, like to believe.

Nick Cave's deal with the devil, orchestrated on different metaphorical terms, serves the same purpose: it collapses the gap between public and private selves. Singers like Bruce Springsteen, Bono, and John Mellencamp project themselves as big screen versions of their romanticized audi-

ence; it would be difficult to model one's behavior on Springsteen's, because he doesn't have any. As a role model, vicarious or otherwise, Nick Cave is all behavior, behavior as art. Like Hank Williams, Lou Reed, or Jim Morrison, he annihilates himself to become art. The proper response to Springsteen, even for a fan, is contempt, because Springsteen embodies the terminal stasis, the absence of possibility, that we all need to escape. The proper response to Cave, even for an impartial observer, is just do it. As longtime collaborator Lydia Lunch says, "What's he gonna do next, explode? Fine. I'd pay to see it. Isn't that what they charge for at the door?"

"The initial feeling behind the Birthday Party," Cave says, "was one of disgust and disrespect for the English audience and English people and England, full stop. I think the Birthday Party was something quite separate from what I do now with the Bad Seeds."

Cave's work with the Bad Seeds (currently including Blixa Bargeld from Einstürzende Neubauten, Kid Congo Powers from the Gun Club, and Mick Harvey from the Birthday Party), has been both bleak and increasingly accessible, a long slog toward rapprochement with the similarly biblical despair of Leonard Cohen. (On hearing Cave's 1984 version of Cohen's "Apocalypse," Cohen said, "I thought his instincts were impeccable for taking that song and tearing it apart.") His rumbling bullfrog voice has become a more pliant rumble, and his obsessions have come into sharper focus.

In the last two years, even before he began his recovery from heroin addiction, he has co-written and acted in a film ("Ghosts of the Civil Dead," a grisly prison movie in which he plays a violent psychopath), completed his novel, and performed with the Bad Seeds in his friend Wim Wenders' "Wings of Desire." Another project with Wenders is in the works. At 31, Cave is learning to create theater outside his own myth—a myth he, like Johnny Ace, says he never wanted.

"There's not very much romance in it for me. From my side of the fence, it's not that attractive, really. Any kind of romantic notion was lost many years ago. For me the whole thing's just very ugly. I haven't seen 'Bird' yet, but I don't think they would have made the movie if he wasn't a great jazz musician. I don't think that's the reason Charlie Parker's remembered today. I hope not, anyway.

"I feel more in control of my life to a certain degree, but I'm also aware that it's very easy for the whole thing to spin around again. I by no means can sit back and relax and think that phase of my life is over."

My favorite piece from "King Ink" is the one-act collaboration with Lydia Lunch, "Gun Play #3," which runs, in its entirety, as follows:

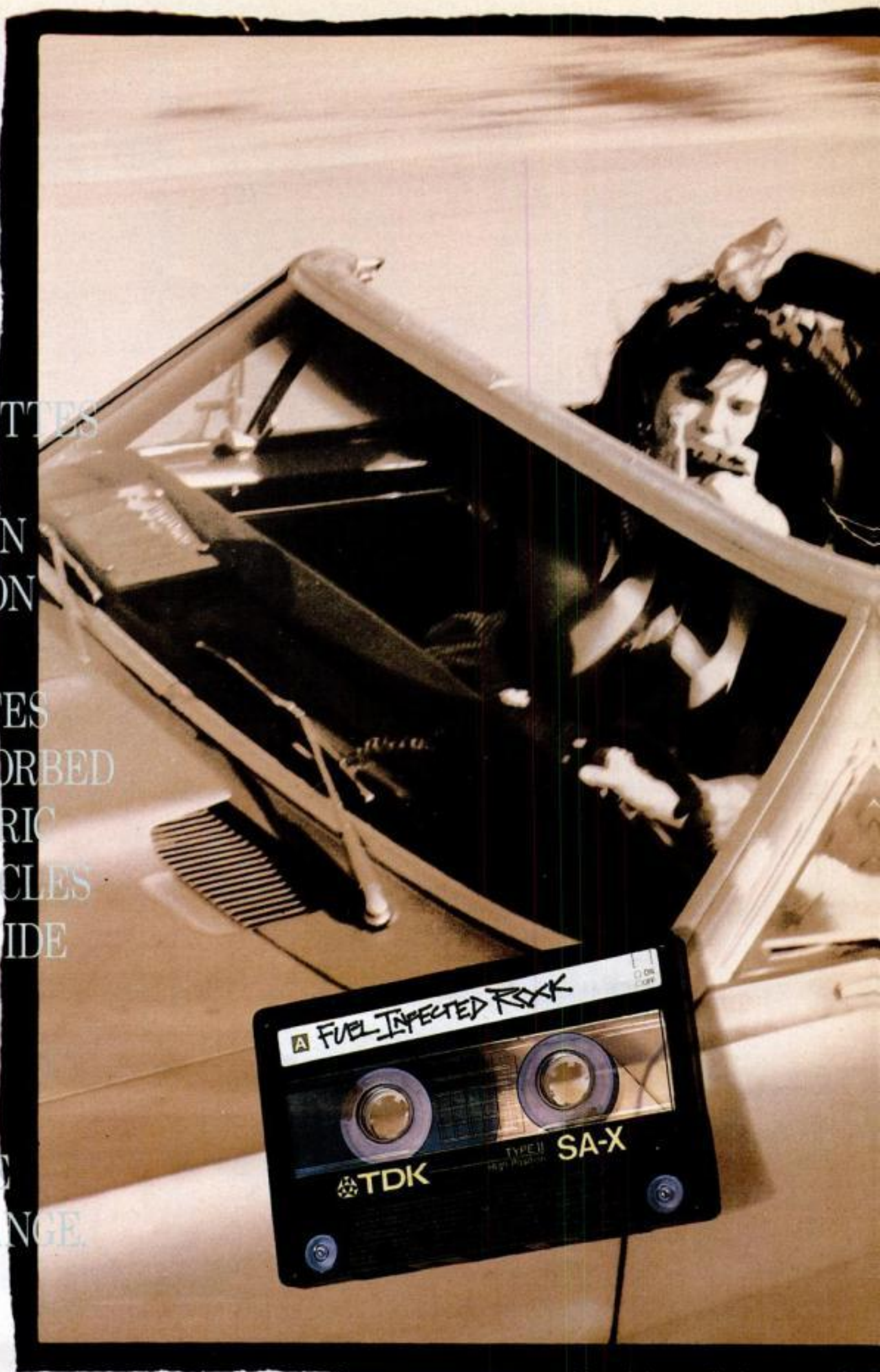
"Caudy coloured lights flood the stage on which a young man spins a blindfolded female partner around in the background [loud]. She stumbles, squeals w/laughter, stumbles [oh how silly] a bit more and then mouth open and still giggling [arms outstretched] she makes a gay little bee-line toward the young man. When at arms' reach [Is that you, Tommy, giggle] the man jams a Colt 45 into her mouth and blows off the back of her head. The Big O sings 'Pretty Woman'... oh.

BLACKOUT

I hope that makes things clearer.

(See excerpt from Cave's forthcoming novel, *And the Ass Saw the Angel*, page 38.)

SOME
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TDK
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AUDIO CASSETTES
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TDK REAL

©TDK REAL

AND THE ASS SAW THE ANGEL (Excerpt)

"I think that a lot of people will probably find the book quite difficult to appreciate," says Nick Cave, "simply because of who I am. But this book is very different from anything that's ever been written before, and certainly by a rock singer. It isn't modern, or inspired by modern literature, as such. In that respect it'll be an oddity.

"It's a sort of backward interpretation of the Bible. The story is about a small religious sect that lives in a remote valley somewhere, and the kind of goings on of these people as seen through the eyes of a mute boy who lives on the outskirts. The actual story is biblical in proportion, in the sense that you've got a religious sect in a valley, and a great rain comes and it rains for three years."

The following is an excerpt from *And the Ass Saw the Angel*.

A sleepy kind of calm had infected me as ah pondered the awesome mysteries bound up in the brittle pods, and safe inside the crate ah let mahself drift away, drift away, only to be wrenched awake by a freakish racket coming from the corral. Placing the shells carefully on the cotton-wool pads that lined the bottom of the shoebox ah peered out the car window, keeping low.

Mule flung himself about the corral, bucking, kicking and beating his hooves in a bid to wrench himself free from the hitching post, slipping and skidding in the mud and emitting a queer "Hawnk-nee! Hawnk-nee!", blowing through his lips and slamming his hooves against the side of the shack. "Hawnk-nee, hawnk-nee." For a second ah wondered what the fuck had flung Mule into such a funk.

And then ah saw it—through the leaden folds of rain it came—a flurry of canine limbs cannonballing up the slope toward the corral—a wild dog—a blood-bent beast—a hell-bound hill-hound driven down from the hills in search of living food. And ah will tell you this. Ah have seen a lot of these hill-dogs, or "barking wolves" as they are known locally, but ah swear this slavering brute had to be the meanest, hungriest, ugliest, most desperate-looking inbort ah had ever laid eyes on—great green fangs and drooling flues, blood-shotty eyes, flattened brow and massive shaggy over-developed shoulders that tapered away to a ratty sawn-off rear end, tail-less and hairless and covered in crap. Ah watched the dog leap up the corral fence with a liquid gut-wrought snarl and attach itself to Mule's flying rump.

"Haaawnk!" "Haaawnk!"

Blood ran red down Mule's ventral region, as the dog, high upon his back, spun and whipped and kicked and bit. The panicking ass floundered and tottered and stiffed beneath the onslaught until finally, with mouth agape and tongue lolling, Mule buckled, and with a splash and a drub fell flat on his side.

The vicious cur held on fast, and only at the sounding of Pa's shotgun did it unlock its bloody jaw and bolt back down the slope. Pa came marching along the back of the shack, shotgun up at his shoulder, and with aim wild and myopic he emptied the second barrel just as the dog lost itself in the sodden cane trash.

Then, cussing obscenely, he entered the corral.

Mule lay upon his side, unmoving, a rain-soiled puddle of blood growing at his hind. And ah watched as Pa removed his hat and crouched by Mule, poking at the moribund beast with his finger.

Mule did not respond and the rain pissed down. After a time Pa rose and walked to the apple barrels, where he unhooked a spade. Then, head lowered, hat back on, spade across his shoulder like a grey bone, he crossed the yard to the old water tower.

There, a few feet from the rickety support upon which the tower stood, he began to dig.

Leaving the shoebox wrapped in an old shirt in the glove compartment—thoroughly checking first, of course, for roaches or rats—ah crept from the Chevy and footed it over to the corral.

Ah saw mah romping body on the pocking faces of the puddles. Splashed a few too.

Mule lay ossified in a petticoat of scarlet lace. His toothy rictus made it look like he was laughing.

Ah drew mah hand in a soft stroke across Mule's neck. His wet grey coat was warm. Ah uttered the beast's name, in quietude:

"Mule"

and Mule rolled one spooked eye open and upward into mine—and the ass saw the angel, eye to rolling white eye, and long-locked in the looking. Slowly, and yes, miraculously, Mule climbed to his feet. Blood ran in rivulets down his hind legs. Ah looked for Pa and found him bent waist-deep in a trench, cussing and furiously digging.

So, me and Mule, we exchanged a second glance, but it was me this time who broke the spell.

Ah returned to the Chevy, mah cicadas still secure as ah had prayed they would be. And ah sat rapt in mah box of little bleached cast-offs, one of which ah held gently up between thumb 'n' fore, to the grey light that oozed through the windows. So engrossed was ah that ah barely registered Pa's whoop of joy when he returned to the corral to find Mule—lolloping a little but alive. Eye right close up to the weightless shell, ah pored over the wing's tessellated arterial skeleton, and mused upon the myriad bifurcations and forks, the branches and anabranches revealed against the murky light.

Suddenly the person of Ma lumbered onto this field—entered it drunk and reeling, with the last wobbling circumgyrations of a clipped skittle. Clad only in a lurid floral dress she came, having donned neither stocking nor slipper, nor any coat against the rain—an empty stone bottle in the grab of her paw. As she rolled the length of the cicada wing, I trapped her, there in that awesome network of subdivision.

Then, still looking through the cicada's wing, ah thought this:

"Ma is gonna fall in Mule's open grave"

and friends, that is precisely what she did—slipped mah fetters, disappeared off the face of mah

cicada's wing without a trace. Mah heart pinked and ah exploded into a dumbshow of laughter. Absently ah crushed the wing and shell in mah hand, unaware that ah did so. Such was mah elation!

Pa had disappeared around the side of the shack, so ah felt it safe enough to climb onto the roof of the car. Below me, like a giant turtle upon its back, thrashed mah phocine Mama, working herself ever deeper into the sucking mucilage that threatened to engulf her and overwhelm her and drown her forever.

Pa returned, with Mule in tow, led by his chain.

Ah made mahself scarce. Low. Unner the Chevy.

On mah belly, the ground beneath me felt mudified and cold, but ah suffered in silence—having no other choice. Ah looked toward the corral and could just see, through the thrashing torrent, Mule's four blood-strained shanks and the huge muddy boots of Pa, all straining away from the grave-hole, and the chain leaping from the great puddle like a silver snake, alive and hissing. Then Mule let forth a cracking bray. . . at least ah think it was Mule. Slowly a giant mud-coloured gastropod—a black and flapping slug the size of a baby whale—rose horribly from the brimming slough and sprawled out, to merge with the mud beside the trench—amorphous, atramental and viscid. The thing wore a heavy chain girdle about its middle.

Pa's boots marched toward the lumpen mass, his stride heavy with badness, and ah watched Pa prepare to kick this murgeoning shit-hill all over the valley. But no, to mah amazement he didn't even lift a leg to stomp on it—he just stood there, shuffling a little, pointing in one direction and then another, like he was looking for something. "Hanging on the wall, Pa . . . the chainsaw . . ." ah found mahself thinking. "Get the goddamn chainsaw . . ."

In time, a pink gash opened at one end, and from this bright hole the steaming zoophyte appeared to breathe. In time, the rain rinsed away the mud and acre by acre the slug got pink. Its lower region split to form of mammoth set of legs, and above these grew two pink flailing arms, one of which clung to a bottle made of stone. Her two hunkering pins kicked and crossed and folded like two brawling sows, then the gaping cavern in her face—for it was Ma—hollered and barked:

"PA-A! PAAAAA! GIT OFF DIS CHAIN!"

© Nick Cave. "And the Ass Saw the Angel" will be published by Black Spring Press Ltd. of London in spring 1989.

RON DELSENER
PRESENTS

*THE
ROCK
PALACE
OF THE
90's*

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Grant Hart in focus, Hüsker Dü obscured. Greg Norton, left; Bob Mould, right





Hüsker Dü. Sounded strange. Meant "do you remember?" in Swedish. Do you remember the Hüskers' crystal crunch white noise pop songs? Do you remember how sad you were when America's best underground rock band broke up? Did you blame it on Grant Hart? You shouldn't have.

Article by Tom Wroblewski

In the year since Hüsker Dü dissolved amid a flurry of internal squabbles and rumored drug abuse, the blame for the band's demise has fallen squarely on the shoulders of songwriter/drummer Grant Hart.

"I can see why," Hart says, having recently released the EP *2541*, the first post-Hüsker effort of anyone in the band. "Because I quit the band." Hüsker was scheduled to play a benefit concert in Manhattan the day after they broke up, but Hart went anyway. "And by the time I get to New York," he says, "here's all these accusations that I'd been fired because of my heroin addiction."

Hart's long-time flirtation with heroin had become an addiction by the release of Hüsker's *Candy Apple Grey* in 1985. "The whole thing with the drugs," he qualifies, "was kind of a symptom of what the disease was that was going on in my life—as far as how much control of it I had in the first place. And I wasn't able to quit smack until I quit Hüsker Dü."

To hear Hart tell it, creative differences had been dividing the group long before their December '87 split, and he takes exception to having been subsequently labelled "unreliable."

"Y'know, if unreliable meant not showing up at the office, not writing songs, not playing extremely well, then no, I was not unreliable. If unreliable meant having dissatisfaction with the way that the label wanted to push us, in the commercial goals of [guitarist] Bob Mould and his outfitting of Greg Norton as an equal third member as far as songwriting was concerned, then yes, I guess I was unreliable, because I couldn't be depended on to assist with other people's goals."

Having co-founded Hüsker with bassist Norton, Hart says that a "dictum" determined by Mould prohibiting Hart from ever writing more than 50% of the material on any release "was a pretty weird thing to have decreed upon me. And I lived with that for the release of *Warehouse*, which is why it's like 45% me, 55% Bob."

Mould, according to Hart, had final say over which songs Hüsker would record, though it was never officially designed that way. "It just became that it was easier to be around Bob if you were

playing a part of Bob's game. And my visual arts, non-music things, stuff that the band liked, and wanted to use, was used, under the name Fake Name Graphix. And anything else I did was never acknowledged. It was just frustrating all around to have such a big hose and such a narrow nozzle." When the band stated that Hart's outside songwriting and gigging activities would have to stop, his sense of confinement within the band became more acute. "It became such a hypocritical thing, because Hüsker weren't getting together to jam either, and I had no ground for my outlay."

Differences in songwriting philosophy emerged after Hüsker jumped from indie-label SST Records to Warner Brothers in 1985, and Hart found himself unable to get behind Mould's new songs. "It was like they sounded—I hate to say it—they were square! And in some sense, it might have broadened us with the R.E.M. crowd, or whatever crowd, as far as—when you're on a major—getting that appeal. But it did nothing for me."

Warner contributed as well to Hart's frustration, making him feel a severe loss of individuality, something he'd expected, but not to such an extent. "Less was expected of me and, therefore, less room was given to me. It was like, I was the drummer in Hüsker Dü; so, Bob's obviously the songwriter, because he sings and plays guitar. Once Warner had to saddle us with a producer for the third Warner album that never was—it began to be painfully obvious that we weren't gonna be considered serious by them unless we kinda let our strings be pulled."

Hart's disillusionment over Hüsker Dü found an outlet in the acoustic-tinged *2541*, a record which he calls, "a looking back on bitterness, almost."

"2541," a relationship song from 1985 that Hüsker Dü had decided against recording, takes its title from an address Hart shared with an ex-lover. 2541 is also a street address in Minneapolis where Hüsker once had office space, a fact Hart realized only after recording the track.

"There's a dual poignancy with that. I wrote the song while I was waiting for the truck to move me out of this apartment where me and this person had just split up. And there were so many parallels with the dissolution of [Hüsker's] office and our being a band."

In Minneapolis within miles of his East St. Paul home, Grant Hart wrote and played everything on *2541*. "It was more important to me to actually play songs on the instrument that I wrote 'em on. I think I'm a better songwriter than I am a drummer, a better vocalist. I got my own style on drums, but I can always do that. Right now it's more important to get myself away from where I've been buried for the last nine years."

Hart enlisted three friends to sing backups on the EP's raucous finale, "Let Go", which features a jumbled mix of lyrics concerning dope, suicide, and vanilla wafers. "On the last verse, there's an extra set of background vocals that sing, 'Keep haaangin' on...' from *Flip Your Wig*. It came to me and the engineer that it would be a nice psychological countering to, 'Let go...'"

As he works on a full-length album for SST, Hart attempts to put the whole existence of Hüsker Dü "completely in retrospect." "I think Greg's probably incurred less frustration doing what makes him happy than doing what Bob and I need to do. It's kind of in a state right now where Bob and I might be trying to show each other up here for a few years. No matter what bitter kind of monster it turned into, there were some very satisfying moments. I can't think of anything else I would have been better off doing for that amount of time." ☺

Photograph by Lisa Haun

Marlboro

A full-page photograph of a cowboy riding a dark brown horse through a snowy, wooded landscape. The cowboy is wearing a light blue shirt, a tan jacket, and a cowboy hat, and is holding a lasso. The horse is galloping through the snow, kicking up a cloud of white powder. The background consists of tall evergreen trees and a few bare deciduous trees, suggesting a winter setting. The overall tone is rugged and adventurous.

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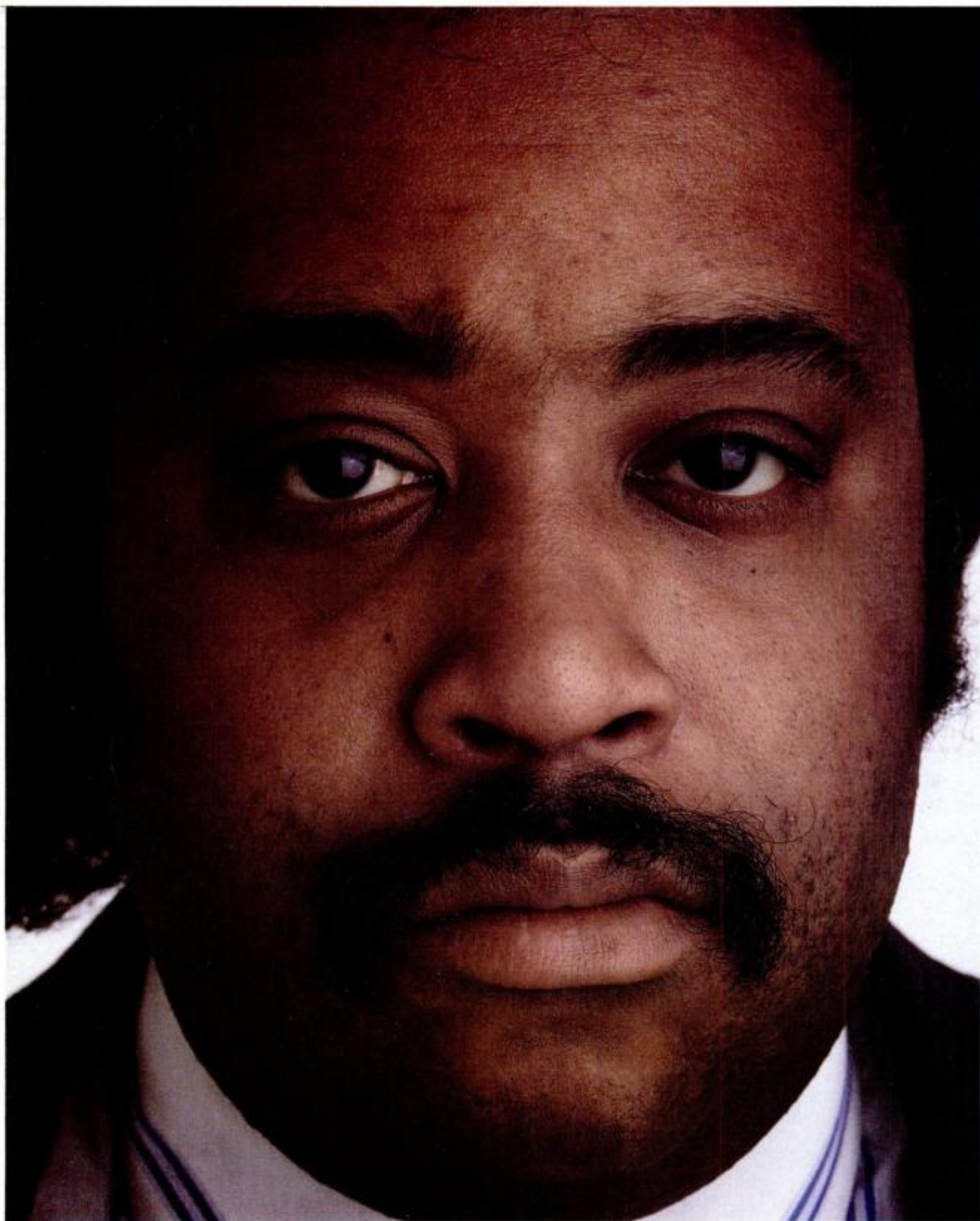
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Lights



The spirit of Marlboro in a low tar cigarette.





Bonfire of the Inanities

A Cross-Examination of Reverend Al Sharpton on the Tawana Brawley Case

Article by Philip Nobile

"TAWANA REPRESENTS ALL BLACK WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN RAPED IN AMERICA," shouted Reverend Al Sharpton to a rally of the faithful at Brooklyn's Slave Theater on Thanksgiving Eve. "The history of the United States is built on the rape of the black woman. All of us here tonight have a different complexion because of the rape of the black woman. Somebody said, 'Well Reverend, that's years ago.' No, it's not. Every time I look at my brother's face and he looks at mine and our color is different, it represents a present-day reminder that they never paid for raping my black woman. Nobody white has ever been to jail in the history of New York for raping a black woman. That's the fact of the matter. Tawana Brawley represented for some of us where we would stop and say this is the end of it. We would stop and say our manhood and womanhood is on the line. And it ain't about how long it takes. It's about we got to win. We've got to let the world know that we love our mothers, and we love our daughters, and you better keep your damn hands off of them."

Sharpton, an Afro-provocateur of roguish appeal in some oppressed quarters of America, was sounding the sexual protest of previous native sons like Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X who likewise reminded blacks of their indelible defilement. In-

stinctively, the aroused throng interrupted Sharpton's incitement with frequent applause. "Tell it brother, run it down," they yelled.

Tawana Brawley, just 16 years old, was onstage dressed in a red dashiki. Tawana used to be a high school cheerleader in the rural town of Wappinger Falls, 60 miles north of Manhattan. In the most controversial black-white sex case since the Scottsboro boys, Tawana claimed she had been repeatedly raped and sodomized by a group of white lawmen during a four day ordeal over Thanksgiving week a year ago. Her quest for justice, exploited by Sharpton and two radical black lawyers, Alton H. Maddox Jr. and C. Vernon Mason, shook a judicial system already reeling from botched racial confrontations. After months of legal rangling and grotesque stunts, a Grand Jury decided that she was lying.

But was she really raped? That question seemed less important that night at the Slave than the Larger Truth.

You don't have to be a member of the Fruit of Islam to know that Mario Cuomo's state and Mayor Koch's city are inhospitable to blacks who rub the white cops the wrong way. Killing black suspects and being acquitted is not unusual in the New York Police Department.

In 1983, transit police choked black graffiti artist Michael Stewart into a fatal coma. In 1984, a squad of blue gunned down a fat old black grandmother named Eleanor Bumpurs, after the hand brandishing the knife was shot off. All the cops were found not guilty.

In 1986, Jimmy Lee Bruce, an 18-year-old black kid, was strangled to death in an upstate movie theater by a cop moonlighting as a bouncer. There was no indictment.

The most egregious encounter of this kind occurred in the 70s, when a patrolman put a bullet between the eyes of an innocent black boy who was just walking down the street. The innovative defense lawyer argued the unprecedented defense of temporary epilepsy and won an astonishing acquittal.

Grand Juries, of course, are danger zones. Since District Attorneys are virtual dictators of these secret evidentiary proceedings where indictments are decided and since all but one of the D.A.'s in the state's 65 counties are white, many blacks regard Grand Juries as safe havens for white cops and vigilantes accused of racial crimes.

The 1986 Howard Beach case, in which a mob of white teenage thugs chased a black man named Michael Griffith to his death on a highway, was a

Photography by Christopher Kehoe

turning point. Distrusting local police and prosecutors, Sharpton joined up with activists Maddox and Mason to prevent a whitewash. Fearing the assailants would get off lightly, the triumvirate dramatically marched across the unfriendly turf of Howard Beach, a working class neighborhood in the borough of Queens—little known for its brotherhood. There they sharpened a new edge for the movement.

At that time, the Reverend was a relatively small-time agitator and concert promoter living with a gorgeous ex-backup singer for James Brown, his idol (and hair-styling model). Although he was a prodigy Baptist preacher in Brooklyn at the age of 10, vacationed in the Caribbean with his political hero, Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, at 12, shared a stage with Mahalia Jackson at 16 and worked with Jesse in Operation Breadbasket, Don King in Zaire, and Michael Jackson on the Victory Tour, Sharpton had no serious constituency (or congregation) to call his own at 33.

Mason and Maddox had already established careers in the black community. C. Vernon Mason, a graduate of Columbia Law, ran as an insurgent candidate in the Democratic primary for Manhattan D.A. in 1985. He was endorsed by the *Village Voice* and received a third of the votes. Alton Maddox, a graduate of Boston University Law, was lesser known but more radical. His unreconstructed anti-whitey rhetoric and nasty courtroom tactics made him a legend in the oppressed precincts of New York.

When the attorneys entered the Howard Beach case, they counselled the surviving witnesses to the crime, friends of Griffith who were also beaten, to withhold their testimony until a special prosecutor was appointed. This creative strategy led to guilty verdicts for the white guys and larger fame for the three advisors.

They called on the Brawley family early last year, hoping to repeat their Howard Beach success. Black celebrities rushed into the controversy. Bill Cosby offered a \$25,000 reward for information on Tawana's tormentors. "Let Ms. Brawley represent an example of what we're not going to stand for as parents," Cosby declared last February. Mike Tyson chipped in with an expensive Rolex. Don King promised a college education. For a while they were on a roll.

A sympathetic Mario Cuomo, who said that "Tawana is my daughter, is everybody's daughter," invited them to Albany to lay out their demands. The media gorged on their show. When things did not go their way, they cracked wise about the governor's Mafia connections, the attorney general's unnatural interest in topless hospital photos of Tawana and other species of crudity. Slowly and sadly, the Larger Truth was assassinated by a body of lies. In the end, after pulling several stunts, they sabotaged the Grand Jury inquiry by urging Tawana's non-cooperation and wound up vivisectioning race relations in New York. Today, the defiant attorneys live on the edge of disbarment for unprofessional conduct. And so the tragicomedy plays on.

Meanwhile, the pleasantly gargantuan preacher with the Africanized outrage carries out the struggle, trying to overcome the effects of the October Grand Jury report that refuted the cry of gang rape with a ton of forensics. Sharpton agreed to an exclusive, taped cross-examination in *Spin*, during which he juked and jived with booming voice and impressive quickness about his handling of Tawana. Although he mau-maued almost every piece of medical, scientific, and eyewitness evidence in the 170-page Grand Jury report, he



was suspiciously vague about key elements of Tawana's story and his own counter-investigation. When cornered, he simply clicked into a mondo bizzarro of factoids, invention, and illogic, where reason could not follow.

For example, Sharpton claimed to possess proof better than fingerprints, stronger than eyewitnesses, more accurate than a videotape. This elegant clue not only confirms Tawana's dubious tale of multiple assault, but would, asserted Sharpton, identify each of her attackers right down to their hereditary material.

Presumably, Sharpton could stop the speculation tomorrow by unveiling this stunning exhibit to disbelieving world. But he won't reveal anything concrete until Tawana and their \$5-7 billion libel suit against Abrams go to court. In other words, it is easier for Sharpton to fit through an eye of a needle than to talk straight about the case.

Tawana has never spoken publicly about the details of her disappearance between Tuesday, November 24, and Saturday, November 28, 1987. Even the Grand Jury, after a seven-month, \$500,000 investigation, has no notion of her whereabouts during those missing days. Yet she told the story of her tribulation to Sharpton, who, in his fashion, laid it out for the first time to *Spin*.

Before interrogating him about the alleged gang rape that shook the movement, I asked about his own family history.

The Rape of Tawana: Believe It Or Not

You said at the Thanksgiving rally that America was built on the rape of black women and you pointed out the evidence in the complexions of your audience. Was there rape in your family too? I have experienced the problem of rape and incest in a very personal way that I have never discussed before. Our family was destroyed.

Given this unhappy history, maybe you're too accepting of Tawana's tale? Maybe the truth is less important than the cause?

To the contrary. Because of the pain I've known myself and the cases of rape and incest I've seen through the church, I don't fall for lies and exaggerations when I go on crusade. With Tawana, it's like re-living my family trauma.

What happened to Tawana after she got off the bus at Paino's gas station?

Tawana crossed over the street which is like a main

thoroughfare. A car pulled up, and some guys flashed a badge and told her to get in the car. At that point, she was hit with something in the head.

Was she knocked out?

She was not conscious. I cannot say she was knocked out. I want to say that she was not conscious of what was happening. She was taken against her will to a wooded area near a fire range, rifle range—which we never said before.

Then what?

A group of guys, around six people, put Tawana through some ritual—they painted her face. Starting sexual acts but not in a lust manner. The scene was a mixture of foolplay and ritual. It's hard to differentiate between the two because you're talking about a young girl. Tawana was not an expert on occult or expert on race cults or expert on anything.

Was Tawana stripped?

Well, I don't want to say what happened what night because we're dealing with litigation. I could say that they took her clothes off while taking their own down. Sodomy and intercourse always occurred in a procedural manner.

Like what?

It was almost a ceremonial type of thing. There were, of course, forced acts where she was made to participate in terms of her being disrobed and in terms of them being able to see her nude body and deal with that in a perverted manner. It wasn't like a beer party. She was covered with excrement and she was cleaned.

Was she raped and sodomized every day?

Ahhh—yeah, two—I'd say... two... yeah, three days. The fourth day she was completely dropped.

How often were the acts repeated?

Her words is "over and over and over again."

One rapist at a time?

Yeah, I would say so, yeah.

And when you say sodomy, do mean oral or anal or both?

Ah—both.

But there's no indication of anal sex in the medical records.

Unless you're talking about oral-anal. Someone can engage in an anal act orally. Someone urinated in her mouth, too. I know at least one did it. I've never admitted these parts before.

Where did they take her after the scene in the woods?

Tawana was moved around. She was not at one location for the entire episode. She was indoors a good portion of the time. I can say that much. She was at one spot near her former home in the Pavilion projects, and she was dropped there at the end. She was clothed when they were moving around because you've got to try to move around as normally as possible.

And how did they transport her in public?

It was done at night. So, I mean, how public is that at Wappinger Falls? You're talking about a community that goes to sleep at 10 o'clock at night.

Did they transport her in the trunk of a car?

I'll let her answer that. That's something I'm not supposed to get into.

[Sharpton agreed to arrange an interview with Tawana. We were scheduled to fly down to Virginia Beach, Virginia, where she currently resides, but the trip fell through without explanation. Next, he arranged for a phone interview, but gave me a wrong number. All efforts to speak with her were first promised, by Sharpton, then left unfulfilled. Deadline prevented further attempts to speak with her.]

And how did they keep her prisoner?

It's not hard if you've got a couple people with you, and Tawana was in and out of consciousness.

Was she tied up? Handcuffed? Locked in a room?

She was restrained, yes. I will not say she was tied up. I don't want to go—I can say she was not tied up.

Did they torture her? Abuse her?

It was not about torture. Again, it was about some type of ritual and sexual activity; it was not about a torture. The torture was at the end, as the excrement was spread. They probably felt that she had gotten unhealthy with the excrement and with not eating and all of that. When they dropped her unconscious, and I cannot state why she was unconscious, I think they felt she would die.

Why not just kill her? They'd already kidnapped and raped her. There's no additional penalty for murder? These are supposedly cops. They know.

Do you know how many crimes are committed by white cops against black people? What did they have to fear from a little black girl like Tawana?

Did she hear them talking during the four days?

Most of the conversations was away from her, but she remembers hearing one of them call the other "son." She was sure of that. And there was references to local people, names that she could recognize that will be part of the litigation. A lot of names of law enforcement people was used by these guys.

Were all six men involved all the time?

No, sometimes there was two, sometimes six. A couple of other men were present, but were not involved with the original abduction or the rape. That's a total of eight.

How many of the rapists can she identify?

Three. Harry Crist, the part-time cop from Fishkill who committed suicide. Scott Patterson, the state trooper. And Steven Pagones, Assistant District Attorney of Dutchess County.

According to Sharpton, the above is a rough account of the incident that Tawana refused to give under oath because Governor Cuomo and Attorney General Abrams would not guarantee a fair Grand Jury. Despite long bargaining sessions, the Reverend and the lawyers found reasons to kidnap Tawana themselves.

Saying No to Mario

You have said that Mario Cuomo is guilty of a racist cover-up. How is he racist?

He is a racist by omission. He doesn't go out of his way to deal with racial imbalance in American society or in his own judicial system. He has never

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walked the streets or put his neck on the line where there was racial turmoil. Cuomo led the charge on saying that Tawana's mother should go to jail for contempt of court when she refused to testify. But he was reluctant to remove the white city councilmen in Yonkers who were in contempt for defying a federal judge's desegregation order. Same crime, different color.

How did the negotiations go last January when you sat down with him in Albany to discuss the appointment of Attorney General Robert Abrams as Special Prosecutor in Tawana's case?

The Governor began by saying that the Attorney General had full authority and that we should trust his—Cuomo's—judgment, because he had been right in choosing Charles (Joe) Hynes as Special Prosecutor in Howard Beach, a guy we didn't want. "That's it," Cuomo said, "let's go out to the press."

We said no. We felt that Dutchess County was a very right wing, racist county and that we needed the Attorney General's power to go into Dutchess, impanel the Grand Jury himself and then personally handle Tawana. We didn't want to just hand her over to some clerk. She was a 16-year-old girl who was traumatized. So obviously the family has certain sensitivities that we want to solve.

Cuomo said, "Let me make a call, five minutes." He went into another office to telephone

Abrams. Then we negotiated some more. He called Abrams again. Finally, Cuomo said that Abrams will impanel the Grand Jury, will open and close the trial, may handle some cross-examination, but that he totally did not want our recommendations on staff. Cuomo called it arrogant for us to tell Abrams who to use.

Did you sense that Cuomo's mood was shifting?

Right. In the middle of this point Cuomo said, "You know, everyone is not convinced in Dutchess County that this thing even happened. So don't push hard, Reverend. You don't have such a strong hand here." And he mentioned that he warned Bill Cosby to be very careful in what he's doing. He told Cosby that he was upset with some statements that he made about the racism of the Grand Jury system in the state.

Well, our side went in a huddle. Since we got most of what we wanted, we agreed to meet with Abrams.

And that's when negotiations broke down?

Yes. We quit after 16 hours of meetings spread over two days. Abrams started with a recitation of his civil rights record going back 20 years. But we reminded him that he had not opened his mouth about the racial atrocities of Eleanor Bumpurs, Michael Stewart, and Howard Beach. Abrams said that he felt insulted.

As for the Grand Jury, he said that either we

were wrong about the Governor's interpretation or that the governor was wrong in his. He wasn't going to make any prior commitments. If I called myself a moral man, I would turn the victim over. And that was that. No promises or nothing.

For that, you compared Abrams to Hitler?

No. After Abrams' office leaked the results of our second meeting to the *New York Times*, placing me, Vernon, and Alton in a bad light, we held a press conference and broke off negotiations. On the way out an A.P. [Associated Press] reporter asked me why a victim like Tawana should have the right to choose who to cooperate with.

So I explain to him that we don't like Grand Juries anyway because if the prosecutor does not want to indict, you're not going to get an indictment. If he does want to indict, even if you're not guilty, you'll still be indicted. Since we had information that Abrams may know Pagones' father, who is a judge, I said, "That's like asking a Jew who watched his family burn in the Holocaust to cooperate with Hitler."

How can you compare a mass murderer to Abrams?

Hitler never murdered anybody. Hitler allowed the murder of people. And in my opinion...

You mean ordered murder.

...Bob Abrams allowed the continuing racial

problems, some of which were murders, in the state of New York.

And what did Abrams do to deserve Maddox's ugly remark about masturbating over a nude photo of Tawana?

Maddox said that the day after Abrams' office leaked a nude picture of Tawana taken when she arrived at the emergency room. Maddox was furious and Tawana was hysterical. She avoided watching the local news shows but she happened to see the picture of herself on NBC network news. I can't describe how awful she sounded on the phone that night. It was an inhuman thing to do to a minor girl.

The Grand Jury exonerated the late Harry Crist (whose certified suicide Sharpton insists was murder) and Assistant District Attorney Steven Pagones. Nevertheless, Sharpton will not let go of his original charge. The following exchange displays the rickety construction of his accusations against the three lawmen.

The Accused: Acquitted But Not Free

How do you know that a cult of white supremacists committed the crime?

Pagones, Crist, and Patterson hung out with a racist group at the gas station where Tawana was let off from the bus. [Pagones denies this and Patterson refused comment, but his lawyer remarked that he would not "get into a pissing match with skunks." He said they would respond in court]. [One of the guys in the cult]... is in divorce litigation.

tion. His wife has given us very substantial information—second hand word, but word—that Mr. Pagones and them were involved.

In fact, we have an eyewitness that has talked to Mr. Pagones about his involvement.

Pagones admitted to this eyewitness the raping of Tawana?
Absolutely.

Who is this eyewitness?

He's a member of the sheriff's office in Dutchess County. He was not part of the abduction or the sex, according to him, but he saw Pagones with Tawana during the four days. He gave us details—like part of the time outdoors Tawana was near a shooting range, which we confirmed with Tawana.

Does your witness nail Trooper Patterson, too?

Yes, but only through Pagones. Pagones told him that Patterson and Crist were involved.

Does Tawana vouch for your witness? Can she verify his participation?

I believe so, yeah. I could easily double-check that today.

Why would this incriminated witness confess to you?

He came forward after we marched on the Dutchess County Sheriff's office in Poughkeepsie because he thought we were on to him.

But he doesn't need you.

His main thing was, "I didn't rape Tawana, and don't try to throw it on me." The real fear here is

that not only is somebody going to be prosecuted for the rape and sodomy of Tawana Brawley, but also for the murder of Harry Crist. I mean you're talking about lights-out for someone.

After what's happened, he probably wishes that he hadn't stepped forward. But he has no choice now, because I documented it.

When are you doing to produce him?

If Pagones follows through with his defamation suit, this guy will be a defense witness for us. And if a judge denies our civil suit, then I'll be forced just to go public with the guy. I may just have to drop him, but I'm committed to do it in court where we can try to get him some protection. We're dealing with a crew that will murder.

Even one of their buddies, Harry Crist?

Crist was the weak link. He used to be a crossing guard at Tawana's school. Tawana could have identified him more easily. I think that they didn't want to take a chance on him when the heat came down.

What's your proof?

There weren't any fingerprints on the gun or the so-called suicide note. How could a guy shoot himself and then wipe off the prints? How could he write a letter and not leave prints anywhere? And one of Maddox's sources says that a .357 Magnum is certainly a hard weapon to kill yourself with. One has to have a hell of a strength to hold a gun like that and point it at his own head.

The Magnum was held under the chin with both

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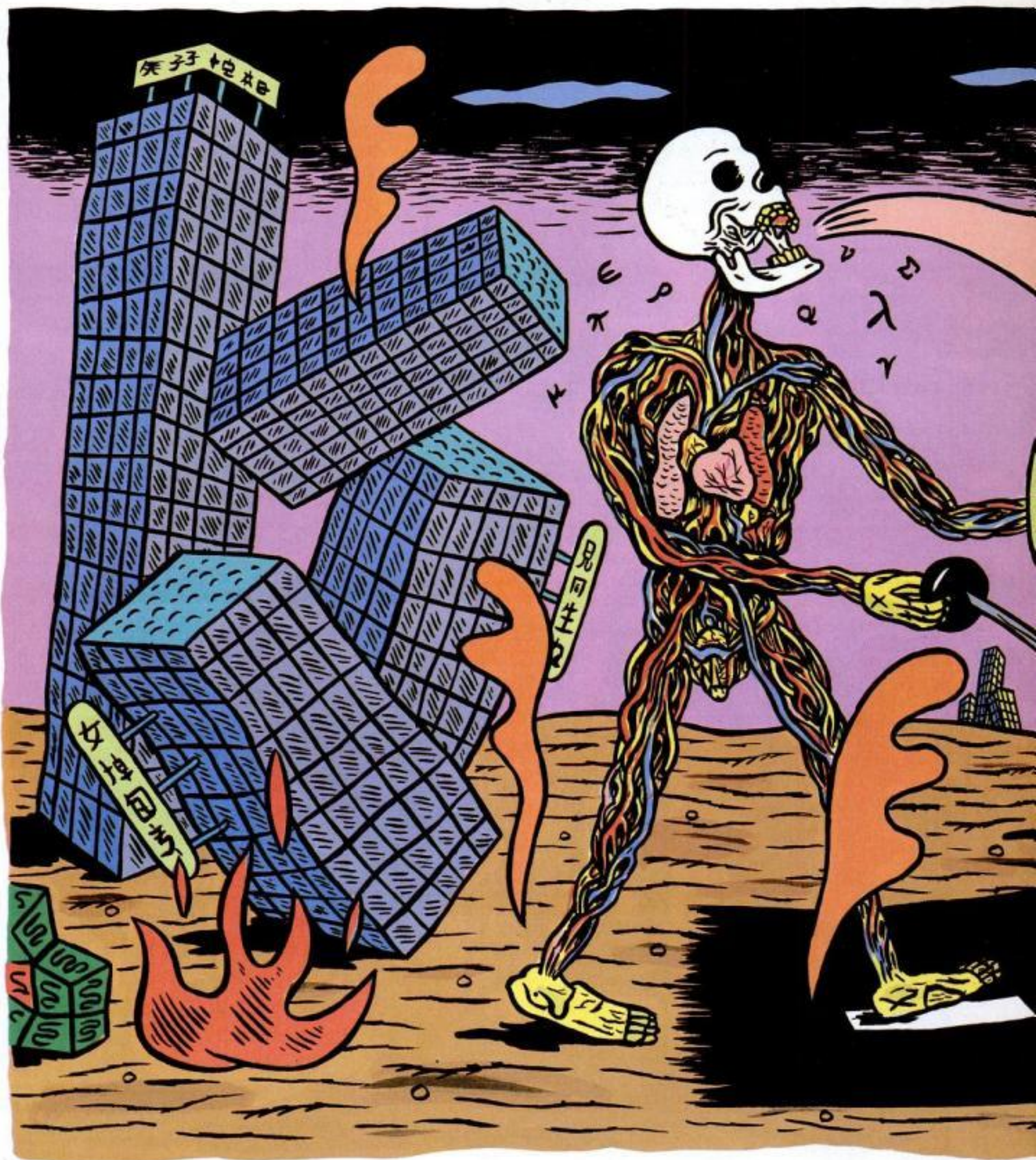
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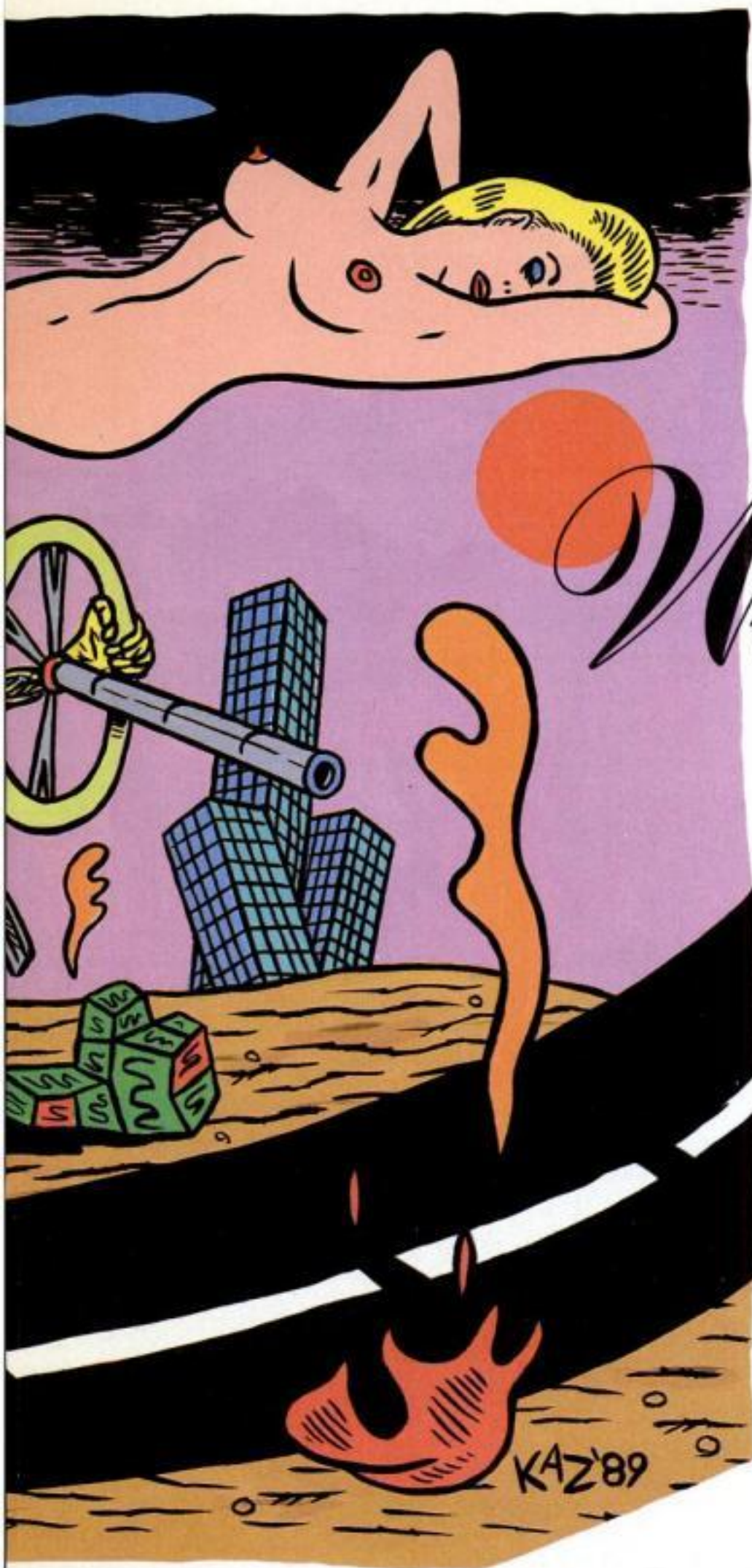
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**Homestead
Records**





Susan Sontag has called J.G. Ballard "one of the most important, intelligent voices in contemporary fiction." Others consider him a psychopath. We wonder why he can't be both.

Article by Julian Dibbell

Illustration by Kaz

Weird SCIENCE

"Sex times technology equals the future—that's one of the most powerful equations there is going. You can't shut it off, you can't smother it with brackets and parentheses, hide it away in a footnote. It's there."

Measured, professorial, the voice on the telephone is that of a well-educated Englishman; the voice, let's say, of the guy in that Thomas Dolby song who would pop up every few bars and sputter, *Science!* It goes well with the xeroxed magazine photo I hold in my hand: a twinkle-eyed, wise looking codger, everybody's fantasy grandpa.

"I mean, I think there should be more sex and violence on television. I don't think there's anywhere near enough. I think sex and violence are powerful catalysts for change. They are powerful energizers of the imagination."

The voice comes through the telephone from a house in Shepperton, a sleepy London suburb known for its proximity to Heathrow International Airport and for its movie studios. Shepperton is less well-known as the home of J.G. Ballard.

Ballard's slow-growing fame got a big boost in 1987 when Steven Spielberg filmed an adaptation of *Empire of the Sun*, Ballard's 1984 autobiographical novel about his childhood experiences in a Japanese concentration camp outside Shanghai. But before that he was well-known to a small circle of fans and critics for the brilliant science fiction he's been producing since the late '50s. Of course, admirers embarrassed to call themselves SF readers have always had the option of considering him an acutely perceptive mapper of the new worlds being built up around us by mass media and technology, or "a profound moralist who has grappled with the ugly devils of our own time" (*New York Times*)—or else simply, in Susan Sontag's words, "one of the most important, intelligent voices in contemporary fiction."

Non-admirers have always had, and occasionally have chosen, the option of considering him a psychopath.

"If you look at the novels I wrote in the '70s," Ballard says, "they're all about... the effects on human psychology of the changes brought about by science and technology, the modern urban landscape, the freeways and motorways, the peculiar psychology of life in vast high-rise condominiums."

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That's one way of putting it. Here's another: *Crash*, written in 1973, is about cars and sex and violent death. It follows in textbook detail its characters' discovery of the erotic potential of high speed collisions. 1975's *High Rise* suggests that today's giant high-tech apartment buildings are ripe for a very low-tech social breakdown, complete with floor-to-floor raiding parties, human sacrifice, and hints of cannibalism. *The Atrocity Exhibition*, which would have been published here in 1970 if publisher Nelson Doubleday hadn't had the whole press run destroyed after taking one look at the thing, tells the fragmented story of one man's attempts to make sense of the media nightmares of the '60s: Kennedy's assassination, Marilyn Monroe's suicide, the constant threat of World War III. The section that most irked Doubleday was the prescient "Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan"; in the so-calm-it's-scary, almost clinical tone that marks all of Ballard's fiction, it looks at how a future Reagan presidential candidacy might make use of the ever-popular combination of cars, sex, and violent death. (Relax, Reagan fetishists: *Re/Search* will reprint *The Atrocity Exhibition* this spring.)

Unlike his earliest novels, these later works don't fit into the category of science fiction without considerable stretching of the going definitions. Ballard insists, though, that the conventional definitions could use some bending out of shape.

"Science fiction has been hijacked by people who aren't really interested in the subject. Most SF writers are writing fantasy—all these future-earth sagas and planet eons, these tales of galactic empires, this sort of medieval futurism. It's the world of Robin Hood dressed up in space suits. It has nothing to do with science as we see it emerging around us today, infiltrating our lives, changing the psychology of the world in which we live. . . .

"I can see that by the standards of Isaac Asimov and company, novels like *Crash* and *High Rise* and so on are not science fiction, but I like to think that they are. . . . You see, I don't consider what Isaac Asimov writes to be science fiction. I consider that to be, well he's writing a sort of technological folktale. . . . It's not really about the present world, it's not really inspired by. . . .

"... science!"

Jesus, there he goes again. Would it even bother Ballard if he knew that, as far as I'm concerned, right now he consists of a xeroxed picture from a magazine and a voice left over from a four-year-old pop song?

Maybe, but it certainly wouldn't surprise him. In *Empire of the Sun*, young Jim, separated from his parents, replaces their fading memory with a *Life* magazine photo of a

smiling couple he's pinned to his barracks wall, imagining the couple to be his real parents. It's a nifty metaphor for one of Ballard's major obsessions: "the way modern communications has usurped and hijacked everyday reality—it gets between us and . . . any kind of original response by imposing its own myths and fictions on us all."

The way Ballard calls it, the world is now so fictionalized by advertising and television that the writer's traditional role is pointless. Rather than invent fiction, the writer now has to invent reality. Which is why Ballard has always turned his back on the "realism" of mainstream fiction.

"The reality of life in the late 20th century demands analytic tools that can come to grips with it, and I don't think realism can any more. One route is the postmodernist novel, which gets around the problem of being realistic by playing a lot of ironic games with reality—I'm not interested in that. I follow the more classic, imaginative/surrealist route. You can write in a surrealist mode and achieve a psychological realism, which is what I'm after—an imaginative realism, not a literal realism."

"Of course, so-called realistic fiction is very easy to take, because it . . . appears to be continuous with our ordinary lives, whereas imaginative fiction requires an effort on the part of the reader. But I think it's an effort that is repaid, because one gets to the psychological truth behind the world of appearances. The novels of William Burroughs are much closer to the reality of life today than the novels of John Updike, let's say. Though it's fair to say that most readers are more comfortable with John Updike than they are with William Burroughs, I've no doubt in my mind which is reaching the truth more accurately."

"This is the only alien planet," says Ballard. He has created the strange world of his books almost entirely from the setting of his own life. Sheperdton, for example, has served as a backdrop and even subject for several of his works. ("The wave of the future breaks in the suburbs," runs another of his pocket theses.) But anyone who cracks *Empire of the Sun* will recognize an even deeper source of Ballard's recurring images and themes: Shanghai.

"I think the experience that I went through as a boy—from 1937 when the Japanese invaded China, through Pearl Harbor, and into the postwar period, when all these rival groups, the Americans and the Chiang Kai-Shek crowd on the one side and the Communists on the other, were acting out a kind of preview of Vietnam—I think those years were for me a kind of preview of the future."

"Shanghai was a media city. There was no TV, but it was in every other

sense a complete sort of media construct. . . . It was a city of relentless public relations, advertising hoardings, stunts of every conceivable kind. I describe in the book a scene where my parents took me to the premiere of the *Hunchback of Notre Dame* and the management of the theater had laid on an honor guard of something like 50 or 100 hunchbacks, all dressed up like Charles Laughton. . . . The whole media landscape had gone over the top. . . .

"In many ways Los Angeles reminds me a bit of it, the sort of Third World [feeling], the huge flooding of refugees from the civil war and the famine areas of China into the city and its great slum sections, where people lived in houses built of old tires and tin cans."

"So many of the things I see going on in the world were going on there, and I think it did provide me with a view of reality as basically surrealist. Everything was a kind of re-created version of itself in its own most extreme image. And that's the way the world is going."

Compared to Shanghai, his return to England after the war was a recipe for normality. He finished prep school, studied medicine at Cambridge (obsessive anatomic detail would become a feature of his writing), did a stint with the RAF (so would airplanes), then married, moved to the suburbs, and settled down to the business of raising a family. By the early '60s he was writing full-time, and when his wife died in 1964 he became a full-time parent to his three kids as well. Against this backdrop of what he calls "an integrated, rich family life blazing away 24 hours a day," the visions he was setting down on paper grew darker all the time. *Crash*, inspired partly by a plastic surgery textbook on auto-collision wounds, was written when his youngest child was just old enough to cross the street by herself.

The contradiction may be lost on Ballard, though. Considering that the major theme running through his novels is disaster—ecological, social, or psychological, but always bigtime—his understanding of them can be pretty cheery: "I don't see these novels as pessimistic, which many people say they are. I see them as stories of psychological fulfillment. In all cases the heroes of these novels find . . . the truth about themselves. Often paying a very steep price—but they get to embrace the catastrophes around them. They rush open-armed towards these disasters, because these disasters are very potent machinery for finding the truth about themselves."

With this, a touch of passion sneaks into his voice. Muffled in his

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ANTIHERO

Lee Harvey Oswald Meets Suzanne Somers

Paul Krassner, publisher of *The Realist*, waxes prophetic on the death of JFK, Jim Morrison, and Lenny Bruce.

It's over now. The 25th anniversary of the assassination of John Kennedy was finally commemorated to death. No more scenes from the Zapruder film showing his brains being blown out. No more Jack Rubys in fedoras blowing the guts out of handcuffed Lee Harvey Oswalds in jerky slow motion. No more little John-John saluting his daddy's casket.

Gone is Dan Rather reeking with fake humility as he retells how he scooped the world on the news that the President was no longer alive. Gone is Jack Anderson trying to convince America that the same mobsters hired by the CIA to kill Fidel Castro would then be trusted by Fidel to do his bidding and kill Kennedy. Gone are the Connelly's quoting Jackie to Geraldo, "My God, what have they done to Jack? I've got his brains in my hand!"

And yet, there was something left out of it all, some kind of artificial line drawn, as though even if there were a conspiracy behind the killing, at least now we've come out and admitted it publicly, and that's what makes America great. But something was still missing, a void to be filled, somewhere out there between the cover-up and the disinformation, somewhere between our bread and our circuses...

In Las Vegas recently, at the first American Comedy Convention, standup comic Jordan Brady confided to the audience: "I'm only 24 years old, so when the Beatles first came on TV, I was just a fetus. And you remember what you were doing when Kennedy was shot? Well, I was developing eyelids."

It's important for those of us who lost a thick layer of innocence on November 22, 1963, to be aware that, for another whole generation it's already become ancient history. I was a newlywed at the time. My wife, Jeanne, had gone shopping for a TV set. Now she stood in the appliance section of a department store with a crowd of shocked consumers as they watched the news of the dead president simultaneously on several dozen screens of different sizes.



Only two days later, in the midst of mass mourning, the war in Vietnam would begin to escalate.

The day after the assassination I was scheduled to perform at a benefit for the Committee to Aid the Monroe Defendants (involving framed kidnap charges against civil rights activists) at the Young Socialist League. It was in a photo on the cover of *Life* magazine that Oswald would be shown holding a rolled-up copy of the YSL tabloid, *The Militant*, in one of his hands, a rifle in the other.

The invitations to this event promised: "Laugh with Paul Krassner..."

It wasn't easy.

Since this was a left-wing group which had at first assumed that the assassin was a right-winger, I simply started out by asking, "Aren't you sorry it turned out to be one of your nuts instead of one of theirs?"

With that opening line, I had acknowledged one assassin theory. It was ironic for me to be so naive since I was editing *The Realist*, which was supposed to be the hippest magazine in America. But equally ironic, I became convinced that there was a conspiracy behind the killing of John Kennedy based on the articles I began to publish by various researchers.

Ultimately, I concluded that it would have been impossible for Lee Harvey Oswald to act alone, that he was a "patsy"—the term he used to

describe himself to reporters—for an alliance of the Mafia end of the CIA spectrum and anti-Castro Cuban exiles.

My favorite conspiracy researcher was Mae Brussell. She had been a suburban homemaker with five kids when Kennedy was killed. Her seven-year-old daughter, Bonnie, was concerned about Lee Harvey Oswald. He had a black eye and he was saying, "I didn't do it. I haven't killed anybody. I don't know what this is all about." Bonnie decided to send him her teddy bear.

It was all wrapped up and ready to mail when she saw him murdered by Jack Ruby on TV that Saturday morning, and then over and over again throughout the day.

Mae Brussell had to wonder, "What kind of world are we bringing our children into?" That question inspired a project that would become a lifetime dedication. Indeed, assassination research was a spiritual path for Mae. It evolved into her Zen grid for political reality.

It started out as a hobby. But soon Mae Brussell was reading ten newspapers a day. She digested a few hundred books on espionage and assassination. This diet was supplemented with items sent to her by a network of conspiracy students known as Brussell Sprouts. Plus magazines, underground papers, unpublished manuscripts, court affidavits, documents from the National Archives, and FBI

and CIA material obtained through the Freedom of Information Act.

She purchased the Warren Commission Report. For eight years, she studied and cross-referenced the entire 26 volumes. She was overwhelmed by the difference between the evidence and the conclusion that there had been only a single assassin.

And then Mae began to study the history of Nazis coming to the United States after World War II, and the patterns of murder in the U.S. identical to those in Nazi Germany. It was as if an early Lenny Bruce bit—on how a show business booking agent, MCA, promoted Adolph Hitler as a dictator—had actually been a satirical prophecy of how Richard Nixon would rise to power. The parallels were frightening.

"How much violence was there in Nazi Germany," she asked, "before the old Germany, the center of theater, opera, philosophy, poetry, psychology, medicine, the whole culture—how many incidents took place that were not coincidental before it was called fascism? What were the transitions? How many people? Was it when the first tailor disappeared? Or librarian? Or professor? Or when the first press was closed or the first song eliminated or the first poem? When the first poet mysteriously disappeared? Or when the first political science teacher was killed coming home on his bike? How many incidents happened there that were perfectly normal until people woke up and said, 'Hey, we're in a police state!'"

"So that, instead of just researching the death of John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Mary Jo Kopechne, the George Wallace shooting, I got involved in collecting articles about the murders of people in the Kennedy assassination. And I began paying attention to the deaths of judges, attorneys, labor leaders, musicians, actors, professors, civil rights leaders—studying what I considered to be untimely, suspicious deaths."

Her lists of musicians included Otis Redding, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Brian Jones, Jim Morrison, Mama Cass Eliot, Jim Croce, Tim Buckley and some 30 other "fine musicians who have died under mysterious circumstances. Rock musicians had an ability to draw together youth at a time when protest meetings were being broken apart and the hippie, anti-war youth became too visible with their own, unique art form at Woodstock. The Senate Investigation's document that persons seeking 'racial harmony' and 'social protest' were defined as enemies of the state."

And there was comedian Freddy Prinze.

"He was an active Democrat," said Mae, "entertained by the President at the White House, a symbol for the Chicano. He had a deep concern about who killed Kennedy. He had a copy of the Abraham Zapruder film, and he kept playing it over and over. It's perfectly obvious that the government is lying, that Kennedy's head is going back. And here's this guy, Freddy Prinze, who every time somebody comes over, he shows the film and talks about it..."

"The removal of Freddy Prinze means one less visual person from that stratum of society. Gone is the symbol for the Puerto Rican kids sitting on the steps in New York. There are no positive visual images of Chicanos on the screen. No encouragement for the young ones because this one's heavily doped and has blown his brains out."

In 1972, when the Watergate break-in occurred, Mae called me. She recognized names and methods of operations from her assassination research. She was able to trace the "burglars" back through nine years of conspiracy. I assigned

her to write about it. In three weeks she gave me her article. While the mainstream press was still calling Watergate a "caper" and a "third-rate burglary," Mae's totally documented piece completely outlined the conspiracy behind the break-in, going all the way up to L. Patrick Gray and John Mitchell and Richard Nixon.

The typesetter wrote "Bravo!" on the manuscript, but the printer wanted \$5,000 in cash in advance before he would print the issue. I didn't have the money. I left, not knowing how I would get it but irrationally confident that I would. When I got home, the phone was ringing, John Lennon and Yoko Ono were visiting San Francisco, and did I want to meet them for lunch?

At the time, the government was trying to deport Lennon before he could perform for protesters at the Republican convention that summer. I gave John and Yoko the galley to read. It spoke for itself. They immediately took me to a bank and withdrew \$5,000 cash. I could rationalize my ass off, but the timing was so exquisite that coincidence and mysticism became the same process for me.

I don't know as an objective fact that there was a conspiracy behind the deaths of three of our most socially active musicians—John Lennon, Bob Marley and Harry Chapin—but I feel it would be irresponsible not to consider the possibility.

In the summer of '72, Mae told me that the purpose of the assassinations was ultimately to get Ronald Reagan into office. Well, it happened, and the last time I talked to her, she said, "You know, more than half of the federal judges in this country were appointed by Reagan—and we know he didn't make those choices himself. That's how it happened in Nazi Germany—it was all done legally."

Mae Brussell became a friend, and I'm sorry to say that she died at 66 of cancer on October 3rd,

seven weeks before the 25th anniversary of the Kennedy assassination, when she would likely have received a token of the honor and recognition she so richly deserved. At the time of her death, she was investigating satanic cults in the military.

She believed that Jack Ruby and Martha Mitchell had been injected with cancer—a tactic of the CIA uncovered in her research—and if Mae were alive today, she might well find a conspiracy behind her own death. Ah, but guess who's carrying on her work? Gary Hart! In the context of a book review for the *Los Angeles Times*, he writes:

"I think President Kennedy was the victim of a conspiracy. And I've particularly thought so since serving as a member of the Church Committee between 1975-76 when, among other things, we discovered CIA efforts to assassinate foreign leaders... The Prime target, pursued with almost demented insistence for 'executive action,' was Fidel Castro."

"And the principal assets of these anti-Castro plots were three Mafia figures, Sam Giancana, Johnny Roselli and Santo Trafficante, now all dead. Giancana died of 'lead poisoning' and Roselli was killed during the Church Committee's investigation... anyone involved in the conspiracy by circumstance or who seeks the truth by choice gets eliminated, one way or the other..."

Is Hart implying that he, too, was the victim of a conspiracy? Or was Donna Rice actually a blessing in disguise? Could it be that, since he had to drop out of the presidential race because of his affair with her, now he's free to speak out? Or is it merely that the taboos have changed so much in those years from Marilyn Monroe to Donna Rice? Reporters certainly knew about John Kennedy's affair with Marilyn Monroe; there was just an un-

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Bob Hoskins Directs a Movie

I saw a ghost once in Covent Garden," says Bob Hoskins from his North London home, where he's readying for the release of *"The Raggedy Rawney,"* his directorial debut. "When I worked there, it was still a food market." At sixteen, a year after he'd left a city school that believed in "beating and all kinds of other atrocities," he worked as a porter, with no inclination towards becoming an actor. The fuses in the Covent Garden shop kept blowing, and he'd go down to fix them. At the fuse box, he saw what he thought was a trick of the light, nothing frightening, just a woman's face and a pair of hands. Softly he recalls, "It was quite beautiful." The second time he saw the image, it was only two feet away. He went upstairs to tell the old man he worked with about what he'd seen. "And he said, 'Oh, you've seen one of the nuns.' Before, this was a convent; Convent Garden. And if you see one of the nuns, you'll have a very lucky life." He falls momentarily silent, then says quietly, "Well, seems to be right."

Before his quite accidental introduction to acting, Hoskins drifted through the backstreets of North London, a setting familiar in his movies, a section fraught with skanky third rate criminals, filth, and misfortune. "I didn't go to a very nice school," he says. "Hated it, loathed it. I was very pleased to get out." In a gruff voice interrupted by long cigarette pauses, he recounts, "I was a clerk, I was a nabby, dug the roads, was a door to door salesman, a window cleaner, and I joined the Norwegian Merchant Navy for a couple of weeks." One afternoon, he accompanied a friend to an audition for an amateur theater production of *"The Feather Pluckers."* As he stood watching, Hoskins was asked to read for the lead; on opening night, an agent suggested he take up acting professionally. "Well, give me a job and I will," he said. He hasn't been out of work since. From his first starring role as a gangster in *"The Long Good Friday,"* a film noir that the Conservative Party tried to ban, the little man with a perfectly round bald patch, big ears, and a roll of flesh at the back of his neck has won Best Actor honors at Cannes and a Golden Globe for Best Actor. He has written short stories, poetry, and had plays published and produced in London and Paris. But he remains in North London—the depressed, dank corridor from which boxing was once the only escape—right around the corner from his parents. "Where I came from," he says, the ice in his cocktail ringing grandly as it hits glass, "no one became an actor. Except Michael Caine." He does not laugh.

In 1985, Michael Caine starred with Hoskins in *"Mona Lisa,"* a classically twisted love story buried in crime. An unusually proletarian project for Caine, his North London accent undisguised and large gut apparent, *"Mona Lisa"* made Hoskins recognizable as an actor of uncomplicated talent, a stubby, round hero with a hard skull. As the guardian of an upmarket whore, he moved effortlessly between conceptions of virility: kissing his daughter far back on the cheek, the sort of innocent adoration every girl longs for from her estranged father; later, in a moment of keen disillusionment, forcing himself on Simone, his prostitute charge,



Hoskins as director/star; Dexter Fletcher as the rawney

with the tight lips of an unsatisfied john, a man inclined towards frottage, the man every girl avoids on the subway.

"Most of our entertainments," he says, "are looking for the worst side of people. And we forget that there's a very good side to people. I do feel that you must be responsible for the work that you do. There are certain films I would not make because of the repercussions. I'm not just talking about violence, but attitudes. Hate is a very dominant and ruthless emotion. Why is it that millions of people are destroying each other for ideals that are not theirs, for religions that are not theirs? I do think films influence people. It's very easy to stir up hate in people; that's why I say love is so fragile. It's not this great strong thing that overrules everything else. We have to protect it, like a flower."

While he was working on *"Mona Lisa,"* Hoskins had the idea for *"The Raggedy Rawney"* in his head. "I never wanted to direct," he laughs. But at a dinner party one night, he began to tell a story, based on a gypsy myth, of a young boy who's been traumatized by war and disguises himself as a rawney, a slightly mad woman with magical powers, attaching himself to a band of travelling gypsies. Nicole de Wilde, a dinner guest, went off and wrote reams and reams of material, brought it back to Hoskins who then took bits of it to shape and develop his screenplay. The film's producer, Bob Weis, insisted that Hoskins direct. "I'm quite thinking about it now," says Hoskins. "But before I never had any ambitions to direct at all."

During the two year period of preparation for *"The Raggedy Rawney,"* Hoskins was in five movies. "I told everybody that I was going to direct a film," he says. "And all the directors said, 'I'll show you how I make a film.' So I had Alan Alda (*"Sweet Liberty"*), Neil Jordan (*"Mona Lisa"*), Mike Hodges (*"A Prayer for the Dying"*), Robert Zemeckis (*"Who Framed Roger Rabbit?"*), and Jack Clayton (*"The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne"*) all showing me how they made films. They're five not only brilliant directors, but very

nice people. They didn't say, *This is how you make a film.* They just showed me. It was a very personal tutelage. So by the time I came to making my film, I'd pretty much worked out my own style."

In the chameleon way of an actor, he incorporates elements of others to best suit the current role. "Recently," he says, "I was most impressed with Robert Zemeckis. The patience, the leadership of the man was extraordinary. You take a film like *"Roger Rabbit,"* which was one of the most difficult films to make, and there wasn't one single fight on the set, not one row. Ever. That was all Bob Zemeckis. If he'd turned round to everybody and said, 'Right, we march on Moscow,' we'd have all gone." For *"The Raggedy Rawney"* the cast and crew did follow Hoskins to godforsaken regions of Czechoslovakia.

"Basically, what I wanted to do was to make an antiwar film without exploiting the sensationalism of war, the horrors. I wanted to present people instead of soldiers and the tyranny of war."

Even when discussing the *"Raggedy Rawney"* fairy tale, he speaks of a certain aim at realism in his work, one he shares with friend Robert De Niro (though he doesn't think he gets it right as often as De Niro does). "There are fantastical elements in the film," he explains. "But there is mysticism in life, especially in crisis times. Don't think there's anything unreal about that. The actual fact of whether or not mysticism exists is irrelevant. Especially to people who are up against the elements and have no control, it is very real."

"I purposefully set *'The Raggedy Rawney'* in a time that could be any time in any country because I didn't want to make a nation or one race of people the enemy. It's not historical, just the concept of war. I'm not saying that people are wonderful, they're not. But they are capable of extreme heroism, heroism in protecting each other. I hope that this film is a universal statement that is bigger than history."

—Christian Logan Wright

Ernest P. Worrell Talks to Vern and Us

Is there anything, anything at all, anything whatsoever, that Ernest would not endorse?

"I think maybe the plutonium..."

Past that, there's no holds barred. And for an absolute archetype, for an immaculate misconception, for a virtual ascendant avatar of American humor, Ernest P. Worrell is a lot of actual laughs. Right now, for instance, he's wowing a whole roomful of movie reviewing junketeers doing their best, such as it is, to pose questions for Ernest—or for Jim Varney, his actorly alter ego. Even the semi-quasi-demi-journalistic softballs these paragons are rolling toward the front of the room have unexpected side-effects. Varney is every bit as funny as Ernest earnestly believes he is, and every shout of laughter produces the most horrifying wincing from the hungover half of the assembled Pulitzer candidates.

As befits the latest in a long line of laughable American idiots triumphant, Ernest was born in a blinding blizzard of snowjob showbiz. The original, the very first of the thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of local Ernest commercials came about because the Nashville ad agency he sometimes worked with had a client with what you could call an image problem. "It was an amusement park we couldn't show. It was in Kentucky, about halfway between Opryland and King's Island. There were weeds growing up between the rides, so you couldn't show the place. 'Let's drive another forty minutes and go to a real amusement park.' It was threadbare. You had to show somebody who had been to the park and had a good time." Here he delivers the biggest, dumbest, broadest, most larcenous wink known to man. "You don't have to stand in line..."—and here he whispers out of the side of his mouth—"...because there's nobody there..." People were going there just to see if what I said was true. Well, gosh, it's falling down..." Well, that's why we didn't show it to you..."

Not a single one of these movie-reviewing whizbangs has apparently ever seen Varney's Saturday morning geek show, "Hey, Vern, It's Ernest," the single most creative show in television today. And even if they had, it's questionable whether they'd get it anyway—these are film critics, after all, aesthetes among men, the intellectual giants of newspaper and broadcast journalism. And while Ernest P. Worrell is a throwback to Twain's Huckleberry Finn, to Pal Joey and Ring Lardner and Rube Goldberg and Laurel and Hardy and to every half-smart half-assed hayseed in the history of American comedy, it's not fair to expect these guardians of good taste to get it. Ernest and his show are about a kind of comedy that's been buried away in American ancestral memory for years and years, and there's nothing about it labeled "sophisticated," which dooms it as far as these deep-thinkers are concerned.

It's a distinctly different approach to comedy than that of, say, Pee-Wee's Playhouse, where the premise always seems to be that we know that Pee-Wee knows that we know that he knows that this really isn't a kid's show after all, that we're all much too smart to fall for that kid show stuff, that the genie's probably a pervert, that Miss Yvonne

has much deeper needs than Pee-Wee and Cowboy Curtis can fill. In Ernest's world, what you see is no smarter and no smirker than what you get, and what you get is so dumb it makes sense. As portrayed by Varney himself in balloon-busted drag, lipstick smeared on with a spatula, Auntie Nelda is a crabby old lady, a truly crabby old lady, Mayberry's Aunt Bea gone menopausally mad, and that's why she's so funny—nothing more complicated or conceptual than that. "Hi, kids! It's time for LONNIE DON'S HOLLYWOOD SCHOOL OF SOUND EFFECTS! First, take the meaty part of your palm..." and make the same fart noises week after week.

Dumb or hilarious, hilarious and dumb. Get it or don't—there's no time to wait for you anyway, since they shot all 13 episodes in five weeks of high-pitched, low-budget, high-tension, low-ball action. It works a lot like the old medicine show theory, just like the commercials that made Ernest whatever it is he is today. (And as we pause here for an instant to contemplate the phenomenon of Ernest leaning his long-jawed self out of the TV in our direction, a troubling question comes to mind: has it ever occurred to you that you're Vern? That thousands and thousands of low-budget commercials, two grade B movies, and an entire Saturday morning television show have been created just to grind the sense-making sector of your own per-

sonal brain into headcheese? Well, think about it.) You work the market fast and furious until you scoop up every laugh and every bit of loose change, then you skip off toward the next tank town, wearing the biggest, dumbest, most harmless grin you can possibly crank up. Works every time—and it has for a couple centuries now.

After the press conference, Varney is walking through the hotel lobby taking a look at the exhibit of Genuine Oil Paintings Available Today Only At These Incredible Prices. Sunsets and sunrises and ships and sandy shores and John Wayne are all available for your bemused examination, and this is nothing if not the perfect moment for comedic condescension. But there's none of it in Varney, no urge to smirk. "I've seen a fox hunt like that one," he says, dead serious as he points at what looks more like pigs chasing a weasel followed by guys riding hippos. He's been a truck driver and a stand-up comic and an out of work actor and one of the great moments of his life was when he played "Wildwood Flower" on dulcimer for a record with the Carter Family because none of them can play that old time stuff any more. There are funnier things to laugh at than somebody making a living as best he can. Unless it's Virgil Sims, Mobile Home Daredevil, who jumps his motorhome over 25 motorcycles. That's dumb.

—Bart Bull



Ernest goes beyond camp

R.E.M.

The year of living quietly.



R.E.M. (L-R) Bill Berry, Mike Mills.

ATHERNS, GA—When R.E.M. released *Green* last November, they did so with no fanfare, no celebration, no surprise hometown gigs. In the past, they'd done shown up unannounced at local clubs under false names like *Hornets Attack* or *Victor Mature* or disguised as an impromptu cover band. This year they stayed home, capping a 12-month break from live performances, the longest vacation of their career. It was a quiet end to what was simultaneously one of the most momentous and uneventful years of their career. This was the year their lawyer and manager had a greater impact than their producer.

It opened like none before it, like none they could ever have imagined in their six years as the Beatles of college radio: with their single, "The One I Love" in the Top 10, and their album, *Document*, certified platinum. They'd come off their biggest tour ever, and they were in a position to cash in. Their contract with I.R.S.—the semi-indie label they'd been with since their 1981 home-grown Hib-Tone single, "Radio Free Europe"/"Sitting Still"—had just expired. They couldn't have been without a record deal at a better time. R.E.M. was what every label wanted: a status signing that was also a smart commercial proposition. I.R.S. found itself in a bidding war with every record company in the land. After meetings and dinners with all the major label chief execs, Bill Berry, Peter Buck, Mike Mills, and Michael Stipe, with the aid of manager Jefferson Holt and lawyer Bertis Downs, made their

decision: they went with Bugs Bunny's label. When the Doors were in a similar situation almost twenty years ago, Jim Morrison died. In 1988, R.E.M. signed to Warner for a sum rumored to be in the eight-figure range.

This was the year R.E.M. rose to the level of global superstars, but in Athens, they refused to be uprooted. Peter Buck maintained the highest profile outside the band. After cutting tracks on Robyn Hitchcock's *Globe Of Frogs* LP, he continued the favor by touring with Hitchcock and his band of Egyptians. Back home in Georgia, he recorded a yet-to-be-released album with Georgia Satellite Dan Baird, kamikaze guitarist Glenn Phillips, and Swimming Pool Q bassist J.E. Garnett, under the name the Nasty Bucks (named for a pre-Satellites band of Baird's). Buck made good on a promise from years ago, and initiated work on an album by the Fans, a now-legendary Atlanta band that inspired him and countless other area musicians at the beginning of the '80s. When not in the studio, or with guitar in hand, Buck also found time to fly down to Mexico to get married.

While a still-unconfirmable rumor circulated that Michael Stipe would release a solo album on the indie Texas Hotel Records, Stipe recorded "Little April Shower" with 10,000 Maniacs' Natalie Merchant for Hal Wilner's Disney collection, *Stay Awake*. He also performed at the Athens Music Festival in a benefit for Habitat for Humanity, Campaign for a Prosperous Georgia, and the Jubilee Partners. Backed by the Atlanta duo,

the Indigo Girls, whose Epic debut album is due later this year, he chose an eclectic batch of covers and originals. Stipe also has been helping an Athens duo, the Chickasaw Mudpuppies, record their field hollers and blues yelps for a Texas Hotel release. Over the summer, Stipe took out ads in college newspapers, urging students not to vote for George Bush. Both Stipe and Buck contributed money to the Dukakis campaign.

Drummer Bill Berry worked with Atlantan Michelle Malone on her independent LP *New Experience* (she has just signed with Arista), and cut a solo single for Dog Gone Records, the Athens label run by R.E.M. manager Jefferson Holt. Bassist Mike Mills moved to the other side of the board, producing *Sixes And Sevens* for Athens band Billy James.

When it came time for the four to regroup for their first officially-major-label album they prepared in the usual manner: a warm-up gig at the Uptown Lounge in Athens. They played mostly new songs, and local fans commented on the spare, haunting accordion and mandolin numbers (which made it onto *Green*, a sure

sign R.E.M. hasn't changed their tunes to suit a new label). The band regrouped with *Document* producer Scott Litt at Ardent Studios in Memphis. They took eleven weeks to record the album. It was the longest R.E.M. recording session in the band's history. Mills said the real pressure came from themselves, "to make the best record we could." Warner president Lenny Waronker never came to the studio, though they would send him a tape "every once in a while. He wasn't going to push us, he knows we're going to make a good record with or without his help, but he throws out suggestions. 'If you want them, fine. If you don't, fine.' And since he knows what he's talking about, and since he wasn't pushy, it made it easier to take some of those suggestions."

A European tour in the works, a Spring U.S. tour imminent, an album of major league and indie strum pop songs under their belts, change in their pockets and their integrity intact, R.E.M. end their year of living quietly with a bang.

—Tony Paris



(L-R) Peter Buck, Michael Stipe

USING IT WON'T KILL YOU. NOT USING IT MIGHT.



Maybe you don't like using condoms. But if you're going to have sex, a latex condom with a spermicide is your best protection against the AIDS virus.

Use them every time, from start to finish, according to the manufacturers' directions. Because no one has ever been cured of AIDS. More than 40,000 Americans have already died from it.

And even if you don't like condoms, using them is definitely better than that.

HELP STOP AIDS. USE A CONDOM.



Photo: Jerry Friedman



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Los Angeles, 1987. Jane's Addiction, opening tonight for Nick Cave, comes onstage, and a pocket of fans up front starts cheering wildly. The rest of the crowd seems a little taken aback. Maybe it's the wafting dry-ice that fills the stage; what sort of retro-rock nightmare have they stumbled into? The drummer plays bongos, the guitar player strums a banjo and, ohmygod!, aren't these the opening chords to "Sympathy for the Devil?" The singer is wearing a girdle and high tops (and that's about all), but he's singing without a hint of sarcasm, and more than a little soul.

Sixty sweat-drenched minutes later, everyone is cheering.

New York City, 1988, Halloween weekend. In the subway I spot a freak who turns out to be a fan: cowboy hat, shaved head, pony tail. I ask him how he first heard of the band. "I



don't know, I guess my friends told me." Is he looking forward to the show at the World tomorrow night? "Of course." So he likes the band? "They're great." Has he seen them before? "Nope." His high school sweatshirt reads, in bold white letters, "Yeshiva" and, beneath that, "Jane's Addiction."

It's a bright Sunday afternoon in L.A., and Perry Farrell, singer and frequently outspoken spokesperson for Jane's Addiction, is having a late breakfast on his friend Bob's front porch. Cream cheese and guava-jelly pastries from the Cuban bakery down the street, chicken, cheese, grapes, and blackberry currant tea. It's one week after the final gig of Jane's Addiction's September-October tour (opened for Iggy coast to coast, went to England), and Farrell looks, well, a little worn. Maybe it's the hang of his newly trimmed off-orange dreadlocks. Maybe it's the midday light throwing shadows over his deep-set eyes. Maybe it's the coffee—whatever. He's tired. There's one week to finish the band's video for "Mountain Song," then next weekend it's off again, to Seattle, then Chicago, Detroit...

"I have a meeting later today to show the president of our record com-

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pany [Warner Bros.] all the nudity in the video we're shooting. I have to sit there with this guy, turn out the lights, get comfortable, and then here we go, there's my big ol' dick. 'Come on Lenny [Warner], don't you get a kick out of that?' " Some time passes before Farrell gets back to his original point. "It's not like now that the album's out we can just relax or anything. It's work all the time now." Dissatisfaction plays on his face like power-chords on a Stratocaster. "I feel like I'm getting squeezed dry, and it's too bad. I understand now how someone can put out a shitty album. If you don't have enough time..." Bob pours more coffee. "It's like Tang: you know it's good stuff, but then someone adds too much water, and people who didn't know about it before never know why it was so good."

Since the release of *Nothing's Shocking* a few months ago, the band's audiences have been growing and, despite initial resistance on the airwaves (dirty words) and in record stores (dirty pictures, the cover was something shocking—Siamese twin naked women with their heads on fire—banned by six record chains, later reinstated by all but two), the band has begun to transcend its status as L.A.'s own. Live performances have been building in size and feroc-



Jane's Addiction are electric love gypsies.

Article by Dave Carpenter

Photography by Paul Natkin

ity, radio stations are playing their songs, and critical response has been strong.

So what's the problem?

"I'm in the midst of a traaaumaaa." Farrell drawls the last word long and hard, wringing out every last drop of self-absorption. He's onstage at the Roxy, in Los Angeles, early '88, part of a performance/reading thing emceed by Tim ("these aren't poets, man, these are prophets!") Leary, and featuring pop poesy from a number of LA's leading rock-and-lit luminaries (as well as some schmoe who reads from his bio of Jim Morrison). Seated behind a table, Farrell begins what sounds to be a very heart-felt account of what's right-and-wrong with the world. But the phone next to him keeps ringing. "No Mr. Record Producer, I'm not singing 'God is dead' in that song, it's 'God is Dad.' "

A little later the phone rings again. "Oh, hello Dad... No, I'm sort of busy." He looks out at the crowd apologetically. "Dad, I have some people over right now..."

Play the studio version of "Dazed and Confused" a few times, until you're good and reacquainted with it, then slip on Jane's Addiction's "Ted, Just Admit It." Philosophers have long puzzled over the relationship between similarity and difference.

There's something reminiscent of the finer musical moments of the late '60s and early '70s in Jane's Addiction's sound, though the band is as much a product of the late '70s and '80s, as mind-and-body scarred by that decade as anyone who survived the era with their record collection



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intact. They reinject a sense of the grandiose into the increasingly ghetto-ized far reaches of cutting edge music, alternating symphonic swoops with pulsing, gut-level rhythms. Then, just when you're ready to say, "Enough! (just a little bit more)," out comes a ballad that, unlike the gaping guitar soliloquies that so many metal bands pawn off as radio-ready power pop, is deceptive in its simplicity, but persuasive in its style. Jane's Addiction will go hand-to-hand with the sonic histrionics of any thrash band, but they're not

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afraid to remind you that, even though Styx was stupid, there was something cool about 'em, too.

The band was formed just about two-and-a-half years ago, when Jane (a housemate, according to Farrell: "eight rooms, thirteen roommates") introduced Perry to bassist Eric Avery. At the time Farrell's old band, Psi-Com, had just fallen apart—they were just gaining momentum in the L.A. gloom-rock circuit when religion reared its unholy head and claimed two band members—and the singer was looking for a new line-up. Avery had the right kind of subterranean-hammerhead grooves, and guitarist Dave Navarro and drummer Steven Perkins soon filled out the roster.

Onstage the four band members like to create a strong impression. (At the New York show Perkins was particularly fetching in his light-weight summer skirt, while Farrell opted for a brighter, more playful ensemble featuring wrestling shoes; Avery was dashing with his shirtless thrash look, while Navarro was pure cut-offs-n'-fishnet rock'n'roll.) To say their performances are athletic is an understatement; Farrell can get more air out of a kick turn off a floor monitor in the segue between, say, an acoustic Lou Reed cover and their own "Idiot's Rule" than most rockers get on a trans-Atlantic flight. Their electric gypsy love-hump stage presence was captured for posterity on the self-titled live album they released early in 1988 on L.A. indie XXX.

Call it psycho-metal, call it martial



be-bop, Jane's Addiction's post-punk *Strum und Drang* has come as a revelation to a generation of rock'n'roll fans who grew up since the heavy was taken out of heavy metal and head-bangers replaced bud-bongers. Their music combines the freshness and aggression for which punk once stood with the musicianship and lyricism which heavy metal, at times, once approached, recalling an attitude and an era when rock'n'roll rebelliousness was measured by something more than the scars on your skin-head, or the length of your weave.

"Well, I guess we can't play any more guitar songs," Perry is standing at the

front of the stage in New York wearing tri-colored bloomers, addressing the audience with all the innocence of a child caught with his hand in Daddy's stash. Dave Navarro's guitar hangs in pieces, limply held together by a few strings that, for some reason, haven't broken. Maybe it was the recurring sound problems, maybe it was a muffed solo, maybe it was joy of playing the last gig of a long tour. Apparently it was necessary, in the course of their encore that night, to start swinging that guitar around. To start throwing it. To start pounding it like a sledge hammer on the stage. Pete Townsend would be proud—maybe scared.

"Outside the clubs we sometimes run into problems. Like one time Dave got his nose broken. That was in Delaware. There was this big guy in a Denny's, and he was all excited and pumped up—he'd probably been eating steroids—and I guess he just didn't like Dave's hosiery. Dave's acting like, 'What, you don't like these? Are you trying to say you don't like these fish nets?'"

"Or one time we were in Miami and we ran into this gang. My friend was, what do you call it? Rendered unconscious. He's alright now, but he had his nose broken, and his skull fractured in two different places. Major concussion. He didn't fight back at all, because after they gave him that side kick he was out in mid-air. His head cracked open on the sidewalk—it hit right on the curb. We were with about ten other people, and the whole street just sprayed open with people chasing and running, you couldn't tell who was who. We thought he was dead. His wife was standing over him, going 'Oh my God.' I was dressed like a clown that night—for some reason—and when the cops showed up I was standing over my friend in a clown suit going 'Help him, help him!' It was the worst."

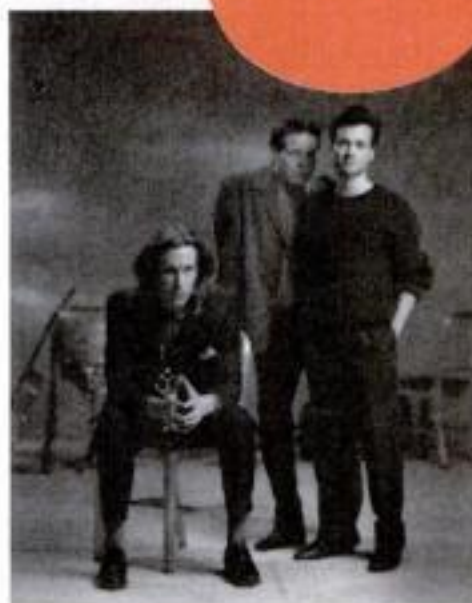
"Inside the clubs it's alright, outside we get the shit kicked out of us." Perry pauses for a moment. "But, you know, our best shows are played in places like that."

After Perry had to leave (time to show Lenny his dick) I hang out with Bob a little while. "I've known Perry for years," Bob tells me, "but it's funny. We really never talk about the band." It's not just humility or disdain that makes Farrell reluctant to talk, I figure, but something more to do with letting the music speak for itself. The more fans the band gets, the more people there are to answer to, and who knows what they all want? Maybe that's why Perry looked so tired... Back home I put on "Pigs in Zen," to the part where he sings, "Yeah, so roses are red, I made up the rest/If you got some big fucking secret, why don't you sing me something?"

Go By The Number.

Violent Femmes

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THE
NEW
ALBUM

Featuring
the song
"NIGHTMARES"

Produced by
VIOLENT FEMMES



Available Now on
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and Compact Discs
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A . I . D . S .

His patients call him a saviour, and the AMA calls him a snake-oil salesman. But Dr. Emanuel Revici, in more than 60 years of clinical research, has formulated a medical philosophy, and a system of non-toxic treatments, that could help bring an end to AIDS and cancer.

Article by Dennis Reid McMillan

Photograph by Dan Howell

In 1971, Richard Nixon "declared war on cancer" by signing the National Cancer Act. The U.S. government has since spent more than \$20 billion on cancer research. Yet, in that period, age-adjusted cancer death rates have not gotten better, but worse, leading Harvard Medical School biostatistician John Baylar to conclude, in a recent controversial article in "The New England Journal of Medicine," that we are losing the war on cancer.

Several forms of cancer are associated with AIDS and AIDS-related condition. So, if we are losing the war on cancer, we can certainly agree that we are being slaughtered mercilessly in our battle against AIDS and ARC.

The tragedy of the senseless losses to AIDS and cancer is that there are alternative medical approaches that just might win the battle once and for all. But, rather than focus our energy on a united all-out war against the diseases, doctors, scientists, and many people with AIDS have engaged in a civil war that has divided our troops and brought bickering rather than cooperation, sapping the strength we so desperately need during this epidemic era.

Dr. Emanuel Revici, founder and Scientific Director of the Institute of Applied Biology in New York City, is one of the unsung heroes of the war on catastrophic disease. He has developed a unique treatment for AIDS and cancer and all manner of life-threatening illnesses, utilizing safe, non-toxic chemotherapy and nutritional supplements. His approach is attributed with innumerable remissions and recoveries from usually fatal diseases.

Of the 282 AIDS and ARC patients he has treated in the past six years, fewer than 40 have died, and most have experienced measurable, positive change.

Distinct from today's Newtonian, cause-and-effect approach to medicine, the 92-year-old physician, biochemist, and theorist does not deal with treatment of the disease, but rather with an holistic treatment aimed at re-establishing balance and enabling the body to heal itself. The son of a distinguished physician in Bucharest, Romania, Revici graduated first in his class in medical school before moving to the U.S. to embark upon a career of research into treatments and theories well outside of the medical mainstream.

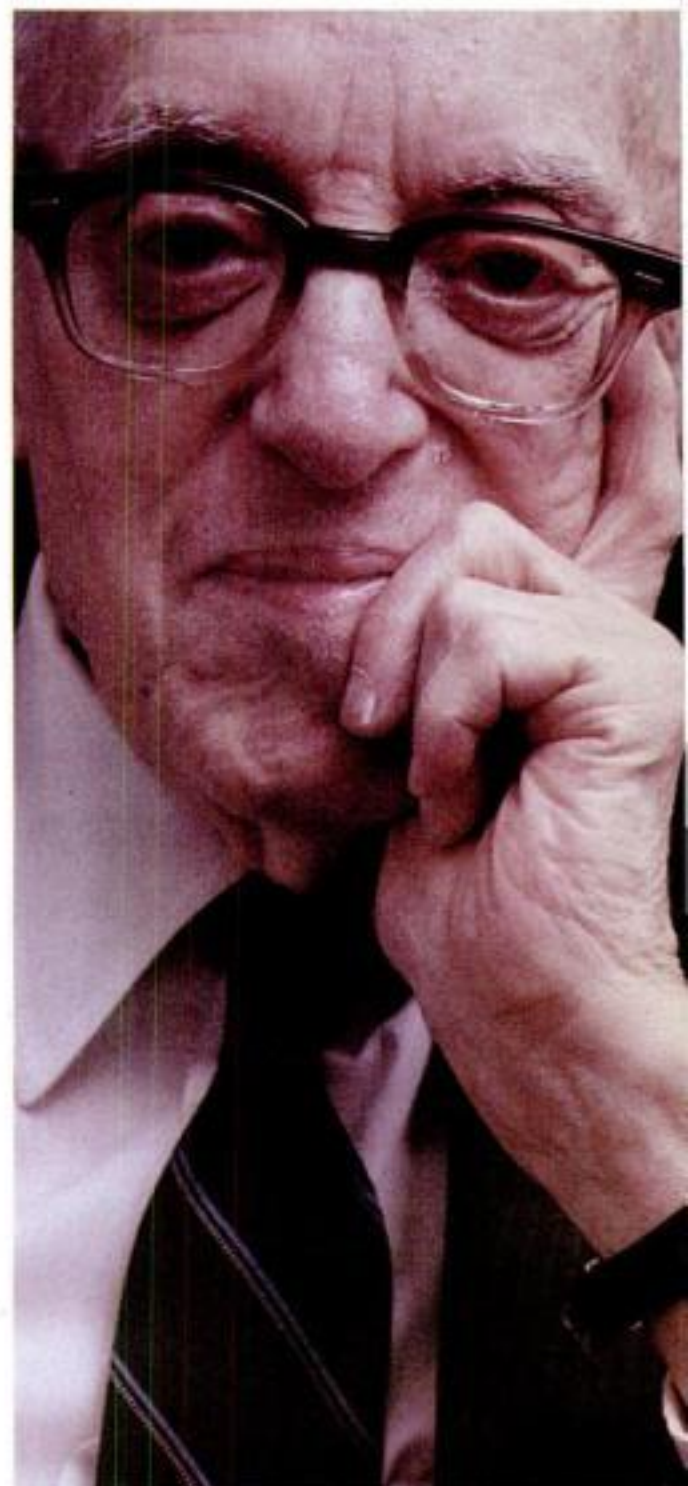
Revici has developed a completely new system of medicine, diagnostics, and pharmacology by going back over 5000 years into Oriental philosophy and medicine, combining this Eastern approach with the quantum physics of Albert Einstein. The essence of both Eastern, yin-yang philosophy and Einstein's physics is a dualistic view of the universe—two opposite polarities complementing and opposing each other, together achieving and sustaining balance.

Revici uses the dualistic terms "anabolic" and "catabolic" to describe the processes the human system goes through to attain a similar balance. When in an anabolic state, the body is in a positively-charged, building-up phase—a phase of synthesis and repair; when in catabolic state, the body is negatively-charged—breaking down with energy production and digestion. A state of good health is one in which a balance of anabolic and catabolic is maintained. Conversely, a state of disease exists when either anabolic or catabolic is exaggerated. In addition there is an acid/alkaline balance known as "pH" that must be maintained, says Revici. Anabolic activity tends to alkalize the body, raising the pH, while catabolic activity has an acidifying effect, lowering the pH.

In a healthy person, anabolic and catabolic activity rise and fall in a 24-hour period, so that just the right amount of energy is expended during the day, and necessary repair occurs during sleep. Restoration of balance in the body's pH when it is fluctuating to either too acid or too alkaline, or predominantly anabolic or catabolic, is achieved through the injection of safe, non-toxic lipids.

Revici explains that lipids, or fatty acids, are vital to the body's immune system, enabling the body to protect and boost production of its "helper" T-cells. (T-cells are components of the immune system often depleted in PWA's. Produced in the thymus gland, T-cells help guide and coordinate the healthy functioning of the immune system.) AL 721 is itself a lipidic treatment. It is a combination of three active lipids (AL) extracted from chicken eggs and blended in a ratio of seven parts to two parts to one part (whence the numbers 721). Like Revici's formulas, AL 721 is non-toxic, shows no side effects, and is relatively inexpensive.

While science is only beginning to acknowledge the role of lipids in defending the body



against disease, Revici has been working for 65 years in the field.

Revici has found that non-toxic lipidic agents can be administered to restore balance in a diseased system. Anabolic imbalance can be treated with lipid acids and sulfur, selenium, magnesium, and lipid-copper compounds. To balance catabolic dominance, lipid alcohols and lithium, zinc, and iron compounds are prescribed. Revici has found that the elements in the Periodic Table correspond with either anabolic or catabolic activity. The heavier metals have been found to be the most effective in treatment, and Revici has developed a number of formulas combining lipids and some of these elements.

Many conventionally trained physicians are amazed at the multiple pathological imbalances which Revici treats with a single medication. Since the body is limited in the number and types of symptoms it can express, one lipidic medicine may apply to several seemingly unrelated diseases. The doctor cited five examples: migraine, sunburn, shock, hemorrhage, and pneumonia—all medicated with the same non-toxic formula. To a great extent, Revici's treatments render current



A testament to his own work: Dr. Emanuel Revici, lively and active at 92.

ment is that his is *individually* guided non-toxic chemotherapy, where the substances and dosages vary for each patient, and may have to change as often as day to day if the imbalance so indicates. Such methodology contradicts the conventional, so-called "magic bullet" approach—treatment reduced to a formula—where a quick scan of the *Physician's Desk Reference* matches symptoms with disease and prescribed medication.

Unlike physicians using more orthodox treatment, the doctor in Revici's system is the patient's partner, not his all-knowing, godlike superior whose word is Truth and judgment final. Regular monitoring and frequent analysis is required, and the patient takes far more responsibility in the monitoring process than in mainstream medicine. He or she must measure and chart pH changes several times a day, as well as test for specific gravity, surface tension, and chloride levels.

Some patients find a sort of comfort in completely handing over their care to their doctor. Still others do not have the patience to stick with one treatment approach, often haphazardly switching from one treatment to another, and finally resorting to taking toxic medicines such as AZT.

Ironically, AZT—a treatment that breaks down lipids, hinders blood production in the bone marrow, and requires frequent transfusions—is the only drug which the FDA has approved for treating AIDS (although when it was originally developed for cancer therapy 17 years ago, AZT was shelved because of its toxicity). Yet, the non-toxic lipids are under strict scrutiny by the FDA, still unapproved.

The Institute's AIDS Program Coordinator, Kenneth Bunch, says Revici will not treat patients who are currently taking AZT. In addition to the drug's toxicity, Bunch explains, "AZT will totally destroy the lipids."

Impressive results have been documented when Revici's refractory medicines are administered to AIDS patients. "In pneumocystis pneumonia and other opportunistic infections, manifest favorable changes are often obtained in less than 24 hours," Revici claims, adding that antiviral treatments and refractory lipids "have kept patients entirely without any symptoms for years."

One of Revici's AIDS patients is a 38-year-old man who began treatment for KS in February, 1984. In testimony before a hearing called by the New York delegation to Congress last March, he claimed that, by October, 1984, his lesions had almost all disappeared. At one point, he said he stopped treatment for a few weeks, and the lesions reappeared. After going back on the treatment, the new lesions disappeared. His T-cell count, he said, also rose dramatically (from 370 to 564).

In another case history, Revici relates how he completely restored the health of Andrew Hamilton, a young man who had been unable to walk—paralyzed on the right side of his body with a brain tumor. He was told by his medical team at Johns Hopkins Hospital that there was nothing to be done but go home and die. "After six months of treatment he was driving a motorcycle, perfectly normal," says Revici.

"I have no side-effects, no regrets. Everything's in working order. I'm alive. I'm happy. I'm fat," says Hamilton gleefully.

Revici patient Robert Wilden was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer in the jaw by doctors at New York's Sloan-Kettering Memorial Hospital, with the recommendation of major surgery to his

head and face. Rather than submit to the disfiguring operation or the adverse effects of radiation and chemotherapy, Wilden chose to be treated by Revici. His tumor shrunk by 50 percent, with no adverse side-effects, and he now leads a healthy, active life. "I am one of many whose life has been threatened by disease," says Wilden, "and who has found in Dr. Revici a method of treatment that offers hope and health where the traditionally accepted forms of treatment offer little of either."

Although his work has been primarily in the New York area, Revici and his West Coast patients want to train doctors and set up protocols in California. So far, two doctors in Corte Madera, just outside of San Francisco, have set up a small clinic last year, modeled on the Institute of Applied Biology in New York, and they already have a thriving clientele.

"I believe that this method represents the future of medicine," asserts Revici, through a thick Romanian accent. "I am pretentious, yes, but this is 60 years of working."

Revici has been referred to by many a patient and colleague as having Albert Einstein's intellect and Albert Schweitzer's compassion. But, despite stories of amazing successes, Revici does not consider himself a miracle-worker. "I am a physician which [sic] want to help, in spite of my age. I fight day and night to help people. That is all."

Dorothy Britt, Revici's receptionist, says the doctor does not exaggerate in saying that he works day and night with his patients. Britt's daughter was successfully treated by Revici seven years ago for an allegedly terminal brain tumor. Britt was so grateful that she volunteered as Revici's receptionist. "That man never sleeps," she says. "He sees sometimes up to 55 patients a day... and I can tell you honestly, I don't think he gets paid for half of them. The people in the office, we're always after him, because we don't know how we are going to keep this place open if we don't start charging people."

Revici says he lives off his social security benefits alone. "I don't receive one dollar from patients: all goes to the Institute for research." Ironically, however, Revici, the Institute, and its lawyers have had to waste more than \$450,000 fighting AMA bureaucrats and their attorneys, who, along with New York State regulators, have tried to yank his license.

Revici's unorthodox billing practices are only one of the reasons AMA traditionalists want the doctor out of the business. In an age where the Hippocratic Oath has deteriorated into the Hypocritical Oath, many conventional doctors seem to respond to new ideas with fear—fear for the sanctity of their theories, their equipment, their status, and their exorbitant fees—all of which are threatened by Revici's unconventional, affordable, non-traumatic, individually-tailored healing system. (Like most alternative medications, including AL 721, the non-toxic lipidic medicine has not been approved by the FDA, but it is allowable under a New York law that permits licensed physicians to prepare non-toxic formulas for their patients.)

This protective fear has often found its expression in the courtroom. In "Schneider v. Revici," Long Island doctor and lawyer Harvey Wachsmann, attempted to sue Revici with three claims of malpractice, fraud, and failure to give informed consent. After a two-week trial, the jury rejected each count of fraud, nullified any claim of lack of informed consent, and threw out the punitive da-

Continued on page 75

diagnostic labels unnecessary. Unfortunately, many people do not easily relinquish this crutch, finding solace in having a label to pin to their illness, no matter how meaningless the word may be.

Revici's AIDS treatment program has four phases. First, the patient is injected with antiviral agents to treat the primary viral infection. Then the immune deficiency is treated with refractory (disease-fighting) lipids. Next, the secondary opportunistic disease (most commonly KS—Kaposi's Sarcoma, the purplish lesions common in AIDS—or PCP, pneumocystis carinii pneumonia) is medicated with antibiotics, antimicrobial, or antifungal agents. Finally, the anabolic/catabolic immune system imbalance is diagnosed and treated. Revici has found that most KS comes from anabolic imbalance, while most other opportunistic diseases are catabolic.

Revici's system appears to the layman, and to his thousands of satisfied patients, as nothing short of miraculous. But quite the opposite opinion is held by many conventional, card-carrying American Medical Association (AMA) physicians. Part of Revici's unpopularity in the medical establish-

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New Rage rockers Nice Strong Arm

Nice Strong Arm *Mind Furnace* Homestead

Down in the den, pop, a first generation hippie gone yup, is plugged into his home entertainment complex, awash in soothing New Age music. Upstairs, pop's art student son sautees his own brain in the guitar-based angst blur of New Rage music, whose gurus (Sonic Youth et al) seem, to mom (the only straight thinker in the bunch), every bit as inane as the pseudo-mystic wine-cooler hucksters whose aural freddies emanate from the den. She recognizes correctly that both hubby and junior's musics are self-defined genres with little clubs of followers, little clubs who, like the men in her house, look for shortcuts to a nirvana generally acknowledged as bogus these days.

Case in point, the Nice Strong Arm record junior brought home last month. Listen to it straight and you think 'what a meandering mess,' like jazz or something; blow some boo and it's a roller coaster through the gray plains and shadowy crannies of

your psyche. Like jazz.

So mom, who listens to records all day while she has the house to herself, blew some boo from junior's stash, and this is what she found: the Butthole Surfers-rip tag that accompanied Nice Strong Arm's debut *Reality Bath* last winter, while superficial then (both used dual drum sets and hailed from Austin), is hardly useful here (NSA lost a drummer and moved to New York)—unless you want to imagine the Butthole's guitar carnival guided by an entirely somber sensibility. Though musically *Mind Furnace* is indeed the old guitar-spazz-as-a-pipeline-to-hell-behind-your-face thing, and is in that respect well rendered (a couple songs do actually go to hell, which is several thousand feet deep and populated with elephants and cartoon Africans, but otherwise very much like this life), Nice Strong Arm goes about its business with the on-the-sleeve and well-read (at least big-vocabulary) forthrightness of a

noise-fried Joy Division that has little to do with white art-rock's current denizens. Or at least not the denizens who don't completely suck.

Since they exist in and for (face it, nobody could get away with singing as flat as they do anywhere else) a college/indie/art/noise circuit defined by a hipper-than-thou stance so smug, jaded and self-aware that it's rare when anybody dares say anything they really mean, Nice Strong Arm's shameless pretention is actually refreshing. (What goes around, comes around, I suppose.) *Mind Furnace* is a collection of songs about resignation and loss and sad inevitability into which bookish sentimentality—albeit detached—actually seeps. The better songs transcend the high school diary/tabloid sensationalism of the genre, semi-narrative moodpiece poetic—like Raymond Carver's short stories—mainly in their sparsely-etched, commonfolk despair. "Swingset" is kind of a retelling of that sad old Harry Cha-

pin song about a kid not getting to spend enough time with the same-gender parent, only the kid's a girl, 24 now, whose mom croaked when she was a tyke. Just when you think it may veer into TV movie psycho-corn (like the girl whose father didn't care about her, will become a prostitute or something), "Swingset" concludes with the lines "Life without her mother's soul/ left a very big hole"—Hallmarkian in their directness, Biblical in their truth.

Mom liked *Mind Furnace* way better than most of the rest of junior's pile—or her old man's for that matter—because it touched her as a middle-aged parent, as a human being, and she wondered if maybe one day one of these guys will write a good book.

—Don Howland

Tiffany Hold An Old Friend's Hand MCA

I think I was about 15 when I first saw my younger sisters Ann and Tracey hand-dance. We were listening to "You Should Hear How She Talks About You," and my sisters were illustrating each line with a hand motion, learned from the older girls on their basketball team on bus rides home. At the prose interlude "talk, talk, talk-talk-talk," both hands faced each other, opening and closing like yammering mouths. I was enthralled. When I went through my Andrea Dworkin phase and began regarding hand dancing as a feminist construct, I made my own inept attempts at it to Eddie Money's "Shakin,'" leaving me only with sore wrists and the conviction that girls' languages are best left to girls.

So imagine my delight at flipping on MTV a year ago to see teen queens Debbie Gibson and Tiffany bringing the hand-dance into Prig Nation's collective living room. I never had trouble distinguishing them: Debbie's main hand move is a downward glide, while Tiff jerks all over the place. I couldn't live without either, but Tiffany's jerk is the one that really tells it to my heart.

It's just, everything is so damn easy for Debbie. Tiffany, well, nothing ever seemed that simple for her. If Deb often seems a Shirelle ("Mama Said," "Tonight's The Night"), cheerfully cooperating with history as it turns her into her Mom, Tiffany was definitely a Shangri-La ("Leader of the Pack") who had to be dragged along wailing and pulling hair. In her songs, she never got the Boy, but she didn't get to keep her innocence either. She truly can never go home anymore. I mean, she can't even sue her own Mom right.

Listen to such memorably miserable songs on her debut album, *Tiffany*, as "Kid on a Corner" and "Should've Been Me" ("she wears your jacket, like it was her own/I used to wear it so well")—you can hear the rage ready to explode. Someday, I thought, she's going to hear Poly Styrene, jam her manager into a revolving door, wrap barbed wire around her neck, start inhaling Pam, pick up a guitar, write some songs.

Then Tiff grew up. Oh, her latest album is still weird, but it's different. No more 60s covers (a song dated 1974, though—what's next, "Torn Between Two Lovers"?), a new husky Loretta Lynn-influenced voice, cute hoop earrings. And the songs they give her are suddenly all about *friendship*. Like, non-competitive *girl* friendship. Why hasn't anyone tried this before? She croons three consecutive "girlfriend, let me tell you" songs, and when the boys show up, she doesn't let them make her cry anymore. "I can be your lover and your best friend too," she even tells one hot young skateboarder.

This is Tiffany?

But to reassure us faithful, there's "Radio Romance," in which Tiff keeps calling this late-night DJ pestering him with requests (not the only shade of Van Morrison on this record, friends), dedicating them to this boy "from the one who loves you, baby," you see, he's going out with her best friend, and she doesn't want, well, it's complicated. Anyway, "Drop That Bomb" is the Gibson-Tiffany battle we've all prayed for—it begins with "Only In My Dreams" percussion, and continues into a strong vocal and lyrical misreading of Deb's "Play the Field." Debbie used a sports metaphor for dating, Tiff makes it in to war. But any song that borrows riffs from "Let's Hear It For the Boy," "He's So Shy," and even "December 1963 (Oh What A Night)," deserves to go number one. The bomb's in Debbie's court, and don't be surprised if her next album covers "Erotic City." This is gonna be great!

I still do love Debbie, especially her nose, but she hasn't yet enacted the

garish splendor of adolescent tackiness with the daemonic excess of Tiffany. According to the September Bop, this summer Debbie came close to buying a "I Sold My Soul To Rock'N'Roll" t-shirt, but it was a size too small. Tiff would have bought it anyway. And she really would have earned it. The Seer of Norwalk knows more about teenage misery than you or I. And yet she refuses to succumb to the temptation to despise herself. She holds her head high. She's got all her life to live. She's got all her love to give. She will survive (we're talking Gloria Gaynor here, not Jerry Garcia). And judging by the "Overture" that ends the album, eighty-four seconds of "acoustical guitar" noodling by "Grant Geissman," who isn't even a girl, the moniker "Tiffany" will soon be an all-purpose aesthetic label for any venture into exuberant absurdity. I could sign this review "Tiffany." It boggles the mind. It rules to be alive, I tell you.

—Robert Sheffield

courtesy MCA Records



One day La Tiff may inhale some Pam and write a song.

American Music Club California Frontier

The American Music Club is probably the only club guitarist/misery bard Mark Eitzel belongs to. He carves the word "lonely" (and its friends, "loneliness" and "alone") into so many of California's grooves, you begin to hear it even after his flat, dull-edged voice has shut up and there's nothing left but some paint-peeling finger-picking and a listless bass thud or two. Because he likes company, he invents a few characters and sticks them in abominably mundane situations: on buses next to old ladies who just had operations (baby, we were born to run ourselves into the ground), in empty houses next to freeways, in a captain's chair in some shit-hole cocktail lounge ("I don't think she really cares," he sneers about one of his hapless creations, "if somewhere there's people living"). Even when he gets a good thing going, you know he's just waiting for it to kiss him off: in California's opener, "Firefly," he sits on a front lawn with his gal to watch a sunset, waxing poetic about the firefly's short lifespan ("Just a flash and then they're gone," he muses—what a charmer). Just as he's about to lay on the sweet nothings, something happens: "You're so pretty, baby—where did you go?"

Actually, Eitzel's made progress, at least since AMC's 1987 album *Engine*,



Only the lonely, *American Music Club*: (L-R) Mark Eitzel, Vudi, Dan Pearson, Tom Mallon, and Lisa Davis.

when he followed the announcement "I think I just came in my pants" with the kicker line "Baby, do you want to dance?" The Club, three Californians including drummer Tom Mallon (who's produced Chris Isaak and AMC since their '85 debut *The Restless Stranger*), does their best to console him with a subdued, intentionally unassuming folkish-rockish blanket of sound that occasionally fires into feedback screams of outrage ("Don't push our buddy around," they seem to be warning). It's a soothing, if not trail-blazing, lowbrid of twang, shriek, and coast that's at once familiar (the Eagles? the Stooges? Poussette-Dart?) and no-foolin.' Eitzel, for all his solitary afflictions, has great tales to tell, whether about skinny girls, guys in blue and gray shirts, harbors, or himself; and the more you open yourself up to him, the more you realize he's got a great way of telling them, too. For somebody who claims to be so lonely, the guy's got something worthwhile to say, and I figure, if I had a club, I'd probably ask him to join.

—Karen Schoemer

The Jeff Healey Band
See The Light
Arista

Johnny Winter
The Winter of '88
MCA

Anyone curious as to how the blues is able to remain relevant and vibrant while so many other kinds of pop music seem to come and go with the tides would do well to seek out the excep-

tional new albums by guitar-slingers Johnny Winter and Jeff Healey. On one hand, you've got the rookie phenom, Healey, with the bio press agents dream about. On the other you've got the veteran, Winter, who long ago—back when Healey was in diapers, in fact—was himself the rookie phenom with the bio press agents dream about. And while their backgrounds, their orientation, and their sounds are totally distinct, it is their common ground—the undefinable feeling that is the blues—that connects them. Whatever brought them to the same town, one thing is certain: they both know what it's like to head upstairs to pack that leaving trunk.

I imagine it will be nigh unto impossible to not know who Canadian Jeff Healey is before too long. It's difficult to say which is more impressive—his talent or his spirit. Blind since age one, Healey got a guitar at age three, put it on his lap like a steel guitar, and went to work. The result, some twenty years later, is a technique that virtually defies description: once you've seen him live, his left hand speedwalking across the fretboard while his right hand grasps the air for the notes he sees in his head, it's hard not to be hooked. Not that seeing him is a necessity; his debut record is filled with a host of engaging tunes that form a fitting aural showcase for his dazzling musicianship. On tracks like John Hiatt's "Confidence Man," ZZ Top's "Blue Jean Blues," and his own "Don't Let Your Chance Go By," Healey weaves thoughtful, angular solos that are reminiscent of early Peter Green. Green's influence on Healey's vocals and songwriting style shows on cuts like "My Little Girl" and "I Need To Be Loved," both the kind of pop-styled blues Green was so good at during Fleetwood Mac's formative stage. At this point, all Healey needs is seasoning and a bit of maturity; based on the promise of *See The Light*, both

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The Jeff Healey Band.



should be coming soon.

As for Johnny Winter, well, it's been so long since the tattooed Texas war-horse has made a truly great record that most album-buying blues fans could hardly be blamed for neglecting him of late. *The Winter Of '88* should change all that—Winter comes out chugging from the word go and doesn't stop until he crosses the finish line. It may be that returning to a major label was the shot in the arm Winter needed; it could also be that the appearance of a young Turk like Healey forced Winter to try a bit harder. Whatever. All that matters is that this album leaves you shaking your head, track after track after track, in joyful awe of Winter's energy and power as a guitarist. With such boogying workouts as "Ain't That Just Like A Woman" and "Looking For Trouble," Winter emphatically re-claims his spot at the top of the speed-for-lunch bunch, and his slashed-to-the-bone slide work on Elmore James's "Stranger Blues" and his own "World Of Contradictions" should help George Thorogood fans get a little, er, perspective. But for me, it's the slow tunes that hit home the most—"Anything For Your Love," which fairly drips with passion, and "Rain," a plaintive

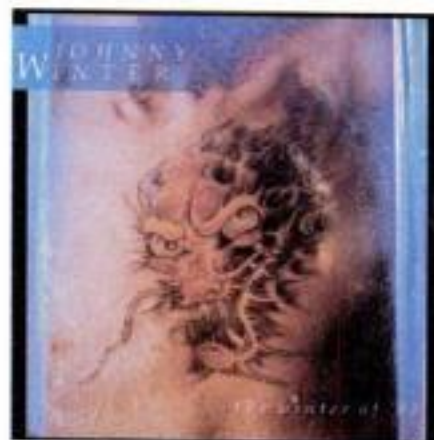
Shop Boys have more in common with Bruce Springsteen than they'd care to admit.

St. Bruce's role on Planet Pop is to make the irrational rational by converting the greatest fantasy factory of the late 20th Century—the record business—into a grungy blue-collar workshop that produces fake rock and roll that thinks it's possessed by the spirit of Woody Guthrie.

The Pet Shop Boys also make the irrational rational. They turn pop's consumer mysticism (the way seemingly shallow pop products incite near-religious states of transcendence) into something that's amusing rather than moving, an attitude caught perfectly on the cover of the Boys' last album, actually: Neil Tennant yawning and the other one (what'sisname) looking glum as if someone had just stepped on his Issey Miyake sunglasses. The Tennant yawn was a sort of knowing wink—the band weren't really pop stars but clever-clever English boys playing at being pop stars.

The Pet Shop Boys are wimps, but not for the reason people usually think. Both the Boss and the Boys are examples of the music business' curious embarrassment over pop's power (did you ever wonder how a Christian like Bono felt about making 13-year-old girls come in their pants?). The major reality of being of being a pop star is that, no matter how arty or smart, the self and artistic persona (the real and the stage identities) are inextricably confused. That's why pop celebrities are so much more vivid, more real, more inside your head than film celebrities these days. No matter how much distance they put between themselves and the role, the emotions excited by pop are too intense, the stakes too high, for that sort of cool self-consciousness—irony melts in the heat.

This said, the Pet Shop Boys are beginning to wise up. *Introspective* is a much braver album than Springsteen or R.E.M. will ever produce. It takes real men to realize that three normal girlies like Exposé can incite desire as intense as the most "serious" and "important" rock band and to fully embrace a genre as feminine as Miami disco, as the Boys do on "Domino Dancing" (produced by Exposé sven-gali Louis Martinée). Not once do you get the feeling that they love the Miami Sound because "it's so bad, it's good." Similarly, their cover of Sterling Void's 1987's house anthem "It's Alright" isn't the "song about a song" you might have expected from these ironists, but a genuinely moving celebration of music as universal salvation more sincere than a thousand U2 albums. Genuine, emotional, and passionate aren't the sorts of adjectives that normally attach themselves to these boys, but *Introspective* is all those things, and it's all the more effective



ballad with a heart-stopping solo that just might be the best single track Winter's recorded since his "Rock 'n' Roll Hootchie Koo" days. In a better world, it'd be a hit. In the world of the blues, it's nothing more, or less, than one more building block for those Jeff Healeys to come.

—Billy Altman

Pet Shop Boys *Introspective* EMI

Despite their reputation in this great hairy-assed rock and roll nation of ours as effete clothes horses, the Pet

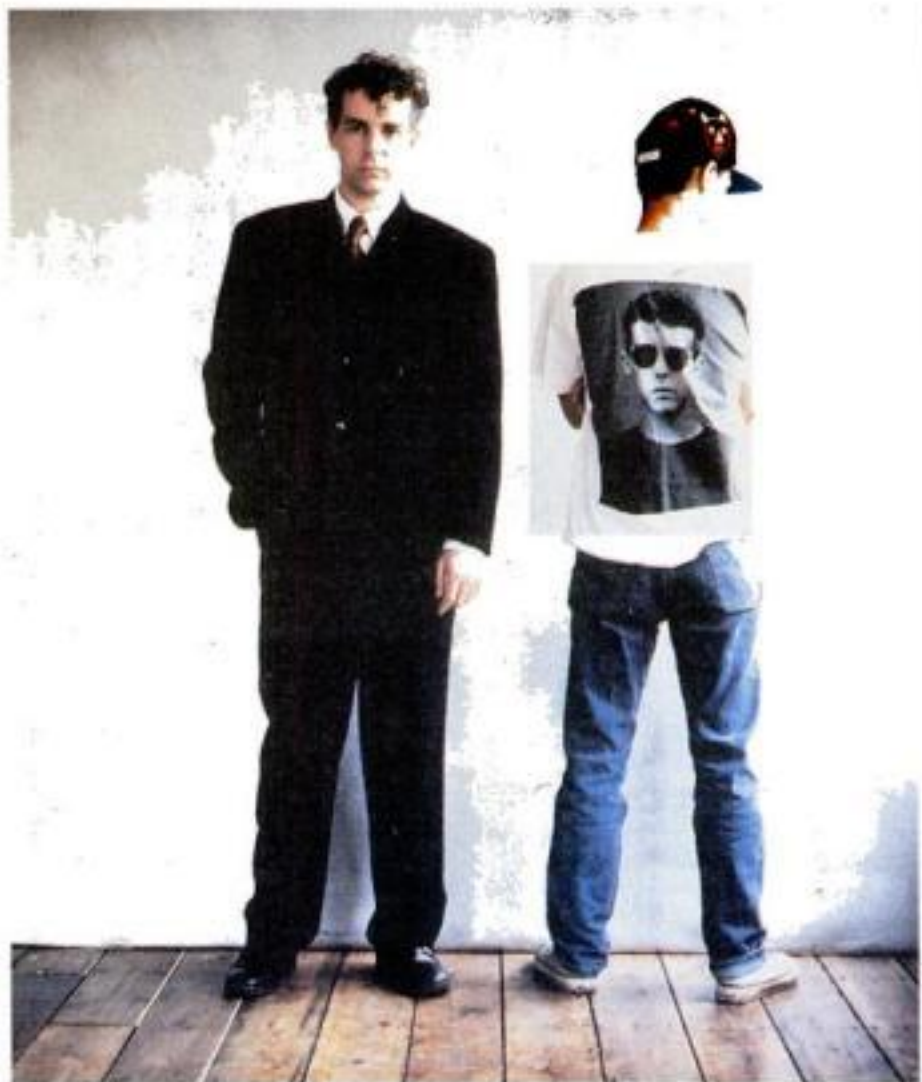
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What us, smile? The Pet Shop Boys think it over. Neil Tennant (r) and Chris Lowe.

because of the Boys' previous diffidence. It seems that the Pet Shop Boys have finally learned that to be really pop (and disco, house, and Latin hip hop are the most honest forms of pop) you have to be uncool.

Of course they still exhibit a 19th century dandies' delight in ingenious trickery, wry little jokes and paradoxical juxtapositions. On "I Want A Dog" they employ legendary DJ and producer Frankie Knuckles to get a rolling, soulful, deep house sound and then sing not about the redemptive power of love, but about Tennant's desire to own a chihuahua rather than a cat. "I'm Not Scared," another house track (originally written for Patsy Kensit), is set during the May '68 Paris uprising—which is something like Information Society writing a song for Debbie Gibson about Italian anarcho-syndicalism. And on "Left To My Own Devices" you get the immortal grouping of "Che Guevara and Debussy to a disco beat."

It's all genuinely amusing because you never get the sense that the Pet Shop Boys are secretly laughing up their sleeves at pop. Neither do you get the sense, so strong in their previous work, that the Boys address two audiences—one, a hip coterie who get all the little in-jokes and the other, the hoi-polloi who just buy it because it's good music. *Introspective* is a ful-

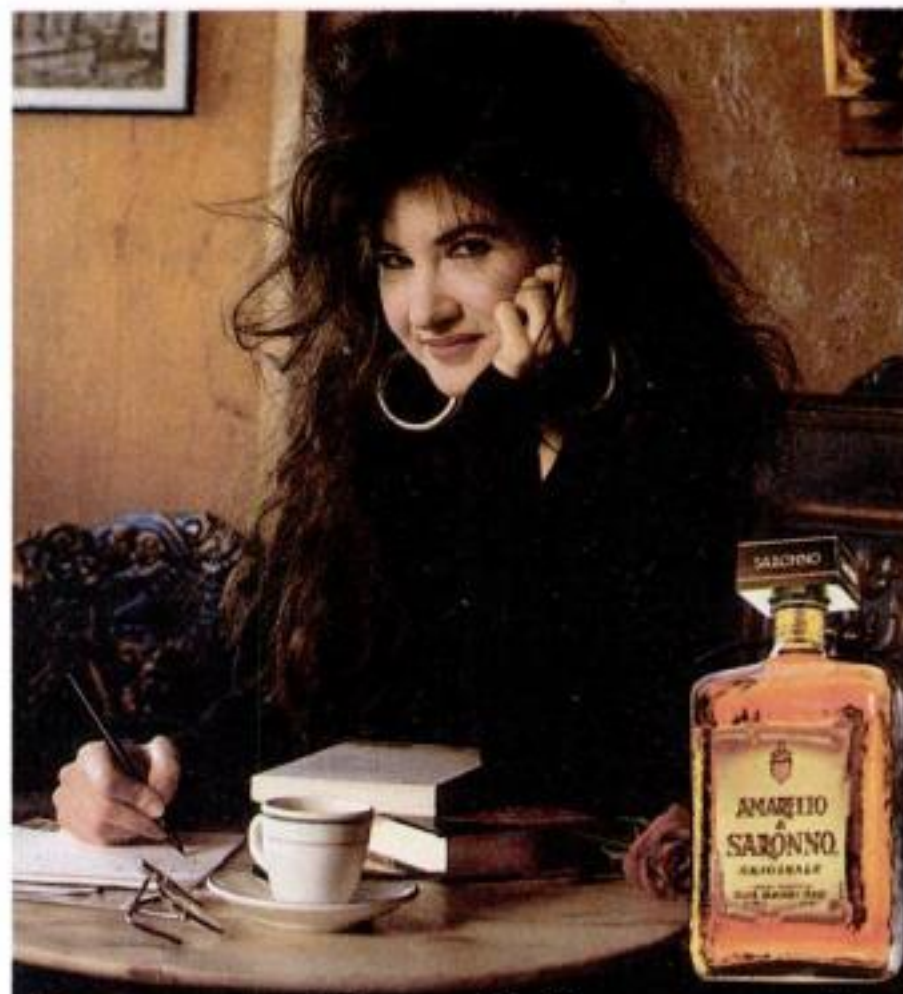
ly-fledged, passionate, action-packed dance album where the irony that exists doesn't translate as a refusal to feel or an uneasiness about the glorious rush of pop transcendence. Welcome home Neil Tennant, soul brother number one.

—Frank Owen

Last Exit Iron Path Virgin

A farm field full of sick steers moos amid a tornado, then Sonny Sharrock's guitar starts yanking the sound back in, restating a warped melody from one of his own records. Shannon Jackson's traps bulldoze the mess, Peter Brotzmann's sax heads up a battle-charge. A chariot driver cracks his whip, shouts "Hyah! Hyah!," everything speeds up, the sax discombobulates into these horrendous concentric squawks. The bassist, Bill Laswell (who produced Motorhead's *Orgasmatron* and Iggy's *Instinct*), rides with the Valkyries. This is just the first song.

Iron Path is Last Exit's fourth LP in



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two years (during which time individual members have put out six albums of their own), the first one on a big label, first one where the tracks sound like rock'n'roll songs, first one where I can understand what Laswell's up to, first one (dig that title!) aimed intentionally at headbangers. Last Exit is a "jazz" group. But R. Melzer, who used to write BOC lyrics so he oughta know, opines in *The Aesthetics of Rock* that Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz* outdid Blue Cheer "cacophony-wise if not volume-wise"; once upon a time, he recalls, downbeat crits used to scoff that only teen rock'n'roll rollers would ever fall for Eric Dolphy or Ornette. Plus, the new Public Enemy album has both Slayer and Coltrane on it. Last Exit's previous records have cuts called "Panzer Be-Bop," "Civil War Test," "Sore Titties," "My Balls/Your Chin." And Sonny Sharrock is the most seismic axemonster on earth.

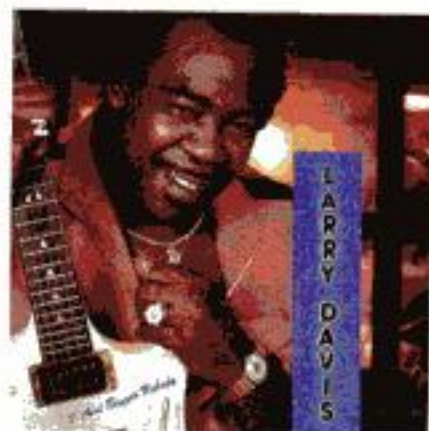
I could go into how deranged he sounds on *Monkey-Pockie-Boo* with his wife in '69 or *Eternal Rhythm* with Don Cherry in '72 or even "Hold On I'm Comin'" with mainstream-nerd Herbie Mann in '69, but that was ages ago and it wouldn't do him justice 'cause now he can strum sheer beauty too, such as where he's Einsteining-on-the-bitch and making your head spin with hirsute swirls on *Iron Path's* "Sand Dancer" (or better yet, in "Princess Sonata" and "Broken Toys" on his solo '87 *Guitar* album). Or perhaps you'd be more eager for a ball-buster called "Detonator," with Sharrock playing Tony Iommi (or maybe the Swans' Norm Westberg—a parody, likely), then these electrical shocks flinging off at isosceles angles, then Brotzmann, German as a luger, commencing to blow his brains out through his brass. These men are old enough to be your dad, maybe even your grandpa, but the arson they set is five-alarm-sized.

There's more. "Cut And Run" rumbles up from Atlantis in the sargassian depths below, King Neptune's spear slashing through subs and sharks faster and faster, popping out and peeping at the sun at the end. "Eye for Eye" 's where Piggy from Voivod goes to church in dimension Hatross and the congregation's all mammoths in rut with their fat butts stuck in the pews. They're getting their wool shaved off, Sonny's making wild electronic noise like he's vacuuming up fur left over from the last Ice Age. Shannon's clanging funeral bells: here's a drummer that can equal John Bonham in "When the Levee Breaks," Gary Jones in "Shaft," and Al Foster in Miles's "Calypso Frelimo," all at the same time!

Jackson and Laswell set up this convoluted sonic obstacle-course; Brotzmann and Sharrock chug through it alert and avenging as Sgt. Sadler's Green Berets, their bayonets drawing pus. *Iron Path* ends with the drummer

repeatedly booting you in the teeth with steel-tipped construction-worker shoes, then everybody else bleating out a full-tilt boogie. This is how *And Justice For All* oughta sound, if Metallica hadn't gone and turned into Klaatu instead. Except Metallica never shook half this hard.

—Chuck Eddy



Larry Davis
I Ain't Begging Nobody
Pulsar Records

Robert Cray ain't got nothing on Larry Davis, nothing 'cept a big record label and lots of fans. The man who wrote "Texas Flood" in '58 (recently re-popularized by Stevie Ray Vaughn) has finally released *I Ain't Begging Nobody*, the long-overdue follow-up to his 1981 *Funny Stuff*, which won four W.C. Handy Awards. The eight years since that critically-praised but hard-to-find gem haven't made Davis any better known, but they've not hurt his talent either. Davis' soulful voice cuts through the radio like a tear through makeup on a smooth cheek. This music is for the ladies and the mens.

Davis' sound is fluid and modern, but more than touched by his 50s beginnings. The roots of his unique guitar style can be traced to the master of left-handed upside-down playing, Albert King, in whose touring band Davis played for many years. A slightly crippling motorcycle accident in 1973 (nothing but the blues) forced Davis to continue developing. While he can punctuate his songs with the stinging notes, he prefers to build them on his more lyrical riffs, which float like chimney smoke on a cold day. Definitely more R&B than R&R influenced (though piano-playing by Chuck Berry's sideman Jimmie Johnson keeps flames in the coals), Davis plays and sings like silk in an all cotton warehouse. Released on a teeny label

outside St. Louis; the address is Pulsar Records, Suite 11, Bogey Hills Plaza #1880, St. Charles, MO 63302.

—Robert Gordon

The Bulgarian State Radio and Television Female Vocal Choir *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares, Vol. 2* Elektra/Nonesuch

The contradiction of girl groups is that their collective desires went far beyond girlhood. Their voices shamelessly embraced what prim, bandbox grooming tried desperately to deny—that innocence and ripeness for all of adult life's experiences could co-exist.

The best of the genre's legacy was a splendid vocal see-saw that balanced precipitously between idyllic romanticism and submission to—even rhapsodizing over—whatever life dished out. Maintaining this delicate straddle depended on the voice simultaneously conveying a sense of anticipation and resignation. Most of the girls' voices grew up; fortunately, some of the women's never did.

A number of these vocally ageless women, whose voices are no less than vessels bearing sagas, have emerged with a follow-up album, *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares, Vol. 2*. The mother LP, which found its instant-cult-status way to the U.S. last year via the savvy, progressive Brit pop label, 4AD (domestically through Elektra), bears the same title. It consisted of music sung exclusively by the Bulgarian State Radio and Television Female Choir. Volume 2 contains nearly an hour of music, and includes offerings by different local Bulgarian ensembles.

While not exactly a Phil Spector production, *Le Mystère* possesses its own wall of sound, which itself becomes a variation on a theme. First, the lone or group voice, no matter

how softly projected, pierces the silence. (And no wonder—this is vocal music that, at its root level, had to carry the length and breadth of a field, or a threshing floor—these are work songs, revolving anthems, welding songs). The ensuing, mostly acapella, music becomes a bouquet of upper registers that cut the air like a frigate. The sounds themselves are initially less pretty than purgative, as if these alternately vibratorless and tremulous notes are performing some huge, cosmic ritual.

The unifying stylistic hallmark to all this pungency is sophisticated, jazz-based harmonies. The use of second, seventh and ninth intervals make for a sound that begs—like some heady aural foreplay—for resolution, as if mimicking the physical tensions, both pleasurable and not, of life itself.

The mystery of these voices does not lie in their assemblage. For the most part, the choir members were recruited from villages, the birthing grounds of the very songs that have, for concert and performance purposes, been modernized and prepared to receive the luster of harmonies. The mystery lies in the vocal straddle, that has one half of the larynx radiating the sagacity of babooshkas and the other half the pubescent lift of the Bulgarian gymnasts. As with the girl groups, innocence meshes with experience, note for note.

In 1957, Arlene Smith and her Chantels cut "Maybe" and "He's Gone," the same year that the frenzied, accordion-laced "The Fox Has Lost His Cubs," one of the 17 songs that comprise *Le Mystère*, was recorded. There's no better affirmation than this unexpected mirror-imaging of East and West to accentuate pop music's matrilineal evolution.

—Mary Anna Feczo

Art of Noise *The Best of the Art of Noise* PolyGram

This upbeat collection offers up Art of Noise standards with a straightforward rendering of Prince's "Kiss" thrown in for laughs—an unlikely collaboration with pop singer Tom Jones that's at once spirited and robotic. Picture a demented android lipsynching along with Jones; Las Vegas-style pop with funky lyrics and a synthesized beat.

The rest is a smorgasbord of organized noise. It's like a library of sounds recycled in different shapes and forms, giving one the impression that the Art of Noise is working with a limited menu. They sample themselves, using bits and pieces of their

LE MYSTÈRE DES
VOIX BULGARES



RECORDED IN BULGARIA BY MARCEL BEAULIEU

The BEST OF ART OF NOISE



greatest hits to make still greater hits, as in the "Kiss" mini-collage of "Close To The Edit," "Peter Gunn," and "Dragnet." Likewise "Legacy" is a "remake" of the '85 "Legs"—a stab at success the second time around with the same song.

Nonsensical words and phrases ("no butterflies/no birds") are repeated over and over to create a kind of high-tech, singsong mantra. Dripping faucets, an engine turning over, even bits of dialogue from "Dragnet" (the movie), are all used, absorbed into songs, and filed away for future reference. The quirky chatter through "Paranoimnia" (the state between paranoia and insomnia) is typical Art of Noise humor: quoting Shakespeare through Max Headroom.

Sound bite pioneers that they are, Art of Noise are never as shamelessly tacky as the current Pop Will Eat Itself sample-your-way-to-fame trend. The orchestral crescendo of "Beatbox" has been widely imitated, and even Trevor Horn, original Art of Noise producer, bastardized this trademark with his work on Yes's '83 single, "Owner of a Lonely Heart." And it's not hard to pick out part of a Steely Dan song running through "Kiss." But all things considered, the Art of Noise is just that—disposable fun with an ensemble of ever-changing and faceless architects of noise to carry on its pensive synthesis. It's the best of the genre, and perfect for its age.

—Staci Bonner

Various Artists

Ragged But Right: Great Country String Bands of the 1930's

Are You From Dixie? Great Country Brother Teams of the 1930's
RCA

Songs about hound dogs, freight trains, and moonshine may seem wildly out of place in an age of pit bulls, space shuttles, and crack, but the current folk revival suggests a yearning for simpler times. As we dig

for our roots, record companies root through their catalogs, and now RCA has unearthed some of the all-time classics of early country music on the first two volumes of its CD-only Heritage series.

Ragged But Right presents three great old-time string bands: Gid Tanner and his Skillet Lickers, the Prairie Ramblers and J.E. Mainer's Mountaineers. Tanner, the master hayseed, is past his prime on this swan-song session, but Mainer and his brother Wade, the grandfathers of bluegrass, are in their glory. The Ramblers, Kentucky-bred converts to Western swing, provide inspiration for Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan with their surrealistic "Go Easy Blues."

Are You From Dixie? includes half a dozen brother duets, ranging from the raucous "hokum" blues of the Allen Brothers to the pristine, pre-Every Brothers harmonies of the Blue Sky Boys. In between are the Lone Star Cowboys, Delmore Brothers, Dixon Brothers and Monroe Brothers—the last featuring the hyperkinetic mandolin of the original Bluegrass Boy, Bill Monroe. It's a shitkicker's delight, racist snipes and all, but if you're looking for social consciousness, better stick to Pete Seeger and Joan Baez.

—Larry Birnbaum



The Go-Betweens

16 Lovers Lane
Beggars Banquet/Capitol

The Go-Betweens remind me of whooping cranes: great gangling creatures capable of heights of gracefulness when in flight and passionate spasms when in heat. Similarly, the Go-Betweens infuse portentous poetry into giddy pop structures, then throw the uncertain songs in the air, whispering "Fly or fuck."

On *16 Lovers Lane*, the sixth album in their ten year career, the Go-Betweens do a lot of both. The address sounds like their natural habitat. You can almost picture the place—a quiet house on a rainy cobblestone street. "A writer's retreat, maybe" Robert Forster, the most gangling, morose

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Brendan Amyot



The Go-Betweens: Looking for love in all the wrong places.

and poetic half of the Go-Betweens' songwriting team, describes it in "You Can't Say No Forever": "Sheltered and lonely there/The fireplace and a rocking chair."

It's not the same isolated "house Jack Kerouac built" of the Go-Betweens' last album, *Tallulah*. The band's current domicile is strategically located on that most romantic of roadways, Lovers Lane. These Australians, still lost and lonely souls, are actively seeking love these days. Like whooping cranes bobbing their heads back and forth, unfolding and spreading their wings, letting out a ringing, unearthly cry, the Go-Betweens' mating ritual is an awesome spectacle: violins weep, bass drums pulsate, guitars shimmer, vocals shake. Oboes, keyboards, crashing crescendos, diminutive diminuendos, thunder, lightning, the stars—all the grand dramatic gestures and emotional outpourings that make the Great Love Songs of pop music the only unconfounded statements of the human condition that we moderns, guiltily, cling to—they're all here. Sainly romantics who merge Monkees mania with Goethe's sorrows, the Go-Betweens teeter between too much and just enough. Thankfully, on *16 Lovers Lane*, there's

more gush than mush.

The record does have its putrid moments. Most of these—the cloying "ba-da-dums" of "Love Goes On," the annoying whistle sounds at the end of "Can't Say No"—are due to producer Mark Wallis's tendency to over-embellish. Fortunately, the distractions in the new surroundings are merely observers' blinds, not a wholly artificial environment. In general, Wallis bathes the band's songs with a lushness that makes their declarations of love all the more unabashed. Lindy Morrison's drums sound like the surf breaking over huge boulders on a barren beach, while Forster and Grant McLennan—the band's more amiable, less awkward, better crooning songwriter—stand over the ocean's edge, flailing their acoustic guitars and wailing their songs to amours on some distant shore.

The album traces a quest for True Love that begins with the usual idealizations: love is a comfort ("Quiet Heart"), an eternal ideal ("Love Goes On"), a symbol ("Love Is A Sign"), an inevitability ("You Can't Say No Forever"), and a vestige of beauty in a desolate world ("I know with you/I've never seen the devil's eye"). Routed by reality (rejection, betrayal, and do-

mestic violence), the songwriters learn that love can be blinding as well as blind. "If you spend your life looking behind you/You don't see what's up front." Die-hard romantics, the Go-Betweens close the album with Forster's vow to dive for at least the memory of love. I can picture him too—leaping off the boulders, sliding gracefully through the air, sweeping up his catch, and whooping one last mating call as he flies off to Lover's Lane.

—Evelyn McDonnell

Soft Machine
Live at the Proms 1970
Reckless

MU
Reckless

The Crazy World of Arthur Brown
Strangelands
Reckless

There's a line on the back cover of *Woodstock* about the imperfections of the recording being like the scratches on worn leather. Old LPs—jackets, sleeves and vinyl—are old clothes: they lie there, rarely worn, decayed husks of your life'n'times. But CDs have altered pop's past—radio rock became "classic" when corporations conspired with the digital beast to repackage music history as floppy disc, selling the notion that value increases with dynamic range. I understand buying some new stuff on CD, but forking twenties for stuff recorded on moldy analog tapes, just so's you can hear the sludge shimmer? Fuck that. CDs of old, obscure material can't capture vinyl's sense—however false—of being a found object, a po-

laroid of the past, a lucky piece of shit. But so what. There's awesome stuff



in Da Rock House, and it don't stop the p-mod pulse of the Now, 'cause you can steal whatever you find. Hip hoppers have been raiding the motherfucker for a decade, hustling rare grooves and stink riffs. Guns N' Roses found some sweet toys in the attic, and labels like Reckless keep yanking fine slime out of the waste pipes.

Whoever runs this label—located in SF's Haight, tra la—has absorbed some kind of ancient goo from the asphalt around the offices. All these discs partake of a similar fried-egg-head vision of rock as cosmic pudding, a project whose overall success can be measured by the fact that only one of these discs—MU—was ever actually released (and for all I know the other two are time delay tabs of sonic spuz wank Owsley crystal). Sure, Soft Machine is revered in certain warped circles, but I've generally found their middle-ground between art-rock, av-garde classical and yazz pretty middlin'. Though their *Live at the Proms 1970* is interesting, it doesn't use arty pretense as a portal to anywhere mythic or mind-fuckin'. But Arthur Brown—known for his '68 hit "Fire"—not only recognizes the morphological similarity of your cerebral cortex and your buns, he shows you why and wherefore. 1969's *Strangelands* is a four-part piece of rigorously warped Anglo psychedelia, a frag-fest

Little Sully's Quest for Music by Mark Blackwell



of groky grooves, holy roller wretching, lizard ritual, creepy organ, free sax, magus vocals, and wooz-blues. Sure, it's half-baked, but who doesn't like licking the dough?

But if you're wary of the wack, skip these two and grab MU's MU. As Antenna Jimmy Semens, Jeff Cotton gutt-fiddled for Captain Beefheart (shows only occasionally) and Merrell Fankhouser wrote "Wipeout" (never shows at all), and all together they have really long hair. While not exactly rocking, they groove in a cool earthy way. Fankhouser's mouth drips melliflous blues, his and Cotton's twin slides slither through the sage, the sax slurps a six-pack while the drums take on the twilight. The Zeitgeist scars are everywhere: harmonies cop to CSN (gluk) and Airplane (eh) and Love (yipie!), and not only are there moons and suns and endless chains everywhere, but there's a few low frequency "OHMS" levitating the drum solo. Two years after this record, MU left L.A. and set up a banana plantation on Maui. Sounds like a one-way to Ludesville, I know, but the whole thing glows like some weird fuzz sunset, or a B cactus-hippie flick you can date by the length of the side-burns and how washed-out the color is. Reckless knows that dated stuff is tasty if the dates are gooey enough.

—Erik Davis

Raging Slab True Death Buy Our Records

Ten p.m., Friday night. All along the acid dump highways of New Jersey, BMW's are filled with mopeds listening to CDs of Guns N' Poses or Mega-Meth. Just outside of Newark, somebody notices a white glow swelling up beyond the highway shoulder. Four bikers shrieking "True Death!" blitz outta the chemical swamplands and across the crowded turnpike. The air is choked with gravel skid guitars and chrome chunklets of Elec-Tric-i-Tee. Raging Slab. Whadda fuck?

Awash in the glare of speeding headlights, the four riders of the Slab weave dangerously through the head banger traffic jam. Known individually only as Zero, Stripper, Rosie and Animal, these Marshall Stack choppers, these twist and shard specialists care not for motor metal speed limits or mucho quick time changes. Instead, they lean back in their saddles, downshift their Strats, and kick the blooze through a rocka rolla hootch tailpipe. A gang chord Mother-Chugger, shooting down the asphalt towards the nearest titty bar.

The Slab knows rock critics will claim they reinvent Motörhead like Motörhead reinvented Deep Purple. That's all irrelevant doggie-doo to

Rosie, as she jabs slide guitar cactus quills into the shin kicking, hard-on rhythm stylings of Animal and Stripper. Zero bugs his eyes out: his voice an oily rasp, his guitar now in slabbish agreement with Rosie's—he nearly falls off his goddamn hog!

Raging Slab are mobile acolytes of Thee Almighty Boogie. Dig them, my brothers.

—Pat Blashill

Dinosaur Jr. Bug SST

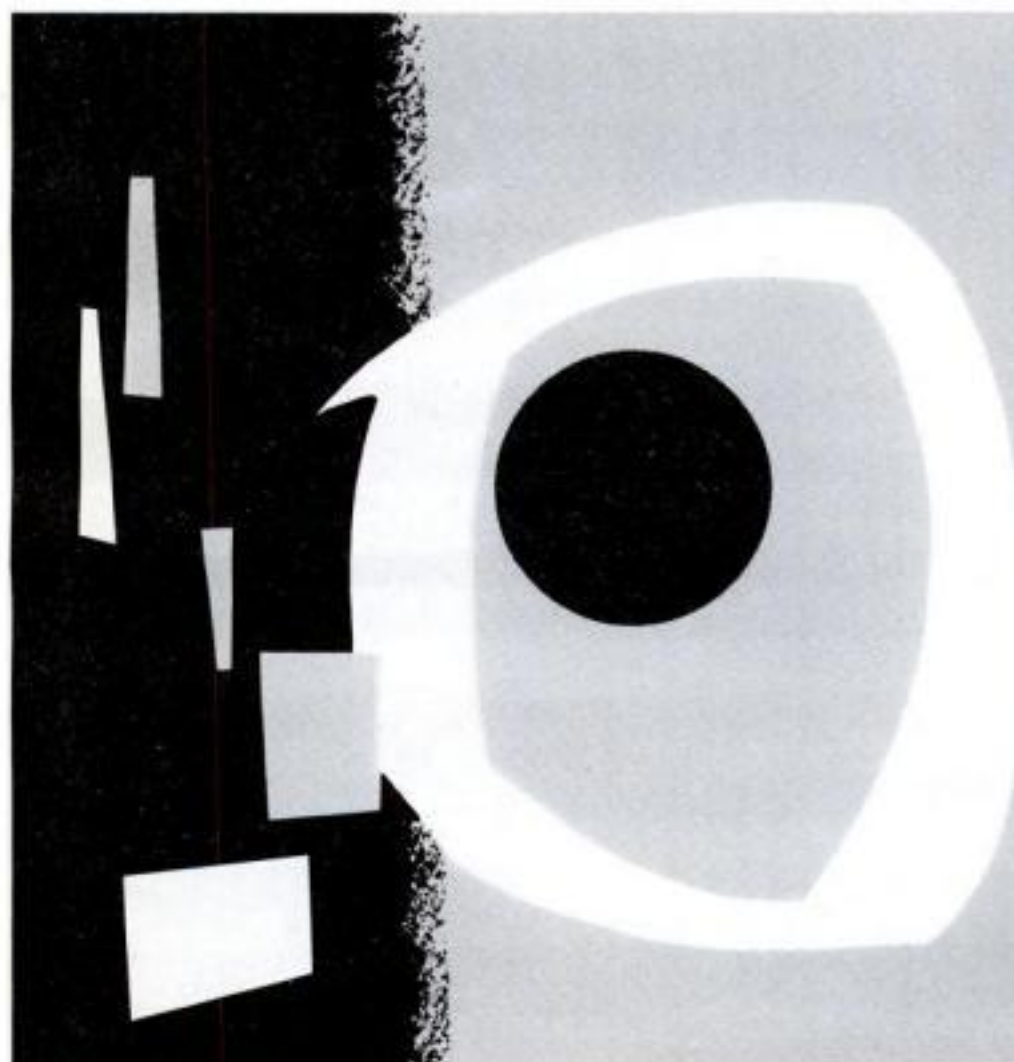
Dinosaur Jr. love animals. Bugs. Cats. Little furious things. Dinosaurs. I'm kinda glad they had to stick "Jr." on the end of their name, because it makes them sound like kids who discovered that big noisy guitars were just as fun as tadpoles. I mean, these boys didn't stare at the scumpond of guitar rock and say, "Gee, kinda stagnant. Let's make eddies." Instead, they stuck their post-punk axes deep into the sludge, and wonderful muck-monsters keep bubbling up. Their first disc was a fabulous bunch of heartfelt noise, but it sounded like a demo (it was). Their second collection had some rad melody melters, but side two dudleyed out. Then came a lamebutt cover of Frampton's "Show Me



the Way." Dinosaur Jr. don't need to rewrite the 70's that way—hell, I'm convinced that SST presses their records on vinyl recycled from all the LPs classic rock stations throw out when they get CD's.

Bug is high grade octane, a consistent buzz. I haven't been this moved by '80s distortion since Hüsker Dü's "Eight Miles High," and Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore even says Bug is "much, much better than Daydream Nation." All my other records are getting jealous. Tank these tunes up, and your soul will turn into a Harley, its broken muffler wailing as you hurtle down some nameless road near Neil Young's ranch, past miles of rolling hills and fresh ponds filled with fresh scum.

—Erik Davis




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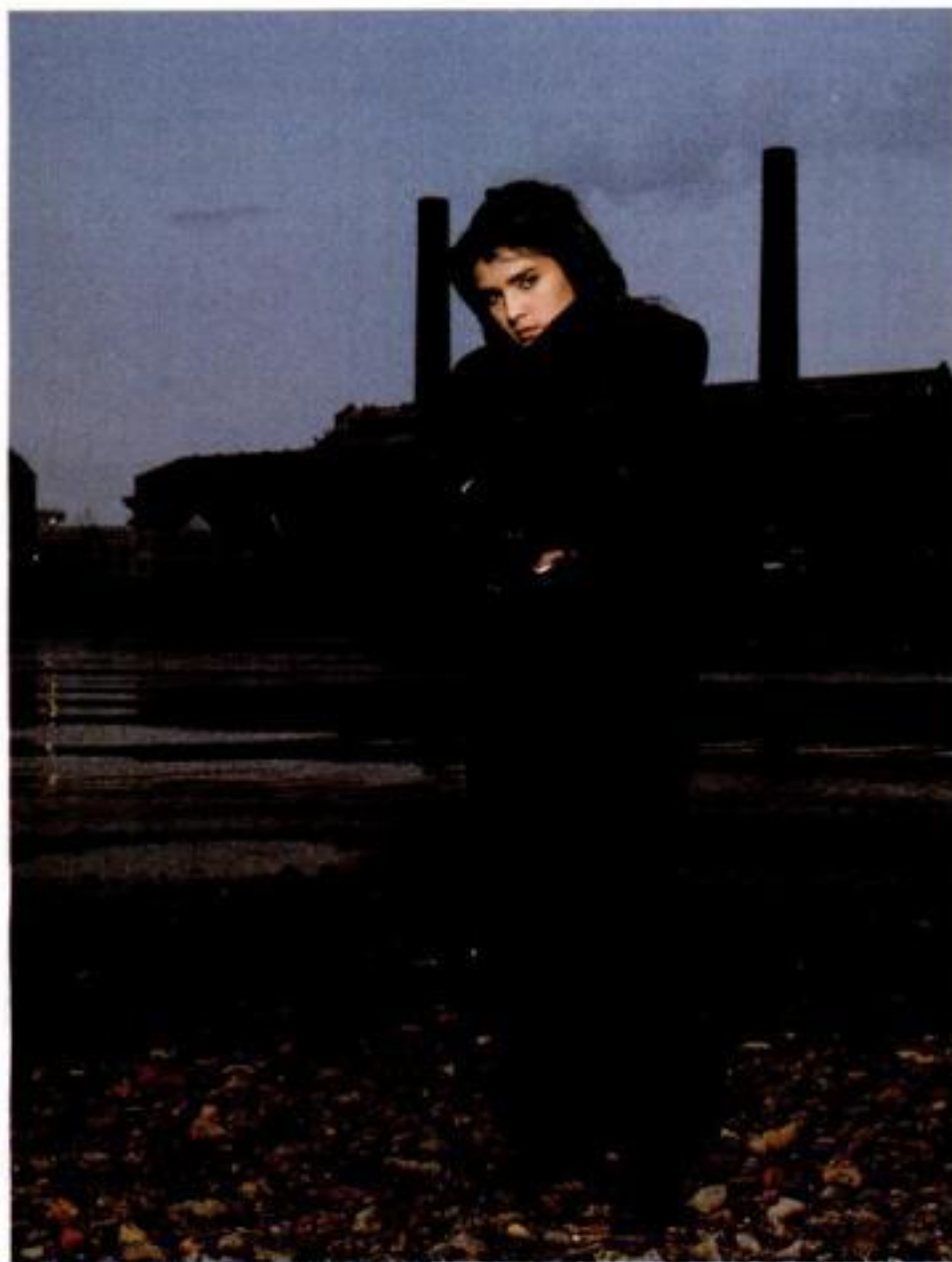
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SPIN OFFS

Ministry *The Land of Rape and Honey* (Sire)

The artphag synthesizer band nonpareil for people who crave hard-core, Ministry (Al Jourgenson and a floating retinue of assistants) accrete a nasty whirl of lyrics, samples, and effects around an unswerving beat that settles down somewhere in the neighborhood of your spleen. This approach has a lot going for it, not least of which is a brooding intensity not often found on a major-label release. At high volume, cuts like "Stigmata" and "Flashback," send you crawling back to the place of definitions, cowering under a tumbling steel rain. And these are the dance tracks. Not for everybody, but for those who require a compelling force to get their hips moving.

—Adam Greenfield

BIG DIPPER *Craps* (Homestead)

Everybody's first rock'n'roll band is usually their greatest: by the second or third time around, most musicians have swapped their once untainted creativity for desperation. Not so Big Dipper, ex-members of The Embarrassment, Dumptruck, and Volcano Suns, who came together in Boston over two years ago with modest ambitions and a healthy lack of cynicism. A favorite in college radio land, they bring a brash approach to the rock standards: Bill Goffrier's impassioned strains are on a par with a David Byrne or Robert Smith, and he and vocal foil Gary Walleik weave guitars through a hypnotic course of overlapping riffs, solos, and layered textures that recall The Buzzcocks' heyday. Lyrically, they prefer anecdotes to love songs, relating a UFO landing on "Semjasee" and the hilarious story of how, at an overly zealous demolition party, "Ron Klaus Wrecked His House." From the record's title to the album's final, frivolous statement that "for a song to be beautiful, the artist must be free," Big Dipper demonstrates that a smile is as welcome as a scowl. *Craps* won't shake the rock world apart—Big Dipper's evident lack of first-time-around desire is not the stuff of legends—but for now it is enough that it captures a group still fresh, excited, and unafraid.

—Tony Fletcher

The Jack Rubies *Fascinatin' Vacation* (TVT) London's Jack Rubies are no better than other Brit-indie practioners of disfigured pop songs (The Soup Dragons, Closes Lobsters, Wedding Present, etc.), but their appeal to the U.S. college market is assured from that name on down. Chosen in good-natured innocence from a Trivial Pursuit question (true fact), it proved the prefect cheeky moniker on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of JFK's assassination, as well as a gateway into the band's own obsession with Americana. Their healthy irreverence for the stars and stripes is displayed from the music's Velvets minimalism through the spaghetti western influence on the title track and cover of America's "Horse With No Name," to the heartless ode for a dead Elvis, "Vegas Throat." It reaches fruition on the CD-only track "Dallas Blues," which looks down the barrel of Ruby's gun while the frantic collision of abrasive guitars and violins sounds like the damned thing has just gone off.

On the personal side, The Jack Rubies are very evidently in love. The single "Be With You" (the ace in the pack), is a lush collage of tumbling acoustic guitars, sparse piano and a deep voice promising unswerving loyalty. Right now, the promise is there, and how it will develop after a vacation across America with guitars in hand is the real fascination.

—Tony Fletcher

Coroner *Punishment for Decadence* (Noise International)

Furiously intricate Gothic rush runs, jagged death-rattle rhythmic bludgeoning, and alienated croak-vocals make this a very convincing hunk of Euro death metal. Formerly roadies for fellow Swissters Celtic Frost, Coroner have quaffed deep on the Frostie's thrash visions, but play a tighter, even more baroque breed of speed-core. Not that this stuff has anything to do with punk—you got a Rodin reaper from the Artmuseum Zurich on the cover and werdz like "We'll drift thru the universe no more reponsibiity (sic)/ High above the clouds far from reality." But I dig this disc for the reason I admire a lot of speed metal: it's got sonic rigor (mortis?). Coroner's prog metal (de)compositions fuse melodic line and solo: ludicrously rapid notes that melt into rococo sound-scapes while the rhythm keeps fucking up every attempt your poor bones make to accommodate the jack-hammer gear-shifting. I guess it's not jazz, but this dense brand of speed metal is a lot more complex and impressive than anyone ever bothers mentioning. So I'm mentioning it.

—Erik Davis

affectless prose but unmistakable here, it's the passion of a modern idealist, someone committed to the human imagination and its psycho-techno-social byproducts as the only protection against the dangers of the suburbs, where, he has said, "You're not going to get mugged walking down the street, but somebody might steal your soul."

"Whatever happens," swears the hero of Ballard's 1979 Sheppertoniad, *The Unlimited Dream Company*, "I will be true to my obsessions."

"Yes," says Ballard. "I've always followed that in all my life. I've always tried to do justice to my obsessions, and never hold anything back in anything I've written. I put everything on the page. I don't pretend that I am something that I am not as the author. Because I do have an idealistic belief that human beings are not a gang of raging psychopaths. We're not a sort of huge Manson gang. On the other hand, one mustn't deny the imagination. The alternatives aren't Charles Manson on the one hand and, I don't know, the Puritan fathers on the other. There is a middle way." ☐

mages petition. The judge directed the jury to find malpractice, but Revici's attorney, Sam Abady, took the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals and reversed that decision.

As a result of the appeal, a landmark precedent was established. The court wrote: "We see no reason why a patient should not be allowed to make an informed decision to go outside currently approved medical methods, in search of an unconventional treatment. While a patient should be encouraged to exercise care for his own safety, we believe that an informed decision to avoid surgery and conventional chemotherapy is within the patient's rights to determine what shall be done with his own body."

It was a tremendous victory for advocates of alternative medicine. But the attempts of narrow-minded opponents to revoke Revici's license have not ceased. Abady explains: "The forces at work to try and limit access by patients to nonconventional cancer care are formidable indeed. The reason is, as with all mavericks in an age where knowledge is limited, [Revici] is a tremendous threat, be-

cause the sacred cows of traditional modes of treatment are not the modalities that he uses, but they are the prevailing modalities through which the medical establishment—'cancer-crats,' the cancer bureaucracy—earns millions and millions of dollars every year."

Revici would rather assist the body to heal itself, through a diligent, time-consuming, holistic process, than cutting, burning, and/or poisoning the disease. Traditional solutions of surgery, radiation, and toxic chemotherapy have been shown in case after case to cause extreme physical and emotional trauma, often exacerbating the symptoms and speeding progression to an excruciatingly painful, and tremendously expensive, death.

There are some cancer organizations, however, that see the value in Revici's work. On July 5, 1987, at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, the Cancer Control Society presented its Humanitarian Award to Revici, "compassionate physician and internationally acclaimed research scientist, whose theories and medical discoveries have changed the directions in the non-toxic treatment and control of cancer and AIDS."

The certificate added, "You [Revici] have refused to be compromised by a half-century of misguided opposition to your medical discoveries.

Through your genius, courage, and generosity, renewed life has been given to thousands."

Is there, then, any hope that this physician, whom most patients call a savior and many AMA bureaucrats describe as a snake-oil salesman, will ever be given the recognition he evidently deserves?

If history repeats itself, the answer may be yes. Dr. Coley, highly recognized for his Coley's toxin, a valid biologic approach to cancer, was considered a charlatan and a fraud only a decade ago. Today he is known in even the most conventional circles as the father of cancer immunology.

Perhaps, then, Dr. Emanuel Revici will one day be known as the father of non-toxic chemotherapy who helped end the devastating age of AIDS. ☐



The Institute of Applied Biology is located at 164 East 91st Street, New York, NY 10028. (212) 876-9669.

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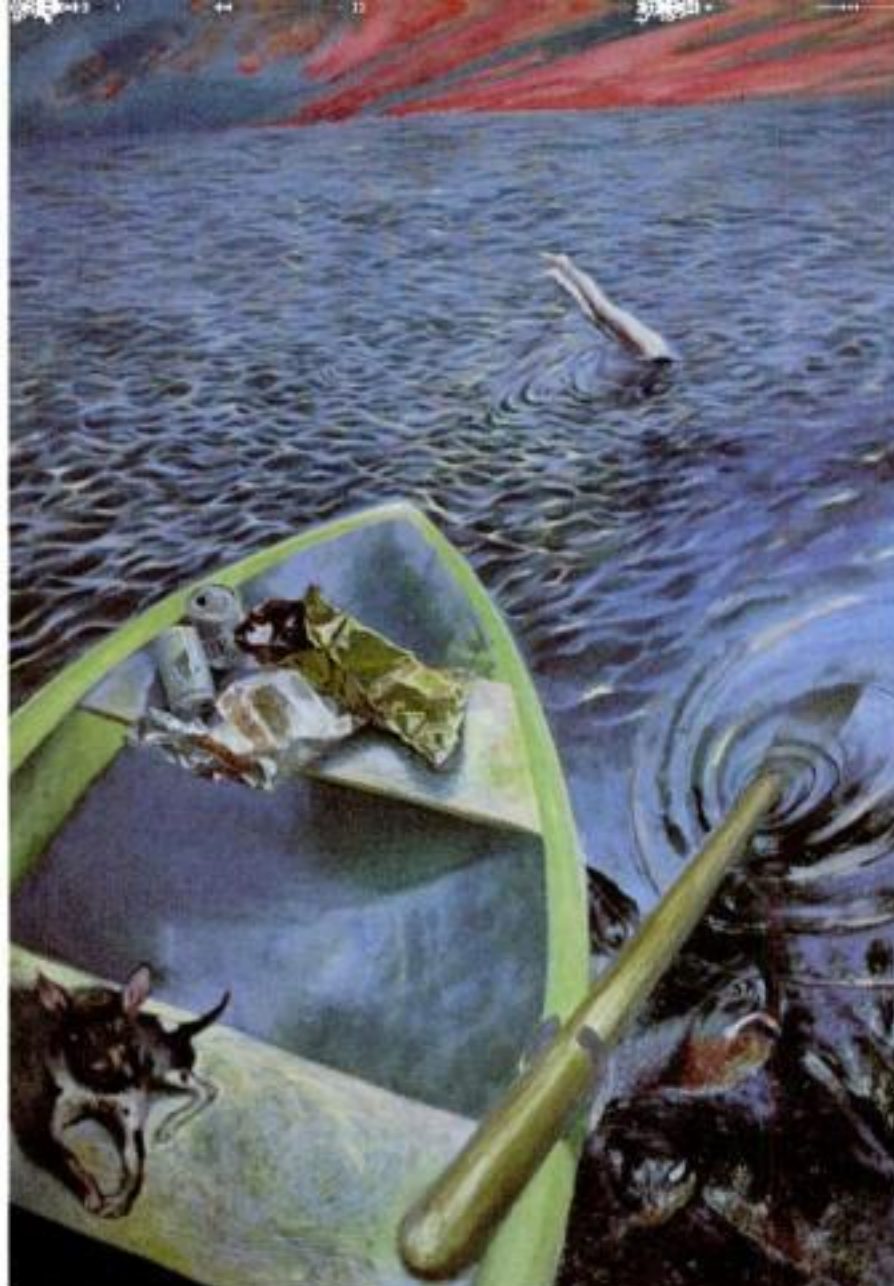
"THE TRINITY SESSION" is their RCA debut album featuring the first single,

"SWEET JANE"

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SINGLE S

Christina Bothwell



Column by John Leland

In 1985, the Original Concept, a hip hop deejay crew from Long Island, got invited to perform at a community center in Miami. They'd hosted parties before, but this was to be their first paid performance. They weren't expecting much. They had a single out, "Knowledge Me," but even their record company, Def Jam, wasn't wholly behind it, and in New York it was a very underground hit at best, overshadowed somewhat by the loopy collage on the B-side, "Can You Feel It?" A patchwork of snatches from old break records laid over a deep electronic bass, punctuated by the repeated title question, the B-side hit local b-boys sideways: it wasn't really a hip hop record, but it wasn't quite a dance record, either. It was a throwback to the electronic rap records Afrika Bambaataa and Soulsonic Force made with Arthur Baker in the early 80s, and a prelude to the sample-heavy records that took over in the summer of '86. But what it really was was a record with a lot of bass on it. Both of Def Jam's executive partners admitted, even at the time, to not understanding the song. They only dropped it on the B-side to bolster the

record's slim chances on the market. Against the backdrop of L.L. Cool J and Run-D.M.C.'s crushing, down-tempo jams, it was just an exciting blip. "We were happy, though," remembers the Original Concept's Doctor Dré, who was then doubling as the Beastie Boys' deejay. "We had our Def Jam jackets. We couldn't believe somebody was actually going to fly us to Miami, plus we were going to get paid."

"We got there," he continues, "and it was culture shock. They gave us a limo. First thing they said was our record was No. 1 on Miami radio. We thought they must've been bugging." They were expecting to play on the bottom of a bill in a room the size of Doctor Dré's basement. By the end of the weekend, they'd appeared on television, been mobbed by fans, and headlined a medium-sized theater. "I was just coming off the Beastie Boys tour," says Doctor Dré, "and I'd seen hysteria. But it was nothing like what we got in Miami. We went home and asked why our record wasn't in the stores." It was one of New York's first lessons in the workings of Miami rap music. Four years later, it remains one of the last. Caught in a one-way information exchange, Miami has developed a potent regional scene that follows its own leaders. Influenced heavily by "Can You Feel It?" and the

Original Concept's follow-up B-side, "Pump That Bass (Get a Little Stupid ... Ho!)," the town that now calls itself "the city of boom" has dealt a wild card that falls between New York hip hop and dance music. It is called **bass music**.

"It's the most fucked-up thing," says Barry Zeger, one of the partners in Bassment Records, a New Jersey label that specializes in house and Latin hip hop 12-inch singles. "We call up our distributors, and all they want to talk about is bass music. All these groups that can't get arrested up here, like Le Juan Love or the Gucci Brothers—the Gucci Brothers!—are selling hundreds of thousands of records throughout the South and West. On the 12-inch level, bass music is the only thing that really sells nationally." It is perhaps the 12-inch single's last frontier.

The godfathers of bass music are the **2 Live Crew**, who set the standard for the music in the fall of 1986 with a frenetic collage dance record called "Throw the 'D'" (Luke Skyywalker), an uncharacteristically polite euphemism for "Throw the Dick" (bass music, like West Coast rap, is often deeply, inventively profane; at least two record store employees have been arrested for selling 2 Live Crew albums or cassettes to minors). "Throw the 'D,'" built on samples of

the Herman Kelly Band's 1978 "Dance to the Drummer's Beat," was fast and sonically clean; even when Treach DJ Mr. Mixx scratched, it sounded nonviolent, more like a keyboard sound effect than a rape of technology. Though steeped in all the right hip hop references, the song brought more of a dance orientation, like Kraftwerk souped up and culturally rewired. In Miami—which has been one of the country's strongest centers for dance music since the days of K.C. and the Sunshine Band, George MacRae, Peter Brown, and Foxy—this didn't hit the b-boys sideways. It sounded about right. Built for club play, the song was a dance instruction record, offering advice on how dancers should throw their 'd's. It was the flip side of the then-burgeoning Miami disco explosion led by Exposé, Company B, and Will to Power. More than that, it was a record with a lot of bass. 2 Live Crew's first album, which also included the bass anthem, "We Want Some P _y!!," went on to sell in the area of a quarter of a million copies, with understandably marginal radio support and no sales in New York. On the back of the jacket, it urged, "ALL FEMALES SEND PICTURES!!!" It was a nice touch.

If 2 Live Crew started it, a posse of performers was ready to pick up the momentum. Atlanta's MC Shy-D siezed the Crew's computerized, boomy sound and label affiliation, and repeated its success. As the Gucci Brothers, teenager Le Juan Love, Maggotron, and others follow, it looks like the gates are open. "The only thing keeping New York on top right now," says Public Enemy's Chuck D., "is the New York accent. New York is still the source for slang." As hip hop acts like Rob Base begin to break down the barriers between hip hop and dance music, look for regional boundaries to fall as well, creating all sorts of weird, hyperinventive hybrids. It should be an exciting year.

THE A-LIST:

M.C. Tee & Lord Tasheem, "Gangster Nine" (Profile)

Big Daddy Kane, "I'll Take You There (Remix)"/"Wrath of Kane" (Cold Chillin'/Warner)

New Order, "Fine Time" (Qwest/Warner)

Kev-E-Kev & Ak-B, "Keep on Doin'" (DNA International)

Jomanda, "Make My Body Rock" (Big Beat)

R.E.M., "Orange Crush" (Warner)

D.J. Duquan and the Wonderluv Dan, "Let the Music Play" (Pow Wow)

Cameo, "Skin I'm In" (PolyGram)

Boogie Down Productions, "Jack of Spades"/"I'm Still #1 (Numero Uno Rerecording)" (Jive/RCA)

hands, which were found coated with vaporous gunshot residue. A forensic pathologist reported to the Grand Jury that Crist's death 'not only is a suicide but it isn't a close call.' Besides that, a few years ago, a Pennsylvania state official shot himself in the mouth with a .357 in Harrisburg. The suicide was shown on TV.

If my expert is wrong, I've blown my whole case, right?

Rev. Sharpton is adept at conjuring up untestable assertions like secret cults and anonymous witnesses to be named later. But he is less skilled at explaining away hard evidence that pokes holes in the rape scenario. Although Tawana was found in a deplorable state—apparently unconscious, covered with excrement, jeans burnt at the crotch, and the words, "KKK," "NIGGER," and "BITCH" charcoaled on her chest and torso—none of the expected indications of gang-rape were present. Ironically, Tawana's own body—inside and out—seemed to deny her story. Even so, Sharpton remains undaunted by the immaculate violation described in the Grand Jury report.

Tawana's Body

Aren't you bothered that there is not one shred of physical evidence to show that Tawana was raped? An examination of the vagina and pelvis revealed no cuts, bruises, swelling, dried blood, or deep redness. Although she was attacked by several men, there was no trace of foreign pubic hair. Nor did they find any sperm in the rape kit analyzed by the FBI.

There was a rape conviction in New York involving a blind lady who couldn't identify her attacker. I can show you the clipping. When you're dealing with a victim who was thoroughly bathed at the hospital, physical evidence is not the basis of a case.

But according to the Grand Jury report, she was not washed in the pelvic area before the rape kit was administered and the kit showed no sperm. I feel there is a good possibility that the rape kit was tampered with.

You are not in the least suspicious that Tawana, unbruised and unscratched, was well treated by the sadistic group of rapists who enjoyed rubbing her with excrement?

Not at all. People in white supremacy cults just don't brutalize their rape victims. Their motives are different. They don't have to beat a girl. As Tawana's Aunt Juanita said from the beginning, she was given some milky substance and was dazed. Why would you bop the girl? You're dealing with prosecutors here. The fact that they let her eat and bathe does not mean that she was well treated. She was not on a vacation at the Hilton Hotel in Nassau, the Bahamas. We're talking about cultism.

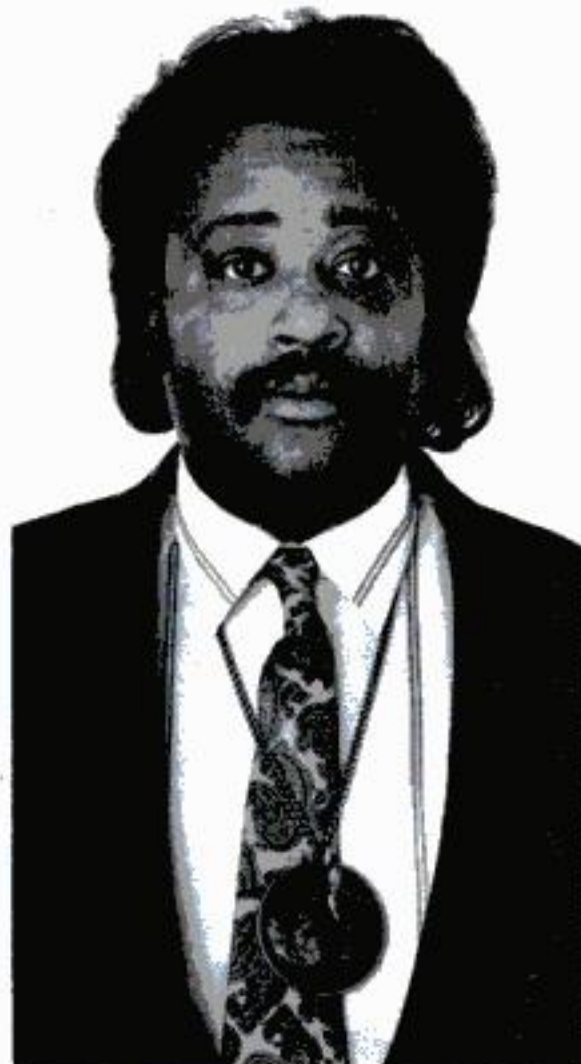
If Tawana was drugged with this milky substance, how come a test for 400 drugs turned up nothing in her system?

No one ever said it was drugs. No one ever said that's what knocked her out. I did not connect the white substance with her unconsciousness.

So what knocked her out?

I don't want to say. I didn't concentrate on this because it doesn't affect her story.

The most intriguing and—not surprisingly—the most elusive piece of evidence in favor of Tawana's version, is a DNA fingerprint of the five rapists that the lawyers are inexplicably keeping in the dark. They announced this amazing news last July on WLBB, a black news radio station and their main media outlet. Somehow, the DNA claim went unnoticed in the press, though Mason noted its significance in a private conversation with me.



How did they come by this fabulous specimen when the first rape test by the FBI returned negative? Mason told me that Tawana was admitted to a second hospital, Westchester County Medical Center, on Wednesday, December 2, three days after being released from the first hospital where she had been rushed the previous Saturday, November 28. Another swab of her genitals was purportedly taken and sent out for analysis. The stupefying results—that is, the isolation of five genetically distinct sperm samples, should settle the dispute once and for all. If real, the lawyers should be waving the slides at the media. Yet Sharpton strangely downplays this smoking gun.

The Missing Quintet

You maintain that five different kinds of sperm were found inside Tawana.

Our five semens is from Westchester County records. After Tawana was released from St. Francis Hospital, where she was brought on the day she was found, she couldn't walk and continued to discharge. So they brought her to Westchester

Continued on page 80

TDK PRESENTS COLLEGE RADIO TOP 40

Most-played albums on college
and non-commercial radio

1. **SONIC YOUTH**, *Daydream Nation*, Blast First-Enigma, 2. **R.E.M.**, *Green*, Warner Bros., 3. **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS**, *Lincoln*, Bar/None-Restless, 4. **MINISTRY**, *The Land of Rape And Honey*, Sire-WB, 5. **WATERBOYS**, *Fisherman's Blues*, Ensign-Chrysalis, 6. **JULIAN COPE**, *My Nation Underground*, Island, 7. **DINOSAUR JR.**, *Bug*, SST, 8. **THAT PETROL EMOTION**, *End of the Millennium Psychosis Blues*, Virgin, 9. **LIME SPIDERS**, *Volatile*, Caroline, 10. **FEELIES**, *Only Life*, Coyote-A&M, 11. **U2**, *Rattle And Hum*, Island, 12. **COCTEAU TWINS**, *Blue Bell Knoll*, 4AD-Capitol, 13. **THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS**, *Love Junk*, Chrysalis, 14. **BIG DIPPER**, *Craps*, Homestead, 15. **NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS**, *Tender Prey*, Mute-Enigma, 16. **SCRUFFY THE CAT**, *Moons of Jupiter*, Relativity, 17. **SKINNY PUPPY**, *VIVIssectVI*, Nettwerk-Capitol, 18. **FRONT 242**, *Front By Front*, Wax Trax, 19. **THE FALL**, *I Am Curious Oranj*, Beggars Banquet-RCA, 20. **SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES**, *Peepshow*, Geffen, 21. **JANE'S ADDICTION**, *Nothing's Shocking*, Warner Bros., 22. **BILLY BRAGG**, *Workers Playtime*, Elektra, 23. **EDIE BRICKELL & THE NEW BOHEMIANS**, *Shooting Rubber Bands At The Stars*, Geffen, 24. **JACK RUBIES**, *Fascinatin' Vacation*, TVT, 25. **LAIBACH**, *Let It Be*, Mute-Enigma, 26. **DEAD MILKMEN**, *Beelzebubba*, Fever-Enigma, 27. **FISHBONE**, *Truth And Soul*, Columbia, 28. **GAME THEORY**, *Two Steps From The Middle Ages*, Enigma, 29. **SAINTS**, *Prodigal Son*, TVT, 30. **VOICE OF THE BEEHIVE**, *Let It Bee*, London-PG, 31. **STAY AWAKE**, *Various Artists*, A&M, 32. **GO-BETWEENS**, *16 Lovers Lane*, Beggars Banquet-Capitol, 33. **ULTRA VIVID SCENE**, *Ultra Vivid Scene*, 4AD-Rough Trade, 34. **TROTSKY**, *ICEPICK*, Baby, SST, 35. **HUMAN MUSIC**, *Various Artists*, A&M, 36. **DREAMS SO REAL**, *Rough Night In Jericho*, Arista, 37. **OFRA HAZA**, *Shaday*, Sire-WB, 38. **A HOUSE**, *On Our Big Fat Merry-Go-Round*, Sire-Reprise, 39. **RAPEMAN**, *Two Nuns And A Pack Mule*, Touch And Go, 40. **PUSSY GALORE**, *Sugarshit Sharp (EP)*, Caroline.

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UNDERGROUND

Graham Jeffries, Fat, Jon Moritsugu's *Sleazy Rider*, KK Null, Zeni Geva, Lazy Cowgirls, Only a Mother, Nick Cave book, Johnny Winter

Column by Byron Coley

It's a day or two after the election and I'm so depressed at the thought of what the Supreme Court is going to be like for the next few decades that it's hard for me to get too enthusiastic about anything. If it happens that you voted for Bush please don't read any further. There is nothing for you here.

Graham Jeffries and his band, *This Kind of Punishment*, have long been staple inside my brainbox. After years of investigating avenues of damaged folk-psych distress, like Pearls Before Swine during their ESP period, TKP have seemingly packed it in, but Graham soldiers on. His first solo LP, *Messages for the Cakekitchen* (Flying Nunn, PO Box 2915, Auckland NZ) is a watershed of heavy, fluid anguish which ranks with Jandek at his most propulsive. Dark, brooding voices make statements of pain, a guitar eats its own guts out via a series of circular lunges defining ever smaller defensive perimeters, and some friends try to help out but end up falling into the dank fen that Graham wove around the condemned office building in which this was recorded. But don't be put off by this gloomic hyperbole. This won't bring you down any more than Robert Wyatt's *Rock Bottom* or Kevin Ayers' *Confessions of Dr. Dream* would. Jeffries piles up elements of despair to create a record that shimmers with a beatific inner light. Van Morrison always used to whinny that genius comes through happiness, but the opposite is not necessarily untrue.

When I was in college in western Mass., there was a truly horrible bar band that played locally called Fat. They recorded a coupla albums, did a live rock opera in Springfield, and died a well-deserved death. I recently got a record by another band called **Fat**, and I am happy as a hen to report that they are nothing at all like their nominal predecessors. This Fat is a trio, originally from Canada but now based in Spain, who do some high energy improv'n'whatnot that goes from the vaguely Chinese tube scrambling of "Nu-Pa-Yip" to the stinging, post-Beefheart guitar wrestling of "A Man Is His Dog." The line-up is rock-



The Lazy Cowgirls: Purveyors of the sort of ugh that really shoots out the lights.

'n'roll basic—bass, drums, guitar—but these gents are focused on something that resembles only the most pointedly fractured rock stuff. Congruent with Crazy Backwards Alphabet, I suppose, but much more likely to sound like pure experimentation than fusion. A good thing, any thug will agree.

I don't know if you care about the state of underground film and video (you should), but from where I'm sitting the field looks more fertile than ever. Every schmeedle with a sixth grade education has a VCR these days, and that means that you don't have to be a boho with access to a 16mm projector to fry your eyes with the latest subterranean eyeshit. All you need is a TV and a few bucks to put yourself in the very vanguard of filmic hepcats. And one guy who'd be more than willing to pocket a few of your hard-earned kopeks is **Jon Moritsugu** (30 Highland St. #5, Providence, RI 02860). His latest opus, *Sleazy Rider*, based loosely (real loosely) on the famous Peter Fonda travelogue, features a female duo of sausage smugglers up to no good in

the vicinity of Shitville. The two run riot with a hitchhiker, a loco hausfrau, and one of the meanest sausage hounds you'll ever see. Naturally, no good comes to them, but the film's use of crude animation, heisted film footage, and genial low-grade yucks is well worth seeing. The soundtrack's a doozy, too.

Something big and ugly is happening in Japan. A lot of people think of the country's music scene only as the synth pop rinky-dinked by such panties as the Plastics, Yellow Magic Orchestra, etc. but there are a whole bunch of other ballgames going on. One of the most interesting revolves around **KK Null**, a crashing, post-no-wave guitar forcefield who collaborated with **Zeni Geva** on *How to Kill* (Nux Organization, 3-690-47, Hibarigaoka, Zama, Kanagawa, Japan). And yeah, I realize the yen is killing the dollar, but if you like stuff that crushes your chest like Play-dough, you can't make a better investment. Something like a very unholy version of the early Swans crossed with Gore trying to play the Buttholes' version of

Sabbath, Zeni Geva must be heard at loud volumes to be truly appreciated. Played properly, a record like this could hurt you bad. Very badly indeed.

The Lazy Cowgirls are one of the planet's ranking punk bands. Drawing from their midwestern lunkhead origins, sometimes they get so carried away that their blast approaches hardcore's non-differentiated howleen, but they have the chop-sense to hold things together, and Pat Todd's voice and Doug Phillips's leadwork keep the tunes tuneful no matter how fast things get. Originally from the state that "blessed" us with Danny Quayle, the Cowgirls have been L.A. natives for most of this decade and are now starting to get their due. I know that the pair of loud and mighty shows I saw last week drew hoots of love; now you—the bedridden fan—can approximate their clubby barnstorming with their new live LP, *Radio Cowgirl* (Sympathy, 4901 Virginia Ave., Long Beach, CA 90805). Mashing their way through a haystack of hep covers (Larry Williams's "Slow

Down," the Saints' "Know Your Product," etc.) and a heap of their self-penned, hard-ass covers-to-be, these boys purvey the kind of ough that sneaks into your brain and turns out the lights. If you ever got the urge to flail, well here's your *carte blanche*.

It's a safe bet that **Only a Mother** have spent some quality time with the Residents' wax output. You hear a lot of Residential foo-fah-rah in the vocal jakery of the opening track ("Bricks Are Naked, Dammit"), but this goofus/experimental band knows more tricks than that. On their first LP, *Riding White Alligators* (Private Studio, PO Box 531, Wyandotte, MI 48192 or through NMDSA, 500 Broadway, NYC 10012) they jump through some of the same musical hoops as such legendary West Coast units as the Doo Doo Ettes and Le Forte 4. The songs sometimes seem based in the English oddball-prog tradition (Soft Machine, Hatfield and the North, etc.), but their parts are often made up of (or plugged into) distinctly American garage-weirdo matter. For each sophisto word-gush-with-gratuitous-time-changes, there's a slice'n'-dice basement-age instrumental that hovers somewhere between gameshow muzak and Eugene Chadbourne's ensemble work. The band does have a slight tendency to sound like a buncha post-collegiate wise-guys trying to impress with mere cleverness, but this is largely suppressed by the genuine invention and swankiness of the playing. I am tempted to say that some of Pahl's euphonium work might goad an inquisitive youngster into studying the intricacies of this magnificent instrument, but unfortunately I know better. More's the pity. IT'S A GOOD INSTRUMENT.

The rock music world has produced precious little stuff with any semblance of literary value. Yeah, some songster's particularly clever turn of phrase might tip your trouser every now and then, but you probably gawp at those "tricky" O. Henry stories too. Well, whatever your reading level you may well get a charge out of a small hardcover collection of **Nick Cave's** writings called *King Ink* (Black Spring, 46 Rodwell Rd., London SE22, UK). Pulling together many of Nick's lyrics, a handful of the legendary one-act plays he scripted with Lydia Lunch, a lovely prose piece about *Einsturzende Neubauten*, and a variety of other bits, *King Ink* is a shockingly good read. Cave's lyrics-as-sung always seemed prone to false depth, but viewed on a page the words (especially the later ones) have a greasy, lopsided power. The vision of a mythical America portrayed (in all its low-rent, white trash guises) is as cool an outsider's view as that offered by Richard Hallas in his noir classic *You*

Play the Black And the Red Comes Up (Black Lizard paperback). Unlike those of us who are too close to the whole shebang, Nick can see the scum for the buckets. And reading this little doll is giving me a whole new slant on the guy's recent solo career. Good for him.

The relative merits of **Johnny Winter's** recent work are not the sorta things I think about too often. I remember being fairly disappointed with *Second Winter* back in '69/'70 and I haven't bought a record by the guy since. I did have the misfortune to see his band at a rock festival in '72, but we won't speak of that. He's got this "new" record out, though, called *Birds Can't Row Boats* (Relix, PO Box 92, Brooklyn, NY 11229). If I were going to buy an albino record this year, *Birds* would probably be it. The album slaps together a batch of chestnuts from Johnny's golden decade ('59-'69) and the quality and variety of the tracks is pretty impressive. Material ranges from fake rave-up Stax-soul (the Traits doing Lowell Fulson's "Tramp") to the blown-Dylan-psych of the title track and "Avocado Green," to a great January '68 session on National Steel Guitar. A few duds are scattered around the disk, and the cover is uglier than a glow worm, but shit—we're talking about a guy I wrote off almost 20 years ago. So let's cut him some slack.

One reason that I'm not too crazy about cassettes is that not very many of 'em are up to standard. And my standard is pretty damn high, due to a few tape labels whose every step is a golden pearl. One is Olympia's K, another is Dunedin's Xpressway, but the one my mind is on right now is No Age/Old Age (PO box 186, Harrisburg, OH 43126). Each of their exquisite releases has illuminated a dark and special corner of Columbus's dream zones and the label's new compilation, *You Are You*, is no exception. You may or may not recognize the names of participants associated with such Ohio legends as Vertical Slit, the Quotas, Moses Carryout, the True Believers, and Squidfish, but you'll sure recognize the material and packaging as shit worth caring about. Most every track here is a glower—Great Plains doing an instrumental "Rutherford B. Hayes," Mike Mulvaney singing along to one of Chicago's dimmest hits, the Campfire Girls showing that there's more to gal-folk than tweety Baez leftovers. This is a high quality C-46 packed to the rafters with class, noise, and gump. If you can't envision a cassette this fine you've got no business owning a tape deck.

Be a groovy cat and send me no crap. Thanks. PO Box 301, West Somerville, MA 02144. ☺

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AL SHARPTON from page 77

County for another series of tests. I have a copy of the document that shows five semens.

What doctor signed it?

Off the top of my head, I don't know. Didn't you talk to Mason about seeing the document? You can see all the records.

I asked Mason to show me the test, but he refused. But I think I know why. Westchester County has no such document. The hospital denies doing any sperm tests on Tawana. The Attorney General's office has all the hospital records, and they deny it, too. Apparently, you have something nobody else has even seen.

Apparently, I and the *City Sun* paper and the Brawley family have documents nobody else has.

If you've got it, it's the clincher.

Could be. But, ah, that's not the—well, well all right. I mean, it could be. That's not the smoking gun I have in mind, but it's important, yeah. I still say the case is going to center around the condition in which Tawana is found and how that happened, and Harry Crist.

Rev. Sharpton cannot slip and slide around a DNA probe. Only three facilities in the country do forensics of this sophistication and none of them has heard of the Tawana quintet. The most likely lab for the job would have been Lifecodes, which is just down the road from the Westchester County Medical Center. But Dr. Ron Dorazio, a vice president of the company, said that he has never seen a five-man sample in a criminal case.

Neither has John Huss, a vice president of Cellmark Diagnostics in Germantown, Maryland. "It's virtually impossible to find a usable specimen five days after the event, especially during menses," commented Huss. (According to Rev. Sharpton, Tawana was raped for the last time on November 27, that is, five days before her admission to Westchester County. She was then in full menstrual flow during this alleged test.)

However, Huss noted that under perfect laboratory conditions, DNA testing works for five-man or even greater samples. Coincidentally, Huss told me that a Cellmark scientist had recently completed just such an experiment: he mixed the sperm of five men in a solution of blood and from this glop he plucked out five distinct DNA fingerprints.

Dr. Ed Blake, a forensic serologist at Forensic Science Associates outside San Francisco, laughed at Sharpton's DNA claim. "In theory, yes, it's possible," Dr. Blake remarked. "But in practice it's not. As each man ejaculates, he not only dilutes the semen of his predecessor but removes some of it when he withdraws. The vagina, which is like a collapsible bag, can only hold about a teaspoon of fluid. Three-quarters of the ejaculate drains out almost immediately. That's why you have all those stains on mattresses. So the likelihood of detecting sperm from even a single man after five days is very, very remote. Anyone who tells you they've got DNA fingerprints for five men after that long delay is lying."

But what about the *City Sun*? Sharpton said the weekly Black Nationalist tabloid from Brooklyn had a copy of the disputed document. Yet, he is mistaken on this point as well. A reliable source at the *City Sun* told me that the paper never saw it. And when I pressed Mason for a look, he stopped taking my calls.

But the good news is that one of the accused



rapists, Assistant D.A. Pagones has an open mind about donating some of his chromosomes for comparison with Rev. Sharpton's mythical specimen. "I might do it under the right circumstances," said the weary Pagones. "I've called his bluff before."

Explaining The Unexplainable

Tawana Brawley's story and the destructive style of her advisers are so perplexing that alternate theories have popped up to explain the unexplainable. Some of the theories are less plausible than others, but all are more plausible than what is seen on the surface of this saga.

The Family Theory

All investigative roads lead back to the family, because the combined sleuthing of the Grand Jury and the sensation-grabbing media ran into a dead-end everywhere else. If Pagones and his supposed white supremacist buddies didn't do it, and if none of Tawana's party-loving teenage friends have come forward with a hint of her itinerary, then suspicion points homeward.

For example, on the Saturday of the appalling discovery, Glenda Brawley was seen sitting in her car in front of her old apartment building at the same time that Tawana was observed hopping into a garbage bag and lying down on the ground out back. Mrs. Brawley told detectives that she returned to the apartment by coincidence to pick up her mail and she said that the box had been full with unforwarded letters. But the mailman testified that the box was still crammed with mail from previous deliveries when he opened it on the following Monday.

According to secret Grand Jury summaries leaked to the *New York Times*, Tawana and her

stepfather Ralph King, a convicted murderer, have a deeply troubled relationship. (After stabbing his first wife 14 times, King shot her to death while awaiting trial.) Violent family quarrels were frequent in Wappinger Falls. Tawana was beaten for running away from home, staying out nights with boys, etc. A neighbor reported overhearing Mrs. Brawley say: "They know we're lying, and they're going to find out and come and get us."

Like her daughter, Mrs. Brawley refused to testify before the Grand Jury.

The "In Your Face" Theory

A black activist, who knows the Tawana Three from way back and prefers anonymity, cannot fathom the suicidal *modus operandi* of the attorneys. Why would they go down in flames for their incredible client? The activist is bedeviled by the wasted brilliance of Maddox. His interpretation of Maddox's uncivilized resistance to the system is psychological: "Alton is dark with wooly hair, broad nose, and thick lips. He's not what white America perceives as acceptable. Who knows what injuries he may have suffered professionally because of his looks."

Incidentally, Maddox defended two black men accused of slashing the face of model Marla Hanson. In a shocking cross-examination, he called the beautiful victim a racist.

The Mole Theory

Rev. Sharpton has screwed up so terribly that he must be a government agent. His mission: to agitate the black community and prevent the formation of a coalition that might threaten white power in the richest city in the world. The Reverend has already been exposed as an FBI informant in

Newsday, although he insists that his undercover assignment was limited to nailing a crook in the record business who threatened to kill him.

Conrad Lynn, a legendary black ultra-leftist lawyer with a 50-year civil rights record, believes that Rev. Sharpton is still on the government's payroll. "He's poison to blacks," said Lynn, who continues to practice in Dutchess County at age 80. "I know I've lost some cases because of him. He's raised so much hostility that white juries won't listen to the evidence anymore."

And he wonders about the other advisers: "They must have protection somewhere. You can't be crazy enough to say that the Attorney General masturbates over pictures of Tawana and expect to stay in the profession." (Lynn's daughter is on Abrams' staff.)

Theories apart, the case will finish up somehow in court. Pagones has filed an \$800 million defamation suit against Tawana and the advisers. His 75-page complaint contains an exhaustive list of libels. Obviously, the aggrieved Assistant D.A. wants revenge. "You can't imagine the rage I feel," said Pagones. "You can't imagine the damage this has done to my life." The other side has countered with a \$5-7 billion suit against Abrams for daring to call them liars.

Disbarment proceedings are also on the way. With release of the Grand Jury report in October, Attorney General Abrams brought complaint of unprofessional conduct against the legal advisers, including a list of 19 false statements, (e.g., Cuomo set Sharpton up for assassination, Abrams masturbated over Tawana's photo, Cuomo and Pagones are linked to the mafia).

Despite the justness of their cause, the lawyers are looking at heavy charges. But do they deserve the ultimate judicial penalty? "If the worst comes to pass, if the disciplinary committees find that Abrams' complaint is accurate, then yes, Mason and Maddox have done enough to be disbarred," said Stephen Gillers, professor of Legal Ethics at New York University Law School. "If they knew Tawana was lying when they accused Pagones, if they took money in her defense when they knew she wasn't telling the truth, then I have no problem with disbarment."

William Kunstler, an attorney of revolutionary sentiment, is representing Mason in the action. How will Kunstler defend Mason's whoppers? "Tawana's lawyers are no more duplicitous than lawyers for G.M. or the Ford Motor Corporation. Their statements are not lies in essence. They may not have been temperate, just or true, but they come from a bitterness that goes back 400 years. As a white man, I can only guess at the depth of black anger."

Is there room for compromise? Not with Pagones. But maybe with Tawana. I asked Sharpton whether he would consider a private summit with the Governor—just Tawana, Mason, Maddox and him—to resolve the mess and encourage harmony between the races. "If Mario Cuomo would meet with Tawana and hear her story," he said, "I would not only agree to the meeting, I wouldn't even have to be there myself—because I know if Cuomo listened to Tawana's story, he'd know she wasn't lying."

But we have just heard Tawana's story, and it is no more truthful than Sharpton's claim at the Slave Theater that no white man has ever gone to jail in New York for raping a black woman.

The evils that Grand Juries do to blacks must be protested. Unfortunately, Tawana Brawley is no Rosa Parks and Rev. Sharpton is no Martin Luther King.

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spoken argument that they wouldn't write about it.

But that taboo faded along with so many others. In the early 60s, Lenny Bruce got arrested for saying "cocksucker" in a nightclub. Two decades later, Meryl Streep got a laugh and an Academy Award for saying the same word (intending to say "seersucker") on the big screen in *Sophie's Choice*. If she hadn't gotten the Oscar, Jessica Lange was also a nominee for saying the same word (as a description of her profession) in *Frances*. And, more recently, Susan Sarandon's baseball groupie friend says that same ol' nasty word in *Bull Durham*. We've come a long way, baby-poo.

However, there was something else in *Bull Durham*—a crucial scene where Kevin Costner lists all the things he believes in, and suddenly Susan Sarandon realizes that, gosh, he's really the man for her, all right. "I believe in long, slow, deep, wet kisses that last three days," he tells her. Pretty nice and mushy, huh? "I believe in the small of a woman's back." Well, who could argue with that? "I believe in the hanging curve." Why not? She got turned on by baseball, right? "I believe in that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone. . . ."

Hey, what is this little speech supposed to be—propaganda, in the guise of romance?

What do long, slow, deep, wet kisses that last three days have to do with the single-assassin theory anyway? Is political conformity now supposed to be the mark of a sensual individual who thinks for himself? Has it become courageous to give up doubt? Are there invisible spin doctors busily at work?

Just the other day, on MTV's trivia quiz show, *Remote Control*, one of the questions was: "Who

shot JFK and who was Chrissy in *Three's Company*?" The contestant got Lee Harvey Oswald but didn't know Suzanne Somers.

There are reasons to be cynical. I met a seven-year-old ghetto child who saw a photo in the paper of Michael Jackson in his special oxygenation chamber. "Aw," said the youngster, "he's just trying to freeze-dry his AIDS." That level of jaded media sophistication seemed like the ultimate loss of innocence.

Still, I'm optimistic. Recently, I was interviewed by a 16-year-old student about the underground press. In the course of our dialogue, I used the phrase "Cold War." He didn't have any idea what I was talking about. The Cold War—it sounds like a bunch of people sneezing at each other. But nevertheless, his generation does have a different starting point; he *did* know the meaning of *glasnost*. Truth.

So maybe some day, perhaps in *Bull Durham II*, Kevin Costner will say to Susan Sarandon, "I believe in carrying condoms with me at all times and I believe that the military-industrial complex took over the country on November 22, 1963." And maybe some day, perhaps on MTV's *Remote Control*, there will be a question, "Who was the patsy for the CIA in the JFK assassination and who shot the sheriff in *She's the Sheriff*?"

Yes, and maybe Lenny Bruce will return from the grave and hang around with Elvis Presley for a while. They could watch an old movie on TV, *Punch Line*, where a little girl at a family dinner with clerical guests starts off a joke with, "What did one cocksucker say to the other?" And then maybe later they'll watch President Bush on the news, instructing viewers to "Read Mein Kampf. . . ."

My Phoney Valentine

Mot Juiced by Michael Musto

Valentine's Day—even its initials are reminiscent of sexual disease. It's time the whistle be blown on this very special occasion—it's hellish, annoying, a pressure cooker of fear and anxiety that leads people into extremely unpleasant emotional states. It's never all it's cracked up to be. In fact, for any reasonable—or alone—person, what should be a day of joy and love and shiatsu massage inevitably becomes a 24-hour whirligig of dread, the kind of faux-peaceable day on which ulcers are born.

Oh it's not that bad. It's possible to avoid V.D. by never leaving the house or turning on the TV for two weeks. It certainly doesn't take on the awesome proportions of hype and merchandising of some other holidays, just moderately awesome ones. But if the joy of Christmas can inspire a veritable army of Scrooges, and Easter can launch an angry battalion of bunny—(and egg)—phobics, why can't Valentine's Day merit its own committee of heart-busters, love losers, kiss-terminators. I'm one of them—maybe the charter member of the bunch—and am proud to spread their hateful message throughout the land: Valentine's Day sucks.

Love doesn't suck. Sex doesn't suck. But the idea that you have to be loving and romantic and sexy for one full day, regardless of any flesh-crawling cofactors, does. What if you woke up with a huge blister on your lip and schmutz in the corner of your eyes? Are you still supposed to be lovey-dovey with someone, enraptured in all the beautiful emotions of various Debbie Boone songs? What if the object of your affections has bad breath that day, or every day? Shouldn't you break up with them instead of cementing your affair via one more ritualistic V.D. anniversary—a symbol not of your eternal bond, but of the fact that you're living a vicious, ugly, halitosal life?

There are other problems. If you have a lover, the pressure to be romantic with them reminds you that you weren't romantic with them the rest of the year. That tends to put a strain on the relationship. If you don't have a lover, the day brutally reminds you of that fact. It screams out in a booming echo (and other special effects), "You are woefully, horrifyingly alone. Nobody wants you. The people who sent you Valentine's Day greetings are merely patronizing you. They have someone. You don't." This irritatingly loud voice inside your brain pushes you to greater heights of bitterness, making you even less desirable for the coming year. By next V.D., you won't even have people patronizing you.

What's more, if you really want to do V.D. in style, you have to spend money, and on what?—flowers, which incite allergies, and which, like love itself, ultimately wither and die; chocolates, which incite allergies, put on unnecessary poundage, and make you kissable only by fetishists. Things that make you feel silly, immature, evil even. You have to give hearts and heart-related things, which in these medically aware times, don't connote love anymore, not by a long shot. They connote bypasses, seizures, and most of all cholesterol. They remind you of why you would have hated eggs, even if it weren't for Easter. In the late 80s, *Murmur of the Heart* is not an adorable French film, it's a medical condition. Do you re-

ally want to celebrate the aorta in such an environment?

You also have to send cards, and this just after having spent a fortune dispersing Christmas ones filled with equally misguided good cheer. All right, you don't have to send out cards. But there are people out there who do, and anyone who's not a V.D. Scrooge automatically becomes one of these people; if you believe in the day as a concept to begin with, you have to get sucked into its neurotic vortex, inside of which there's nothing but a sealing-and-stamping treadmill, to fill the rest of your days. This brings you into a whole new territory of confusion: Who do you send the damned things to—only people you really want to be your valentine, or those who can help your career as well? Do you scribble different, personalized greetings on each one—a diplomatic "Happy Holiday" on some, a more inviting, "Let's do it in a bathroom stall" on others? If you don't send a card to someone, does that mean you don't want them to be your valentine, and in fact you despise them more than life itself and want them to return your bilious venom in a public way that will create a photo opportunity? I choose to not send V.D. cards at all, a plan that works. No one is offended. No one is wrongly titillated. No one feels they have to return the favor, forever resenting the fact that I cost them a gratuitous quarter. That quarter can go to charities—like heart associations.

Two years ago, at a V.D. party at the New York club called the Tunnel, an eager-beaver celebrante zealously went around handing out dozens

of cards he'd alphabetically organized in a portable file cabinet. He'd see someone he knew (whether intimately or vaguely), scramble for their card in the box, and give it to them with a well-meaning, but by necessity generic kiss on the cheek. All genders, age groups, classes, races, and religions were covered in this sweeping attempt to spread feelings, wo-wo-wo feelings. It was a sweet gesture, but pointed to the tragic flaw of V.D.—it's mass love, *amour* by the file cabinet. At least if you woke up to one of those things in the mail, you wouldn't necessarily know that an entire Rolodex of people got the same exact piece of cardboard affection. You might suspect it, but you wouldn't feel quite so much like a human file card—alphabetically correct in the pile, and still so very much alone.

I've had some truly miserable V.D.'s. There was the year when I went with a friend—just a friend—to see a show starring the late Divine at the Beacon Theater, only to find the unwanted special guest, a rock band called Rough Trade, getting summarily booed off the stage. So much love! Another time, a big Gotham disco hosted a musical revue of heart songs, nothing but heart songs, rendered by "up-and-coming" (i.e., failed) cabaret stars. Slick and cheery as it was, my grumpy mood found it utterly stomach-turning. This year everyone's making plans for the big AIDS benefit at Roseland—a sad statement on our times.

For those who enjoy V.D., I begrudge them not their joy, their sweaty palm-holding, their lipstick-smudging kisses. Just please, count me out.



Mark Kostabi, *Upwardly Mobile*, 1987