

The Brain Mutator for Higher Primates

BEING BONG

\$3.95 number 11

The Internet: Stay for Free!
Mondo Vanilli: Satan's Pigs!
Quantum Tantra: Sticky Fun!
L.A. Vice Squad: Silly Morons!



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The *boING-boING* story begins in 1988, in a small apartment in Los Angeles, California. It wasn't a very nice apartment. When a corner of the carpeting was pulled up by the two curious tenants, they discovered a nest of termites eating the wooden floor.

The bugs were unhappy to have the roof peeled from their home, and they burrowed deeper under the carpet. So then the couple had to pull up *all* the carpeting, complaining bitterly the whole time, because it was grueling work.

As soon as the carpet was in the dumpster and the termites had been driven from the apartment, the male complained of a stomach ache unlike any other he'd had before. His alarmed mate drove him to the doctor, who poked him in the stomach a couple of times and told

him that his appendix was about to burst.

The male underwent surgery to have the infected organ removed.

Afterwards, while recuperating – but still not in full control of his mental powers – the male suggested that they pack up and move to Colorado, a rectangular-

shaped state with nothing in it except brown lawns, truculent cowboys and bitterly cold weather. He had never seen a termite in Colorado. Neither had his mate, so they moved.

But the couple was miserable in Colorado. To stave off boredom and avoid the truculent cowboys, they produced a little zine they called *boING-boING*. The first issue had a print run of only 100 copies, but it quickly sold out.

Subsequent issues had much larger print runs, and it became plainly clear that *boING-boING* had become a way of life for many people. Everybody was happy, and the couple even moved back to California.

The story might end right here, if it weren't for the trouble looming on the horizon, my friends. You see, the male and female are living in an

apartment with wall-to-wall carpeting, and they're *burning* with curiosity to find out what's underneath. If they lift the carpet and see just *one* bug, they're going to have to relive the same ugly cycle of 1988: carpet pulling, termites, organ infection, surgery, Colorado. But this time, the male won't have any more vestigial organs, and the cycle will end right there.

"So what?" you say. "Who cares if another editor bites it? They're as common as termites."

Not so fast. Let's take a closer look at the situation, before you make another callous remark like that. Thousands of workers depend on *boING-boING* to turn the cogs of industry-stimulating businesses such as printers, news dealers, distributors, computer equipment manufacturers, and advertisers. Tens of thousands of delighted readers rely on *boING-boING* to provide them with wholesome entertainment, and information they can use to get a leg up on their fellow human beings. Simply put, *boING-boING* is an indispensable ingredient to the healthy functioning of the economic, environmental and memetic systems of the planet.

Mark & Carla need money to keep a pest exterminator on retainer. Bug killers aren't cheap. Don't believe us? Go ahead, call the yellow pages, my doubting friend, and get a fast education in insecticide economics.

It boils down to this: If you don't subscribe, *right now*, you might just be the "horseshoe nail" that starts a chain reaction of system-collapsing disasters that ultimately lead to the end of the world, or even worse, turn it into a planet with nothing in it except brown lawns, truculent cowboys and bitterly cold weather. So think about the fate of the planet for once! Save it by subscribing!

Choose one:

- ☐ Hey man, I'm no stinking horseshoe nail, and here's my \$14 (\$20 international) to prove it. Don't you go around saying crap about me anymore, you got that? And gimme 4 issues of *boING boING* while you're at it.
- ☐ You've got me scared real bad! Please, please keep *boING boING* going! Here's \$25 (\$35 International). Send me 8 issues. I realize that I'm saving \$3 by doing this. Over the course of two years, that's almost a half-cent per day!

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Street _____

City State Zip _____

Country _____ Start my subscription with issue # _____

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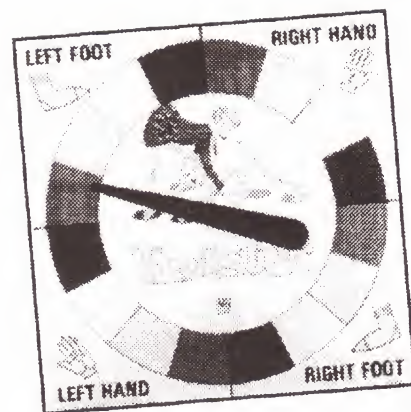
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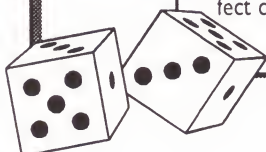
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START HERE

Not long ago, we *BOING BOING* minions felt a little more mischievous than usual. Exploiting the world of weirdness and fun via *bb* was definitely rushing noradrenaline into our brain sockets. But greed set in. We wanted to fill every one of our fleshy tubes and valves! Interactive entertainment was the key, so we decided to conduct an experiment. What would happen if we tossed two different subcultures together into one confined area?



BOING BOING readers seemed like a nice innocent bunch to use as test group #1. According to our 100%-accurate-survey, this is a bookish crowd, who takes utmost delight in fringe science, technical gadgets, mind expansion through a variety of methods, and studying other subcultures. Not only was this group interesting and accessible, they also trusted us. They were perfect candidates.

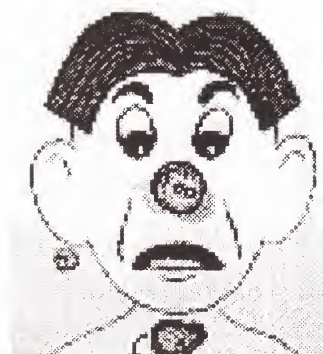


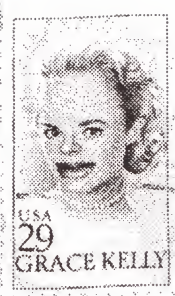
For test group #2, we wanted to find a batch of humans who had none of the above interests, except a desire for mind expansion. After scouring the planet for a few seconds, we were lucky to meet the guys who promote F*CK!, a club bash for the modern primitive/S&M/bondage & discipline gang. These folks seemed completely different from the *bb* group. Instead of using outside stimuli such as information and hi-tech to hack their nervous systems, those in the F sphere use body-piercing, whipping, and mummification for excitement.

But then I noticed an androgyne clad in a G-string and a leather collar around hir neck sitting in a corner, wearing a brain machine! I spun around to tell one of my sidekicks, when I spotted a plump lad with an EFF t-shirt and Birkenstocks actually jump on a go-go platform and gyrate with the dancers! The environment suddenly became loose, the two groups began to cross over until they merged into one, and everyone was juiced up with happy hormones. Our goal was reached. We've since created this special Fun & Games & Entertainment issue so that you, too, can get those juices flowing at full speed. Have a blast! 🎵



We built the test environment, called CyberSex, Inc., by outfitting a Hollywood club with a sexy Mandala virtual reality system, brain machines, a "cyber-fashion" show, topless dancers of both genders, techno/industrial music, and modern primitive performances (such as the piercing and mummification mentioned above, twice now). When the test groups arrived, the subjects seemed a little uneasy at first. They were like suspicious little guinea pigs sticking among their own kind, beady eyes darting all over the place. No one trusted anyone.





BOUNCING BACK

dEAR mARK

Congratulations! You can now advertise that *boING-boING* is an honest-to-badness censored magazine! I live in a coop household of folks who normally surf the bleeding-edge of radical liberalism, but the appearance of the SEX CANDY issue transformed two of my housemates into genuine, old-fashioned glasses-sliding-down-the-nose book banners. They found Gareth's confessions of lust offensive and your 1950s porno cartoons sickening. They thought the front cover and the Virtual Sex illo were a mutilation of all woman-kind.

I tried to get one of them (who still doesn't regret marrying me) to read the Rudy Rucker thing and the great Neurotica reports, but those didn't hold her interest long. She flipped to the vibrator review instead, and that redeemed the magazine in her eyes enough to leave it in the bathroom. Not my other housemate, though. She politely requested that the offending filth rag be removed from the john.

This, of course pushed all of our bleeding-edge-liberal buttons—censorship! A lively breakfast-table discussion brought us to the conclusions that one of my housemates (who, by the way, was also mildly offended) believes that the Light of Being shines through all things, even dumb things like *boING-boING*, while the offended party believed that a force of pure evil exists on the Earth, and that neurozines are an incarnation of that evil, forcing us into a one-sided hollow experience of existence. I agreed to remove the 64-page anti-Christ from the throne room for the sake of my room-mates' spiritual and emotional sanity.

Fortunately, none of us are at all

offended by the religious books that sometimes show up in front of the toilet, though some of us kinda wished we were so that we could push the censorship issue harder. We all thanked our higher selves for this blessing of household harmony.

Anyway, thanks for instigating a real discussion instead of the same old gossip. The general consensus (minus one) is that *boING-boING* is the same old 1950s exploit-women-while-we-worship-technology shit in a 1990s wrapper. I'm the minus one who thinks *boING-boING* is great (though I thought the SEX CANDY was disappointingly lukewarm and pubescent). Anyway, keep pushing those buttons!

Cybernetically yours,
Dick Oliver
Morrisville VT

P.S.: Check enclosed. I've always bartered with you before, but any radical progressive mag worth being banned by radical progressives is worth twenty-five bucks in my checkbook. My wife agreed to let me buy *boING-boING* under the condition that we also subscribe to *Yellow Silk*.

(Actually, we like to think that *boING-boING* is the same old 1990s exploit-technology-while-we-worship-shit in a 1950s wrapper.)

Dear *boING-boING*

Enjoyed your *Mondo Wondo* (as we call it around here) parody. If we had known you were working on it, we would have written something for ourselves. However, I think you got our names wrong.

Get high and fly for free!
Spacey & Jerkoff
Berkeley CA

(The following letter was accompanied by two 1-3/16" diameter rubber balls, one frosty blue, the other a swirly mix of red, blue, green and white. Durometer measurements are forthcoming)

Dude (Gareth Branwyn)

Here is a pair of balls. Obviously you don't have any. Politically correct wussies like yourself are worse than Republicans. "Oh God if I write a good review of the Double Penetration/GG Allin issue of *Dissonance* I won't get to dip my wick into the lush undergrowth of hair adjacent

to the current hole I'm infatuated with!" Grow up shithead! If you actually said what you really think you'd get more notice.

By the way, don't come to Philly until you show some literary guts becaus (sic) Double Penetration will make a weak wimp like you our bitch/slave to add to the conquered here.

Goodnight, Powder Puff!
Mega Jimmy
Double Penetration
Lindenwold NJ

P.S.: Your parents hated you, or else they wouldn't have given you the softiest name I ever heard!

(Gareth responds:) Dear Mega,

Thanks so much for your kind offering of balls. As you guessed, I don't have any. Here, let me attach these fine new ones right now!

[...ew...I'm feelin' kind of strange...something is changing...I...]

Now that I've got balls and have my fists wrapped around my lost "literary guts," let me tell you what I really think of you, you putrid piece of rotten meat, you polluted sack of bilge water, you worthless excuse for a land mammal...YOU SUCK SHIT! What you do is NOT art, it's NOT music, it's nothing, man! NADA! If I ever...

[I'm starting to scare myself. I better take these balls out]

Whew...that's better. So sorry about that outburst, Jim. I don't know what came over me. I sure hope I didn't offend anybody. I better go lie down.

Peace and Unicorn Horns.

Gareth

PS: Say hi to your brothers Titanic Timmy and Gigantic Gerry for me.

Dear *boING-boING*

Pardon my language, but yours is the best fucking magazine I've ever read in my life: "zine", slickster, or whatever!

In Cannabis Veritas,
C
New York NY

Dear *boING-boING*

I'm still reading through issue no. 10 of *boING-boING*. looks pretty good so far! The TimeWave Zero program can be considered as the "Tao Jones Index."

With all the talk of cybersex and "personal digital assistants" (which Apple will try and convince everyone that they single-handedly pioneered), there is still the great unexplored area

Continued on page 63

BOING BOING

"Mutating Simian Brains Since 1988"

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NeoWobbly Contact

Kata Sutra

AN ILLUMINATED BBS FOR THE PLAYFUL MUTANT!

I thought Steve Jackson's long battle with the Secret Service would take all the life out of his game-creating meme, but I was wrong. In fact, the game-maker seems to be taking on a more challenging project than ever before.

Inspired by his bulletin board system, The Illuminati, which has a couple of continuing play-by-mail games on it, Jackson is now creating a full scale on-line service, sort of a "WELL for gamers" as he puts it.

"We're trying to build an on-line environment where a whole lot of creative people can get together and play games." He'll continue to use the name Illuminati. The service will be on the internet, and will have an array of worlds and games to choose from. In time Jackson hopes the new bbs will develop into graphics, and then virtual reality. But he says right now those are just buzz words.

Jackson wants to make this service accessible to everyone, by creating user-friendly documentation and charging rock bottom prices. "I want to make it real real cheap, and get lots

and lots of people. None of this 12 dollars an hour stuff. The more people you have in the environment, the richer the environment is."

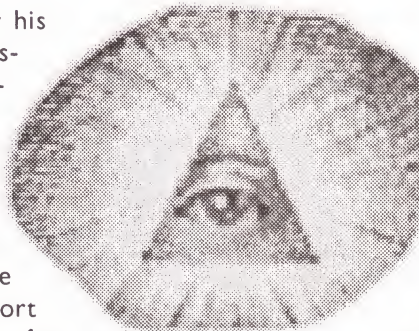
When I asked Jackson if there was a difference between game-playing humans and non-

game-playing humans, he said, "A lot of the non-game-playing humans are just gamers who haven't yet been exposed to the game meme.

There really is a game meme. There's a mind set that says 'play' and 'let's pretend' are good

because it can teach you things that otherwise you could only find out by getting hurt. Or maybe getting killed. But there are some people who just cannot accept this meme. They don't have a place in their brain for it to fit, and their only reaction to the idea of playing any kind of game or simulation or whatever is, 'oh, that's a waste of time.'"

My brain definitely has a place built in it for the game meme, and it's anxiously waiting to tap into Illuminati. If it's not out already, it soon will be. Jackson says he'll keep us and everyone on the internet posted. [Carla Sinclair]



BOING BOING MOVED AGAIN?!



Yep! Aren't we nutz! Look below for our new address. Write it down (in pencil!).

BOING BOING is seeking energetic, happy, resourceful, intelligent, gregarious, and funny Earthlings for **internship positions**. Learn how to run a magazine by the seat of your pants (or fur, for any of you lower primates out there who happen to be reading this. Actually, to our monkey and ape readers, here's some advice: your chances of getting an internship with **BOING BOING**, or any other magazine, are slim at best. Why not stop frustrating yourself and bug NASA for a test pilot job?) Everyone else, dial 415/974-1172 now!

H. Kurtz

In Memoriam 1924-1993

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Beyond Cyberpunk!

A Do-It-Yourself Guide to the Future

Beyond Cyberpunk! is a guide to cyberpunk Sci-Fi and the real-world cyberculture. This massive HyperCard stack (over 5 Megabytes!) is a multimedia data base of books, movies, comics, zines, games, and art from the bleeding edge of the high-tech underground. Over 300 pieces on postmodern Sci-Fi, critical theory, hacking, street tech, techno-industrial art, music, and much more.

Contributions from Bruce Sterling, Rudy Rucker, Richard Kadrey, Stephen Brown, Marc Laidlaw, Hakim Bey, R.U. Sirius, Steve Jackson & many others! Created by multimedia wiz Peter Sugarman and bOING-bOING's own Gareth Branwyn and Mark Frauenfelder.

"Exquisite."

- Rudy Rucker

"Enlightening"

- New York Times

"Puts the Mac back on its revolutionary track."

- MacWeek

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Beyond Cyberpunk! comes on five 800K floppies packed in a clear microbox with an 18 page mini-comic. Extra comics available for \$1 each. (Requires Mac, 1.5 Mb of RAM, 5.5 Mb of Hard Disk, HyperCard 2.x)

Also available from The Computer Lab: The Voyager electronic book version of Gibson's "Sprawl" trilogy: Neuromancer, Count Zero, Mona Lisa Overdrive. Requires a larger than Classic screen. All three volumes on one high density disk for \$19.95!

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neurotica



In March 1992, entomologists from Tel Aviv University hooked up six Oriental hornets in series and obtained enough electricity to run a digital watch for several seconds. The researchers believe that the Oriental hornet's skin stores solar energy and acts as an organic semiconductor

In September 1992, the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation reported the development of an odor that makes gamblers bet more. In a study in Las Vegas, slot machines outfitted to emit the odor racked up 45% more business. The neurologist who conducted the study predicted that the scent will become widely used in Las Vegas.

Starclone is a new perfume made from the sweat of country-music singer Sammy Kershaw. During his concerts, Kershaw wears a special shirt fitted with absorbent pads under his costume to harvest his "body essences." After the show, the shirt is sent to a laboratory at the University of Colorado, where the sweat is extracted and sent to the perfume maker. A two-ounce bottle containing a small amount of Kershaw's excretions costs \$19.50.

Male transvestite hookers in Bangkok have found a new way to increase their profits: by coating the nipples of their silicon-inflated breasts with knockout drugs.

The unsuspecting john clamps his kisser on the guy's boob, and in a matter of minutes he passes out. The hooker then liberates the cash from the unconscious customer's pocket and spends it on all sorts of fun things.

Sudormed Inc., of Santa Ana CA has developed a band-aid-like patch to detect drug use. The patch is worn on the upper arm for a month, and absorbs perspiration (which contains traces of any chemicals the patch-wearer ingests). The patch will show evidence of tampering. Jay Whitney, creepy greedhead president and CEO of Pharmchem, the sole distributor of the patch, says: "There are certainly valid reasons for businesses to have the right that people not bring illegal drugs into the workplace, even if they are brought in their bodies."

A Cool Idea from shaun@marble.uucp: "I've been harboring a secret fantasy for several years about setting up one or more secret BBS systems using old tech. Specifically, one would grab an old solid machine with a smallish 20-40 MB hard disk drive, a 2400 baud modem, and preconfigure it with some reliable BBS software, set up to be completely maintenance-free. (Deletes old messages, users, and wares automatically, or when space gets tight.) One would sneak into someone else's house or apartment, go into the attic, and plug the PC in (after appropriate weatherization,) then call the telco to get another line installed at the house

when the occupants are away.

The system would be jacked in, the bills would be sent to a dead drop or forwarded to nowhere after a large (1-year) advance cash payment was made. The system would be as self contained as possible, with one of those auto-reset circuits to reboot itself every night at 2 AM or something. That's what I'd like to do with my old PCs, but I never quite got around to it."

It's Appendgag-Lickin' Good! This issue's Urban Legend: "Hey, you know why Kentucky Fried Chicken changed their name to KFC? It's because they're using genetically engineered chickens with four legs so they can get extra drumsticks. And the FDA says you can't call them chickens!"

The *Nation* magazine reports that Anheuser-Busch, makers of a popular recreational drug called Budweiser, gave \$150,000 to the Partnership for a Drug Free America. Studies indicate that ingestion of Budweiser can lead to violence, crime and an overall rotten mood.





NURSE FRECKLE'S

PRANKTIME

Nurse Freckle Says: I am a registered nurse. I am also a prankster! I enjoy interrupting the daily routines of office drones by throwing nerf-like monkey wrenches into their lives. Won't you please help me in my quest to demolish serious culture? Send your prank ideas to BOING-BOING. But don't you dare try to prank me! I hate it when somebody screws with my life!

I found the image of Nurse Freckle on the envelope of a sanitary napkin bag in a Jamaican hotel bathroom in early 1993. I was attracted to her smile, the flip of her hair, and especially her freckles, so I kept the bag. Imagine my surprise when I discovered her message (reprinted above) inside the bag when I was back home.

Now Nurse Freckle communicates with us by teleporting messages into the bag once every lunar month. How does she do it? She's the Prankmistress Supreme. It's her secret.

We want to hear about your pranks: pranks that delight everybody, even the target. (Or, if the target is not delighted, then s/he should at least be taught a lesson.)

Types of pranks we'd like to hear about:

1. Exposing a charlatan.
2. Conning a con-artist.
3. Tormenting a telemarketer.
4. Recombinant billboard meme-splicing
5. Greed traps.
6. Fake events (eg. Martian landings, dinosaur hatchings, time travel, etc.)
7. Creative use of wrong numbers.

Both of the following pranks, brought to us by Barry Gilbert (gilbert@well.sf.ca.us), are great kick-offs for the first Pranktime! column. - Mark

"Oh my God!" I cried. "I hoped this wouldn't happen! I don't want any trouble. You know where I live! Please don't hurt me!" I could tell that the cop was using his talk-the-jumper-down-from-the-roof training. He started talking to me in a very placating, fatherly way. When he eventually realized that he wasn't getting anywhere and that I wasn't a threat to myself or society, he politely ended the conversation.

I've done dozens, hundreds of conversations like this. The fun part about using incoming calls is that you never know who the person is looking for, what they want, what will agitate them, what will keep them on the line, etc. I usually find the angle early in the conversation and run as far with it as I can. I let the caller determine the direction that I will take. One key is not to be aggressive, unless it is a bill collector or a salesman. They sort of expect that, and if you do it creatively, they'll stay with you.

When it's pretty obvious that you're dealing with a professional collector or telemarketing rep, it's fun to turn it extremely personal, even bringing their life into it. They try like hell to remain professional but can't resist you if you ask them what they would do if they were you or some such question. The possibilities are endless

and this is one of the most interesting ways to learn about how people relate to each other over the phone and how they relate to the phone's function in defining and violating personal space.

I got a call from an aluminum siding salesman a few months ago. This guy was right out of a sit-com! He had obviously dialed a wrong number. He started out by telling me about their new "Space-age" product. I responded with a "Wow!" When he asked if I rent or own my place, of course I said "own." (Give the guy what he wants.)

"When's the last time you painted your house?" he asked.

"Oh, I dunno. Fifteen years ago?"

"Oh, so it probably needs it."

"Yeah, it's really looking bad!"

"How about aluminum siding?"

"Sounds great!" I said, extra effusively.

"Well, let me tell you about our great product..."

"No. Excuse me for interrupting. I don't need the sales pitch. I want it! Sign me up. How soon can you do the work?" By this time I could hear the guy peeing in his pants.

"Uh, it would be best if I sent a salesman out to visit you. He can give you an estimate and show you colors"

"You've got different colors?! Wow! Have you got white? How much will this cost?"

"My salesperson will discuss that with you"

"OK. I'll have forty-thousand in cash ready. Will that be enough? I better have fifty-thousand, just in case. God, I'm so excited! This is going to be great!"

Now he's kind of giddy: "OK. Well great! Are you still at 1427 Pine Street?"

"Yup! Still here," I lied.

We proceeded to set up an appointment for the following night. I can just see the salesman's lead-sheet: "This one's really hot! No discounts necessary! Done deal!" and the look on his face as he walks up to the guy's house and rings the doorbell.

I never heard back from him. ☘

Send in those pranks!

BOING-O-RAMA

Weirdos of all stripes and affiliations LOVE bOING-bOING-approved merchandise. They know there is no substitute for subversive mind viruses, such as the wares offered here by bOING-O-Rama! All products are guaranteed to rewire your nervous system in dangerously unpredictable ways, or your money glumly refunded!

Beyond Cyberpunk! (new version 1.5) A Do-It-Yourself Guide to the Future

This 5.5 Megabyte interactive multimedia HyperCard stack uses the guiding metaphor of an information machine, illuminating the world as seen from the edge. Its turf? - the interzone where high tech hits the street. This massive stack has essays and hundreds of reviews on post-modern science fiction, critical theory, underground culture, street tech and lots more (over 325 items). BCP! was created by Peter Sugarman and bOING-bOING's own Gareth Branwyn and has

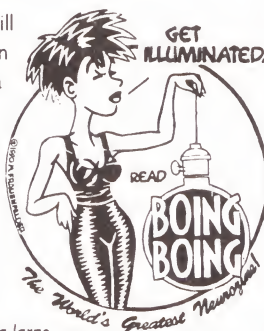
lots of stuff by Mark Frauenfelder and other bOING-bOING collaborators. BCP! also features essays and reviews from some of the major figures in science fiction and the emerging cyberculture including Bruce

Sterling, Rudy Rucker, Richard Kadrey, Stephen Brown, Hakim Bey, Mike Gunderloy, and Robert Anton Wilson. The future's leaking into the present, it's already here, almost gone. Catch up with the future before it catches up with you! Requires 2Meg Ram, Hypercard 2.0

\$37.50, includes five 800K floppy disks w/minicomic. **\$1.00** for the minicomic only

BOING-bOING T-Shirt

Your enemies will quake in fear when they learn that Kata Sutra of the neo-Wobblies is your friend. She will be your friend only if you buy this thick cotton T-shirt.



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Delivered straight to your hovel: cyberpunk, fringe tech, altered consciousness, high weirdness, and subculture curiosities!

\$14 for four quarterly issues, **\$25** for eight



Transreal!

by Rudy Rucker

Rudy Rucker is the author of eight novels, four widely popular mathematics books, and several software packages. This collection contains all his short stories together with selected essays and amazingly nifty poems. The impressive range of his astonishing literary imagination is reflected throughout the collection in the graphics he produced with his software.

\$15, paperback, 534 pp

Smart Drugs & Nutrients

by Ward Dean, M.D. & John Morgenthaler

This introductory guide to new developments in neuroscience explains how to use cognitive enhancement substances and how to get them. It lists the addresses of overseas mail order pharmacies for products which are not available in the United States. Although the FDA is clamping down on many of the sources listed here, this book is still very useful for the budding smart drug user.

\$12.95, paperback, 221 pages

PIHKAL

by Ann & Alexander Shulgin

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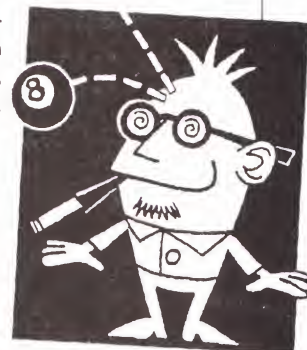
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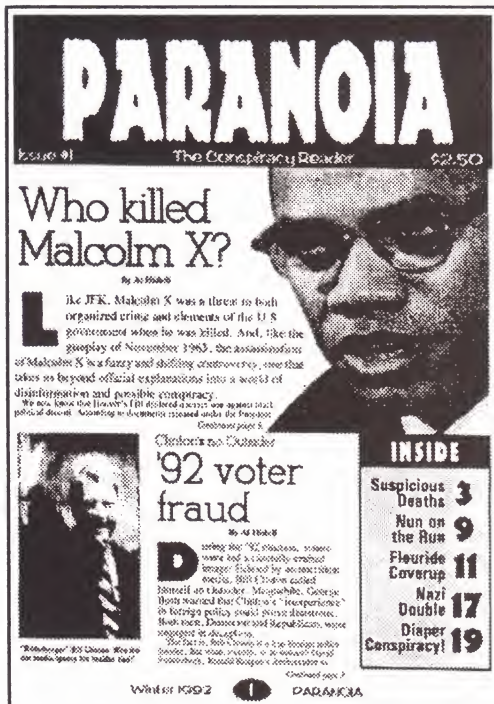
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CONSPIRACY THEORY FOR BEGINNERS



STUDIES REVEAL that people live longer, happier lives when they can blame somebody else for their problems. The God/Devil tag team used to be a fine finger-pointing target for people who felt gypped by life, but thanks to religion-bashing spoilsports like Copernicus and Galileo, only 25 percent of the college graduates in America still believe in that fairy tale. The rest of us have been forced to come up with another gang of boogie monsters: the Conspiracy, those invisible, omnipotent puppetmasters responsible for war, poverty, famine, eco-catastrophes, bad weather and planetwide stupidity.

Conspiracy theories are meant to conveniently link problems to solutions and tie them up into nice bows. But conspiracy theory literature is messy, full of loose ends and false leads. A lot of it is blended with racist drivel and sometimes it even resorts

back to old-time religion. Getting on a conspiracy kook's mailing list might be amusing at first, but it soon grows tiresome. Wouldn't it be nice if someone else did all the dirty work for you by compiling the best of the latest conspiracy theories into an easy-to-read magazine for the budding Big Brother-blamer?

Guess what: someone has. His name is Al Hidell and he calls his new zine, *PARANOIA*, a "mini-READER'S DIGEST for hip paranoids." The layout is clean and tasty, and the articles range from the serious to the intentionally ludicrous. The standard enemies (CIA, Mafia, Council on Foreign Relations, Bilderburgers, Trilateral Commission) are all here, as well as some newcomers to the global control game (adult-diaper manufacturers). Find out why the boys from Washington and the Mafia teamed up to kill Malcolm X. Discover the ugly truth about the political brainwashing program known as the Rhodes Scholarship. And what conspiracy zine would be complete without a blast at fluoride, everybody's favorite insecticide and communist plot.

Future issues will investigate Masons, Bigfoot, mind-control, UFOs, Satanism, and subliminal advertising. The best thing about *Paranoia* is that they know when to laugh, and they know when to lay the known facts out on the table and let the reader draw her own conclusions. [Mark] 🐸

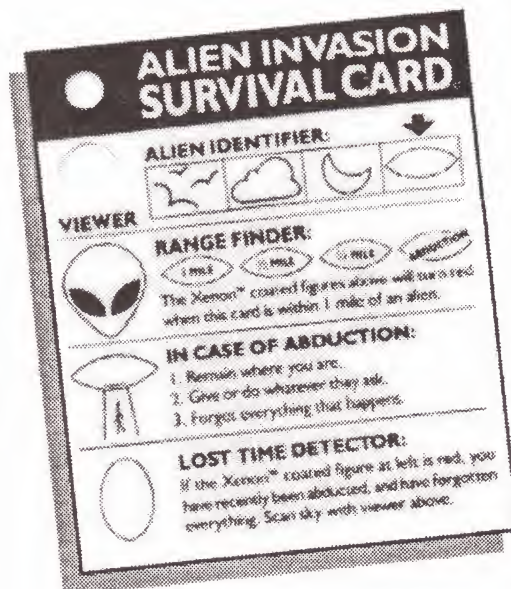
Paranoia: the Conspiracy Reader

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Bill Barker, the creator/channeler of Schwa, must've been an Eagle Scout who smoked a bunch of DMT, talked to the aliens, and decided they were up to no good. He's come up with a whole line of amazing merchandise designed to thwart unfriendly spaceman abductions: cards, calendars, stickers, T-shirts, instant Stick Persons, even a Schwa credit card!

The whole Schwa mythos is outlined in a 38-page book titled, simply, *Schwa*. There are no words in the book, just a bunch of cartoons with spooky images. It tells a story, but a different one every time you read it.

My favorite Schwa product is the Alien Invasion Survival Card. It's got an Alien Identifier (you're supposed to look through a hole punched in the card), a range finder (With Xenon™ coated spots that turn red when a bad space alien comes within a mile of the card), a list of things to do in case you are abducted, and a Lost Time Detector.

The artwork is great, and the products are of the high craftsmanship expected of fine artists and supreme weirdos. Buy this stuff before the invaders get tired of cutting up cattle and decide it's time to start going after the primates. [Mark] 🐸

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BELL SCIENCE SERIES

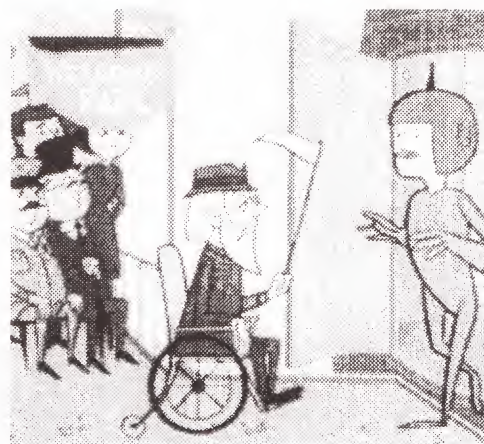
Have you recently sired or birthed a future member of America's workforce? If so, you'll want to teach her linguistics, physiology, anatomy, astronomy, physics, geology, chemistry, genetics, and meteorology. But how?

Traditional education is useless, unless your child plans on becoming a gun smuggler, professional drug dealer or a school teacher. And you should forget about multimedia. It costs too much, and besides, your scion can easily sniff a "learning-disguised-as-fun"

stench emanating from the classroom all the way over at the video arcade.

There's only one way to make your offspring learn: build a small CLOCKWORK ORANGE-style video-viewing chair and begin conducting BELL SCIENCE SERIES training sessions.

THE BELL SCIENCE SERIES movies were developed in the 1950s to teach children about the wonders of our universe in a fun, easy to absorb format. They feature goofy cartoon characters and fat, white, bald, know-it-all scientists wearing really ugly shirts. Kid Rhino Video is selling all eight titles in the series for the amazingly low price of only \$9.95 each. The science presented in the hour-long tapes is interesting, and they look cool, especially if you're a sucker like me for the post-atomic cartoon style. Even though Rhino is marketing the BELL SCIENCE tapes for young people, adults

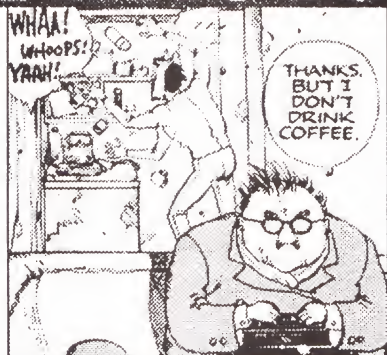


About Time

who dare to watch them might get lucky and form a new synaptic circuit or two.—Mark

Bell Science Series: *About Time. Alphabet Conspiracy. Gateway to the Mind. Hemo the Magnificent. Our Mr. Sun. Strange Case of the Cosmic Rays. Thread of Life. Unchained Goddess.*
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VERSION



MUST-HAVE RIBOFUNK* MANGA

EGOS is a super-secret biochip, consisting of nanomachines, messenger RNA, and enzymes on a protein substrate. With the ability to consume tremendous amounts of information and grow in size, EGOS also exuded a substance highly toxic to humans. As a result, the project was halted and the biochip was put in permanent cryogenic storage.

In the first issue of *VERSION*, (subtitled 1.1, software release-style) we learn that EGOS creator, a scientist named Dr. Higure, has stolen the biochip and is hiding out in Australia.

A young Japanese private detective Mitsuru Happo gets hired by a friend of Dr. Higure's to go down under and find out what's going on. When he arrives, Happo is greeted by Dr. Higure's daughter, who explains that she is looking for her father, too.

At this point, things get weird: BBs are being broken into by somebody or something that calls itself "Version," unknown thugs beat up Happo when he makes a trip back to Tokyo and then he gets the bejeezus scared out of him by what looks like a monstrous mermaid.

Artist/Illustrator Hisashi Sakaguchi has made sure that it's not all biotech and sleuthing. What makes *Version* great is the sense of humor, character development and occasional story breaks to explore life in

the Australian outback.

Dark Horse promises that when *Version* 1.X is concluded, They'll begin with a new story line starting with 2.1 [Mark]

Version
by Hisashi Sakaguchi
Dark Horse Comics
Monthly. 32pp. b&w
\$2.50 per issue

*SF author and general troublemaker Paul DiFilippo introduced the term ribofunk as an alternative to cyberpunk. Ribofunk is hot, sticky and biological in contrast to cyberpunk's mechanical coldness.





zip3: frankenstein and artificial life

THE MOST FAMOUS FICTIONAL CHARACTER WHO TRIES TO CREATE LIFE IS VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN, the protagonist of Mary Shelley's 1818 novel, *Frankenstein or, The Modern Prometheus*.

Most of us know about Frankenstein from the movie versions of the story. In the movie version, Dr. Frankenstein creates a living man by sewing together parts of dead bodies and galvanizing the result with electricity from a thunder-



houses," until finally he believes he has learned how to bring dead flesh back to life. He sets to work building the Frankenstein monster.

"In a solitary chamber ... I kept my workshop of filthy creation: my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn

infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs... The beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart."

The creepy, slithery aspect of *Frankenstein* stems from the fact that Mary Shelley situated Victor Frankenstein's artificial life researches at the tail-end of life, at the point where a living creature's life dissolves back into a random mush of chemicals. In point of fact, this is really not a good way to understand

life — the processes of decay are not readily reversible.

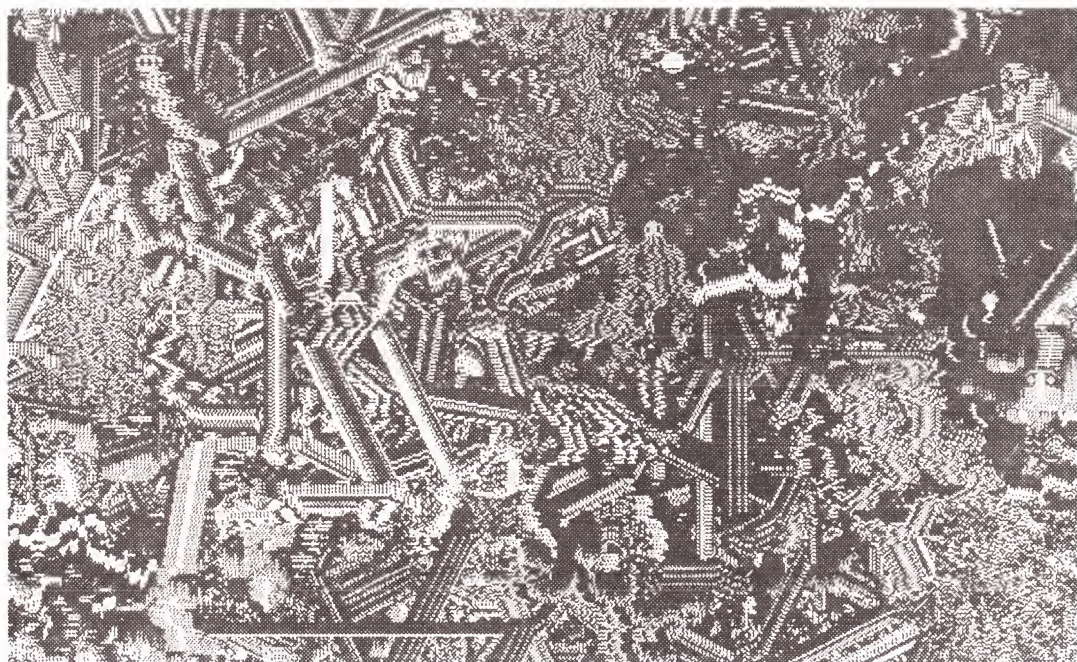
Contemporary A-life ("A-life" is the short form of "artificial life") biochemists focus on the way in which life keeps itself going. Organic life is a process, a skein of biochemical reactions that is in some ways like a parallel three-dimensional computation. The computation being carried out by a living body stops when the body dies, and the component parts of the body immediately begin decomposing. Unless you're Victor Frankenstein, there is no way to kick-start the reaction back into viability. It's as if turning off a computer would make its chips fall apart.

The amazing part about real life is that it keeps itself going on its own. If anyone could build a tiny, self-guiding, flying robot he or she would be a hero of science. But a fly can

build flies just by eating garbage. Biological life is a self-organizing process, an endless round that's been chorusing along for hundreds of millions of years.

Is there any hope of scientists being able to assemble and start up a living biological system?

Chemists have studied complicated systems of reactions that tend to perpetuate themselves. These kinds of reactions are called *autocatalytic* or *self-exciting*. Once an autocatalytic reaction



storm. The original version is quite different.

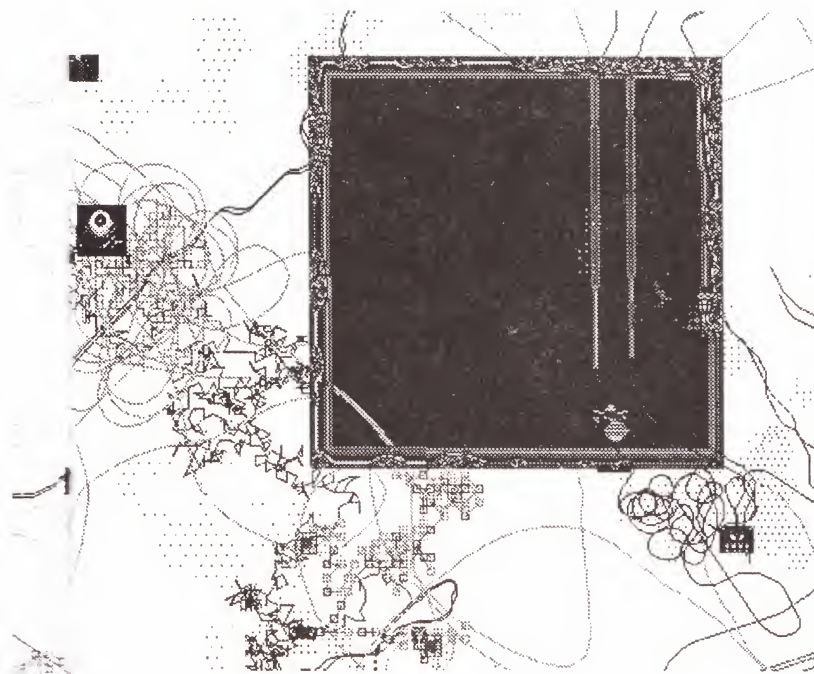
In Mary Shelley's novel, Victor Frankenstein is a student with a deep interest in chemistry. He becomes curious about what causes life, and he pursues this question by closely examining how things die and decay — the idea being that if you can understand how life leaves matter, you can understand how to put it back in. Victor spends days and nights in "vaults and charnel-

with loathing from my occupation... Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil, as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave, or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay?"

Finally he reaches his goal.

"It was on a dreary night of November, that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might





gets started up, it produces by-products which pull more and more molecules into the reaction. Often such a reaction will have a cyclical nature, in that it goes through the same sequence of steps over and over.

The cycle of photosynthesis is a very complicated example of an autocatalytic reaction. One of the simpler examples of an autocatalytic chemical reaction is known as the Belusov-Zhabotinsky reaction in honor of the two Soviet scientists who discovered it. In the Belusov-Zhabotinsky reaction a certain acidic solution is placed into a flat glass dish with a sprinkling of palladium crystals. The active ingredient of litmus paper is added so that it is possible to see which regions of the solution are more or less acidic. In a few minutes, the dish fills with scroll-shaped waves of color which spiral around and around in a regular, but not quite predictable, manner.

There seems to be something universal about the Belusov-Zhabotinsky reaction, in that there are many other systems which behave in a similar way: generating endlessly spiralling scrolls. It is in fact fairly easy to set up a computer simulation that shows something like the Belusov-Zhabotinsky reaction.

As well as trying to understand the chemical reactions that take place in living things, biochemists have investigated ways of creating the chemicals used by life. In the famous 1952 Miller-Urey experiment, two scientists sealed a glass retort filled with such simple chemicals as water, methane and hydrogen. The sealed vessel was equipped with electrodes that repeatedly fired

off sparks — the vessel was intended to be a kind of simulation of primeval earth with its lightning storms. After a week, it was found that a variety of amino acids had spontaneously formed inside the vessel. Amino acids are the building blocks of protein and of DNA — of our phenomes and of our genomes, so the Miller-Urey experiment represented an impressive first step towards understanding how life on Earth emerged. Biochemists have pushed this kind of thing much further in the last few decades. It is now possible to design artificial strands of RNA which are capable of self-replicating themselves when placed into a solution of amino acids; and one can even set a kind of RNA evolution into motion. In one recent experiment, a solution was filled with a random assortment of self-replicating RNA along with amino acids for the RNA to build with. Some of the molecules tended to stick to the sides of the beaker. The solution was then poured out, with the molecules that stuck to the sides of the vessel being retained. A fresh food-supply of amino acids was added and the cycle was repeated numerous times. The evolutionary result? RNA that adheres very firmly to the sides of the beaker.

Genetic engineers are improving on methods to tinker with the DNA of living cells to make organisms which are in some part artificial. Most commercially sold insulin is in fact created by gene-tailored cells. The word *wetware* is sometimes used to stand for the information in the genome of a biological cell. Wetware is like software, but it's in a watery living environment. The era of wetware programming has only just begun. ●



This Zip is an excerpt from Chapter One of *Artificial Life* with Boppers, a non-fiction book and Windows computer software combination by Rudy Rucker to be published, God willing, in the fall of 1993, by the Waite Group, and shipped, here's hoping, to the Computer Books section of your local bookstore. The images are from the software. *Eyeball* by Paul Mavrides.

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FAKE FUNLAND

by Mark Frauenfelder

bOING-bOING is supposed to have a theme for every issue. All the editors think it's a good idea, because it supposedly allows us to plan in advance for each issue. Otherwise, we'll just sit around and do stuff like defragment our hard drives or play Minesweeper until we get sick.

The original theme for *bb N911* was going to be "women in cyberculture," but it mutated into "fun and games," and then we got a bunch of stuff about movies and music. Never ones to worry about taking charge, we just let the subject matter of the submissions we received in the mail jerk us into a new direction every other day, sort of like a giant-size Ouiji Board, with us as the lint-ridden felt pads under the plastic slider-thing. This article, (written only after I diskwiped all copies of Minesweeper from the premises) is a remnant of our short-lived "fun and games" period. -Mark

WHAT ARE THE TOY STORES SELLING THESE DAYS? I hadn't cruised through one in a while, so I decided to check out a Toys R Us late one evening, when most of the families had cleared out. I started at the front of the store, and weaved my way up and down every aisle, taking notes when I saw something either really cool, really stupid, or really weird.

Unfortunately, almost everything I came across fell into the "yawn" category. I'm not interested in infant and toddler toys. Baby furniture is invisible to me. I hate hate hate sports. And the girls' doll section is pink overload. Every box is pink colored, with a smiling or crying plastic girl inside. I'm pretty sure that most of the human body functions are simulated in one doll or another, but the pinkness of it all forced me from staying long enough to find out.

The good news about my visit is that the few things that caught my interest were just dripping with absurdity. Take, for example, goo. It's in a child's nature. It brings them joy to fondle germ-laden ooze, mud, caterpillar guts, and other types of natural glop. Fifty years ago it was impossible to keep junior from smearing himself with insect egg-clusters or slapping cocoons between his hands in his quest for fun, but

today's toy makers have developed an entire market of simulated filth that's way more fun. Toys R Us stocks gallons of designer goo, including Gworms (gelatinous worms that grow when you drop them in water), ooz balls ("The pod of intergalactic ooz"), and Gak Splat (a handful of gooeey putty). The packages scream "Look kids! Gross goop to play with!" To their parents, they whisper "These toys are sanitary substitutes, safe illusions that enable your offspring to act on their urge to wallow in slime."

Animal cruelty was another opportunity for the toy companies to offer clean versions of odious childhood pastimes. As a kid, I enjoyed burning ants with a magnifying glass, and taping grasshopper "astronauts" to pop-bottle rockets. However, I drew the line at bugs.

The toy makers crossed it, with an animal torture simulation kit called "Frog Baseball." It comes with a plastic boat oar and a green plastic ball with frog legs sticking out from it. The object of the game is to pitch the frog in the air and squash it with the oar. It seems frogs are low enough on the cute 'n' cuddly animal list to prevent parents from complaining. If "Frog Baseball" is successful, maybe they'll introduce a plastic "Kitty, Gasoline 'n' Matches" kit next.

The step from frogicide to homicide is just an aisle away, in the large weaponry section, where kiddies are given a million ways to pretend to kill their friends. While the selection of firearms is greater than ever, they just aren't realistic-looking anymore. Today's toy weapons are made from brightly colored plastic with fat red plugs on the barrel ends. During my cork-gun commando days, toy firearms looked like smaller versions of the real thing. Once, a friend and I were breaking in our new cap pistols by firing them at people on the street through the rear window of the station wagon his mother was driving. A woman at an intersection saw us take

aim at her and she dropped down flat on the pavement. My friend's mother didn't see what happened, and we saw no reason to tell her about it. She did ask us for an explanation (in a downright ungenial tone of voice) after several squad cars forced her off the road and screamed at her through a megaphone to come out with both hands up. (So, you see, Steve Jackson isn't the only one who's had to put up with illegal confiscation of property—The cops took our toy guns twenty years ago, and they STILL haven't given them back!)

I wished that Toys R Us sold *real* guns when I got to the "plush" animal department, especially after seeing Barney the Dinosaur, who has taken over not only Toys R Us, but every kiddie brain in the country. If any dinosaur ever looked like a child molester, it has to be this fat purple freak. "We're a happy family." I'll bet we are. Did you know that Barney's producers actually ripped-off Barney's mind-bogglingly vapid theme song from a school book written ten years ago? That's like stealing from a manure truck! Now why can't they come up with a Barney Baseball kit, or a Barney you can squeeze until ooze leaks from his orifices? I'd buy that.

Other hideous toy animals include the "Disney Babies" series of dolls, games, books, tapes, cassettes, cartoons, etc. The Disney Babies look like the adult Mickey, Donald, etc., but have even fatter heads, tinier bodies, more idiotic grins, and (I'll bet) squeakier voices. This is cuteness overkill. Toys R Us had better consider installing barf-bag dispensers in the "Disney Babies" section.

Moving quickly (to avoid the janitor coming over with his trusty can of odor-absorbing pellets), I found myself in "Farm Country." This company sells kits of little plastic animals, sheds, tractors, and feed silos, so you can "Build the Farm of Your Dreams." Finally! I can stop feeling



sorry for those children who have been losing sleep over not being able to build a realistic miniature farm. The stuff did look realistic, I have to say!

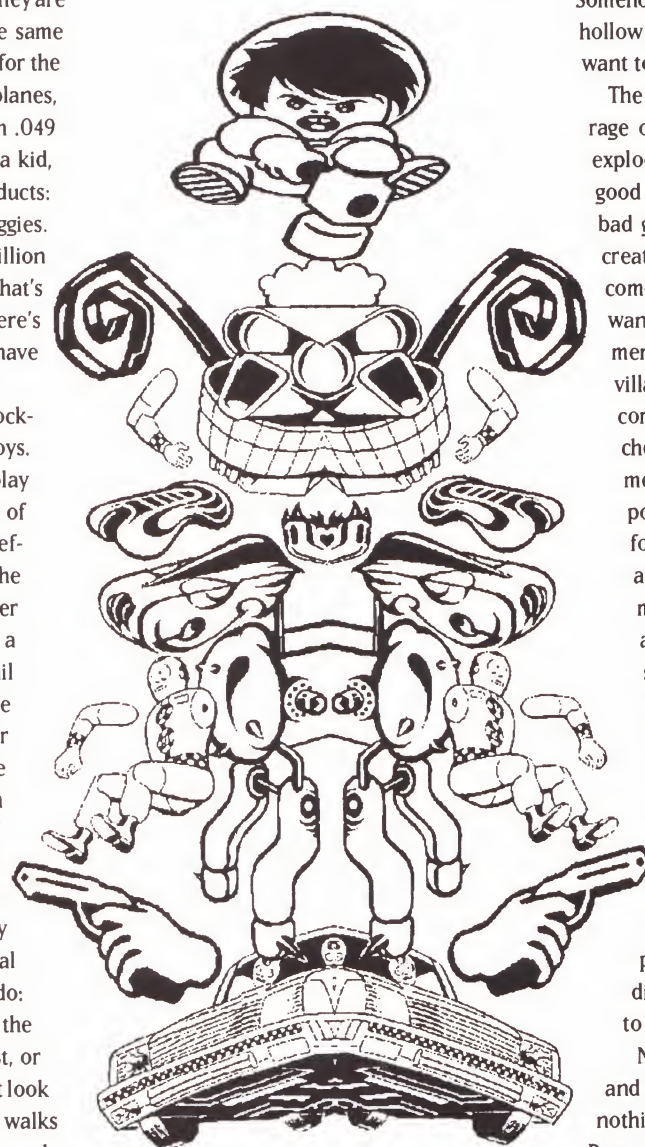
So far, everything I'd seen was a simulated something-or-other. I like toys that don't pretend to be something else, especially ones that burn gas or solid fuel and make a lot of noise and move fast. Estes rockets, for instance. While they might be modeled after big rocketships, they are in fact real rockets, and operate on the same aerodynamic principles. The same goes for the Cox gas engine planes. They're real airplanes, tiny as they may be. I used to play with .049 cubic-inch Cox engine toys when I was a kid, and I enjoyed looking at the new products: hovercrafts, helicopters and dune buggies. The boxes said that Cox has sold 50 Million .049 engines in its forty-year history. That's one for every child in America. (Where's mine? Some little fucker out there must have two!)

Almost—but not quite—as cool as the rockets and planes was the Spy Tech line of toys. They're designed for kids who want to play sleuth, and are watered-down versions of what you might expect to find in the briefcase of a real covert intelligence agent. The "Tracker" consists of a small transmitter that you can surreptitiously plant in a purse, backpack or pocket to "help trail suspects and locate them when they are hiding," and a receiver unit with a speaker that emits a tone. The speaker's volume is proportional to the distance between the two units. The Spy Tech "Tracker" operates within a tiny range—under 50 feet—so its uses as a tracking device are limited. Another interesting Spy Tech toy is a small hollow plastic rock and a "special frequency" whistle. Here's what you do: put something in the compartment of the fake rock, and hide it in a park or forest, or some other place that has gray rocks that look like the phony one. Then your partner walks around in the general vicinity and blows on the whistle. A microphone built into the rock picks up the whistle signal and if the frequency matches, the rock will beep, so your pal can locate the rock and the goodies inside.

The trouble with both of these spy tech toys is that they make a lot of noise and a real spy doesn't want to run around in the woods blowing a whistle, or walking down the street holding a weird looking baton that emits a whooping siren noise.

Where there're spys, there're soldiers. The

fall of communism was welcomed by everybody except arms and toy makers. The geniuses behind the GI Joe line of action figures had to come up with a new enemy, fast, before children forgot how to use violence to solve conflicts. They still sell the normal-size Joes with "lifelike hair"—I couldn't find any with the "kung-fu grip"—for fighting foreign enemies, but a new gang of teeny-weeny Joes has two new sets of villains to



contend with: drug dealers and litterbugs.

These 4-inch warriors come in cardboard-backed blister packs, complete with a weapon, and sometimes a dog or even a dolphin. The art on the blister packs is great: on every one, whether the Joe is a good guy or a bad guy, the illustration depicts him screaming with rage, wildly firing his weapon from the hip. This, plus the fact that these subminiature GI Joe dolls show "battle-damage" when splashed with water, is enough to make me want to run down and

buy the whole set right now.

The drug-menace fighters are called The DEF (Drug Elimination Force). The drug dealers are called the Evil Head Hunters. The back of each package explains the situation: "After taking the Headman's drugs, victims are unable to perform the easiest task, such as tying their shoelaces." I also learned that "GI Joe is proud to be a member of the Partnership for a Drug Free America." Somehow it seems right that a person with a hollow plastic head and an IQ of zero would want to join the Partnership.

The GI Joe Eco-Warriors also scream with rage on the packaging, but instead of firing exploding bullets from their weapons, the good guys shoot big clean water guns and the bad guys squirt toxic sludge. It took some creativity on the part of the toy makers to come up with reasons why a person would want to intentionally pollute the environment. Take the sad case of the head eco-villain, "Cesspool." He was the head of a corporation until he fell into a tank of chemical waste while giving an environmental group a tour around his plant. The poisonous concoction mutated and deformed him, 60s Marvel comic book-style, and now Mr. Cesspool blames environmentalists for ruining his life. He carries a big tank of filthy liquid on his back and squirts it at anyone who comes within range. The biographies for the other Eco-Villains don't go into detail about how they became so untidy; they're simply called "Sludge Viper" and "Toxo-Viper."

It was interesting to note that in both scenarios, the bad guys have some kind of scarring or physical damage. This was probably done to teach children that people who have been maimed or have a disfigured appearance will never amount to anything.

My final stop was to check out the Nintendo and Sega section. One day, Toys R Us will be nothing but game cartridges and plush smiling Barney's. This is the nineties, and the "play" experience provided by toys has become "simulated play." Now you can actually *hear* the people scream with rage and *watch* them fire their weapons. That's progress. Right before I left, I scanned the rows and rows of cartridges for sale. Shoot-the-enemy games were most prevalent, then sports simulations, then cute'n'cuddly animal quests. There was even a bright pink card for, you guessed it: Barbie "Gamegirl."

Lemme outta here! ♦



Carla interviews LA's most controversial club promoter

So what if somebody chooses to be wrapped in black rubber from head to toe and then tied down to a table? So what if somebody wants Christmas lights pinned to his skin as he stands on stage wearing a jock strap and high-heeled boots? So what if that same somebody has chosen to be whipped by a man with deer antlers attached to his forehead?

For three years people in the Los Angeles area were able to participate in an active underground community where whipping, mummification, and body-piercing were the norm. James and Miguel had created *FUCK!* for the hundreds of people interested in the alternative gay and S&M scene with nowhere to go. *FUCK!* floated from one club to another, and its last location was at a place called the Dragonfly, in Hollywood. People entered the club by their own free will, and they practiced S&M at the club only if they chose to do so. Nothing was ever pushed on anybody who wasn't interested in this alternative scene.

However, some bored cops with some real shiny badges didn't have enough to do in the fine city of Hollywood, so when they got wind of the weird and amoral wrong-doings that were going on, they made sure to put a stop to it. "How dare these deviants go against the grain of society! How dare they not conform like the rest of us!" So much for the first amendment.

But this subculture isn't going to disappear just because some bully with jelly donut crumbs stuck on his lip tells them to. They're just going to become more clever.

After playing phone tag with James for over a month, I finally pinned him down (no pun intended) and this is what he had to say...

BOING BOING: Is it cool to talk about the bust at Dragonfly?

James: Yeah, sure. I had hired a friend of mine who's an expert in S&M to come to the club and do a theatrical S&M demo, which involved a bull whip, some blood letting, and some other torture techniques - genitalia torture and some other stuff - and apparently several customers called and complained to the Hollywood police department and took it upon themselves to turn us into the police. So the following week, about 20 undercover cops came in, paid admission like a normal patron, and were assigned to watch the dancers and the performers and other patrons. Then at midnight the house lights went on and they made a raid. They arrested 20 people, confiscated our door money, and shut us down.

On what grounds?

Lewd conduct. The police report was full of lies saying that people were having sex on the dance floor, and that our go-go dancers were having sex on the stage, and that we were having prostitution going on in the back room. So it's really more of a harassment than anything else.

Were the people who were arrested let off?

Most of the charges were dropped to trespassing. Some people are taking it all the way to trial. Some of my friends who were arrested think it's going to be thrown out of court.

Were you arrested?

No, there were no charges brought to Miguel or me.

What about the club itself?

We don't really know. There's a possible rumor that the club set us up, or paid the vice off so that they wouldn't lose their liquor license. Because with a bust like this it's very surprising that they didn't lose their liquor license. Not only that, the fire marshals came as well. The club legally holds 270, and we had around 470.

But that isn't your responsibility, is it?

No, that's not our responsibility.

You mentioned that your performers did blood letting. What is that?

There were incisions made with a scalpel on the surface in a ritualized pattern that just made some surface bleeding, and that was it.

You said they made charges against the go-go dancers, but do you think they were against the S&M performances as well?

I think they're just against the club itself. What the vice has told us is that you cannot do S&M at an establishment that serves alcohol. Supposedly it's a violation of the ABC liquor license, or law, but I don't know if it's true.

Would you consider doing it at a non-alcoholic place?

Yeah, we would, but there's a lot of mixed feelings about that. It's kind of hard to have a club environment without alcohol. Most of the people who work for us don't drink, and a lot of our crowd doesn't drink, but there are enough people who do drink and want to be able to do so.

How did you guys come up with *FUCK!*? Did you guys start promoting it so that you could create an environment that people couldn't get elsewhere?

It was Miguel's idea to open up the club, back in the summer of 1990. He had been having after-hours parties, and the apartment would fill up with about 200 people or so, and he thought it would be a good idea to do a club so that we could invite the people who were coming to his house, and have them in a club environment. And we did that, and we never had any expectations of a certain clientele. We just knew the music we wanted to play. Because at that time there were no clubs that were playing the music we wanted to hear.

Which was...?

Which was industrial. And there was no alternative gay scene at all, really.

So how did you get involved with the modern primitive crowd?

We didn't advertise it. It just started happening with the people who came to the crowd. Our friends that started coming - that's what they were into, and practiced it as a lifestyle. That's how it all happened. It was just like a domino effect. One thing led to another.

So it's not something you and Miguel are into.

Yeah, sure, we are. You know, that was never our intention - to open up a club for modern primitives. I don't even like that word, to be honest with you.

What word do you like?

I don't like to be categorized, you know? I just don't like catchphrases. It was never exclusive, where you had to be pierced, and have a tattoo, or have some type of shoe fetish. It was just about a place where we could go and have fun. It was an accumulation of

people who would come, and it didn't really matter at the time.

Okay, I'll take modern primitive out of my vocabulary, but can you explain the philosophy behind the performances that your performers do?

Well the performances are primarily (but not all) S&M oriented. We had friends at the Gauntlet who would come and do different ritualized performances that had overtones, or undertones of S&M, which were basically making a claim towards "we own our bodies and we can do whatever we want," through body modification performances, different piercing demonstrations. But we also had a lot of bands. We supported a lot of local bands at the time as well.

From what I understand, people who are into S&M don't experience pain in the same way that someone else would. Can you explain what's going on?

I think it depends on the individual. I think there are people who are squeamish about getting their ears pierced, but then there was our friend Cliff, who passed away last year, who would get play-pierced, and that's when they stick needles through your surface skin and you get an endorphin rush off of that, and it's a different type of sensation. You kind of have to get beyond the initial pain of it. It's supposed to be an altered state.

Is it something you have to work at, or are some people just naturally inclined to this type of stimulation?

I think that a lot of people first of all are squeamish of needles, and somebody who's squeamish of needles isn't going to have the same experience. I think that you have to look at it as an initiation of some kind, or be willing to put yourself through the test. I don't think you just do it once and get this immediate rush. I think it's something you get into as time goes by. You have to be very open minded.

At Cybersex you guys had people doing mummification. What's that all about?

I think mummification is similar to an isolation tank, which can produce an altered state. It's basically surrendering yourself to your enclosed environment, surrendering to that and allowing your mind to go off into a different consciousness. I'm not one for mummification, because I'm very claustrophobic, but I know people who are really into it.

What do you think people's misconceptions are about what you guys do?

I think they're just basically confused on a pretty surface level. They just look at it and don't compre-

hend it, and can't understand why anyone would want to either get flogged by a whip, or they don't understand why anyone would want to get play-pierced, or be mummified. They can't comprehend why anyone would want to undergo the pain, because I think that's what they see. They see somebody getting stuck with needles, and it flips them out. And blood really freaks people out right now. They're not really informed on S&M, and they take it at a surface level, and they see something that looks painful, or looks perverted to them, and they just judge it as that. They get scared, because they don't understand it.

What are you guys now?

Honestly, I don't really know. We tried to reopen the 30th of May, and the police found one of our flyers, and formally went to the club where we were going to be holding our event, and told the owners that we couldn't open. There's a possibility that we might be reopening some time soon, at a very secret location. It's going to be invite only, because we can't really advertise anymore. We already know that the police are on our tails, and they're going to keep us out of Hollywood. They told us that they're going to close anything that we try to open.

Why are the cops so adamantly opposed to you?

I think we're just being persecuted. They have a really tainted picture of what we're about. I think they have a really misinformed idea of what we do,

and they think we're sexual deviants or something, and they just don't want us in Hollywood. So we're only going to invite the people we want there, and we won't advertise. That way they won't be able to find us.

Did you see the Dragonfly bust coming?

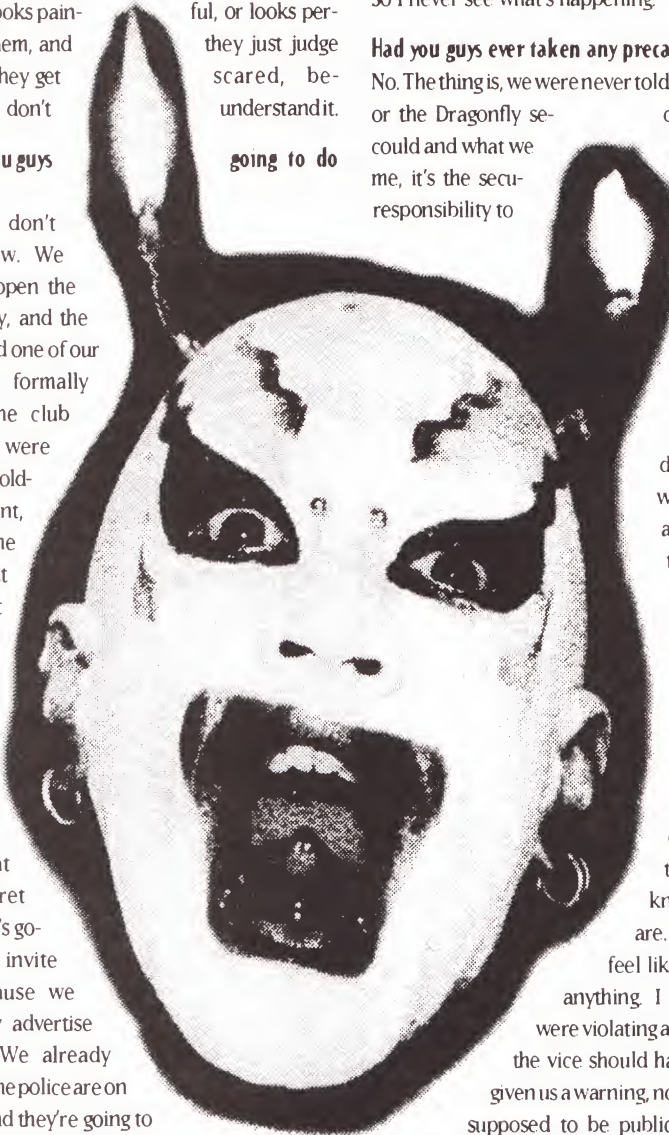
No, I didn't. Some people had told me that they had seen the cops in there before, but I had never seen them because I was in the DJ booth the whole night. So I never see what's happening.

Had you guys ever taken any precautions?

No. The thing is, we were never told by the Dragonfly or the Dragonfly security what we could and what we couldn't do. To me, it's the security guards' responsibility to insure that we're not violating the liquor license. That's why they're there. But the Dragonfly security never did anything. They would just sit back and watch everything.

Will you do anything differently next time to prevent being busted again?

The only thing we'll do differently is make sure that the cops don't know where we are. That's it. I don't feel like we've violated anything. I feel like, if we were violating an ABC law, I think the vice should have come in and given us a warning, not raid us. They're supposed to be public service people who are working for us, and what they did was treat us like criminals, and they're persecuting us. I don't feel like we've done anything. There are people out there killing each other and smuggling guns into the country, and we're not hurting anybody. We're not going to stop doing what we're doing, we just won't let them know where we are. ♣



by Don Webb

As an occasional game writer and game designer, I generally don't give away games; but since all the readers of *BOING-BOING* are so

rich and sexy (and my prestige goes way up by hanging with them) I decided to give these games away.

1. The Christmas police game.

a) A month or more after Christmas, rent a Security Officer uniform. b) Drive to a neighborhood where you're not known. c) Find a house with Christmas lights, wreaths, etc. d) Go up, ring the doorbell, announce yourself as "Christmas Police" and demand they pay a fine proportionate to the number of days since Christmas.

2. The thank you game.

a) Look for a group of religious wackos protesting a gay book store, porn store, occult bookstore, etc. b) Pull up and ask (very politely) to speak with the leader. c) Tell the leader, "A gay bookstore! Gee, thanks, I didn't know one was here." Then swish inside and purchase something (or flash the Sign of the Horns if it is an occult bookstore, etc.)

3. The literature exchange game.

a) When a Jehovah's Witness comes to your door, tell them you're busy but ask if they will "please, please" give you a copy of their literature. b) When a Mormon comes to your door, tell them you're very worried about their morals and faith and could they please read (handing them the copy of Jehovah's Witness literature). c) Get Mormons to give you their literature which you can then offer to the next visiting group. Note this works just as well with political literature.

Nine Games You Can Play

4. The yes-and-also game.

a) Obtain the literature of some hate group. b) Wait until said group is slammed by the media. c) Write an editorial response containing the most vile phrase from the hate literature plus a second totally absurd idea, such as, "We in the White Purity party believe that all members of the mud races should be forcibly sterilized and that wearing strawberry-flavored condoms causes an irrational attraction for the music of Sonny Bono." d) Demand the letter be printed. e) Be sure and sign the name (and use the address and xeroxed letterhead) of the hate group.

5. The nickel game.

a) Obtain a roll of nickels. b) Go to poetry readings, gallery shows, etc. c) Put single nickels in the coin return slot of pay phones. d) Be sure that you are observed doing this activity. e) Explain that you have obtained an NEA grant for this purpose (as a way of subsidizing artists who lack enough funds to apply for an NEA grant).

6. The get-together game.

a) Obtain a waitperson's uniform and a handful of condoms. b) Deliver condoms to various men and women who are alone in the bar or restaurant. c) Tell them that various other single men or women in the bar or restaurant asked to have it delivered.

7. The historical marker game.

a) Research your community, and discover an event culturally unpopular

such as the First Church of Satan Conclave in Dayton, Ohio (1974). b) Begin a letter-writing campaign demanding a historical marker be placed on the spot. Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* is a great aid for this one.

8. The Illuminati game.

a) Learn the details of an ongoing scheme (such as Ignatz Placenta, the owner of AI Computers, is selling ersatz toner cartridges that leak and ruin laser printers.). b) Write up the scam with all the details you possess (including addresses, dates, phone numbers etc.) but mix in names and facts from any of Robert Anton Wilson's books. c) Xerox your write-up and post in laundromats, on telephone poles etc. around the actual place the scam is going on. d) Mail a copy of your write-up to the scam artist along with a dollar bill, which you have written the word "FNORD" on—over the all seeing eye design on the back. e) Send a similar mailing to your local newspaper. f) For the advanced game take two different scams and mix them and the Illuminati together. For those of you not interested in the Illuminati, this game may be played with your favorite *Twilight Zone* episode, with the scam artist receiving a cassette with the *Twilight Zone* theme—or with Robert Heinlein's *Mark of the Beast* with the victim receiving a futuristic postcard with the words, "Grok this, Bozo!" written on it.

9. The conference call game.

a) Get conference calling for your phone. b) Set up a conference call between a telephone sex service, your local PBS pledge line, Pat Robertson's prayer line, and a lawyers' referral service. c) Record and broadcast as a radio performance.

If you play all nine games in a year, score ten thousand points and declare yourself to all worlds within and without as a winner. Remember the world is your plaything. Amuse her and she will amuse you. ♣

QUANTUM TANTRA ADVANCES IN SKIN SCIENCE

An Interview with Nick Herbert
by Joseph Matheny

"It's always gooiest before it solidifies." — **Beverly's Ovation.**
Beverly Rubik. Ph.d

"Quantum Tantra is not just another way to get high using common objects you can find around the house . . . Caution: Practising Q.T. before you understand Bell's Theorem of interconnectiveness is like walking into the Amazon jungle without a map." — **Alternate Dimensions.** Jabir ibn Hayyan

Dear Carla and Mark ,

Sorry for taking so long to check in, but as you will read in the following report, I have been hot on the trail of Incunabula Press and its elusive proprietor, Mr. Emory Cranston. This is my report to date:

October 13, 1992

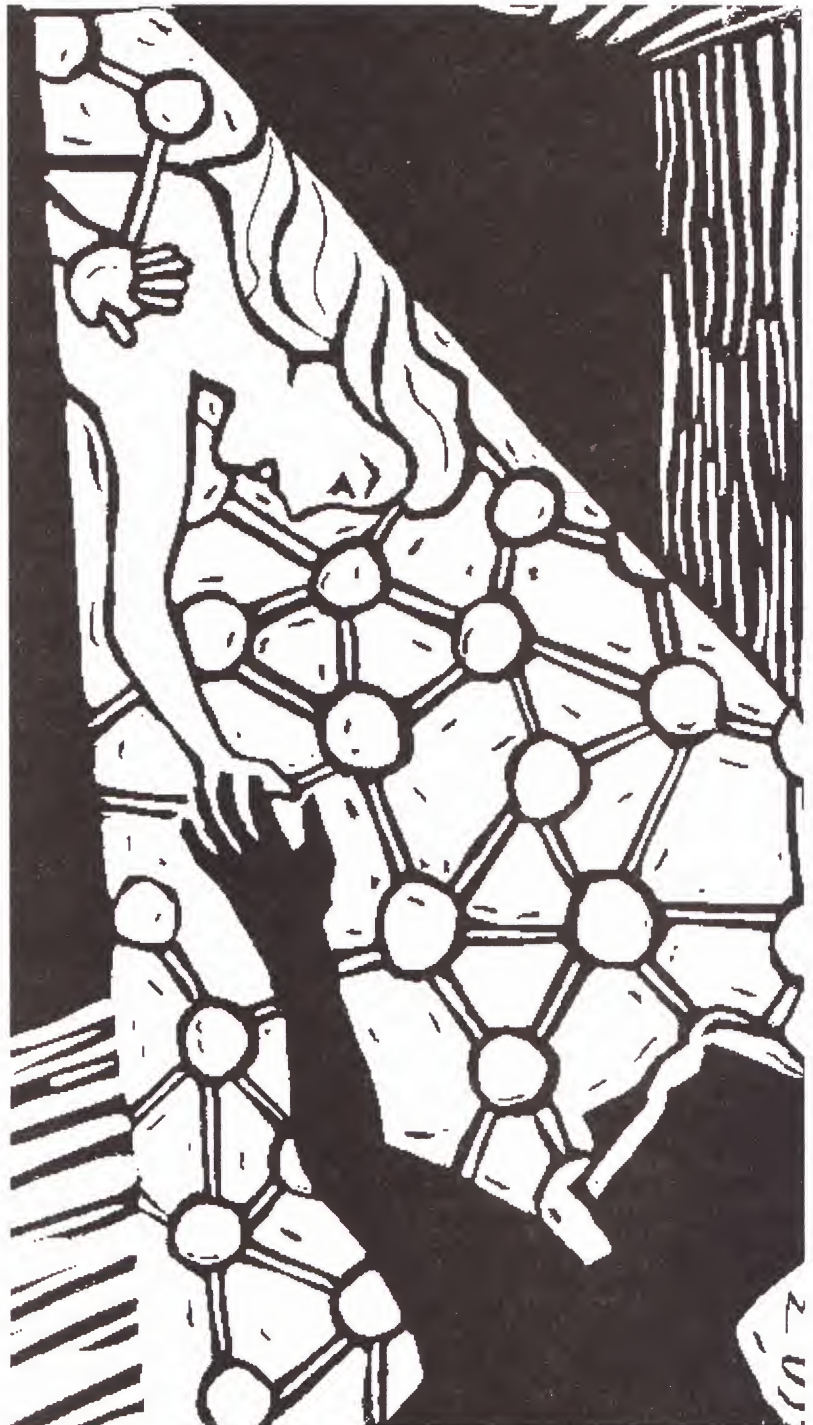
I finally get a trace on Incunabula. Following a lead from a culture-jamming club in San Francisco (MEDIASEIZURE 415/241-1568), I arrive in the small New Jersey town of Ong's Hat. The address I have for Incunabula is a PO box. The local postmaster/general store operator was very helpful. Almost too helpful! He told me that Cranston and Incunabula had fled the area during the night about a month ago. He allowed me to examine the PO box used by Cranston's nebulous book venture. All I found inside were overdraft notices from his bank and some solicitations from a church of geniuses in Dallas, Texas or some such thing. Another dead end.

October 14, 1992

I arrive in New York City, get a room, restock supplies and think. I call New Jersey information to get the phone number for the Ong's Hat general store and post office so I can ask the postmaster a few more questions. I am told by the inbred boob on the other end of the line that there is no such town listed in New Jersey, and after a long and heated debate, we terminate the phone call by mutually insulting each other's gene pool. God, I hate the phone company.

October 16, 1992

Two days (and two bottles of Johnny Walker Black Label) later, I finally get a lead on one of the most intriguing authors



listed in the Incunabula catalogue, Nick Herbert, author of *Quantum Reality, Faster Than Light: Superluminal Loopholes in Physics*, and of course, the legendary *Alternate Dimensions*. Herbert was a former SDI scientist turned renegade researcher. His past areas of research involved pleasure dome technologies, Quantum Tantra, Time and Dimensional travel theories, and gelatinous substances.

I'll give you a little background on *Alternate Dimensions (A.D.)*. It was written in 1989 by Herbert, but was suppressed by the publisher, Harper & Row, for unexplained reasons in 1990. Incunabula was offering bound, uncorrected galley copies for \$100 each, or at least they were, until Cranston disappeared with the whole kit-n-kaboodle. In A.D., it seems that Herbert gave away the inner secrets of a Tantric-dimensional travel cult based in northern California. Using techniques that combined Herbert's own theory of Quantum Tantra, and hardware technology, consisting of

an egg-shaped craft of some sort, members of this cult were able to penetrate into other dimensions. There were also intense visualization techniques, and Tantric-Egg-Yoke postures involved, but the Xerox copy I had purchased from MEDIASEIZURE seemed to be missing some of the key technical portions.

Herbert was now hiding out in the backwater town of Boulder Creek, CA, deep in the Santa Cruz mountains. I hopped aboard one of the private *BOING-BOING* Lear jets and parachuted in, about a mile away from Herbert's mock farm house bunker.

I decided to phone Nick on my satellite cellular phone before bursting in on him. God knows what sort of nefarious gadgetry would await anyone trying to breach the boundaries of his compound! Surprisingly enough, Herbert was very cordial on the phone, and agreed to meet me in town for lunch and conversation. He suggested Adelita's Mexican Cantina, gave me directions, and promised to meet me there in an hour. (You will notice, of course, that he didn't

invite me to his secret lab!) I hitched a ride into town on a cartage truck and waited for him to show.

About an hour later, Dr. Herbert appeared in the parking lot driving a converted electric Stutz Bearcat. I recognized him instantly from his jacket photos, even with the recently acquired beard. Was he changing his appearance to hide from someone? Was he preparing to flee, like



"The type of connectivity that's possible in quantum theory allows two connected entities to be in indefinite states, but allows the couple itself to be in a definite state!"

Cranston had 30 days ago? I casually reached inside my jacket and activated my HidaMike. I waved him over to my table, and after shaking hands we settled down to Dos Equis and Gorditas.

I told Herbert that I only wanted to talk about his Quantum Tantra theories, and he could have final edit on anything I decided to publish. "What magazine did you say you were writing for, again?" he asked.

"*BOING-BOING*," I answered, watching his body language closely. "Never heard of 'em," he replied, trying to be coy. It was too late,

though. I had spotted the tell-tale signs of recognition and excitement. A well-trained operative knows how to spot these sort of things.

"Okay," I said, "let's start with the obvious question: What is Quantum Tantra?"

"Well, psychology has used a lot of classic metaphors to explain the mind, like the hydraulic metaphor of urges building up, and even when repressed, they'll find some way to spurt out to the surface. We're told that releasing your repressions will relieve the pressure, and you'll become healthy. That's a very classical metaphor. Now we have this marvelous new way of thinking called quantum mechanics, and it seems right to use these metaphors to explain human behavior. So, what's the most interesting human behavior of all? Sexual, of course. That's the idea, to use quantum mechanical metaphors to explore sexuality, to look at it through the lens of quantum physics. I would consider Q.T. successful if we could find new things to do that never would have been thought of, using the old metaphors. I mean, of course, pleasant things.

(Laughter).

The core idea of Q.T. stems from Heisenberg's statement that "atoms are not things." So, Q.T. naturally extrapolated that statement into "well, then people are not things, either." People are not things in the same way that atoms are not things."

"What are things?" I asked.

"Things are entities that have attributes, whether you look at them or not. They're big, they're solid and such. You can list their attributes. Non-things, or Quantum objects, like atoms or molecules, don't have attributes. They are basically clusters of oscillating possibilities, the possibilities not even being well-defined. It might reward us to look that way at people, as oscillating possibilities.

He took a long draw off of his Dos Equis, and signaled the waiter for another. "So, try and think of what the essence of quantum theory is," he continued, "Three adjectives: Randomness, thinglessness, and interconnectiveness. Randomness I associate with the spontaneity that is within people. Uncertainty is the very essence of romance. It's what you don't know that intrigues you."

"Now, thinglessness is even more renunciatory," he went on. "The notion of treating people like possibilities rather than fixed structures is a healthy one, I think.

Interconnectiveness is the most fantastic feature of Q.T. Things are connected in the quantum world in such a way that not only did we not think of it before the discovery of quantum mechanics, but I don't think we could have thought this way at all. It's so strange. The terrestrial belief system that comes the closest to quantum connectiveness is VooDoo."

"Sympathetic magick?" I queried. Now we were getting somewhere.

"Yes, sympathetic magick," he replied. "Of course, the VooDoo conception is naive in comparison to Q.T.'s connectiveness. In VooDoo, you do something like burn someone's hair to give them a headache. The Quantum connection isn't that crude. It has more to do with timing. In the Quantum world, you burn someone's hair, and maybe they miss an appointment. The Newtonian world view emphasized control over the world, whereas, the Quantum world view doesn't emphasize control so much as timing. You could say that the Newtonian view emphasized force, where the Quantum world emphasizes finesse."

"One analogy is ordinary, steerable dish radar versus phased array antennae. Steerable dish physically moves the whole antenna structure. In the phased array antennae, you have a whole

array of antennae that are all fixed. None of them move, but by changing the timing on these antennae, you get a virtual antenna that's pointed in any direction. That's an example of using finesse, rather than force. Quantum connection is like that. It is set up like VooDoo by having something that the other person has interacted with, some sympathetic object."

"But what does this have to do with sex?" I asked. Herbert was quick to answer. "I'm getting to that. In Q.T., the tantra part has to do with sex as well as religion. Every religion has their symbol. The Christians have the cross, Islam has the crescent and star, the Pagans have the pentagram, the wheel for Buddhism, and so forth. Q.T. has its symbols, also. One of them is this fork." He picked up a salsa-encrusted fork, and stared rapturously at it. "It reminds us to see the world as possibilities," he continued, "In the Newtonian world, starting from now, only one thing could happen. Q.T. sees the future as open possibilities, like the four tines of this fork. Actually, if this fork were fuzzy, like Man Ray's fuzzy cup and spoon. . ."

I was beginning to understand. That, or the Dos Equis was kicking in. I felt lightheaded. "So the borders would not quite be defined. . ." I replied.

"Yes," he said, eyes twinkling in the candlelight. "The possibilities are defined only by your intentions, by how you construe the moment. Quantum possibilities are not quite as defined as dice possibilities, even. With a die, only one of six numbers will come up, whereas with Quantum possibilities, it depends on how you look at the moment, and that again, is part of thinglessness. All of these elements have resonances in popular literature. Like the talk of the inexplicable chemistry that occurs between two people, or this notion of 'it's bigger than both of us.' The type of connectivity that's possible in quantum theory allows two connected entities to be in indefinite states, but allows the couple itself to be in a definite state! The mathematics on this are clear. As Heisenberg said, 'quantum theory has changed our way of thinking completely,' and it's changed in such a way that it didn't dissolve into some unclear, fuzzy fog, but into this absolute clarity of a new mathematics. Now the mathematics describe the fog in an absolutely precise way. So, it's this kind of very precise unclarity."

"You're talking like a lot of mystics I know!" I scoffed. He replied, laughing, "Except, this is found in ordinary physics! This is stuff that was discovered 75 years ago, it's not new stuff at all. It's only now beginning to permeate popular

culture. So, we have this system where each member of the pair, say, a man and a woman, or whatever, are undefined. They've gotten themselves into a state where their individualities are not as clear, but the couple itself as an entity, is better defined than the individual members of the set. We use symbols, like the fork, to remind ourselves of these things, because the human mind is not used to thinking in parallels."

"Our data rate is so minuscule, compared to, say, television data rates equivalent to megabits per second, or telephones, which are equivalent to thousands of kilobits per second. Morse code is about 10 bits per second, and that's pretty close to our attention rate! I mean, when we're not on robot, when we do come to attention, we don't bring much to this moment in terms of quantity. It's been estimated at about 16 bits a second. So, people need simple graphic symbols, like the fork, or the cross, or the crescent, to remind themselves that they're Moslems, or whatever. So, one symbol I've invented to epitomize Randomness, Thinglessness, and Interconnectiveness, is the trinity of White, Hot and Sticky. White corresponds to Thinglessness, Hot to Randomness, and Sticky to Interconnectiveness. By white, I mean like white light, all the colors together, all human sexual potentials. Thinglessness is wrought with possibilities. As David Finklestein, the inventor of quantum logic said, 'We are all white light, in the sense that we are all possibilities.' Hot has to do with newness, spontaneity that we can bring to the moment to remind us that the moment can be ever new. That's a hard thing to live up to, sexually, and otherwise. Sticky, of course, typifies the new kind of connectiveness. A metaphor for achieving stickiness, are objects that you break in two, and each partner keeps one half. The fracture is so unique, that I will only match one other person in the whole world! Quantum objects help to enhance this two-person white, hot, sticky state. And music is the connection in this technology."

"Why music?" I asked.

"Because, these possibilities are vibratory,"

he answered.. "In the physical world, every atom, or possibility, is vibrating at a certain frequency. The higher the energy level, the higher the frequency or pitch of the vibrations. We can't hear, smell, see, or taste any of these vibrations except indirectly. I'm doing more research with solid state technology, sound sequences."

"But what about *Alternate Dimensions*, the egg craft, travel cults, Tantric-Yoke technique, I mean, what about all this stuff!" I blurted, almost blowing my cover.

"Youngman, I have no idea what you're talking about. All I can say is there are some questions that you should not ask, ever. The interview is now concluded."

He rose to leave. "But - but what should I call this...this statement you've given?" I stammered. "Call it," he said, before closing the door, "Advances in Skin Science!" I looked around to see

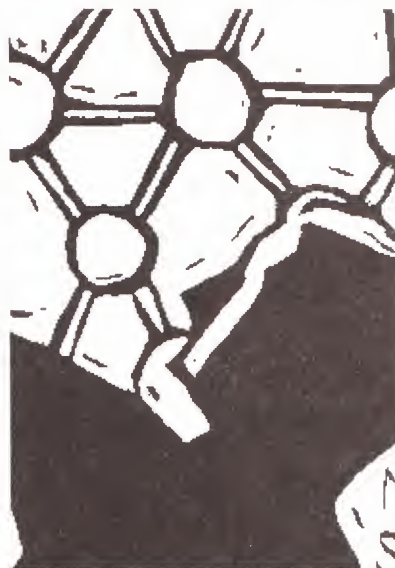
if any operatives were nearby. I didn't see any tell-tale signs of info-agents in the cantina.

I looked down at the table and tried to clear my head of the Dos Equis and Herbert's hypnotic voice. It was then that I saw it. The very sight of its white, hot, sticky surface made my heart race. I couldn't believe it! "Great!" (see attached expense account report) ☛

Nick Herbert is the author of the weird physics classic *Quantum Reality*, the *Japanese non fiction best seller* *Faster Than Light*, *Superluminal Loopholes* in *Physics*, and countless

magazine articles. His newest book, *Elemental Mind*, about maverick models of consciousness, on Dutton Press, is due for release in 1993. Nick Herbert will admit to nothing more than having a learner's permit in *Quantum Tantra*.

Joseph Matheny is a freelance writer living in San Francisco. His next book, *Giving the Media a Seizure* is about culture jamming in theory and practice. He also lives under the delusion that he is some kind of secret agent (or some such rubbish). If you meet him, humor him. He's basically harmless.



I was beginning to understand. That, or the Dos Equis was kicking in.

Good morning, Mr. Goldberg. Welcome to the Cyberculture."

I sat bolt upright in bed, fighting back dream hordes of flyer-wielding members of the Revolutionary Communist Party Youth Brigade. I was blinking desperately, trying to get cartoon silhouettes of AK47-totin' teen proletarians out of my head.

Cyberculture? I listened for a moment. Scratching my head, I wondered if the endless sirens of D.C. emergency vehicles sounded in any way different. I looked at my hands — I was still metaphorically Black and physically brown. I had never heard anything about cyberculture in RCP rhetoric. I rubbed my eyes briskly for a few moments and was relegating the strange greeting to dream overlap when I looked across the room.

There stood this weird white guy with mirrorshades, a day or two of beard, a mass of half-dreaded hair and a smug little grin. He wore some kind of plastic jumpsuit trimmed in neon, a Native American prayer pouch around his neck, and a knapsack slung over a shoulder. In his hand he held a tall mug of some steaming green concoction, the reek from which was coming my way.

"Hyper-Blast Breakfast Beverage? Dark and Sundry's finest," he said cheerily, raising the mug in my direction.

"No thanks," I muttered. "Who the hell are you?"

He lifted the mug to his lips and took a long pull, choking back a belch before speaking. "Harry Wentbang, Field Operative for the Agency of Control and Appropriation."

"The who?"

"The A.C.A. Mr. Goldberg. We are the shadow arm of the unknown, but totally notorious NeoWobblies."

"The who!?"

I demanded, trying to sift through the twist of words and syllables.

"The NeoWobblies!"

"Alright, pal. Let's see some ID." I said, swinging my legs off of my bed. "No prob."

He put the beverage down on my desk and fumbled through his medicine pouch. Amidst a hail of rainbow-colored pills, he pulled a leather wallet out of the stretched bag. As I listened to the pills clatter and bounce across the floor, I watched him open the wallet to display a hologram of the dollar bill/Illuminatus eye-pyramid. He then adjusted his mirrorshades and flashed them up and down in an awkward, cartoony gesture.

"Just beamed in from your nearest pirate mind station." He said, tucking the shades into a breast pocket.

"Why?" I asked, wondering if I should allow myself to be annoyed by this guy.

"Because the A.C.A. wants your mind Mr. Goldberg."

I raised an eyebrow skeptically. "My mind, Mr. Wentbang?"

"And those of people like you."

black

science

navigator

"Like me?"

"Yes. Like you." He slapped a grin on his face and pushed his badge into a jumpsuit pocket.

"What is it about people LIKE ME?" I asked.

"Well..." He trailed off suddenly.

I was beginning to get that vibe that I got from representatives of the RCP. They latched onto certain people for certain reasons.

"Well what?"

"You, among other people, are very special. We need you as allies in our fight."

"I've heard this before. What other people?"

His smile vanished and he began

"I think

to shift his feet nervously. you know, Mr. Goldberg. You've been around long enough. Certain strains of the species have special characteristics that lend themselves to revolutions, real or imagined, sponsored

by certain other strains."

"What? My sign? Libras are pretty cool revolutionaries I've heard."

"Well, no, not exactly."

"My genes! Right? I've got special genes!"

He paused and looked around my room for a second as if to appreciate the police silhouette target which I had covered with fragments of other photographs and drawings. "You're kind of close. Your special qualities are common yet rare at the same time."

I took a long look

at my hands and felt his excitement increasing. I looked back up. "I still don't get it. What's so special

about me?"

He seemed genuinely embarrassed. "Don't make me say it. I'm a neo-male, post-guilty, cyber-shaman. I'm supposed to be past all this."

"Let me guess. Is it like... Elvis? Like Vanilla Ice? Like Lou Reed? Is it like that "special magic?" Like Jordan? Sandra Bernhardt? Tanning booths?"

He winced with every statement I fired at him, intentionally missing the target.

"Maybe I can teach you how to dance? How to jive? How to get women?"

"Oh, Stop! Please!"

"Then admit why you're here!" I shouted, getting to my feet.

"Okay, okay. "We need... B... Bl... Bla..."

I had my head turned and was listening intently. "What? You need what?" I prodded, encouraging him with hand gestures.

He sighed and stood up straight, removing his shades and looking at me squarely.

"Alright Mr. Goldberg. I'll be straight with you. The Neo-Wobblies need Bla—"

"African Americans?" I interrupted.

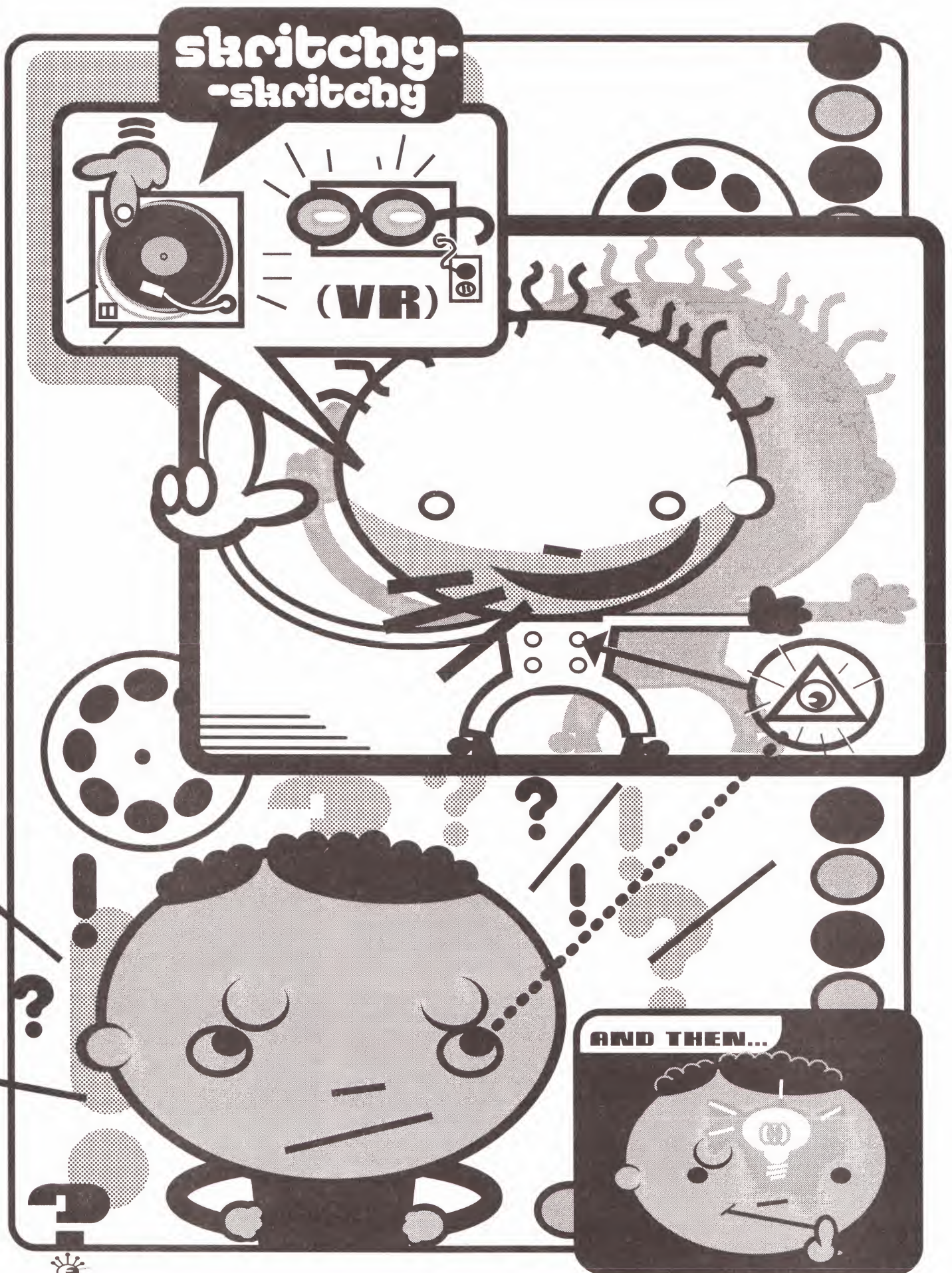
"Afri-" he began with a sheepish smile but I cut him off.

"Black. Black is faster."

He barely stopped himself from rolling his eyes. "We need

By
David
Point3
Goldberg

Claudia Newell



Black people in the cyberculture."

"A-HA!" I shouted triumphantly, waving a finger in the air. "You need that O! Black Magic again, heh?" I said with a vocal swagger. I looked ceilingward and began to shout at the top of my lungs. "HEY! THEY NEED NEGRO CYBERPUNKS IN THE POST-NEO-CYBER-DADA ARMY! COME ON BROTHERS AND SISTERS!"

Then I stopped. He was covering his eyes with a mixture of shame and anger.

"C'n I ask you a question?"

He uncovered his eyes and looked at me. "Yes?"

"What the fuck is the cyberculture? When the hell did it start? Is this a postmodern thing? Why hasn't anyone written about it? Why are Black folks always the last to know? And what the hell does it have to do with us, anyway? Talk to me, Harry."

"I'm trying, Mr. Goldberg, I'm trying."

"Call me David."

"Fine. Let me explain. First, I should warn you. The cyberculture is so techno-fast, so hyperdense, so trans-convoluted, so meta-unimaginably vague that it requires a whole new mode of media to present and understand it."

"Hey, I think I know what you're talkin' about there." I said with a smile. "That virtual reality stuff, right? With the goggles...Lawnmower Man?"

Harry Wentbang shook his head sadly. "Ah, the

around inside it, tossing out pieces of anonymous matte black street tech, a thermos, a tangle of wire, and a magazine called "Hacking Bio-rhythms." His hand emerged triumphantly holding a startlingly familiar pair of stylized red plastic binoculars with a sliding blue lever that fit your fingertip in ergonomic comfort.

"Good God!" I exclaimed. "Isn't that a...?"

"Yes, David. It's a B-H Cyber-C Viz Sys! The absolute latest in portable VR gear."



"Right here, bud, and you aren't gettin' it!" He waved a small plastic case that held the circle-mounted set of quasi-3D slides. "This," he said while gesturing with the Viewmaster, "is the only way you can consume the intense information related to what cyberculture is really about. After you jack in, you'll understand why the movement needs you people."

"Us people?" I said, annoyed, taking the thing from him.

"Sorry... sorry."

I was considering putting him out of my room but something had me intrigued. What was this cyber thing? And why was he here with me? I raised the Viewmaster to my eyes: dark. I removed them for a moment to see if there was a disk in the slot.

"Don't!" He shouted suddenly, waving his hands. "Jack back in, jack back in!"

"There's nothing there!" I said, humoring him.

"You have to let the Vasopressin set in."

"The pressa-what?"

"Just look! I'll talk you through it."

I put the Viewmaster back up to my eyes, staring at a blank field, feeling like a total idiot. Then he started talking to me, rapping really. It was all more of that fragmented hyphen-stroke stuff. Big words with plenty of interchangeable prefixes like cyber-, post-, techno-, hyper- and trans-. The more he talked, the faster he talked and I peeked once to see him making these grand gestures to emphasize his points. I didn't understand half of what he was saying at first but then I started to catch onto the rhythm of what he was rambling about—something about mediascapes and simulacrum and fractal interiorities... Eventually I realized that he was really possessed by what he was thinking and the concepts were so huge and intertwining that they could only be communicated via this strange language of warp speed and incredible density. Somewhere, in between all the folds of his monologue, he was talking about people, and machines, and ways of life, and a new revolution. It began to make sense somehow—I mean, it was way up there where none of the gun-totin', blunt-smokin' fools that I knew could get down with it. In the end it sounded a lot like a Hip Hop culture for white folks.

"Cyberculture, like all postmodernism, is about appropriation...." He was saying.

Then it hit me. I lowered the Viewmaster and looked sidelong at him with extreme suspicion.

"Appropriation?" I repeated warily.

"Yeah," he said simply. "Our postmodern age is an the age of sampling and overlapping. The age of the dub, the scratch, and the remix. Just

HEY! THEY NEED NEGRO CYBERPUNKS IN THE POST-NEO-CYBER-DADA ARMY! COME ON BROTHERS AND SISTERS!

poor victims of the culture industry-stroke-consumption society-stroke-spectacle. Imploding beneath the sheer mass and infinite distention of their porous omnipresent postmodern mediascapes."

"Hey, don't start that Damon Wayans shit with me."

"Let me explain it to you in pictures using my Official Baudrillard-Haraway Cyber-Concept Visualization System."

"Your what!?"

"Here, look."

He took off his knapsack and began digging

"Hell no!" I pronounced, taking another step towards him, wagging my finger at the device. "That's a...a...VIEWMASTER!"

An expression of absolute horror flashed across his face and he whisked the toy behind his back.

"Who sent you?" He whispered desperately. "Who's your industrial espionage contact? This is real street tech, man! The high meets the low! Real down and dirty hacker stuff!"

I made a sour face and grabbed his hand, forcing him to bring the Viewmaster back into plain sight. "You lie. This is an old toy... where's the...shall I say...software?"

like Hip Hop! That's why I would like to hereby welcome the ranks of Black Americans into the cyberculture since you're already outstanding contributors to it."

"Wait one screwy minute, pal," I said. "Y'all been appropriating shit since my great-great-great-grandparents. This all sounds like what white folks have been doing with Black culture for the longest time—taking it and making it seem to be their own. I'm thinking about Jazz, Rock 'n Roll, and nowadays, even Hip Hop!"

"I know, I know," Wentbang said with a trace of guilt, "we've been doing it for centuries! But you Blacks have something special about you that demands that we copy it!"

"STEAL is more like it. So, why are you here with me? Y'all usually just take what you want and let us find out later."

"I know, but we're trying to be different this time around. This is so that the cyberculture doesn't end up like some hyper-extension of a commercially fetishized Elvis simulacrum."

I nodded, somehow actually understanding what he meant. "Why do you have to come and bother us again? The century's almost over and we'd like to hold onto our subcultures a little longer before the pressures of survival force us to mutate and adapt again. Aren't there any alternative white people doing anything you want to appropriate?"

"Well, some of them are interesting, but the majority of them lack the vitality, or the authenticity for that matter, that Black culture seems to have. Ya know...soul. You've been living the Apocalypse that we're only fantasizing about!"

"Me?"

"Well...maybe not you...you're an intellectual. I'm talking about your brethren in the ghettos and the urban wastelands."

"Glorify them not, Harry. I try not to."

He sighed and sort of shrugged. "It's hard. This Hip Hop thing captures the essence of street tech cyberculture! It's fast, it's slick, it mutates, it samples! It finds its own use for things. And I'm afraid the ol' standbys like Leary and Burroughs are just getting too old for the job. We want the libido of the dancefloor! The rave scene! House music all night long! The bliss out of custom drugs!"

I looked this wild cracker up and down a couple of times and folded my arms across my chest. Where was he coming from? At least he had the decency to come to a Black person to get them involved. I shuddered to think of what would have happened if they had simply interviewed a couple of rappers, a few bands and a music producer—cleverly absorbing and sub-

verting them into their little cyber-revolution. The next thing you know they'd be summarizing the history of Hip Hop in a paragraph, calling it a cyber-apocalypse or something, and making "scratch" into a glossary term! I wiped my brow dramatically.

"You like P.E., Harry?" I asked.

"Public Enemy? The greatest! Beats! Politics! Samples! Noise! They're the new Sex Pistols!"

I frowned but went for my music collection anyway.

... 500 FBI agents, comin' after us, with a license to kill 30 mil, claimin' it's just a drug

"Unless—and I'm no spokesperson for the race or anything—you intend to learn about what REALLY goes into cultural improvisation and mutations like Hip Hop. We'd end up back in Africa you realize, and that could get pretty uncomfortable if you've forgotten about the Olduvai Gorge."

Wentbang had the biggest grin on his face and he was nearly jumping up and down with glee.

"I'm ready, David! Tell me everything!"

He flounced down onto my bed and waited there with an expectant look on his face. I wondered again about the name of the organiza-

THIS HIP HOP

Thing captures the essence of

STREET TECH CYBERCULTURE!

bust...

I put on P. E.'s "Hazy Shade of Criminal" (12" vinyl version, of course). There were the tumbling drums sounding like a phalanx of African robotech mechs, the relentless high-pitched whine keening somewhere in the higher frequencies, the looped sample of "Rebel Base/Bass" (from Star Wars?!) through the whole song and periodic disintegrations into folds, warps, cuts and transformations of noise that condense a Deleuze and Guattari paragraph into a few seconds of sound. Flav's mad hatter banter punctuated the apocalyptic baritone of Chuck D who roared through the entire track, breaking the most liberal rules of new school rhyming.

"So," I said after the song ended and the tone arm swung back, "You cyberpunks intend to lead a cultural revolution that matches the intensity of what you just heard? You intend to take Hip Hop—"

"And punk. And industrial," Harry interjected.

"—and punk and industrial" I added, "as models?"

"Maybe even splice them. A bit of musicalultural memetic engineering."

I shook my head emphatically. "As Homey The Clown says: 'I don't think so!'" But, then I paused, rubbing my chin slowly, and began thinking about the actual potential of linking Black people up with a "movement" that was at least trying to embrace and recognize some of their ethics.

tion he was working for... "Control and Appropriation." I put my hands on my hips and looked at this spaced-out cyber-cowboy for a few more moments. It couldn't hurt to at least try to kick some facts to him. My own people might call me some kind of sell-out or bourgeois intellectual, but this was all about SURVIVAL, right? And besides, this was an opportunity for Black people to play a little Columbus—metaphorically speaking, of course. ☘

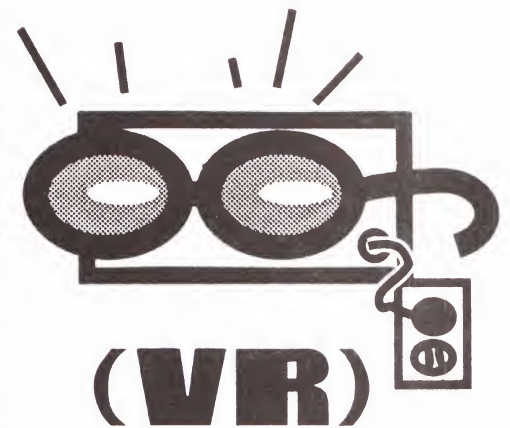




Photo of Scrappi Duchamp: Annalisa Aguilar

Satan the Lip-Syncing Doodoo Pig Gets an Enema

by Carla Sinclair and Mark Frauenfelder

When we first heard the name Mondo Vanilli, it set our fat little heads spinning. Were they a serious music group, a '90s MacLarenesque swindle, a double-bluff performance art stunt, the latest media virus, a stoned hippie's dream, a colossal joke, or what?

We decided to interview them, not to answer that question, but because Mondo Vanilli had threatened to run a digitally falsified picture of the *BOING-BOING* editors exchanging bodily fluids with a marsupial in the next issue of *Mondo 2000*. We doubted their technical ability to make a peccary look like a kangaroo, but decided not to take any chances. We hope that what you are about to read will satisfy the Mondo Vanillian terrorists: RU Sirius, Scrappi Duchamp and Simone Third Arm.

The interview took place during a rainy night at Canter's Deli on Fairfax Avenue in Hollywood. All five of us talked at the same time, making a verbatim transcription impossible. Thank gopod RU told us, "You can write anything you want about Mondo Vanilli, and even make up quotes and attribute them to me or any other Mondo Vanillian." So we started by making up that last sentence from scratch.—Mark

Where was your first performance?

Scrappi: It was at Toontown in San Francisco. We had a scissors lift that brought us 20 feet up in the air, a torture bed that spun around, actually a burn ward bed, we had video projections and jars of chocolate sauce. We hit people with fire extinguishers, scared them a little bit, the peace authorities came to straighten things out, and we had the Doctor out there.

Doctor?

Scrappi: He's our anti-Vanilli guru who tells us we're wasting our time. He tells me that I'm working way too hard because I'm trying to flesh the whole thing out which is a complete waste of time, obviously.

RU: We also played at the RU Sirius for President campaign.

How did that go?

RU: I don't think I won.

Scrappi: I think you did. We are running a pig for the President of Outer Space

Simone: You can have a cat, but you can't have a pig as a pet in the White House, I don't think.

Scrappi: You can have a pig as a pet in the White House!

Simone: You can?

Scrappi: Yeah!

RU: If you get elected you can change the rules. Anyway the rules don't apply to me, and I can change them.

Why do you want a pet pig?

Scrappi: Because they're like humans!

Simone: Why do I want a pet pig? Because they're selfish and they understand!

They're smart.

Simone: They are? The ones I've met... another band had one called Annabelle, that played Satan. I've always

wanted a pig named Satan.

Did you eat it?

Simone: What!?

Did you eat it?

Simone: No.

So what happened to it?

Simone: Oh, you know... we just became friends!

That's good.

Simone: She went home actually. You know, she was tired and cranky. She ate everything and she pooped all over my dungeon.

RU: Really?

Simone: Yeah, she got nervous. We were putting her in my medical room, we have a medical room in my house, and she thought it was the vet. She had just gone to the vet three times that week. She was not happy. She got all nervous and did a doodoo.

Aww! Why do you have a medical room?

Simone: I have a medical room and a dungeon. I do enemas, which is one of my favorite things.

For yourself or for other people?

Simone: I enjoy them, but I give them with champagne, coffee, whatever. I want to have an enema bar.

RU: The Mondo Vanilli performance will have a segment where a small, elite group of people are invited into one of the bathrooms, and it will become a performance venue. We'll show it through a video hook-up. It'll be like the other performance Simone did called the Smoking Fudge Pack. They did an enema in a bathroom and it was

on video.

Simone: We went into the audience and captured a cowboy, kidnapped him, tied him up and put him in the bathroom. We had a video camera and ten video screens in the theater.

What is the Mondo Vanilli philosophy?

RU: The goal is pure concept. When you try to actually achieve what you imagine then it ruins the whole thing.

Scrappi: It's a little different from pure nihilism...

RU: It's a very objective philosophy, actually.

Scrappi: It's Mondo Vanihilism.

RU: We'd like to have franchised Mondo Vanilli bands in every city across this great land. Any kind of band. They would just pay us dues and they would be Mondo Vanilli. There would be hundreds of Mondo Vanilli shows going on at once. Our preferences are for Holiday Inn-style bands, but it could be anything else—

Scrappi: As long as they pay!

Do you actually have a fucking robot?

RU: That's supposed to be a secret. When is the next issue of *boING-boING* coming out?

In May (*wrong!—ed.*)

RU: It'll be ready by then. (*wrong!—ed.*)

bb: Who's building it for you guys?

Scrappi: Can't say that. It's a secret.

Is it Mark Pauline?

RU: No, Mark's very expensive.

Speaking of money, what are you going to do when you get a million dollars?

Scrappi: Quit

Simone: Give up.

RU: Buy a house in Beverly Hills.

Scrappi: You won't get much in Beverly Hills. Buy a parking garage.

RU: We'd just make more things.

Scrappi: That would be the early stages of the very beginning of a multi-media production company.

RU: Yeah, we need more than a million dollars, like, tomorrow, to do what we want to do.

Scrappi: We're very paranoid about saying anything. You know what this city is like. Everyone tells everyone else, it gets around and then things fall apart. Meetings get canceled and we don't get our million dollars.

RU: The only way you can obtain dadaist spontaneity in a high-tech surveillance society is by becoming a dadaist multinational corporation. The idea is this: basically people on the street can be totally random. And the more you climb up the social ladder the less random you can be and the more inhibited you become. But once you climb to the top of the ladder you can reverse that and become random again. I mean random from the perspec-

tive of Warner Brothers or Sony, and just put out all sorts of random shit that doesn't necessarily make any sense.

That can only be done from that kind of position. Being random on the street is not as satisfying without access to the tools and the media. It's much more fun being random to twenty million people. I mean Michael Jackson couldn't even get away with kicking in car windows in his fucking video! Bang! It's over. There's got to be a way past that. Our culture is so much more ready for people to step over these boundaries now.

bb: Have you seen *Buzz* on MTV?

RU: Yeah, I was on it actually. They had a sequence up at *Mondo*.

They said it was canceled because it didn't fly with the seventeen-year-old kid in Kansas.

RU: That's such bullshit. They had reasonably good ratings on MTV but it was too expensive to do the show. That's the thing: all the shows they have are really cheap. That's why they have all these "reality" programs on TV now.

Like *The Real World* and *Cops*.

RU: Yeah. But I think something like *Buzz* can be done cheaply now. They just need to get people with the hacker spirit to put it together cheaply.

Why do you think it is that cable access TV is such a wasteland? The shows usually just have a couple of women wearing muumuus and clutching crystals.

Simone: Because they haven't lived on my planet yet. My planet is created from the Earth's shit, and everything that is toxic has made this ball of fecal matter and it floated up, like a newborn planet. That's why I'm channeling to RU via commode satellite.

Scrappi: Yeah. High-speed doodoo transmission through commode means would definitely be the way to send things. It's quick, easy and right down the chute.

RU: People who do really great videos don't usually seem to show it on cable stations. You can see lots of great shit. It's just going around. Stuff like Hyperdelic Video and Emergency Broadcast Network (see *interview this issue—ed.*). They just don't put it on cable. Probably the people that run cable stations are really politically correct. And they are such a drag to try to deal with. There are a limited number of slots and you have to live up to a number of different criteria before you can do it.

"The only way you can obtain dadaist spontaneity in a high-tech surveillance society is by becoming a dadaist multinational corporation."

Scrappi: It takes a long time to get your stuff played, too, because there's such a backlog.

RU: It's just not worth it.

Nobody's going to watch it anyway. Anybody with any sense is trying to get a show on Fox.

What will your performances be like?

RU: Our performances will be like an est session. It's going to be a very difficult psychological program. People are going to come, hopefully, all dressed in their leather outfits and sunglasses expecting another cool industrial music show just like every other one. And then immediately, instead of darkness, the lights will be bright, and there will be these geeks who'll be wearing some sort of Third Reich-ish things with peace signs and wheels on them leading them to their folding chairs. For quite a while we'll just talk and show pictures...

Scrappi: We'll laser-point at the vast array of Mondo Vanilli products and services. Without getting too far into this, because we have to keep it fairly secret or else no one's going to want to come—wait, maybe we shouldn't even be saying any of this...

RU: Actually, it's going to be a REAL COOL industrial show! It'll have that tough rhythm all the way through just like all the other industrial bands.

Simone: We're going to be Charlie's Angels!

Are you going to have cosmetic surgery performed on you at one of your shows?

RU: Oh yeah, I said I was during our first show, so it's already a lie. Eventually I'll do it, but I wonder if plastic surgeons can do that without losing their license? There's this one guy who I interviewed for *Mondo*, a plastic surgeon, so I sent him a letter asking him to do this and he doesn't talk to me anymore.

Maybe you can find a doctor who's already lost his license.

RU: Kervorkian could do it.

RU, when we first met you in 1984, I asked why you moved to San Francisco from New York. You said you wanted to start a magazine, a band, and something else, but I've forgotten.

RU: Run for President. I've done all three and I can go home now.

Anything else you'd like to try?

RU: Well, I've taken every kind of drug in the world, except for money. I want to try that one next. ☛



Cyberion City Main Transporter Receiving Station

The bright outlines of the Cyberion City Transporter Station slowly come into focus. You have been beamed up here (at considerable expense) from one of the Earth Transporter Stations. You are among the adventurous and moderately wealthy few who have decided to visit (and perhaps dwell) in Cyberion City, the largest space city in the solar system. You are welcomed by the transporter attendant, who gives directions to all newcomers to this space city.

Contents:

Attendant

Obvious exits:

Out

Welcome to MicroMUSE, your name is Guest2.

Attendant says "Welcome, Guest, to Cyberion City."

Attendant says "Feel free to contact any Official for aid."

Attendant says "Be sure to use our extensive online help command."

Attendant says "I hope you enjoy your stay."

The attendant smiles at you.

You step down off of the MTRS platform and walk out into the lobby.

Thus began my electronic travels through the alternate reality of *MicroMUSE / Cyberion City*, a complex computer simulation of an immense self-contained space city orbiting the Earth in the 24th century. As a "Guest," my span of possible interactions was somewhat limited, but this didn't bother me—I was more than happy with the handful of MUSE commands I had mastered so far. I was able to walk around the city freely and easily, examining and interacting with its areas and objects, and meeting its inhabitants, both living and artificial. The basic format, reminiscent of text-based adventure games like *Zork* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, was both familiar and logical.

MUSERS NOT LUSERS!

Tod Foley visits MIT's "Cyberion City"

In a few short days I would be registered as a "Citizen," and the temporary name of my electronic alter-ego would be changed to whatever I wanted. In fact, as a Citizen I would be able to alter and animate any aspect of my simulated self to suit my mood, and to engage in virtual commerce with virtual money. But by far the most enticing aspect of this computer-world was something I had already begun to acquire. Idling there in the Main Transporter Receiving Station, I was filled with an almost overwhelming sense of the creative power that would soon be granted me: the power to create, describe, and fully animate any place, thing or character I could imagine.

This is the Game that Moves as You Play

MicroMUSE is a Multi-User Simulated Environment conceived and founded in 1990 by programmer/head wizard Stan Lim, aka "Jin" (the title of "wizard" is a throwback to the early days of MUDs [Multi-User Dimensions], which were usually based upon the role-playing game *Dungeons and Dragons*). Executive users are now called "Directors" in MicroMUSE). This user-built, fully interactive world has undergone numerous political and conceptual changes since its inception, including near-extinction due to "data bloat" and "virtual civil war."

The massive database which contains the "city" is held within a Motorola M88K RISC computer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). This computer is colloquially known as "chezmoto." Internet users from all over the world are able to access this information freely via ftp (File Transfer Protocol), and enter the simulated reality. Indeed, within my first few hours in the city I met characters whose real-life users were located in Northern California, Florida, and Czechoslovakia. To date, over 1,400 people have visited Cyberion City, roughly 90% of which have become Citizens. The database, looming dangerously large at 15.5 megabytes, includes almost 50,000 individual objects. And all of these objects are interactive. This means that

the commands you place in their memory registers will take effect whenever any character looks at them, takes, drops, or tries to enter them, depending upon what you specify. You don't even have to be on-line. And you can address these registers any time you want to, instantly changing wishes to horses, thought to form.

Things weren't always so cushy for Lim and his world. In its infancy the simulated environment was a virtual battleground of artistic styles and programming goals. In late 1990 several MUSERS, entrusted by Lim with advanced programming capabilities and administrative positions, began to abuse their power, neglecting their responsibilities and threatening the delicate social balance (and electronic size) of the entire construct. Petty confrontations and covert secessions began to occur as the wizards feuded over the virtual territory like Joint Chiefs of Staff in a flesh-and-blood war.

Finally one disgruntled user created a "berserker device": a virus-like object which moved from area to area of the MUSE, destroying everything it encountered. In response, Lim was forced to restore the database and revoke all wizard powers. The creator of the virus was never identified.

The continued existence of Cyberion City—and even its name—may be directly attributed to the efforts of a remarkable educator named Barry Kort. One of the MUSE's earliest visitors, Kort (as "Moulton") quickly rose to prominence, building the city's

Science Center, the Computer Museum, Children's Wing, Curio Shoppe and something called—intriguingly—the "Logic Quest." According to "Early MUSE History" by "Shohin the Historian", MicroMUSE—then called MicroMUSH—came into grave peril in 1991. Kort's letters to the California State University at Fresno had already borrowed a few extra

months on the University's SUN 4/110 computer, but now that time was about to end—and with it, the world. In the face of near-certain extinction, Jin gathered a new team of trusted Builders and set about transforming the place into the creative utopia it is today. New letters were sent, outlining the uses of the MUSE as an educational environment, and expounding Lim's nonviolent, creative philosophy. Finally, in April 1991, Kort managed to secure a new home for MicroMUSE at MIT, and has since invited scores of new visitors. Today, thanks largely to Kort's Herculean efforts, Cyberion City is rapidly growing in size, population and diversity, and is finally approaching the utopia of its original altruistic vision.

We Are the World

The reality depicted in Cyberion City is an idealist's view of the future, created by today's young computer community; a golden age of exploration and invention, enjoyed by a society based upon educational progress, cultural tolerance and personal creative freedom. The expansive virtual environment is comprised of hundreds of painstakingly detailed smaller areas, almost all of which were created in ad-hoc fashion by the inhabitants themselves. These "Rooms"—as they are called, regardless of their apparent size—are mostly located within the virtually-



I was filled with an almost overwhelming sense of the creative power that would soon be granted me: the power to create, describe, and fully animate any place, thing or character I could imagine.

hermetic hull of the orbital city, although users have created "functional" spaceships, planets, and even dimensional gateways, leading through the Internet to yet more artificial realities.

Like all MUDs and MUSEs, Cyberion City is written in a programming language which allows users to create dynamic areas and items of their own. And, like all MU's, the simulation is really a huge relational database, linked to advanced telecommunications hardware which allows users to interact with each other's characters in real time. Unlike most other MU's, however, Cyberion City grants "Builder Privileges" to all Citizens; this and other unique features vastly increase the depth and variety of the simulated world. The most laudable of these features has to be "The MicroMUSE Charter"; a sort of mission state-

ment which espouses the most altruistic of human goals. This insightful document protects the inhabitants of MicroMUSE—many of whom are minors—from the senseless attrition and fiercely competitive behaviour which tends to plague such fictional worlds.

From the MicroMUSE / Cyberion City Charter:

MicroMUSE is chartered as an Educational MUSE, with preference toward Educational, Scientific, and Cultural content. MIT in Massachussets provides the computing resources for MicroMUSE with the understanding that these resources are used in accordance with the University's general policies and guidelines for propriety and relevance to MIT's Educational Mission. Since MIT is funded in part by Federal taxes, we have an obligation to ensure that those taxpayer dollars are not used to support activities of a question-

able or objectionable nature...

I. Purpose of MicroMUSE

A. Educational: MicroMUSE allows the cooperative exploration and construction of simulated worlds, past, present or futuristic. The educational aims of the Muse are as varied as the people who use it. Some such uses include learning basic programming techniques, producing simulation models of real-life phenomena, exploring such simulated models to learn about the systems that were modeled; learning by teaching others; classroom projects; meeting people from other parts of the country or the world; reading and learning to write clear, understandable prose.

B. Recreational: Provides a congenial atmosphere and comfortable environment for socializing and exchanging ideas.

C. Visionary: MicroMUSE models an optimistic possibility for a future world inhabited by a productive worldwide community of people and of the tools and machines they have built.

D. Communication and transfer of ideas: MicroMUSE is geared towards the promotion of communication and the transfer of new ideas.

The MicroMUSE programming language, known as "tinyMUSE", is an amazing piece of

code. For all its flexibility, it is remarkably user-friendly, and possesses several levels of Power and Civic Function. By associating user access level with civic responsibility, MicroMUSE creates an environment which enables all citizens to progress through the hierarchy in accordance to their desire, their skill, and their willingness to help others.

HyperArt imitates SuperLife

So what can you do in Cyberion City? Better to ask "What can't you do?", provided you're not scared of learning a few new commands. As Moulton says, the best way to learn it is to jump in and start doing it, and the good Citizens of Cyberion City are always willing to lend you a hand, teach you a trick, or stop your runaway widget.

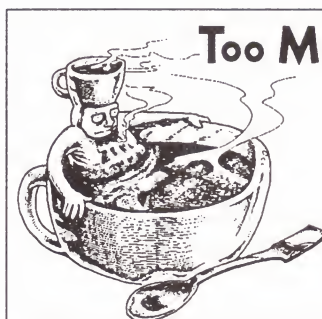
My registration notice arrived today via email. Wasting no time, I took Telnet directly out to Cyberion City and dove right in. Engrossed in my "play", I quickly created and detailed my first character, following it up with several "Rooms" to live in and a few-odd "Things" to carry around. All these objects are getting more and more complex as I continue... I'm thinking about adding six adjoining Rooms, each with its own decorative theme, literary style, and interactive puzzle to solve... Or maybe that adventure movie I've had in my head since I was thirteen... Or, then again...*

To connect with MicroMUSE you must have Internet access.

1. At telnet: type 'open michael.ai.mit.edu'
2. At login?: type 'guest'
3. At welcome screen: type 'connect guest'

Tod Foley is an Interactive Fictioneer from Los Angeles; author of the CYBERSPACE Role-Playing Game and author/producer of the multimedia interactive gothic cyberpunk horror mystery theater piece GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE. He can be reached at <asif@well.sf.ca.us>.

Finally one disgruntled user created a "berserker device": a virus-like object which moved from area to area of the MUSE, destroying everything it encountered.



Too Much Coffee Man

Shannon Wheeler
P.O. Box 5372
Austin Texas
78763-5372

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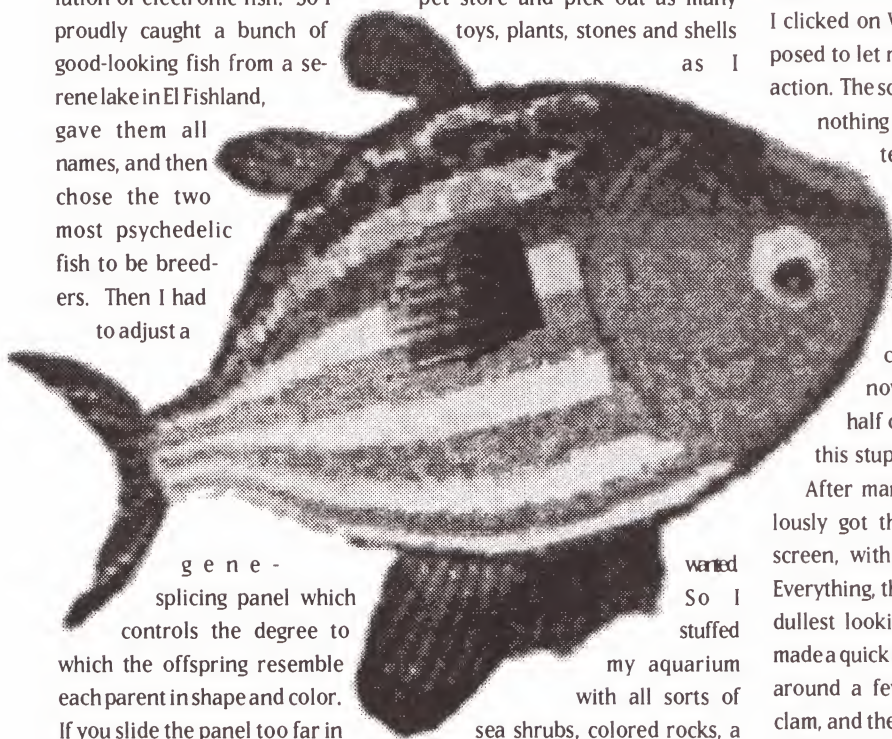


I've never had so much fun AND such disappointment in a computer game. El Fish seemed promising in the beginning. I was already intrigued when I pulled out the user's manual, which sports an attractive cover with bright colorful fish swimming in all directions. The tutorial is very friendly, cute, and witty, (a sign of someone not to be trusted, I now realize) and I spent the next five hours completely immersed in creating my electric aquarium.

The idea behind El Fish is to experiment with artificial life (as crude as it may be here) by catching, breeding, and architecting the evolution of electronic fish. So I proudly caught a bunch of good-looking fish from a serene lake in El Fishland, gave them all names, and then chose the two most psychedelic fish to be breeders. Then I had to adjust a

(about eight minutes per fish on a 486) I had a 3D school whose movements were as real as the wet thing. Each fish modeled a rich skin of brilliant colors, which glistened through the phosphor behind my screen. They really made my eyes happy. I create a pretty mean El-fish, if I do say so myself. (Ahem, well, I guess some of the credit goes to the Animatek Team in Moscow, who created the El-Fish concept, design, and programming.)

Once my fish were set in motion, it was time to get all the goodies for my fish tank. I got to go to the El-Fish pet store and pick out as many toys, plants, stones and shells as I



gene-splicing panel which controls the degree to which the offspring resemble each parent in shape and color. If you slide the panel too far in one way or the other, you can create a mutant fish, which seemed like a must for my BOING BOING aquarium. The mutants are non-breeders, so I made sure to create plenty of them for good measure.

After a bunch of whacked out, psychedelic fish were lined up, the computer analyzed each of their genetic codes, and generated up to 256 animation frames for each fish. When this process was finished

wanted. So I stuffed my aquarium with all sorts of sea shrubs, colored rocks, a clam that opens and shuts on its own, a treasure chest, a dangerous-looking reef, and a plastic sea diver that bobs up and down in the water. I also got to pick out the type and color of the gravel. It took a couple of hours to gather all these trinkets and then to arrange and rearrange them in my tank. But time was meaningless. I was completely immersed in my project. I was an artiste.

EL-FISH

Maxis Swallows the Hook

by Carla Sinclair

Everything was finally in order and it was time to place my mutants in their new home. I clicked on each fish, which was supposed to transfer them to the tank, and then I clicked on VIEW, which was supposed to let me see my creation in action. The screen blacked out, and nothing reappeared. The system crashed. My excitement crashed. I began to feel seasick as I feebly reset the program and tried again. Again it crashed. I understood now that I had wasted half of my precious day on this stupid fish thing.

After many restarts, I miraculously got the tank back on the screen, with everything in place. Everything, that is, but my fish. The dullest looking one in the school made a quick appearance. She swam around a few plants, sniffed the clam, and then swam off to the left, into the unknown. What were they all doing off-screen, anyway? The tutorial said all of the fish would swarm around food, so I clicked on the feed-button. The food dropped, but only one little fish came by. He pompously swam right by the food, did a few twirls, glared at me for a second, and then meandered off the screen. I couldn't even get the pleasure of flushing those creeps down the toilet and throwing the

bowl out the window.

You can say EL FISH is kind of like building a model train set, or doing a jigsaw puzzle. Piecing these crafty toys together stimulates a heavy flow of creative juice and captures every whit of your attention. But as soon as you've created your masterpiece, it becomes a dust collector. So why even bother? I guess because that creative juice feels so good when it's flowing.

I can't recommend El Fish. Not only were the fish the most miserable mutants I've ever seen, not only did the program crash whenever it pleased, and not only did the cat paw never swipe a thing when it reached into the bowl (one of the features I forgot to mention), but El Fish didn't simulate real fish in many other ways. El fish don't breed on their own, they don't fight each other, they don't die, and it's useless to feed them. Sorry Maxis. El Fish doesn't come close to your very cool SimAnt and SimLife. ☹

Carla called Maxis' customer support to tell them about our problem. They called back four days later and told her to make a "boot disk." I showed her how, and now the fish show up. — Mark

EL-FISH for DOS
Requires 386, 4 MB RAM
Maxis
2 Theatre Square, Suite 230
Orinda CA 94563-3346
510/254-9700

DESCRIPTION:

Cyborg: A hybrid of cybernetic machine and biological organism. From *cybernetics*, the study of control processes in mechanical, electronic, and living systems. A cyborg is a late Twentieth Century boundary creature, the illegitimate offspring of modern science and military-industrial technology. The cyborg: a near-future fiction with here-future value as a way of looking at current personal and political existence. You have met the future and you are standing in its shoes! You, my friend, are a cyborg.

STRENGTHS:

Cyborgs are not looking to reclaim their past, return to The Mother or the Edenic Garden. Cyborgs are "hopeful monsters" built from within the belly of the beast; in the lab, after hours, on somebody else's time. They are street wise, tech smart, and pragmatic (or they should be). "[They] are not reverent; they do not re-member the cosmos. They are wary of holism, but needy for connection." [Haraway]. Cyborgs know how to exploit military/industrial techno-science for their own personal and "tribal" purposes. Cyborgs are creatures of the net and the web. They use the webs (temporary connections) they've built within the world's technosphere to create new social structures and new forms of value exchange. The cyborg is a useful survival myth in this age of leaky margins.

WEAKNESSES:

Cyborgs are monsters, creatures of irony. They have been folded, stamped, mutilated, and mutated beyond all recognition. They are "partial people," fragmented, shell-shocked, value gray. Their future is unknown. The permeable membrane that surrounds the 'borg and allows her to have a free exchange with her environment also lets nightmarish things creep in. The cyborg's state of consciousness is "simultaneous ecstasy and dread" [Kroker].

TOOLS AND WEAPONS:

'Borgs from Terra's privileged sectors have a whole armamentarium of software and hardware available to them. **Software Upgrades:** Reality Hacking [the ability to hack various aspects of one's life: job, lifestyle, sex, allegiance, state of mind, physical and psychic location, etc.], Cultural Jamming [detouring commercial media and using DIY media to subvert mainstream culture], and Temporary Autonomous Zones [the cre-

ation of cyborganic networks to communicate ideas and to plan insurgencies]. **Hardware:** All manner of personal and street tech and whatever "big tech" can be appropriated for subversive use.

ALIGNMENT:

Cyborgs are good, bad, and ugly. They live in the "value-dark dimension" [DeLillo]. It is up to each individual to decide how to apply the available technology. The most hopeful cyborgs "[take] pleasure in the confusion of boundaries and responsibility in their construction." [Haraway]

CITINGS:

"A cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints. The political struggle is to see from both perspectives at once because each reveals both dominations and possibilities unimaginable from the other vantage point. Single vision produces worse illusions than double vision or many-headed monsters." [Haraway]

This "anti-humanist" conviction in cyberpunk is not simply some literary stunt to outrage the bourgeoisie; this is an objective fact about culture in the late twentieth century. Cyberpunk didn't invent this situation; it just reflects it. Today it is quite common to see tenured scientists espousing horrifically radical ideas: nano-technology, artificial intelligence, cryonic suspension of the dead, downloading the contents of the brain... Hubristic mania is loose in the halls of academe, where everybody and his sister seems to have a plan to set the cosmos on its ear. Stern moral indignation at the prospect is the weakest of reeds; if there were a devilish drug around that could extend our sacred God-given lifespans by a hundred years the Pope would be the first in line. [Sterling]

MANUALS:

Simians, Cyborgs, and Women, Donna Haraway, Routledge (91), **Seizing the Media and Cultural Jamming**, Open Magazine Pamphlet Series, **Mondo 2000: User's Guide to the New Edge**, Mu, Sirius, Rucker, eds. HarperPerennial, 1993, **Beyond Cyberpunk: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to the Future**, Branwyn and Sugarman, eds. The Computer Lab, (92), **TAZ**, Hakim Bey, Autonomedia (91).

CYBORG STAT CARD

Modern war is a cyborg orgy.
-Donna Haraway

We couldn't have done it
without the computers.
-Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf

Does the cyborg represent the
final domination of human-
ity by technology, or the
beginnings of a new level of
coevolution between
humans, machines, and
nature?

Haraway likes "cyborgs," bOING bOING fan-
cies "happy mutants," TNG Trekkies have a
weakness for "Borgs." Sterling's got
"Shapers" and "Mechanists." Then there
are "morphs," "post-physical constructs,"
"liquid bodies," and other techno shape-
shifters. In the sixties, Bucky Fuller talked
about new "Human Intelligence Units" who
could use technology and eco-science to
pilot Spaceship Earth into the 21st Century.
What all these conceptualizations have in
common is an attempt to create a survival
strategy for a humanity that has become
as much technology as biology.

The TAZ (Temporary Autonomous Zone) is...a
perfect tactic for an era in which the State is
omnipresent and all-powerful and yet
simultaneously riddled with cracks and
vacancies. [T]he TAZ is a microcosm of the
"anarchist dream" of a free culture. -Hakim
Bey

The New Techno-Body:

Head-mounted input/output devices,
sensory implants, entrainment
devices, pharmaceuticals and mind-
altering drugs, prosthetic limbs, hand-
held or worn input/output devices,
personal digital assistants, cameras,
stereos, cellular phones, personal
offensive and defensive weapons,
data suits and gloves, ritualistic and
recreational body modifications, arti-
ficial and transplanted organs, sex
change operations, close-at-hand
"desktop" technologies (computers,
scanners, fax machines, copiers), vir-
tual worlds and global computer net
linkages. [And the already invisible
tech of the vehicles, appliances, and
machines that surround us.]

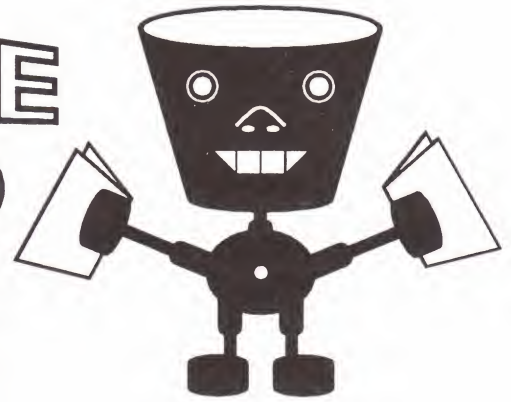
Maybe we are already living in
another dimension of space
travel...a virtual reality where
we can finally recognize that we
are destined to leave this planet
because we have already exited
this body. -Arthur Kroker

To say that human knowledge is tangled
with fiction does not imply an end of
human response to nature. It places
man (sic) in a country he creates partly
with his own mind. In this country he is
surrounded by brilliant, fantastic, wildly
distorted images of himself. Is there a
god behind the mask? There is no way of
knowing. Hence the third moment of
modern science, the authentically mod-
ern moment, the moment of reality as a
game. - O.B. Hardison

Long live the new flesh. -Videodrome
Your future is metal. Don't resist! -Tetsuo
Thank you and have a nice day. -RoboCop

Ward Parkway

WAY OFF THE NEWSSTAND



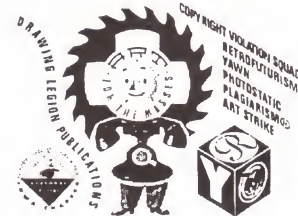
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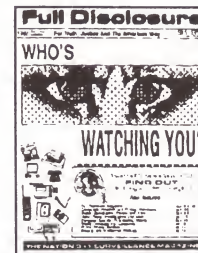
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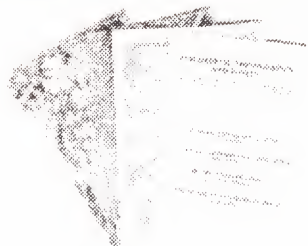
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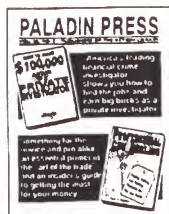
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BBI I



THE POOR HUMAN'S

by Sean Carton

elrod@pro-cynosure.cts.com

The Net. The Matrix. Cyberspace. Regardless of what you call it, the Internet is where it's happening. Every day, millions of computers all over the globe are interconnecting even greater numbers of people. The Internet is a virtual landscape teeming with life — interesting people, rare warez, vital information and all manner of weirdness — all as close to you as your keyboard. With the flick of a finger, you can zip over to Finland to grab the latest copy of PGP (Pretty Good Privacy), hop into MIT's Media Lab to take a gander at new developments in AI, send mail to friends you've never met, and read the latest stock quotes, news wires, and software information. Jacking in can bring you more information and contacts than your crackling silicon heart can stand. The Net is about people communicating with other people, from cyberpunks to scientists, grade school kids to professors, CEOs to secretaries, and onward and beyond.

The Internet (aka the Net) is perhaps the world's grandest experiment in decentralization, a contradiction born of the nuclear age and the military's desire to create a network that would survive Armageddon. From its humble (and innovative) beginnings as a decentralized network for military research (DARPANET) to today's digital anarchy, the Net has remained a decentralized system with no one at the controls. Anyone with the money to lease a line from the telco and the tech to effect a hook-up can connect their computer to the Internet and become a "site." You too can be your own glowing dot in cyberspace!

But unless you have a few hundred thousand bucks to burn, you're better off getting access to the Net through a school, corporation, or other organization. That way, you simply use your deck, a modem, and a regular phone

line to dial up a site that has an Internet connection. From this home site (your account), you can venture forth into the Net.

But most sites aren't just gonna *give* you access. (There are a few, we'll tell you about them, just keep reading.) There is no "Internet, Inc." so trying to find some central authority to answer your questions or guide you in is next to impossible. The Net don't advertise! In fact, there's a whole lotta folks who don't even know it exists.

Levels of Access

First, let's get some definitions out of the way. Since the Net is really just a complex system that exists for the exchange of information, we'll consider any method that lets you exchange info with the Net to be a form of Net access. However, there's Net access and Net ACCESS, and understanding the difference can help you make a sentient decision about what it is that you want and how much you're willing to pay for it.

The "highest" level is full Internet access. This means that you can send mail, connect to different computer systems around the world, grab files from other sites, hook up to the various net services, chat on the IRC (internet relay chat), read USENET (a distributed bulletin board system) newsgroups and any other Net service that requires your host (the computer you have an account on) to be a full time member of the Net. Since this is expensive, this type of access can usually only be found at universities, large corporations, or commercial telecom services like Delphi, the Well, or MindVox.

E-mail/USENET access is the next best thing. While you won't be able to directly connect with other Net computers, you can still send and receive e-mail in real time: when you send your message on its merry little way, it's grabbed immediately by the Net and sent packin.' Ditto

for messages to you. With USENET, you'll usually have your pick of the thousands of groups to subscribe to and your postings go out immediately. This type of access is usually offered by commercial services as a cheaper alternative to full access, but some universities make it available to students and faculty who don't need full access.

The most limited form of access is one that provides e-mail and some USENET groups through a "feed" system or a gateway to the Net. In this setup, when you send a message, it's usually held until some time in the dead of night when the host system dials an Internet site and dumps all its outgoing messages and receives all incoming ones. In a gateway system, usually one of the other large nets that exists outside the Internet, messages are sent to a system that serves as a gateway between the outside net and the Internet. The advantages of using this method of contact is that usually the hosts that allow this are free or cheap to be on and, if you route your Internet mail through a widespread network such as FIDONET, access can be as close as a call to a local BBS. The disadvantage is that communication with the Net rarely occurs in what anyone would call real-time and the fancy commands that you need to address your mail can often send it sailing off into some dark corner of cyberspace, never to be seen again. But, then again, what do you want for free?

Jacking In

The cheapest full access to the Net is through freenets — free bulletin board systems staffed by volunteers and run as experiments in bringing networking to the masses. Most are in the midwest, centered around the mother of all freenets — the Columbus Freenet. Getting access to one is usually as simple as dialing in, logging in as a guest, filling out a questionnaire, and sending

them some sort of proof of ID. Access to a freenet will give you complete access to mail and USENET, some file transfers, and usually community news, local chats, and message bases. But, since it is free, they are usually pretty stingy about how much space you have to store personal stuff and will frown on you if you subscribe to too many mailing lists. As a foot in the virtual door, though, freenets may be the way to go. Even if you don't live a local call away, by calling off-peak hours you could still save yourself a bundle over commercial services.

The next best method is by getting an account through a local university. Most schools will let you into their system if you're a student. If you're in school now and don't have net access, get over to the computer building and ask about it NOW! If you aren't a student, become one and ask for an account. If you figure that tuition at a state school will run you around \$300 a class, and that your account is usually good for about a year, you could

something similar) offer both USENET feeds as well as e-mail access. While most of these do not have real-time connections to the Internet, you can still accomplish a lot through e-mail. The advantages of finding a limited-access UNIX BBS is that often times you will have a real, bona fide Internet e-mail address which means you don't have to go through any fancy-schmancy routing commands to send mail to others on the Net. So, how do you find one of these groovy places? The best way is to ask around on your community and local BBSs. In case you can't get anyone to help, the NIXPUB list covers all the public-accessible, Internet linked (in one way or the other) sites in the US and abroad. You can get this list by calling 215-348-9727 and logging in as nuucp. You don't need to type a password, just continue on to the usr/spool/uucp/public/nixpub file and download it. You can also consult the appendix for a list of publicly accessible Internet BBS's near you.

FTP - Gettin' the Goods!

Once you've discovered the names and locations of the files you want, the next step is nabbing them. To do this, you have to use FTP (File Transfer Protocol), a program that lets you transfer stuff from one computer to the other. To use it, just type: ftp computer@domain.name at the prompt.

Even if you only have limited access, you can still use FTP through the mail. By asking a computer for a file through the mail, you can get that computer to pack it up and send it to you, and receive it just like any other e-mail. To get all the gory details and to receive some actual e-mail from a genuine Internet computer, send a message to: FTPmail@decwrl.dec.com with: HELP as the message body.

GUIDE TO THE INTERNET

save yourself some big bucks and even learn something in the process. Most schools only check the roster of current students with computer accounts about once a year, so even if you were to sign up for a class, drop it, and get your money back, you might still have an account on the system (wink wink). A method often used by netjunkies who were mercilessly deprived of their accounts when they graduated is the beg-the-hell-out-of-a-current-student

method, euphemistically known as "sharing an account." With a little interpersonal skills it's possible to befriend a local student and "share" their account. The computer doesn't know who you are — it just wants the right login and password. However, in most states you skirt a thin line by doing this, so use caution and check with your local

sysadmin. Many big corporations with their own mainframes often have Internet access. You may work for one of these companies and not realize that the Net is there for the begging. Even if you don't work for a company that has access, you may have a friend that does, in which case the beg method may work with the same disclaimers.

Limited Access

If all you want to do is send e-mail, subscribe to mailing lists, and shoot the breeze on USENET, the limited access option offers a lot of ways to connect and not worry about a knock on the door in the middle of the night. A lot of BBS's around the country that run UNIX (or

What's So Great About Mail?

If all you're able to swing for yourself is an e-mail account, don't sweat it. It might be a little more complicated and a lot slower, but you can still access shareware, mailing lists, and Archie. No...not that carrot-top lickspittle from the comics, Archie is the Internet file finder! First of all, the Internet is a BIG place with lots

of stuff ripe for the pickin', but only if you know where to pick. The best way to find out is through Archie. It allows you to ask for files by name, and then it sends you back a list of places on the Net where that file lives. If you have gotten yourself full Internet access, using Archie is

simple: telnet toarchie.sura.net and follow the commands. If you get lost, just type: help. On the other hand, if you're like most humans on a budget and only have limited access, you can query Archie through your e-mail. Send a message toarchie@archie.sura.net asking for the types of files that you want. For example, if you are looking for the latest version of PGP (that's Pretty Good Privacy, the encryption software), your message would look like this:

To:archie@archie.sura.net
Subject: prog PGP

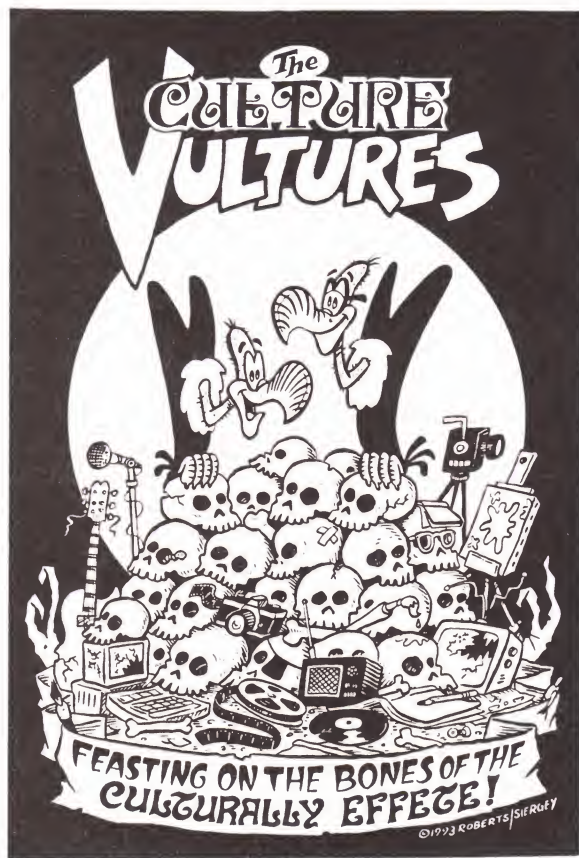
You should then get a message back from Archie that contains a listing of all the sites that have PGP and the directories that the files reside in.

Mailing Lists

The limited access of e-mail can still plug you into an important part of the Net—communicating with other human units. A lot of inter-network talk takes place on "mailing lists"—groups of people who "subscribe" to a mailing address that bounces all the mail that's sent to it back out to all the people who subscribed. This lets people have ongoing discussions by providing a public forum. There are so many mailing lists and so much demand for finding out how to get on them that O'Reilly & Associates has just published a book listing just about every list and how to join them. A good list to start with would be Andy Hawks' "FutureCulture." Its a free-wheeling discussion of all things "cyber." To join, just send a message to: future-request@nyx.cs.du.edu with: help in the subject line. Another good list is Fringeware, run by BOING BOING's very own Paco Xander Nathan and Jon Lebikowsky. To jump on that bandwagon, send a message to Fringeware-request@wixer.bga.com with the word "subscribe" in the subject field.

USENET groups are usually easier to locate because the list of available groups is available while on-line. If you can't find a newsgroup that strikes your fancy, try alt.answer—a place where the different newsgroups often make their FAQ's (lists of frequently asked questions) available.

Cyberspace is here, now! While we may not be plugging in through our 'trodes yet, it's easier to jack in and swim around than you might think. Don't be afraid. Ask questions. Usually the people sitting on the "good stuff" will be happy to talk to you about it. No matter if you have monster super-access or are getting your mail through FIDONET, the idea is to communicate and the medium is the Internet. So, don't delay...jack in for cheap today! ☺



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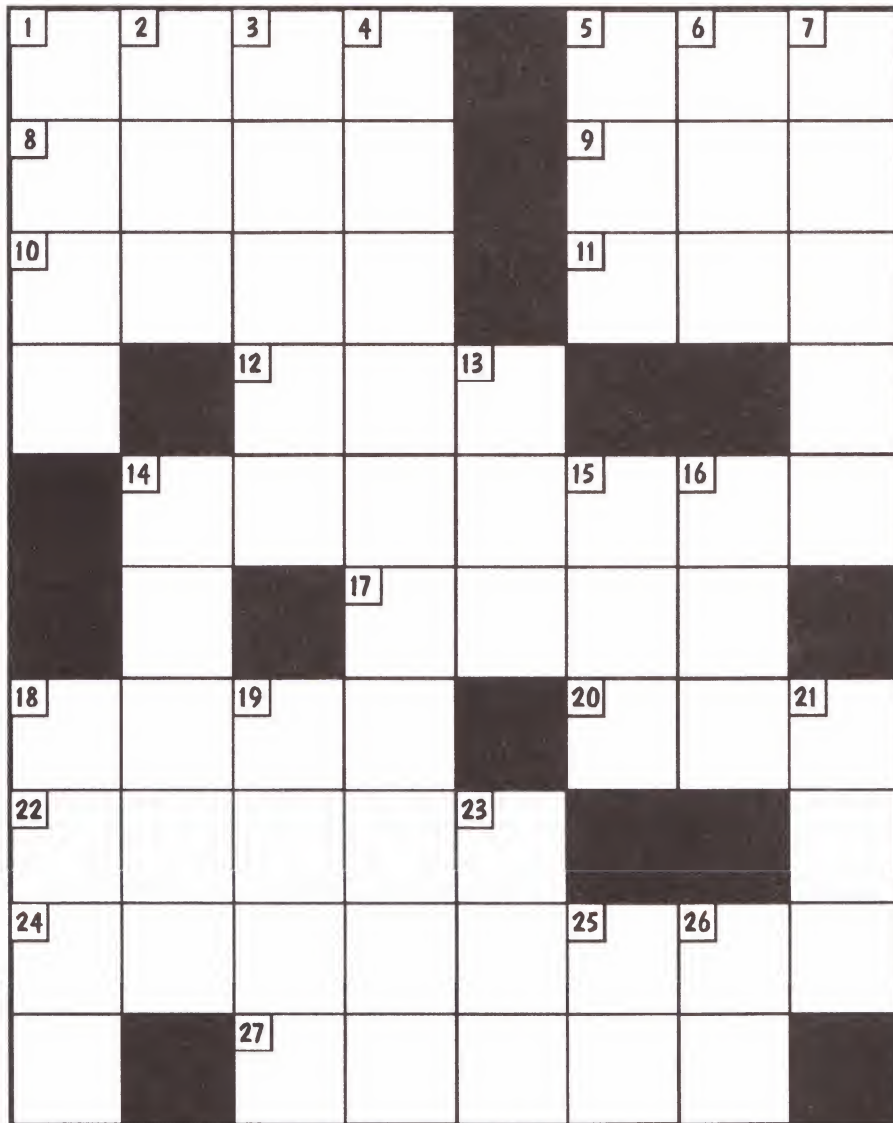
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こんなに安くて中身は超充実!

crossweird puzzle

by Carla

Answers on page 63 (cheaters will be horsewhipped)



DOWN

- 1) Author of "Kalifornia" (first name)
- 2) ____ - Armed Man; ____ Palmer; ____ Horn (first initial of each blank)
- 3) He played Eraserhead, and lots of other Lynchian crackpots (last name)
- 4) One of bOING bOING's first writers (NeuroTarot, for example)
- 5) ____ Candy for Happy Mutants
- 6) Cramps singer (last name)
- 7) Mother ____ (pl) Game that teaches mini-humans to be subservient.
- 13) What same waitress in #20 across is missing
- 14) Type of container that holds Zolo toy
- 15) What one of the initials of Mondo 2000's Sirius is supposed to stand for.
- 16) What kind of product is Dippity-Do? (spelled backwards)
- 18) ____ the can (neighborhood game)
- 19) ____ Radio (film)
- 21) A cherished bOING bOING editor (as called by friends)
- 23) Sound that happy mutants make when munching on tasty treats
- 25) Creator of Fred & Ethyl Mertz (initials)
- 26) 1980s "New Romantic" singer (initials)

ACROSS

- 1) ____ Lisa Overdrive
- 5) ____ Ant (neat game)
- 8) ____ Alda (M*A*S*H wimp)
- 9) WWII Evil Dictator's gal
- 10) ____ ers & Crowd Pleasers, by Greil Marcus
- 11) A zine about over-yanged male humans
- 12) Where Ren & Stimpy lived before moving to TV land
- 14) A food that harbors toys (pl)
- 17) Singer for Skinny Puppy
- 18) Female superstar in cyberspace
- 20) The form of offspring produced by the waitress in D. Clowe's "Like a Velvet Glove Cast in Iron"
- 22) Birthplace of former parliament member/porn star
- 24) ____ Automata
- 27) Big-eyed Japanese cartoon lion



A SIX-PACK OF DYSTOPIA

by Daniel Marcus

You've seen at least twenty of these films. The year is 2025, or 1999, or 2066. Civilization has collapsed in post-nuclear chaos, or choked in its own shit, or just slowly degraded to a quasi-equilibrium Brownian end-state where all the women look like blowpop sucking MTV mallheads and the men look like Sly Stallone on Dilaudid, only stupid.

The future bears an uncanny resemblance to either Route 50 in Nevada or the South Bronx. There's always something burning just at the periphery of your vision. It's usually night, and most of the people in this dismal apocalyptic vision hang out in cheesy nightclubs with early '80s university art museum neon sculpture crawling across the walls like Dayglo kudzu and some sort of Duran Duran karaoke act flailing away on a stage made from a pair of burned out Chevy Luv pickups parked tail to tail. (The truly initiated know, however, that CBGB's on any Monday night in 1975 was a much more alien place).

The plot, such as it is, usually revolves around a testosterone-poisoned freak with a metal hand who has to lead his ragtag band of mutants across the Bonneville Salt Flats to the last remaining city where, besieged by the last remaining barbarians, they will defend the world's last remaining supply of water, or gasoline, or women.

The proper way to experience these things is to round up a few of your least PC friends, send out for barbecue, fill the bathtub with ice and Diet Jolt, and watch three of them in a row. Or four. Or six.

I spent the last couple of months perusing as many of these as I could stomach, and I've selected six of them to talk about, for no other reason except to justify what I thought would be a boffo title for an article. — Daniel Marcus

Street Asylum

My first selection doesn't really fit the formula I just described, but I couldn't pass it up. This stars, I swear to gopod, G. Gordon Liddy. He plays himself, of course—a twisted, pain-loving fuck who masterminds a plan to implant mind-control devices into L.A.'s finest so they won't shy away from their divine mission to clean the scum off the streets. Wings Hauser is the protagonist who puts sand in his vaseline. Wings has really come a long way since *Vice Squad*, and he turns in a first-rate performance. This probably has George Kennedy in it somewhere, but I'm not sure.

Split Second

I like a good Rutger Hauer film. The unfortunate fact that he hasn't made any doesn't change that. (Well, okay. *Blade Runner*. But Ridley Scott can make anybody look good). In this dog, Rutger is a cop on the rebound from a Section-8 furlough, trying to track down a serial killer in a futuristic, pollution-choked London. He says stuff like, "Where's my fucking coffee?" has a sugar monkey the size of Mighty Joe Young on his back, and mercilessly torments his partner, a standard-issue milquetoast computer-nerd. Naturally, he's carrying around a lot of Deep Hurting (and a pistol the size of a Buick) because his last partner bought the farm under "mysterious circumstances," but he is nonetheless a thoroughly despicable character. This is not mitigated one bit by the fact that he has a cute girlfriend. So it turns out this serial killer is really some sort of genetic engineering experiment gone awry, impossible to kill, blah-blah, woof-woof... George Kennedy turns in a cameo appearance as a gathering crowd.

World Gone Wild

Bruce Dern and Adam Ant. Seems like that ought to be enough, but I'll ramble on a bit anyway. For those of you who don't know, Bruce Dern was born to play Edge City, and this film gives him plenty of room to do what he does best. He is a drugged-out, hippie warrior guru type, spiritual leader of a ragged band of plucky survivors scratching out a living from the barren soil of a parking lot. There's no water anywhere, but these people seem to have a stash, which attracts the attention of Adam Ant and his band of Mormons, who ride around the desert in Bradley Fighting Vehicles reading from the *Book of Manson* and fucking anything that moves. Stuff happens, cars explode, nearly everybody dies horribly but the movie ends on a note of hopeful whimsy. George Kennedy has a bit part as Conan the Librarian.

Hell Comes To Frogtown

Roddy Piper is one of the last remaining fertile men in a post-nuke America, and he's enlisted by MedTech to impregnate as many, uh, fecund women as possible. Problem is, there's a whole herd of 'em held in captivity by a posse of mutant, bipedal frogs. Some movies are just too stupid to be offensive. George Kennedy turns in an *outré* performance as the gruff but good-hearted police captain.

Neon City

Starring Michael Ironside, looking a bit chubby and not up to his usual standards of vileness, and Vanity, the outlaw con he has to transport across the Outland. ("Skins own the Outland!" Ironside is warned). For the better part of this thing, we're stuck in the back of an apocalyptic Winnebago with some of the worst detritus from Central Casting: the Rich Bitch, the Slut, the Con, the Moron, the Healer, the Wise Old Man, the Asshole With A Secret, and

Bulk, the Driver. (So what's not to like?). Actually, this thing has a tough, glass-chewing, Corman-esque feel to it that puts it a notch above others of its kind. It gets swamped in bathos, though, about two thirds of the way through. The director forgets that these people are, after all, cartoons, and there's absolutely no reason for us to give a flying leap about their wretched, tacky, little intrigues. George Kennedy delivers a penetrating performance as the hooker with a heart of gold.

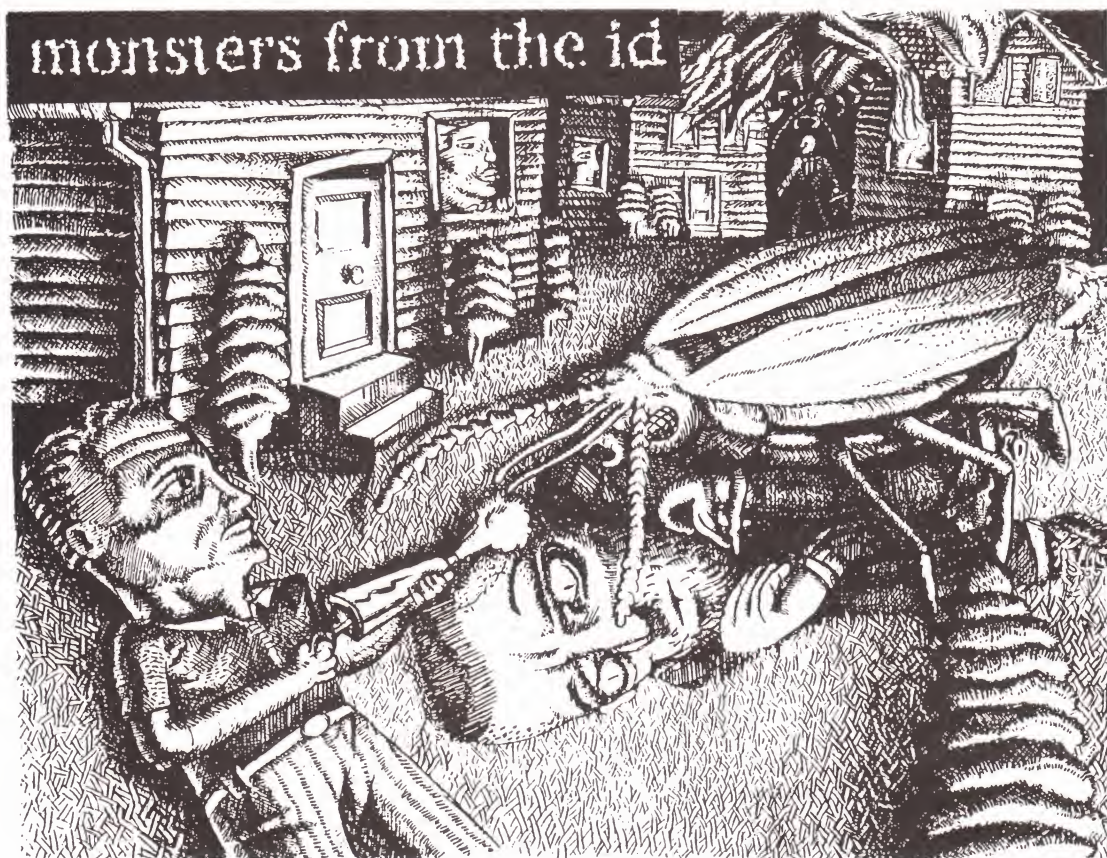
Until the End of the World

I don't know if I can get away with sneaking a real film in with the rest of this swill, but I'll give it a try. Wim Wenders has a unique, skewed vision of what holds people together inside, and his work is not to everybody's liking. (I loved *Paris, Texas* and snoozed through *Wings of Desire*). *Until the End of the World* has a meandering, tedious charm that grabs on to you even as you're wondering if the thing is ever going to end.

It is the cusp of the millennium. The world is kind of like it is now, only more so. The plot sends Solveig Dommartin and William Hurt veering in and out of each other's lives in an apparently aimless, globetrotting dance of surreal intrigue. Focus and clarity emerge slowly from the chaos, but I'm reluctant to say much more than that—it's too much fun to experience for yourself how this sprawling mess of a movie takes on depth and substance as it unfolds.

Beautiful computer graphics, and Wenders' vision of the near-future pervasiveness of personal info-tech is right on the money. The sound track is sheer joy (except for Peter Gabriel, who is something of a whiny, little ferret). Curl up on the couch with someone you like a lot, hook your television up to your stereo, turn off the lights, and take the phone off the hook for the next 158 minutes.

George Kennedy wouldn't be caught dead in a foreign film. ♠



by Jon Lebkowski

When man entered the atomic age, he opened the door into a new world. What we will eventually find in that new world, nobody can predict. —Edmund Gwenn as Dr. Medford in Them!

Saturday morning, I was so scared I almost wouldn't go see *The Man from Planet X*. But everybody else was going, and my brother had been bugging me to go all week. I drained my Gandy's half-gallon milk carton (spiked with Hershey's chocolate syrup) which was admission to the show, and I wandered into the dark mystery of the Ritz Theatre. It was there that I became inoculated with the special virus that would open my head to the very best monsters spawned in 1950s Hollywood. It was a strange era—but we found community in those grimy theatres where we escaped the horrors of the world outside—science, the cold war, and modern fragmentation—to embrace the monsters from the id.

1) The Thing from Another World

Released in 1951, the very beginning of the postwar era: optimism was high that we could lick any beast alive, 'cause we'd whipped the Axis. The film's message: if you encounter the apocalypse with professionalism and the right sense o' humor, you just might survive!

Based on *Who Goes There?* a classic "golden age"

SF story by Don A. Stuart (which was much scarier than the film). The '80s version of *The Thing* directed by John Carpenter, with Kurt Russell, is much closer to the original, but the '51 film is a fast-paced action adventure, and you can't help but dig the extremely likeable characters, especially Ken Tobey (who later showed up on television's popular syndicated series, *Whirlybirds*). As Captain Hendry, he is none too bright but knows how to delegate. James Arness, Matt Dillon on *Gunsmoke*, portrays the monster, an ambulatory vegetable with a very bad attitude.

2) This Island Earth

One of a series of SF films made by Universal in the fifties. All had decent budgets, but *This Island Earth* was downright expensive, and (so the blurb goes) 2½ years in the making! Rex Reason stars as a scientist who's approached by Jeff Morrow as Exeter, agent for a mysterious zaibatsu that proves to be a front for the planet Metaluna, which is engaged in war with the planet Zahgon. They're recruiting scientists from earth because their own best minds have been offed by the enemy. (You won't believe this, but one and only one of the scientists recruited is a regular pinup girl!) Great scenes in transit to and from Metaluna, especially the return trip with a runaway mutant on board. Trivia: you'll recognize the Monitor of Metaluna as Douglas Spencer, the actor who played Scott the intrepid reporter in *The Thing*.

3) Them!

Another big-budget SF flick, 'this one from Warner Brothers. Nuclear tests fuck with ant chromosomes in the New Mexico desert, evolving a mutant species of bugs each the size of a Cadillac! Truly spooky opening: a little girl is wandering alone in the desert clutching her stuffed toy, staring into space. Her family's disappeared, their trailer home torn open from the outside. Doctors discover that she's frozen with shock, but she freaks out when she smells eau de pismire, formic acid. "Them!" she screams.

Once we've learned the nature of the beasts, we see a partnership form, including one of the New Mexico highway patrolmen who found the wandering child (James Whitmore), an FBI agent (James Arness, Mr. Dillon again), and a crotchety old scientist, Dr. Medford (Edmund Gwenn, Santa Claus in "Miracle on 34th Street"). You won't believe this, but the old guy brings his daughter, also a scientist, along, and she's a...er...regular pinup girl. (A pattern seems to be forming here.)

Our heroes blast the ant bed, once they've found it, but they're too late, a couple of queens have escaped. They hafta track 'em down, which leads to an eerie battle in drainage tunnels beneath L.A. (Today, street gangs woulda carved up the queenie before she even thought of laying her first egg...time to shoot the remake?)

4) Forbidden Planet

Greg Carter

Futuristic retelling of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, with Freudian overtones. Robby the Robot is a tin-can Ariel, and the Monster from the Id, a bit like the Tasmanian Devil, is Caliban. Esteemed, sometimes over-the-top actor Walter Pidgeon plays Morbius, survivor of the Bellerophon expedition to Altair 4...its members, excepting Morbius and his significant other, were torn limb from limb. Kinda makes you wonder, right? Morbius lives with his daughter Alta (Anne Francis—remember the reference in *Rocky Horror*?), who reeks of pent-up eroticism. She's never seen a man other than her father, mmmmm.

Leslie Nielsen, beginning his career as a serious actor, never dreaming that he'd be doing self-parody one day, arrives with his crew to follow up on the Bellerophon mission's colonization effort. Next thing y'know, he's got a nightmare in his backyard. The source? Morbius, eaten up with the Oedipal thing. On the surface, the Morb reasonably assumes that Alta will want to go to earth someday, meet a guy, do the usual (wild) thing...but beneath the surface, he hates the idea, he's seething. Turns out he's hacked the technology that destroyed the Krell race, Altair 4's original inhabitants. They had learned to manifest thought as matter, and damn if they didn't have a few wicked primitive thoughts buried in their triangular heads, sufficient to wipe out the entire race. So you can just imagine what Morbius is into with the Krell brain-booster....

Meanwhile Cookie (Earl Holliman) is getting stinking drunk on 180 proof space whiskey that Robby has somehow produced — a real miracle of technology!

Full color, Cinemascope, stereosound, art by Chesley Bonestell...a classy production, great fun especially if you can view a restored print in a decent theatre!

5) Tarantula

More giant bugs, this time of the arachnid variety... caused not by radiation, but by a ribofunk hack. Absent-minded scientist Leo G. Carroll wants only to feed the world (reminiscent of H. G. Wells' *Food of the Gods*), but the experiment backfires when his assistant, crazy and deformed from drug-induced acromegaly (a pituitary malfunction associated with overproduction of growth hormone) wrecks the lab, freeing the experimental tarantula, which is about the size of a go kart, but growing FAST. John Agar, a genre veteran (sf films and westerns) is the puzzled hero...what could he have stripped all the meat off a herd o' horses? Heh.

Agar's working with Mara Corday, who...er...looks like a pinup girl...gee, there seems to be one of these in every film! She's a scientist, of course...we learn from these films that incredibly foxy ladies can find careers in science, an early concession to women's lib. Or could it be a cynical chauvinistic attempt to sell sex as part of the package? Naw.

Best scene: Agar and Corday are standing near

a desert hill, trying to figure out what's happening, when there's a rock slide...what we can see and they can't is that the rock slide is caused by the tarantula crawling along, absolutely filling the other side of the hill. Creepy!

6) Creature from the Black Lagoon

Actually a trilogy, with sequels *Revenge of the Creature* and *The Creature Walks Among Us*. Pretty convincing creature suit worn (imagine the discomfort) by underwater stunt man Ricou Brown. The original *Creature* starred Richard Carlson and Richard Denning as a scientist and his financial backer, who happen to be natural competitors, with Carlson holding the high moral ground...and the girl, Julie Adams, who's best seen swimming through the lagoon with the creature, a kind of prehistoric missing link, an amphibious man, swimming parallel below her. Filmed in 3D, and featuring Whit Bissell, who later did a turn as the mad scientist in *American International's* cheapo *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein* ("Speak! I know you've got a tongue, I sewed it in there myself!").

7) 20 Million Miles from Earth

A spaceship returning from a mission to Venus crashes near Sicily, and a canister containing a weird jelly egg washes ashore, found by a precocious, somewhat hyper Sicilian boy who doesn't quite know what he's getting into. The sole survivor of the crash is William Hopper, son of columnist Hedda Hopper and a regular on the original Perry Mason series. He's one irritable son of a bitch, and he's determined to find that egg. Too late: it's been sold by the kid to an old professor who travels the area with his daughter (a pinup, sigh). It hatches an ymir about a foot tall. What's an ymir? It's a creature from Venus, animated by stop-motion special effects wizard Ray Harryhausen...and it grows and grows and grows. Harryhausen, onetime assistant to *King Kong* animator Willis O'Brien, creates amazing scenes, including a battle between the ymir and a huge elephant in the streets of Rome. I saw this film a dozen times when it came out, munching out on about fifty boxes of Milk Duds, a seminal and quite tasty experience for this boy....

8) Invaders from Mars

Every kid's nightmare: your parents are no longer your parents, their souls have been zapped by demons or, in this case, martian invaders who've descended to earth during a rainstorm and burrowed into the ground at a quarry behind your house! A nightmare it is, and though the story's fairly corny, it works, thanks to the eerie technicolor of William Cameron Menzies' design and the strange vocal chorus that throbs whenever the martians are onscreen. The martians are bug-eyed

frog-like creatures carrying their honcho's turbaned head in a fishbowl. They gain control of decent citizens by planting strange devices at the bases of their brains. They almost succeed, but little Jimmy Hunt notices what's going on and finds a sympathetic scientist (Arthur Franz) to save the day.

A few years ago Tobe Hooper remade this film starring Karen Black. A pretty good remake, though not quite faithful to the dreamy quality of the original.

9) War of the Worlds

Not exactly H.G. Wells. Produced by fantasy filmmaker George Pal, this is a contemporary retelling of Wells' story, set in California. Gene Barry is scientist Clayton Forrester, who happens to be fishing nearby when the first meteor/ship strikes near a small town. He flies his private plane to the scene, where he meets the local preacher and his daughter (not quite a pinup, working on her PhD, a real science groupie!). The aliens make their first strike while the townspeople, with Barry as their guest, are having a square dance. Is this dated or what?

The spaceship and heat-ray effects in this film set a standard often copped by the Japanese for the SF epics (e.g. *The Mysterians*). You only get one brief glimpse of a tripodal martian, but their ships are what's happening, anyway.

10) Invasion of the Body Snatchers

Pretty faithful to Jack Finney's book, though even more sinister. A local doctor (Kevin McCarthy) finds that several of his patients report the eerie feeling that their friends and loved ones are not who they say they are. At first he thinks it's mass hysteria, but then his best friend (King Donovan) finds a body that is like his own, but not quite fully-formed. Too weird—this scene gave me the willies! Turns out that seed pods from outer space have drifted to earth, and they grow a perfect likeness of a body, which they replace (though it wasn't quite clear what happened to the original). Extremely paranoid, this film was the perfect metaphor for alienation in suburban America. Once replaced by a pod, a person behaves more and more like a Republican...argh! And by the way, director Don Siegel went on to make *Dirty Harry* with Clint Eastwood (who was, we might add, one of the pilots who bombed *Tarantula*).

A good historian could do a better job linking these films to the modern postwar radioactive fifties mentality, but I'm against interpretation at the moment, preferring to revisit my innocence in the willing suspension of disbelief. Just think of these films as icons of an era, and these weird creatures as totems of the atomic age. ☛



THE
GAME!



Welcome to the fascinating new board game called **Zine!** This mindwrench has been written by the friendly staff at **BOING-BOING** magazine, purveyors of twisted humor and high weirdness throughout the Milky Way galaxy.

Please keep in mind that this board game is intended to be played by at least four entities. These entities may either be four physically distinct sentients, or a sum total of their multiple personalities. The point of the game is to publish zines. Have a nice day.

DEFINITIONS

Each **Player** is a role playing entity, i.e. "DNA-suit" or "meat basket", who assumes a character. This could be you. Good luck.

The game proceeds through four **Issues**. During each Issue, there are four **Steps** required to produce the zine.

Subscribers are what makes the zine world twist. These ephemeral, bicameral creatures pay hard earned federal reserve notes in order to gain the privilege of collecting each Issue of their favorite zines. Be nice to Subscribers.

Writers are those funny beings who provide content for the zines. Hey, they're kinda weird and some don't bathe frequently but they provide good entertainment at parties and typically have better drugs than just about anybody else, except for cops. But that's another story. Writers cost a lot of money to keep around on a zine's staff, but they also have **Cool Points**, which help secure new **Subscribers** and thus rake in dinero. Many of the Writers provide an added advantage of a **Cult Following**, i.e. herd mentality of fanatical Subscribers who follow them everywhere.

Advertisers are those greedy, wretched souls who must pollute the sacred integrity of the published word by slipping in their own deviant mind viruses, for a price. Sign on a few Advertisers, then use part of the money to go buy some chocolate, which will make you feel less compromised.

Publishers are the characters depicted by the personality profiles on Publisher cards. Publishers all have certain **Strange Attractors** listed on their cards, which provide a basis for mutual attractions between them and their potential harem of Writers and Advertisers. Publishers vie with one and other to create and market their zines throughout the planet.

One of the Players acts in a special non-Publisher role as a character called **Gopod**. Gopod sees all. Gopod knows all. Gopod takes a cut from accounts at the **Gopod Intraplanetary Mutual Monetary Exchange (GIMME)**. Gopod must keep each Publisher's account info private from the other Publishers and also show an accurate accounting balance sheet at the end of the game. Gopod also maintains a super secret **Private Account** to hide all the funds extorted from Publishers.

There is a stack of **Special Cards** which Publishers draw and use, hopefully to their advantage... But hey, life isn't fair, eh? Some of these **Special Cards** are called **Meme Cards**, since memes are the smallest component used to perpetuate ideas, just like genes are the smallest genetic components used to breed monsters. Meme cards can be kept face down by a Publisher, who then chooses to spread the Memes at more appropriate, self-serving points in the game.

START OF PLAY

First off, decide who is twisted enough to play Gopod. This will involve a lot of arithmetic so be careful. Maybe someday we'll create a spreadsheet to help make this character's artificial life easier, thus enabling Gopod to commit even more acts of treachery.

All the other Players become Publishers, so select a Publisher card for each. Decide how to accomplish this feat, either randomly or chosen based on the group's consensual reality. Gopod establishes each Publisher with 100 Subscribers and \$0 cash in hir account at GIMME.

Next, shuffle the stack of Writer cards and have each Publisher draw one at random. The Publisher holding the Writer card with highest Cool Points goes first, then play rotates to the left for the first step in the game.

Collect all the Writer cards and shuffle. Then draw enough cards for each of the Publishers, to create a pool of available Writers. You'll get to fight over who gets what.

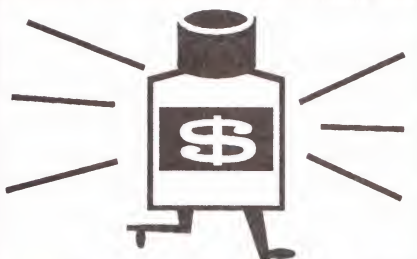
Shuffle the Advertiser cards, then draw enough cards for all but one of the Publishers to create a Pool of available Advertisers. You'll also get to haggle over these.

At each step in the game, each Publisher draws a Special Card, then either takes hir turn or chooses to pass. Publishers may negotiate privately with Gopod to borrow credit up to the limit on their Publisher cards or to repay credit from available cash, at any time. Results of these negotiations are left entirely to the discretion of Gopod.

(CONTINUED)

ADVERTISERS' S POOL

ADVERTS

A stylized illustration of a running bottle with a dollar sign on its label. The bottle is anthropomorphic, with a black cap, a white body, and a black label featuring a white dollar sign. It has two black legs and is shown in a running pose, with its left leg forward and its right arm slightly bent. Eight black lines radiate outwards from the bottle, suggesting motion or speed. The entire illustration is set against a white background, framed by a thick black border.

ZINE!

SCHMOOZING

Publishers may cut deals with any other Publisher to trade Writers and Advertisers, borrow money, agree to exchange favors, etc., at any time.

REVENUE COLLECTION

Publisher collects monies from Subscribers and Advertisers. Gopod tallies the subscription price of the zine, plus \$1 for each Advertiser, plus \$1 for each mutual Attractor between the Publisher and all of hir Advertisers. Gopod multiplies this sum by the number of Subscribers and credits this revenue to the Publisher's account.

Afterwards, the Publisher may bid on one Advertiser, either chosen from the pool or raided from any other Publisher's existing base of Advertisers. The Publisher chooses between a public or private auction. Advertisers auctioned from the Pool have a minimum bid of \$100 times the number of the Issue for each of their Strange Attractors. Advertisers raided away from another Publisher add to their minimum bid (\$500 plus \$100 for each mutual Attractor they share with their existing Publisher) times the number of the Issue. The Advertiser's existing Publisher gets a bid bonus of \$500 times the number of the Issue to use solely for the auction.

Gopod arbitrates the auction, then deducts the bid amount from the winner's account and adds it to the Private Account at GIMME. Whenever an Advertiser gets auctioned out of the Pool, another Advertiser card is drawn to replenish the Pool. Note that all Advertisers sign contracts which guarantee at least one Issue, so newly acquired Advertisers cannot be raided until after at least one Issue.

WRITERS

Publisher may bid on one Writer, either from the pool or raided from any other Publisher's existing staff of Writers. Auction rules are the same as for Advertisers, substituting the Writer's number of Cool Points for number of mutual Strange Attractors. Gopod follows the same sleazy pattern of extortion. Replenish the Writers' Pool as needed. Writers do not sign contracts and therefore can be raided any time.

Next, the Publisher decides on how to pay each of hir Writers. Publisher must pay at this Step or the Writer will leave immediately. Required payment for each Writer is (\$100 times the number of Cool Points) or (1% of the Publisher's last revenue times the number of Cool Points), which ever is greater. Publisher must retain at least one Writer on staff to advance to the next step of the game.

PAYING THE PRINTER

Gopod tallies the publication cost times the number of Subscribers, then deducts that figure from the Publisher's GIMME account in order to pay **Gopod Printers Inc.** Gopod then covertly transfers the full amount into the Private Account.

Publisher must also pay himself a salary, which Gopod determines as (the Salary percentage of the available cash in hir account) or (the number of Salary percentage points times \$100 times the number of the Issue), whichever is greater. This wad-o dough is immediately forked over to the **Gopod Mercantile Store** and funneled into the Private Account.

GENERAL ACCOUNTING

A fraction of the Subscribers drift away after each Issue, so Gopod sub-

tracts 20% off the Publisher's Subscriber count. Gopod tallies (the total number of Writers plus their mutual Attractors with the Publisher) times 100, then adds this many new Subscribers to the Publisher's account. Gopod adds/subtracts any Cult Following for newly acquired and/or dearly departed Writers.

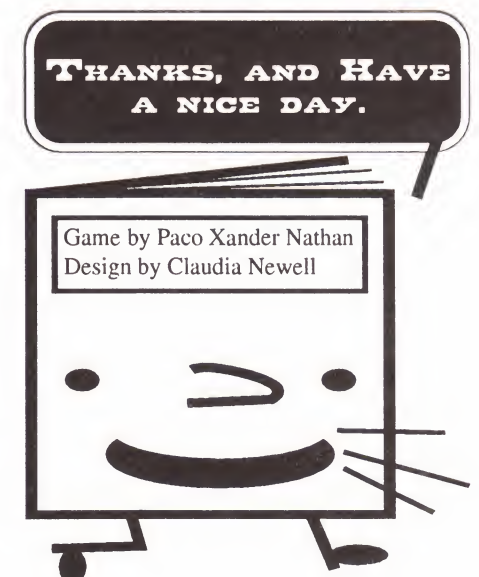
At the end of each Issue, Gopod redetermines the order of turns. Publishers take turns based on their available cash accounts: the "Least Financially Endowed" goes first, and so on.

END OF THE GAME

The Publisher who finishes hir fourth Issue first, satisfying all hir **Win Conditions**, wins the game. Of course, there can be multiple winners.

The basic Win Conditions are to be able to boast a working zine: at least one Writer, at least one Advertiser, at least 5000 Subscribers and more cash available than credit borrowed. Win Conditions are modified for each Publisher as stated on their cards.

If, however, Gopod has managed to extort at least \$100,000 per Publisher by the end of the Game, then Gopod wins.



PUBLISHER'S RECORD SHEET.

ISSUE #1

Collect Revenue

Schmooz Writers

Pay Printer

General Accounting

ISSUE #2

Collect Revenue

Schmooz Writers

Pay Printer

General Accounting

ISSUE #3

Collect Revenue

Schmooz Writers

Pay Printer

General Accounting

ISSUE #4

Collect Revenue










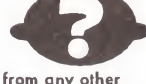









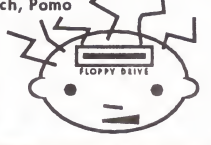


Schmooz Writers

Pay Printer

General Accounting

PHOTOCOPY ONE FOR EACH PLAYER.

ZINE! cards. Photocopy each side separately onto card stock.

<p>Kata Sutra BOING BOING</p> <p>attract: Funny, Hi-Tech, Weird credit: \$1,000 salary: 2% price: \$4 cost: \$2 notes: Gets x2 effects on Meme cards win: Most Cool Points with Writers</p> <p>PUBLISHER</p> 	<p>Queen Bee MONDO-MONDO</p> <p>attract: Hi-Tech, Pomo, Trendy credit: \$10,000 salary: 10% price: \$6 cost: \$5 notes: win: Most Attractors with base of Advertisers</p> <p>PUBLISHER</p> 	<p>Howard Ringwald FLAT EARTH BINDVIEW</p> <p>attract: P.C. credit: \$1500 salary: 3% price: \$6 cost: \$4 notes: Earns \$1000 after each issue from endowment trust funds win: All Writers & Advertisers must be P.C.</p> <p>PUBLISHER</p> 	<p>Al Goldscrew SPORTS ILLUSTRATED</p> <p>attract: Sleazy credit: \$5000 salary: 7% price: \$8 cost: \$4 notes: Pays off Mob \$5000 x issue after each issue win: largest base of sleazy advertisers</p> <p>PUBLISHER</p> 
<p>Alfred von Neuby NERD</p> <p>attract: Funny credit: \$5000 salary: 4% price: \$3 cost: \$2 notes: Sub drift is only 10% after each issue win: most Subscribers</p> <p>PUBLISHER</p> 	<p>MICK GUTTERBOY</p> <p>attract: <all/> cool: 5 (used to be 10) cult: 1000 notes:</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>NIMO CHOMPSKY</p> <p>attract: P.C. cool: 1 cult: 500 notes:</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>DONNA CARAWAY</p> <p>attract: Hi-Tech, P.C., Pomo, Sleazy cool: 6 cult: 500 notes: min bid is \$4K</p> <p>WRITER</p> 
<p>BRENDA LARVAL</p> <p>attract: P.C., Pomo, Weird cool: 7 cult: 100 notes:</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>GUEST WRITER</p> <p>attract: - cool: - cult: - notes: borrowed from any other Publisher - must be paid</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>BRYCE STARLING</p> <p>attract: Hi-Tech, Funny cool: 9 cult: 1500 notes:</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>TOM PYNCHNERVE</p> <p>attract: Pomo, Trendy cool: 11 cult: 2500 notes: min bid is \$10K</p> <p>WRITER</p> 
<p>DICK CADRE</p> <p>attract: P.C. Weird cool: 5 cult: 100 notes:</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>RUDY SUCKER</p> <p>attract: Funny, Hi-Tech, Weird cool: 9 cult: 300 notes:</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>LARRY SERGIC, MD</p> <p>attract: Funny, Sleazy, Weird cool: 4 cult: 500 notes: has the best drugs</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>STIM BLEARY</p> <p>attract: Sleazy, Trendy cool: 8 cult: 1000 notes:</p> <p>WRITER</p> 
<p>DON DOLITTLE</p> <p>attract: P.C., Pomo cool: 2 cult: 1000 notes:</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>R. U. DELIRIOUS</p> <p>attract: Funny, Sleazy, Trendy, Weird cool: 8 cult: 200 notes:</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>PAT CARDAMON</p> <p>attract: Hi-Tech, Weird cool: 10 cult: 500 notes:</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>GARNET BALDWYC</p> <p>attract: Hi-Tech, Pomo cool: 8 cult: 100 notes:</p> <p>WRITER</p> 
<p>ST. LEWD</p> <p>attract: Funny, Hi-Tech, Pomo, Sleazy, Trendy cool: 6 cult: 300 notes:</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>TERRENCE McKETAMINE</p> <p>attract: x2 Weird cool: 7 cult: 1000 notes: min bid is \$3K</p> <p>WRITER</p> 	<p>XANDOR KORZYBSKI COLLECTION</p> <p>attract: X2 Sleazy, Weird <p>Strange, paranoid catalog of unknown origin and content that shows up in most zines...</p> </p> <p>ADVERTISER</p>	<p>I AM WON</p> <p>attract: Hi-Tech <p>Mind toys offered at a reasonable premium. Rumored to hypnotise users into joining GnuAge collectives.</p> </p> <p>ADVERTISER</p>
<p>BOOKS BY UPS</p> <p>attract: Sleazy, Weird <p>If a book is published anywhere, you can buy it from BBU. Especially if the book contains subversive or banned materials.</p> </p> <p>ADVERTISER</p>	<p>RAW Tuna</p> <p>attract: Funny, Weird <p>Blatant self-promo from the absolute fringes of reason. Occultisms, truths, conspiracies and aging bodies revealed.</p> </p> <p>ADVERTISER</p>	<p>DEE-DARK</p> <p>attract: Hi-Tech, Pomo, Trendy <p>Nefarious wonderlust of the dark side of near-human nature explored in a rave scene music context. Product of repeated UFO encounters. Buy their CD-ROMs.</p> </p> <p>ADVERTISER</p>	<p>THE COMPUTER VIRUS LAB</p> <p>attract: Funny, Hi-Tech <p>Muchademia tutorials on how to create mind virus plagues for fun and profit.</p> </p> <p>ADVERTISER</p>

ZINE! cards. Photocopy each side separately onto card stock.

EMPTY VEE RECORDS

attract: Hi-Tech, P.C., Pomo

120 minutes worth of rehashed alternatives to music.

ADVERTISER

777th GENERATION

attract: x2 P.C., Weird

Cult-legend Cruelstare Owsley has amassed this enormous catalog of environmentally safe occult supplies.

ADVERTISER

ABSOLUT ROT-GUT

attract: Sleazy

The world's most publicized moonshine.

ADVERTISER

GOOD VIBRATORS

attract: Funny, P.C., Sleazy

Catalog of six-sigma sex products. Stop using Ben-Wa balls!

ADVERTISER

DARK PERSON & SANDY SHORLINE

attract: Sleazy, Weird

Offers a catalog of repackaged health food chemicals for \$24.95 per bottle.

ADVERTISER

OFF OUR BUTTS

attract: P.C., Weird

Formerly couch potatoes, this group of worked-up workaholics wants new members to join its ranks of generic Militant Activism.

ADVERTISER

SVEN JENSEN GAMES

attract: X2 Funny

World's largest purveyor of board games. Reported to be quite popular, except that game instructions are written solely in Swedish.

ADVERTISER

RAMSES MAN

attract: P.C.

Features advertisements which promote safe sex till it hurts.

ADVERTISER

LOAN OCCIFER

An official from the Bundesbank scores some smart drugs at your latest Halloween party.

You may raise your credit limit to 50% of your last collected revenue.

MEME!

CROSSOVER

You run a parody of another Publisher's zine. You may take away 10% of the Subscribers from that Publisher.

MEME!

ILLUMINAUGHTY

You join a major world conspiracy.

You may add 10% or 500 Subscribers, whichever is greater.

MEME!

ENDORSEMENT

A major cyberpunk author publically admits to enjoying your zine and remarks about his subscription during a TV interview.

You may add 10% or 500 subscribers, whichever is greater.

MEME!

KARMA RUNS OVER DOGMA

You perform unmentionable favors for Gopod during a series of lucid dreams.

You may have the available cash in your GIMME account mysteriously increase by 10%.

MEME!

ARIGATO GOZAIMASU

An anonymous Japanese investor takes interest in your zine.

You may have Gopod pay for 50% of the auction price for your next winning bid on a Writer or Advertiser.

MEME!

VOYEURISM ANONYMOUS

You may peek, via Gopod, at the Subscriber count, available case and credit balance for any other Publisher's account at GIMME.

MEME!

H & R NARC

You learn information from your uncle's sister-in-law's second cousin who works as a tax preparation assistant that a competing Publisher has cheated on last year's income tax.

You may narc to have Gopod Revenue Service take away 10% from any other Publisher.

MEME!

MUTUAL REVIEW

Conspire with any other Publisher to run mutual reviews of each other's zine.

You both may add 10% of each others Subscriber count to your own.

MEME!

POLI COW

Republicrats take office after a landslide election.

pay 10% one-time tax hike on all available cash in your GIMME account to Gopod Revenue Service.

Have a nice day.

SPECIAL

P.C. GUIDE

A new political Correctness Guide has just been published by the Council of United Liberal Thinkers (CULT) at Snodart University.

Lose 5% of your Subscribers for each non-P.C. Writer and Advertiser.

Have a nice day.

SPECIAL

PLAGARISM IS BASIC TO ALL CULTURES.

You inadvertently publish some software source code that was copyrighted by Zaibatsu, Inc. and get busted for infringement.

Pay \$5,000 court costs or drop one Writer.

Have a nice day.

SPECIAL

ECO WISE CRACKS

Aunt Beatrice American Corporate Agricultural Bifurcate lobbies to mandate use of their new brand of toxic soy inks in all small press publications.

Publication cost increases by 10% unless you have a P.C. Attractor.

Have a nice day.

SPECIAL

WANING MOON

For some obscure reason, some of your Writers and Advertisers launch into a conflict which you don't quite understand.

Lose one Writer or Advertiser.

Have a nice day.

SPECIAL

FIRE ANT

If you have less than (2000 times the number of the issue) Subscribers, then your advertisers get ants.

Lose one advertiser.

Have a nice day.

SPECIAL

DEATH THREATS

Mississippi Loose joins your editorial staff.

Go to the end of the turn order for the rest of this issue.

Have a nice day.

SPECIAL

HEY JUDE....

Senior Editor has a severe nervous breakdown after hearing a Musak rendition of an old Beatles' tune playing at her favorite slam dance club.

Lose one Writer.

Have a nice day.

SPECIAL

PRISTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

Clean-freak terrorist attack destroys your printer.

Re-pay (5% times the number of the issue) of the last issue's printing cost or go back to last Printing.

Have a nice day.

SPECIAL

GEEZUS LUVS EWE

You get endorsed against your will by a radical Xtian bookstore association.

Lose one sleazy advertiser.

Have a nice day.

SPECIAL

1/O, 1/O, IT'S OFF TO DISK I GO..

Computer crash fries your hard drive, but at least you have data backups.

Pay (\$1000 times the number of the issue) to Gopod Data Systems.

Have a nice day.

SPECIAL



Flood! A Novel in Pictures (Eric Drooker. Four Walls Eight Windows, \$15.95. Paperback)

New York artist Eric Drooker needs no words to translate his dark and poignant vision: Via *Flood!*, a graphic novel, the brutality of urban life in a bleak, Reagan/Bush reality is stark and real. Violently pulling you into its bruised current, Drookers artful message pounds in your ears louder than shouted words. But this semi-autobiographical work is far from didactic. Its cruel purity and unfiltered truths are testaments to

Drookers skill in both art and storytelling.

In the tradition of Frans Masareel and Art Spiegelman, Drooker details this grim tragedy in scratchboard coarseness, without dialog bubble or color (save an inky blue in certain dream and art-within-art sequences). Drawn in three parts Home, L, and Flood the book was completed over the course of many years (and locations).

Home depicts the most vivid elements of urban blight and survival through a lower-east-side factory workers struggles against loneliness, unemployment, drugs, poverty, and homelessness. L reveals the Everymans dreams and only means of escape, further juxtaposing his inner longings

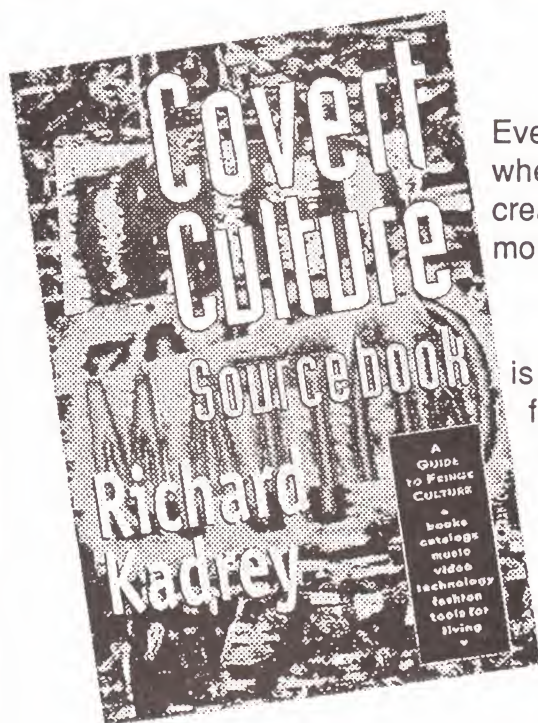
with his compassionless prison. In Flood, the Everyman begins to resemble Drooker himself, and must now struggle against indomitable forces

of nature seeking to cleanse the earth of its pestilence. Ultimately, and tragically, the hero finds he is indistinguishable from the rot that has surrounded him. Art and dream are blended with reality, and all but Nature is devoured.

Through exacting use of symbol and scene, Drooker powerfully illustrates the battles of good and evil, art and establishment, have and have-not, as well as mans own struggle to survive despite his dissection and divestment from Nature itself.

*Flood!*s waters are deep-

ened by artwork that gives more with each look, and a statement more powerful than any deluge. [Kristin Spence]



NOTHING INTERESTING EVER HAPPENS AT THE CENTER.

Everything interesting is out at the edges. Sparks kick up when opposing edges meet. Sometimes hot edges fuse, creating something weird and new—the birth of a hopeful monster. That's covert culture.

COVERT CULTURE SOURCEBOOK

is a guide to the best in alternative music, books, zines, fashion, software, videos and "tools for living"—everything from videophones to mail order sex toys, countersurveillance gear to smart drugs. Plus contact names and addresses!

**A St. Martin's Press trade paperback.
\$12.95; 224 pages; Indexed**

St. Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010-7848; 212-674-5151



ZINE REVIEW

RATING SYSTEM FOR CONTENT

- ☒ Thud – no bounce, worse than watching paint dry.
- One bOING – makes you chuckle, smirk or grunt, but you forget why after you read it.
- Two bOINGs – average zine. Probably worth your while to check out.
- Three bOINGs – neat stuff. Good for plagiarizing and/or saving for later.
- Four bOINGs – you get more out of this than you put into it. Pure Flubber!

RATING SYSTEM FOR PRODUCTION

- ☒ Horrible layout makes it painful to extract any brain-juice.
- Pretty confusing and messy.
- Average job. Gets the point across without being much fun.
- Nifty! Content is presented in an easy-to-read or overdesigned-but-kool format.
- Eyeball kicks galore! Who cares what it says, you can stare at it for hours!

BLACK ICE #1 (£3.95 [add £1.50 for postage to North America], PO Box 1069 Brighton, BN2 4YT ENGLAND)

Content ●●●

Production ●●●

Does the planet really need another cyberzine? Not really. But when it's just bustin' out with optimism, and creativity, I'll pay attention to it. The premiere issue of *Black Ice* crams fun articles (check out the Japanese candy piece), tidbits and longish interviews into sixty-four pages. "Access," several pages at the front, is a bunch of short pieces about new-edge tech (but they didn't include access information to the cool stuff they write about!). (64 pp, slick) [Mark]

CONTROL Ver 1.0 (\$2. 703 Penbrooke Rd. S.E., Calgary, AB. CANADA T2A 3T3)

Content ●●●

Production ●●●

Plenty of cool drawings of people wearing tuff gas masks in here. *Control* was a good read at lunch time. The layout is neat, and the interviews with bands Alien Sex Fiend, Xorcist, Poohbucket, and Cop Shoot Cop are interesting. My favorite parts of *Control* were the interview with SF author S.N. Lewitt, a story about machines from another planet wondering if DNA-based life is truly intelligent, and the article about hallucinating neural nets. (36 pp, typeset, digest) [Mark]

THE DAILY COW (\$1, David R. Wyder, 121 Gregory Ave., #B-7, Passaic, NJ 07055)

Content ●●

Production ●●1/2

David Wyder is weird. He's obsessed with cows! That's right...the boy's got

the hots for bovines! In his zine *The Daily Cow*, he lets his cows do the talkin', bringing us into their worldly concerns. And what are those concerns, you might ask? Well...international and national news, sports, weather, literature, gossip, what else? Through Wyder's eyes, cows are just regular Janes tryin' to make a livin'. His zine is a neatly typed and stapled bundle of 8 1/2 x 11 pages with a sense of style that transcends its low tech production. There are photos (of people with their cows), cattle comics, letters from other teat-lovers, and enough bad cow puns to choke a maggot ("cowmercials," "cowtoons," "The Johnny Cowson Show"). Not for anyone with less than three stomachs! (28 pp, standard) [Gareth]

DISSONANCE #3 (\$2 to Leif Hunneman, PO Box 165 Cambridge MA 05444)

Content ●●●

Production ●●●

Dissonance is one of my favorite magazines. Editor Leif Hunneman writes his zine like he's telling a friend on the other side of the world about all the interesting things he's discovered and what he think about them. Issue #3 has a personal editorial about the series of life-shattering experiences Leif's recently experienced, a cool DIY primer, zine & music reviews, and an interview with filmmaker Richard Kern. Nifty layout, too (31 pp, standard) [Mark]

DURING THE DAYS OF A CIVIL WAR IN YUGOSLAVIA #12 (See

Gamera Vs. Giron review below for ordering info)

Content ●●●●

Production ●●●

Each issue of the *QMB* is a mini-comic by a different artist. This one, called *During the Days of a Civil War in Yugoslavia* by Aleksandar Zograf & Sasa Rakezic, reveals the surreal aspects of the war. Citizens ignore the frequent earthquakes, soldiers aren't sure who to shoot, comic book publishers implore children not to purchase books published by the "enemy" and spurned lovers bomb their unfaithful partners. The text is grim and terse, the art is spooky. (16 pp, itty bitty)[Mark]

FRINGE WARE REVIEW (\$3.50, PO Box 49921, Austin TX 78765, 512/477-

1366)

Content: ●●●●

Production: ●●●

Paco and Jon were apparently unsatisfied with the high salaries and lavish perks given to them by *boING boING*, so they decided to moonlight and start a company called Fringe Ware Incorporated. This is their catalog and magazine. They sell brain toys, weird software and hardware, multimedia, books, clothes, and other assorted odd goods. I defy you to look through this and not order something. The bulk of the magalog, however, consists of articles by familiar names such as Paco, Jon, Don Webb, and Tod Foley. (52 pages, slick) [Mark]

FURTHER (\$12/year, LG Concannon, 219 E. 33rd St. #1, Baltimore MD 21218)

Content: ●●

Production: ●

Further is another rave related zine. It's published by a group of Baltimore ravers who call themselves Atomic Vibe. This zine features a calendar of upcoming raves on the US east coast, letters, artwork, rave reviews, and DJ play lists. There's a good description of all the different style of Techno music by DJ Scott Henry. (32 pp, digest)[Robert Campanelli]

GAMERA VS. GIRON (Quimby World Headquarters Publications, PO Box 281, Astor Station MA 02123)

Content: ●●●

Production: ●●●

This is #15 in D.B. VelVeeda's "mini-bible" series. It works like this: you send Quimby \$18, and they'll send you \$20 worth of publications. (With many titles at 25 cents a copy, you'll be getting this stuff for a long time.) Mr. VelVeeda has a nasty little mind, and we are all a whole lot better off because of it. He,

like Robert Crumb, is one of those kinds of people who lets their perversions all hang out. Generally, he draws good-looking bald hermaphrodites with pierced nipples, but *Gamera Vs. Giron* stars "two nice ladies" in a flying saucer and a couple of young boys. Plenty of surprises await the lads, though, because the "nice ladies" have some strange desires. (20pp, tinysized) [Mark]

GOOD CLEAN FUN #2 (\$1, PO Box 843, Redwood City CA 94064)

Content: ●●

Production: ●

Several pages of hit 'n' miss comic strips from the Zine Features Syndicate: Gene Mahoney, Shannon Wheeler and Ace Backwards. Also, somebody attends a Donny Osmond appearance at Tower Records and lives to tell about it. (8 pp, standard) [Mark]

GRAY AREAS Vol. 2 No. 1 (\$18/four issues, PO Box 808 Broomall PA 19008-0808)

Content: ●●●

Production: ●●●

Gray areas are activities and objects that skirt around the borders of legality or acceptability, and this magazine explores them. It has lots of stuff about the Grateful Dead, so if you like them, you're in for a treat, and if you don't like them, just close your eyes about half the time while going through the magazine. This issue has an interview with pornographic video producer Candida Royalle, a look at the few scraps remaining of your fourth amendment rights, and heaps of reviews of bands, zines, catalogs and videos. (114 pp, slick) [Mark]

THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK (\$5, Paul Rydeen, VIVO, PO Box 537 VAMC, Tuskegee, AL 36083)

Content: ●●●

Production: ●1/2

I might have given this zine an extra black ball under "Content" if it weren't for the fact that they listed *boING boING* with an old old old address (three moves ago). Shame on it! However, Rydeen's got a pretty neat little rag filled with names and addresses which are listed under alphabetized categories such as Christian Extremes, Goofy Catalogs, Heady Zines (where you can locate our former stomping

grounds), Mind Machines, Sleeze, and Witches and Other Neo-Pagans. As you may have guessed, the front and back cover are entirely black, interrupted only by a mailing address and a postage stamp.

Rydeen spent years of researching before putting this zine together. He intended to make it an alternative list of fringe material and societies, and he's tried to step around any data which can be found in *Factsheet Five* or other popular resources. Rydeen's also spent time researching UFOs, which he writes about in *Crash Collusion #1*. *The Little Black Book* is packed with fun info, so don't be too glum when you see what poor quality you're getting for five bucks. (check out the CC zine review in bb #10). (18pp, digest) [Carla]

MONKEYBOY (Free, Larry Snelly, 6221 Fairhurst Ave., No. 3, Cincinnati, OH 45213, Free)

Content: ●●●

Production: ●●●

Monkeyboy ("for mature primates") is a new quarterly zine of comic reviews. Although it's new, and so far slight (the first two issues were only six pages), it looks like it could have a promising future. Editor Larry Snelly describes the premise: "I write and draw about anything that strikes me as poignant, thought-provoking, asinine, pointless, hysterical, etc...I'll rant, bitch, gush, and spew forth cynical, opinionated ideology..." Hey, sounds like all the other zines I love! Larry manages to fit in quite a number of picks, pans, and shameless plugs into each tiny issue. Best of all, *Monkeyboy* is free (Be nice and send some stamps, tho). (6 pp, digest) [Gareth]

NOISE #1.5 (\$2, 1043 Grand #252, St Paul MN 55105-3002)

Content: ●●

Production: ●●

This is mostly reviews of Twin Cities bands, along with a character-assassination piece of Riot Grrrl Jessica Hopper. "Smoking: It's Still Punk Rock to Me," starts out as a smoker's rights lament but rapidly degenerates into an amazing rant that compares smoke-control laws with ethnic cleansing and genocide. I guess he's heavily into his nicotine. I like the way editor Bjorn Christianson reviews zines: he gives dollar values indicating how much he'd be willing to pay for them. Has potential. (24 pp, standard) [Mark]

PILLS-A-GO-GO #14 (\$12/yr, 1202 E Pike #849, Seattle WA 98122)

Content ●●●

Production .5●

If you've got a problem, chances are there's a pill somewhere out there to cure it, or at least halt the symptoms long enough for you to resume whatever activity it was that caused the problem in the first place. We are a nation of pillheads, and now we have our own newsletter, *Pills-a-go-go*. Issue #14 is a grab-bag of pill lore: drugstore cowboy capers, prozac-poppin' people-punchers, pharmaceutical firm fibbers, and more. Now in an easy-to-swallow two-page format! (2 pp, standard) [Mark]

ROUGH DRAFT #76 (\$10/12 issues, PO Box 426392, San Francisco CA 94142-6392)

Content ●●●

Production ●●

Last year, several groups of protesters picketed in front of Bay Area theaters that played "Fantasia." The Bay Area Say No To Drugs Committee did not like the dancing mushrooms and poppies from the nutcracker sequence. The Bay Area Drought Relief Alliance Party was sickened by Mickey's water-wasteful ways in the "Sorcerer's Apprentice sequence." Dieters United did not appreciate the fat hippo and elephant ballerinas in the "Dance of the Hours" sequence. The straight press fell for it, and so did most everybody else. These protest groups were actually members of the San Francisco Cacophony society. If you want to join in on this kind of "freak-out the normals" fun, then *Rough Draft*, the official organ of the Cacophony Society is for you. (2 pp, Typeset, 8.5 x 11) [Mark]

TERRA X (\$3.50, Mike Petrie, 34159 Gem Cir., N. Ridgeville, OH 44039)

Content ●●1/2

Production ●●●

Covering "industrial" and "gothic" music and art, *Terra X* is worth checking out by anyone interested in these subcultures. Issue number one contains interviews with James O'Barr, creator of the goth comic classic "The Crow," and MC 900 Ft. Jesus, plus articles on Skinny Puppy and a number of other bands. Issue two covers the intense art and music of John Bergin and several

other unsigned bands. Both issues are chock full of art, comics, and reviews. One thing I really appreciate about TX is its art coverage, since so many industrial zines seem to ignore this aspect of the scene. Editor Mike Petrie has big plans for *Terra X*. We wish him luck. (40pp, standard) [Gareth]

WILD CARTOON KINGDOM

#1 (\$3.95, at your favorite trash culture outlet)

Content: ●●.5

Production: ●●●

Chris Gore, editor of *Film Threat*, has launched his new magazine dedicated to reawakening the Saturday-morning-cartoon addicted, frosted-flake-sugar-buzzed, nose-pickin', slack-jawed inner child in all of us who still loves to park in front of the big fat wood-cased television for a dose of garish, violent, gut-busting humor. (64 pp, slick) [Mark]

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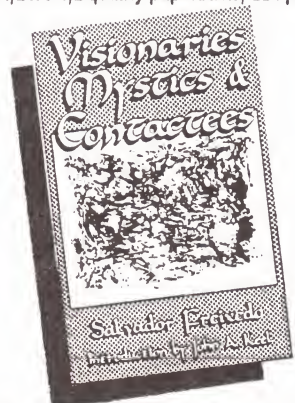
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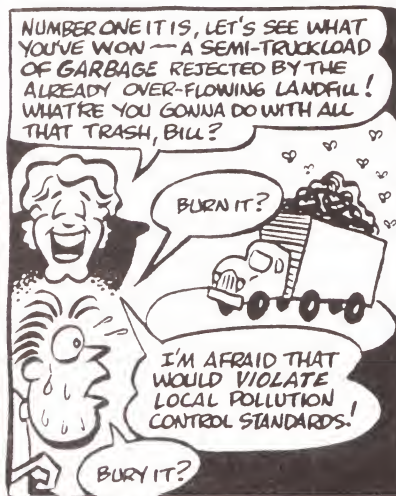
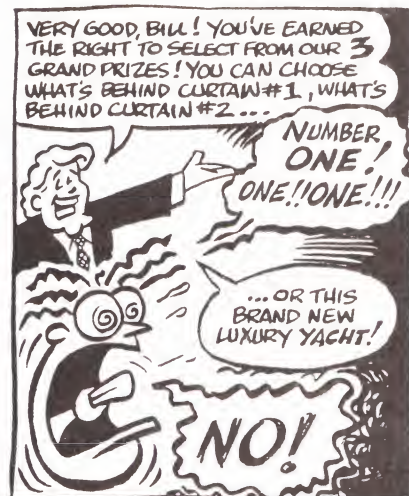
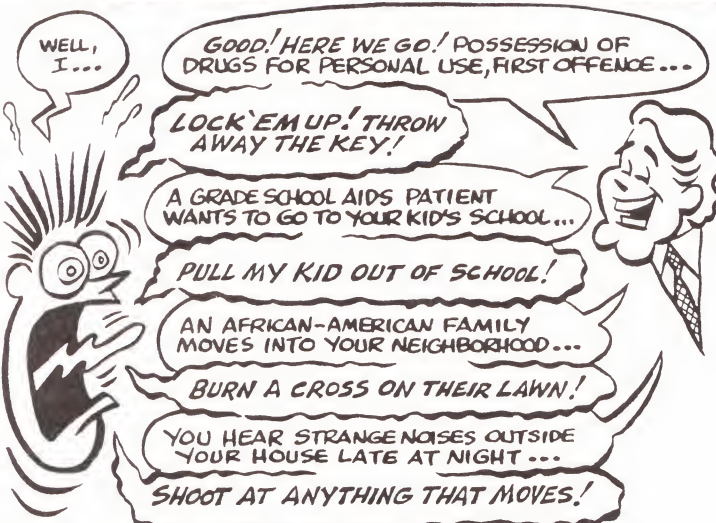
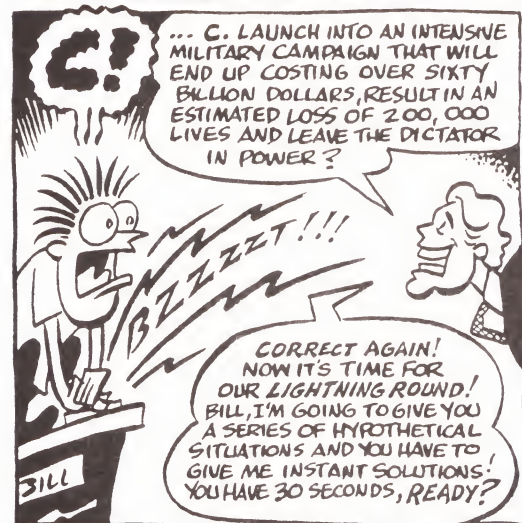
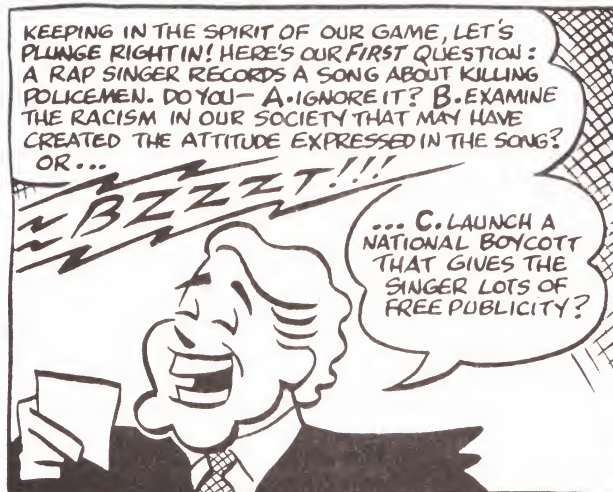
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GROTUS

Vegans Who Bite

Individually, Lars Fox, Adam Tanner, Bruce Boyd, and John Carson aren't big guys, really. But don't expect all four of them to fit into your building's elevator, because when they combine to form SF-based Grotus, *heavy* becomes the operative term. Using a line-up featuring two basses, crushing guitar and vocals, a thunderstorm of live drums and an aural lasagna of digital samples, Grotus creates a sound as subtle

Fox, chief poet and mouthpiece for the band, writes songs that scream in the face of the dying planet. On "Clean," the narrator, his *eyes and pants a little wet* from emotion and excitement, happily watches his favorite sports team, the US Armed Forces, play out a season of prime-time global war. A more typical Grotusean tack is taken in "Up Rose the Mountain," which chronicles the history of life on Earth: it's not until the final

verse that the manchild appears, *with a big head planning to stay on top of the chain*, but Fox reminds us in the last line that *if time was this song, we'd have been around as long as this...* and the next track starts a half-second later. Keep your ears open for the hidden track at the end of the CD, a version of the title cut from Grotus' 1991 full-length release, *Brown* (Spirit Records): its lyrics - *push, meat, blood and hair* - offer a few choice flavors of their central themes.

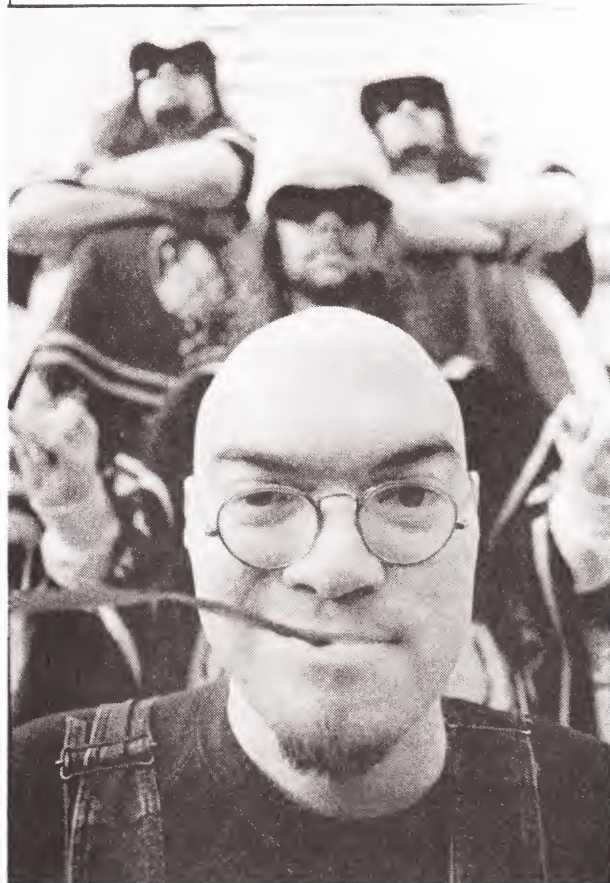
Lest the listener feel depressed by all this weightiness, s/he can find, however, bytes of beauty and humor in the midst of the carnage: a Hindu chant, a fascinating string-of-TV-commercial-pearls, a line of poetic lyric. Live, the band counteracts bald-headed Fox's intimidating stage antics and rapid-fire video backdrop with cheesy choreography, the

rhythm section dressed in colorful fezzes and matching XXXL overalls. Grotus are like sumowrestlers: heavy, frighteningly likable, good to have as friends when things get rough. [Colin Berry]

Grotus, P. O. Box 170487, San Francisco, CA 94117

Alternative Tentacles Records, P.O. Box 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141

Spirit Records, P. O. Box 170195, San Francisco, CA 94117



as trains colliding. Grinding, gritty, grunting, Grotus does for your ear what substituting Comet for powdered sugar might do for your morning doughnut. And, though you'll find *Slow Motion Apocalypse*, the latest issue from Grotus (Alternative Tentacles Records), in your record store's Industrial section, placing them in the same genre as Ministry or Skinny Puppy might keep the uninitiated listener from discovering a far less calculating and more tribal alternative act. Think Mother Earth in steel-toed boots, ready to kick your ass.

MUSIC REVIEWS

by Richard Kadrey

David Sylvian & Russell Mills: *Ember Glance* [Venture/Caroline]

A book and CD-set documenting an environmental art space that included sound, light and sculpture, constructed by David Sylvian (late of Japan and Rain Tree Crow) and Russell Mills. The package contains not only photos of the art, but also production notes, sketches and shots of the environment under construction. The final space is like some natural history museum gone mad, with organic shapes slipping from the frames and boxes onto the walls and floor; it's a space that seems to have grown in place, rather than been constructed. The accompanying CD is quite minimal and functional in the context of the show (but lovely to listen to on its own), an ambient mixture of large soft structures, with occasional stabs of voice and metallic tones, not unlike Sylvian's recent recordings with Holger Czukay.

The Stiff Records Box Set

[Rhino Records, 2225 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90404-3555]

\$51 ppd (CA residents add sales tax)

In the late 70s and early 80s, Stiff Records created a whole culture around itself by producing and distributing some of the best non-big label acts in England. This was also one of the few labels that had a sense of humor both about itself and the music industry. For instance, Graham Parker played an uncredited song on an early Stiff compilation while he was signed to Phonogram. Later, Stiff brought an ad for Parker's new album, even though they didn't release it. This four-disc set is a collection of terrific songs, and also captures an exciting, hopeful moment in time. Nice, though minimal, notes and packaging. Featured performers include Parker, The Pogues, Madness, Nick Lowe, Elvis Costello, The Damned and Ian Drury, and a host of others.

Michael Brook: *Cobalt Blue*

[Warner]

Solo outings by session guitarists are mostly like visits to the dentist: they are occasionally to be endured, but not enjoyed. *Cobalt Blue*, however, is the exception that proves the rule. The tune "Red Shift" is an ultralight buzz over a twenty-first century Riyadh, while "Hawaii" burns quietly like the sun coming up over the crater of a dormant volcano. Brook's first solo record, *Hybrid*, is also exceptional, and heavily influenced by producer Brian Eno's ambient sound.

King Crimson: *The Great Deceiver*

[Caroline Records]

In an age when anyone can have killer chops at the push of a sequencer button, it's nice to be reminded of what music can sound like when it comes from people who can play. The Great Deceiver is a four-CD set that captures King Crimson in their natural environment playing live to an attentive audience. The dates range from 1974 to '84 when Crimson was in one of its strongest incarnations, consisting of Robert Fripp, Bill Bruford, John Wetton and David Cross. Both the level of writing and of musicianship here is nothing short of amazing; that any individual, let alone group, could keep together the complex polyrhythms that are the basis for such Crimson classics as "Larks' Tongue in Aspic" and "The Talking Drum," is inspiring. The booklet that accompanies the discs contains Crimson photos from the period, as well as reviews and excerpts from Fripp's road journals.

Mo Boma: *Jijimuge*

[Playing by Ear, 1244 Mojave Dr., Colton, CA 92324; 909-824-8749]

\$18 ppd (make checks payable to David Hodgson)

Imagine if that gold record in the Voyager probe ever gets picked up by aliens who figure out how to play it, but don't really pick up on the fact that the different musical styles are in fact supposed to be different. Mo Boma produces the late tech sort of digital primitive sound that someone from another planet might call world music. And they'd be right.

The Muffins: *Chronometers*

[Cuneiform, P.O. Box 8427, Silver Spring, MD 20907]

\$16.50 ppd

Combining elements of free jazz, New Music and rock & roll, The Muffins were one of the smartest and most capable bands of the '70s. Naturally, they never rose above cult status. Now over an hour of their best material from '75 and '76 has been beautifully remastered on CD by studio wizard Kit Watkins. The numbers range from a 20-minute-plus all-over-the-map title track to tight and intricate barely-more-than-a-minute jazz ruminations.

MUSIC VIDEOS

by Richard Kadrey

Matt Heckert: *Mechanical Sound Orchestra*

[We Never Sleep, Box 92, Denver CO 80201]

\$15.50 ppd

Heckert is an alumnus of Mark Pauline's Survival Research Laboratories robot performance group. Heckert applies some of SRL's overpowered hydraulic tendencies to machines that, primarily, don't blow up, but make noise/sound/music in interesting ways. This video explores the sounds and the processes behind these machines. Hieronymous Bosch meets Rube Goldberg and jams with Luigi Russolo.

The Residents: *20 Twisted Questions*

[The Voyager Co., 1351 Pacific Coast Highway, Santa Monica, CA 90401; 800-446-200]

Laserdisc \$52.95 ppd (postage is approximate and varies on your location; CA residents add sales tax)

Video Voodoo

[Spectrum Music Video, P.O. Box 1128, Norristown, PA 19404; 800-846-8742]

\$32.95 ppd (AZ and PA residents add sales tax)

Technically not a video, but a laser disc compilation of twenty years' worth of Residents films, videos, computer animations and performances. The Residents have always been one of those bands who seem to lack something on record, but become magical when a visual element is added. Some of the early pieces on this disc, such as "Hello Skinny" and "The Third Reish and Roll," make clever use of simple collage effects, staging and lighting to turn the minimal production quality into a part of the piece. Included are some recent computer animations from their Freak Show album (and upcoming CD-

ROM), and performance footage from their extraordinary "Cube-E" show. If you don't have a laser player, you can see many of the pieces from this disc on the tape Video Voodoo.

Gwar: *Tour de Scum*

[Spectrum Music Video, P.O. Box 1128, Norristown, PA 19404; 800-846-8742]

\$22.98 ppd (AZ and PA residents add sales tax)

What can you say about Gwar? They are by turns the worst and best metal band on the planet. Their stage shows are works of putrid art, and often, just putrid. If you've never seen them, imagine Josie and the Pussycats set in a Flintstones universe, but all of the members of the band are possessed alternately by Jerry Lewis and Satan. Don't bother with the albums. For Gwar, stick to the videos.

Master/Slave Relationship: *Forced Abandon*

[P.O. Box 191211, San Francisco, CA 94119-1211]

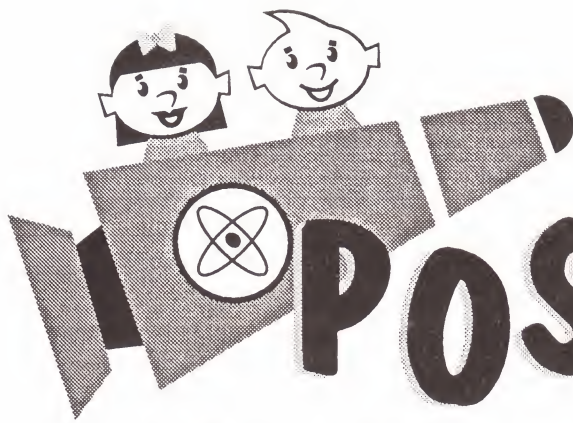
Like her CDs and tapes, Debbie Jaffe's Master/Slave Relationship video confronts questions of gender, sex, power, eroticism, pain and violence. The simplicity and obvious amateur production standards of the video pieces on this tape make them even more compelling, like perverse home movies. Master/Slave Relationship's power is to both arouse and disturb, and Jaffe does both on this compilation. You must be over 21 to order.



Therapy?: *Hats Off to the Insane*

[A&M]

If your eyes mist when you recall the days of safety pins, skating, and speed thrash (and you surreptitiously still indulge in classic rrrAWK! à la Headbangers Ball), then you'll love Therapy?'s (no, that's not a typo) latest. From a group of Celts who cite boredom as one impetus for forming the band, this 6-track EP remembers those clipped, hard-driving songs from punk rock days (average length per cut is about 2 minutes, 20 seconds), while parading speed metal drum riffs with somewhat formulaic noise. The sound may be in-your-face, but The Message isn't. As Irishman/guitarist Cairns puts it, "We're not politicians or Bono." [Kristin Spence]



Life in the Nuclear Heritage Theme Park

A Conversation with Emergency Broadcast Network

by Gareth Branwyn

Several months ago, after I had sent a friend a copy of the new Consolidated record, I got an email message from him. He said listening to it had given him an idea. Consolidated did such a great job of integrating audio bits and pieces from the news, comments by people at their shows, etc. Somebody, he wrote, should do this sort of danceable hip-hop political commentary/newsmagazine on a regular basis...say a tape a month. That same day, the EBN video arrived in the mail. Here, instantly delivered to my doorstep, was the very thing he was talking about. But, EBN did him one better: they have created a whole new form of audio-video sampling. It's hip-hop cum head-hop, brain candy whipped up from the raw confections offered by commercial TV and network news, topped with bits of a/v "jimmies." Don't think they have any plans for monthly releases, but who knows...these guys are on a roll. This interview was conducted by phone--Gareth

BOING-BOING: Hello...which "Network-er" am I talking to?

EBN: This is Josh, Josh Pearson.

And you're the MC right?

Yeah, I'm the guy with the bullhorn doing all that yelling and screaming.

Let's insert the "How did EBN get started?" question here.

We got started back in 1986, myself and Gardner Post [now joined by Ron O'Donnel -ed]. We collaborated at first under the name Pearsonpost Industries and we were involved in multimedia exhibitions incorporating video, music and kinetic sculpture. Gradually we got more and more into the musical aspects. We became fascinated with sampled material, the sampling technologies, and the possibilities they made available to us. We also began to take note of the information acceleration in our culture, the sheer volume and the diverse forms of informa-

tion presentation. Everything that's being beamed around the world and into our homes...and into outer space!

That's right...aliens are monitoring our transmissions even as we speak!

We began to watch closely how television presents a condensed and exaggerated reflection of our culture. We wanted to take that signal and exaggerate and enhance it even further. We began to work solely off of television, sampling television.

I'm really awed by the hyper-aesthetic quality of your work. You take that information feed, which is already a montage, and you make other montages on top of that which forms such a potent commentary on the source material. And,

of course, the irony is, your work then becomes part of yet another media montage which gets beamed back into the videodrome. When I saw you all in concert, I got so high on that media overload. It was like an epiphany experience for a media cynic like myself. You all presented the same kind of commentary that runs in my head when I watch TV. I get so fucking angry at it all, but I'm laughing hysterically at the same time. It's a complex set of mixed emotions. It's what Arthur Kroker calls *Panic Culture*, the simultaneous experience of ecstasy and dread.

[Laughter] Yes.

I was amazed when I read a review of your video tape and the reviewer said that it was a shame you all weren't more political. I thought "Jesus, I can't imagine being MORE political"

Yeah, television kinda speaks for itself, in that regard. It would be almost too easy to give it a blatant political treatment.

YES! The message already seems pretty upfront. Like on "Get Down," you're staring

right into the face of the police state. Nothing more needs to be said. What got you to this particular style of presentation?

Hip-hop music definitely and the witty use of samples...and as I said...the sampling technology itself. None of us had any musical background or abilities. We were just fans, music fans and TV fans. The sampling tech just presented us with a new form of art. Music technology has become so democratic. Almost anyone can make music



now...and even videos, with a little more equipment.

What influences you all in the visual realm?

Television and movies themselves. Documentaries, we're very into documentaries. Just the sheer volume of stuff is inspirational. Early inspirations were people like Laurie Anderson and her use of images.

Are there other people who are doing things similar to you all?

I honestly don't know of anyone.

I've had the worst time trying to describe EBN to people who haven't seen and heard you. "It's video and music together." No wait, lots of people are doing that. "It's like music/video collage." Which has also been done. I guess the best description was from a friend who said "Wow, these guys are scratchin' video!" How do you all describe it?

We call it video sampling.

Even that doesn't do it justice. I guess the thing I find unique about your work is the seamless coupling of the sounds and the images. I've never seen anything that tight. Also the stroboscopic and trance effects are very cool. How do you get access to all your source material?

We have a subscription to basic cable. That's it. [laughter]

But, how do you all catch what you want? Do you just nab it when you see it, or do you just run tapes all day and then sift out what you need? We just watch LOTS of TV and record what looks interesting.

I used to live in a group house that had 3 VCRs. I thought of recording different TV stations for an entire day on all three machines and editing that down to a video art piece.



"Post World will be a sort of adult anti-Disney World that will be composed of all the high-end cold war defense tech that is slated to be scrapped."

rest of the video tape was entirely done at home.

Wow...that's amazing! Which one of you guys is the hardware hacker who puts together your gear, your stage set-up, and your ultra-cool EBN vehicles?

Gardner Post is the main person behind all that.

Do you all have two vehicles now? I love that Ghost Busters-like station wagon!

Yeah, we have the wagon and the Chevy Suburban. We're a two-car company.

What do you do with them?

The vehicles were designed to allow us to

There was a guy who wrote a book about something similar to that. He recorded every single channel, I think for a whole week, and then went through it all and analyzed what he saw. We do basically the same thing, we just try to make it entertaining...and danceable!

So once you've gotten the raw material, how do you go about composing?

All the audio gets sequenced with a Roland W30 Sequencer and we use a big Roland Sampler as well, the S770. It's all sequenced and laid off to videotape and then we perform the video edits. We have a 3/4" video system here at home.

So you do everything at home.

Well, we've done a few things in bigger studios since we've signed with TVT Records. Like "We Will Rock You" and "Psychoactive Drugs." The

do outdoor shows and spontaneous street performances. We haven't used them to their full potential yet. We've done several parking lot presentations and we actually used one of them indoors at a rave in Boston.

And you did Lollapalooza II as well?

Yup. We just like having the mobile capability.

Tell me a bit about what they have in them.

The station wagon has a PA system as well as a bunch of televisions and a satellite dish. But we can adapt it to whatever we're doing. It has 8 color television monitors, a 1250 Watt PA system, two banks of Pile speaker cabinets pointing out of the back windows.

It requires external power I would imagine?

We did some testing with generated power, but like at Lollapalooza, we were able to plug in on-sight.

Do you haul the generator behind the wagon?

Yeah, or store it inside.

All your tech LOOKS so slick. Do you all get art grants or what?

We've just been slowing building the stuff over time...since '86. And we've had regular jobs to pay for it. It's really as homemade as you can imagine. We use scrap metal, stuff from junk yards, found materials...we just do the best we can with what we get. We've only gotten one grant from a local arts council.

Consummate street techies!

And, we appreciate street tech, but we're also looking to upgrade to better equipment. That's a big reason why we wanted to get a record deal, we wanted the backing of a bigger company.

What kind of new toys would you all like to acquire?

Well, believe it or not, we don't own a computer yet. We'd like that and better audio and video editing gear.

One friend of mine who saw your shows said: "Whoa, imagine what they could do with morphing technology?"

Yeah, we'll immediately want to get that \$100 "Morph" program for the Mac.

How about digital video tech?

That would certainly make our job a lot easier to be able to compose finished pieces



with sound and video all stored in digital memory. We're also very interested in getting into interactive CD. We've been talking to people who are into that whole scene and we think that using interactive technology for our material would be really great. So, the viewer could stop and explore a specific clip further.

Or get info on the source of the clips. I wanna know where you got some of this stuff!

Well there's something to be said for keeping that sort of information secret, but then it's also nice to let the viewer discover the previous contexts.

The "intertext" is always intriguing to me in appropriated work. I like to follow the trail to its often trashy source. And speaking of trashy source material, have you seen the new GLH (Great Looking Hair) infomercial from Ronco? The color spray for your bald spot?

Yeah, that one! I actually had this bizarre experience the first time I saw it. It was like 3 AM and I was half asleep. The next day I was telling my wife about it and all of a sudden I wasn't sure whether I had dreamt it or if I had actually seen it. It's so bizarre...I mean it's spray paint for your head!...I didn't know what world it existed in. It was too weird to be true!

[laughter] We have recorded some of it, but we haven't figured out what to do with it yet.

It's just such a poignant commentary on how TV sleight of hand, all those flattering camera angles, and such, can sell something as useless as head paint. I mean think of all those poor balding saps (like me!) who watch that thing and think that if they put that on their head then people aren't gonna know that they're self-conscious bald people walking around with paint on their heads. I mean, you thought toupees were funny!

[laughter] Showers must be a nightmare.

NOT if you use the patented Finishing Shield (tm).

Spray Fixative for your head!

[laughter] Oh man...

Just a bit of the exciting potential of television. Constantly digging new depths. Just when you thought they couldn't POSSIBLY go any lower...they get out the steam shovels and go to work on more landfills of sleaze!

So what are some of your future projects?

Well the full-length video album is being worked on now. The "album."

VIDEO REVIEW

Emergency Broadcast Network:

Commercial Entertainment Product
[TVT Records]

Techno beats sliced and diced with media sights and sounds. No one and no thing is spared. The video and audio samples range from George Bush to Jimi Hendrix, Bill Clinton to Mr. Rogers, Dan Rather to Bud Dwyer. It all gets cuisinarted together into glistening kidney punch agitprop, Situationist Busby Berkely numbers that go after drug and gun hysteria, two-faced politcos and the media itself. [Richard Kadrey]

Is that what you call it, or did you just make that up?

Just made it up.

I like it.

Touring, obviously. And that's basically our plans for the near future. One of the other long-term projects we're working on is called "Post-World." It will be a technology theme park. It was conceived about three years ago. We introduced the idea to an architect in New York who is helping us design it. It will be a sort of adult anti-Disney World that will be composed of all the high-end cold war defense tech that is slated to be scrapped. When we heard that all this was going to be happening, we decided to do our little bit for the conversion effort. It is destined to be the most exciting theme park around!

[snicker] Can you give me some examples of the star attractions?

Well...like rocket sled rides that will take you twice the speed of sound. A virtual reality chamber that will place you inside the exhaust jets of a Shuttle launch. And various multimedia and VR experiences that will place you within the awesome power of the military high technology that we live with, but never experience - are even shielded from.

I used to be addicted to reading some of the high-tech weapons mags that were popular in the "star wars" decade. The ads in them were amazing. "Survive and command on the post-nuclear battlefield with the Raytheon C3 bunker" (or whatever). Brings the perversion right up into your face.

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Various: *Fifty Years of Sunshine*

PGR: *The Chemical Bride*

Drome: *Anachronism*

"On April 16, 1943, Albert Hoffman accidentally absorbed a small dose of LSD-25 through his fingertips while working in a Swiss laboratory...." So starts the press release (and the journey) of **Fifty Years of Sunshine**, a new double CD celebration of the 50th anniversary of the discovery of LSD. Silent Record has done an excellent job of capturing the diversity of the psychedelic experience without relying on tired 60's music. After all, people haven't stopped dropping acid, and every new generation has its own interpretation of what tripping sounds like. So, instead of Jefferson Airplane and Pink Floyd, Fifty Years of Sunshine brings you the Pelican Daughters, Elliott Sharp, Controlled Bleeding, and a number of today's techno bands. The only old timers here are Timothy Leary and Hawkwind. The whole thing is nicely produced on two disks (100 Micrograms and 250 Micrograms) with a CD booklet and an essay.

Wanna take a trip to "the other side?" OK, first you consecrate your magickal tools while fasting for a week, then, following the instructions in your grimoire, you cast a magick circle and...wait! This is the '90s. Forget all that ancient mumbo jumbo. Get thee to a kick ass stereo system with a pair of good headphones (mind alteration beforehand is optional), jack in, and get ready for "The Chemical Bride," the latest phantasm conjured up by PGR. The flyer for the new CD sets the stage: "On the other side there are, shall we say, spirit stations...like radio transmitting stations...they guide the spirits to the bridge so they may travel to the material world...what you hear is the sound of the stations humming and whirring before they begin to transmit." Let this statement frame your experience and you're off on one hell of a trip through a wispy world of electronic spiritism and flickering mirages that beckon suggestively, but never coalesce into anything real. The Chemical Bride lives in a land of in-betweens. Listening, I picture these huge, ancient transmission towers

glowing, sparking, and humming like bug zappers as they capture the spirits in one dimension and beam them into another. Putting on headphones, you feel as though you've stuck your head directly into the path of this supernatural radio traffic. Astellar piece of musical "visionware."

Germany's **Drome** is one of the best techno bands I've heard in a while. Anachronism, their first release, is a wide-ranging exploration of techno and industrial trance-induction that never falls back on the tried and true formulas of these genres. They cross-breed, making excellent use of spoken and sound samples, polyrhythmic dance grooves (not very common in techno), harshness, noise, and melodic orchestration. The first four songs "Optimism," "Dreams," "9 to 1," and "Drugs" are guaranteed dance floor butt shakers. [Gareth] ☛

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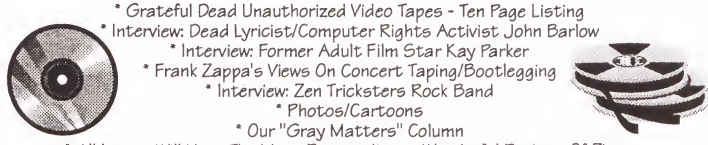
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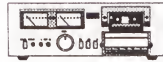
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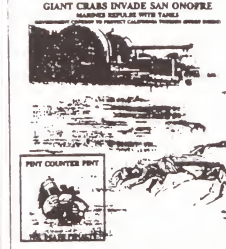


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of pussytop computing. Just as the cellular phone is a networked computer with a walkie-talkie grafted onto it, a "personal digital sex slave" is a computer with multiple independent vibrating actuators (MIVA's) grafted onto it. Program the Schumann resonance frequency into it, entrain the brain waves through direct tactile stimulation, add pressure sensors and modem link for true teledildonics. As always, the software is the key to making the hardware fly; Kerin and Darby could do the alpha testing.

Feel free to quote from any of the above (*OK -Mark*). After all, I've plundered enough graphics from *boING-boING* related projects!!

Yours in Slack,
Tom Terashima, SSZcom

(Thanks for sharing the great ideas. Tom. I think "pussytop computing" like "Walkman" or "Gameboy" misses half the potential market. though. How about calling digital sex toys CUMboxes (Computer User Masturbation) or something. Note to our readers: Tom is the cool guy responsible for the MEMeticON held in Canada every year. Write to him at Bow Valley Postal Outlet, PO Box 20004, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T2P 4H3)

Dear boINGers

Thanks for the invite to the CyberSex party! I did all kinds of things to get there—arranged the day off, got friends to do the same ... then a great wheezy pneumonia hit my household & ... well, no CyberSex for us. Guess I'll have to live it out virtually through the print media.

Thanks also for sending me the newest *boING*. It's the best one yet (although I really enjoyed the production-intensive one with the glued-in color-xerox front cover).

I've got this nifty computer before me, but the disk drive consumes diskettes & won't give them up ... so no way to put anything else cool into those hard drive megabytes! How frustrating! It probably just needs lubrication (rubber gloves; a dental dam).

So I remain, old-fashioned paper-n-pen. I will keep in touch.

Ordinarily yours,
Cynde
Sherman Oaks CA

Hi

Just trying out my new email capabilities and doing a trans-atlantic'un....

I've just got the new *boING-boING* and it's triff as usual - keep it up (fnerr fnerr).

I DO wish you hadn't put that chain letter in there - I don't know whether to send copies to

people who DESERVE great sex or to people I hate and who I know won't pass it on, just to muck up their lives. Hmmm. I wonder if I can get onto the WELL across this link????? Maybe some other night.

Bye
Dave McKinnon - in England

Dear Editors

So what happened to you guys? We haven't heard from you.

Modal Zazen
Burlington VT

(Thanks for sending us your CD for review last year. We can't review every CD and tape people send us. We could build a nice split-level ranch home using the plastic cases we receive every month. In fact, that's just what we are going to do! If you decide to go into the cyanoacrylate adhesive business, please send us a sample. We promise to review THAT.)

Dear boING-boING

The penile strain gauge featured in Paco Xander Nathan's column is used in sleep labs to study "penile tumescence." People who wonder whether their problem "getting it up" is psychological or physiological get hooked up for a night of monitoring. Most healthy males will get an erection during their rem periods.

This electronic transducer can be the basis for

a H.O.L.D. I.T. or Hold-On Lucid Dream Induction Tool (seed idea credit goes to George Gleason). The strain gauge, which is an elastic tube filled with mercury, changes electrical conductivity as it stretches. With proper electronic conditioning, the transducer can be hooked up to the joystick port of an inexpensive Commodore 64. The computer, which serves as an off-the-shelf-controller, monitors for erections.

The computer (through its user port) then controls a vibrator strapped to the dreamer's thigh (or placed in some convenient location). The rem erection triggers the vibrator which then signals the dreamer who (with luck and training) becomes lucid.

This device, still unbuilt (that's a call to any adventurous techies out there), has precedent in the early work of dream research pioneer William Dement. One study tested the effectiveness of dream incorporation for different stimulus modalities. Tactile stimulation was found more effective at incorporating into dreams than either sound or vision.

I don't know whether women have some corresponding, easily monitored, arousal response during rem. For the moment, H.O.L.D. I.T. is likely to be a boys-only lucid dream sex toy.

Sorry.

Best wishes,
Jeff Kleinbard
New York NY



CROSSWEIRD ANSWER (FROM PAGE 39)



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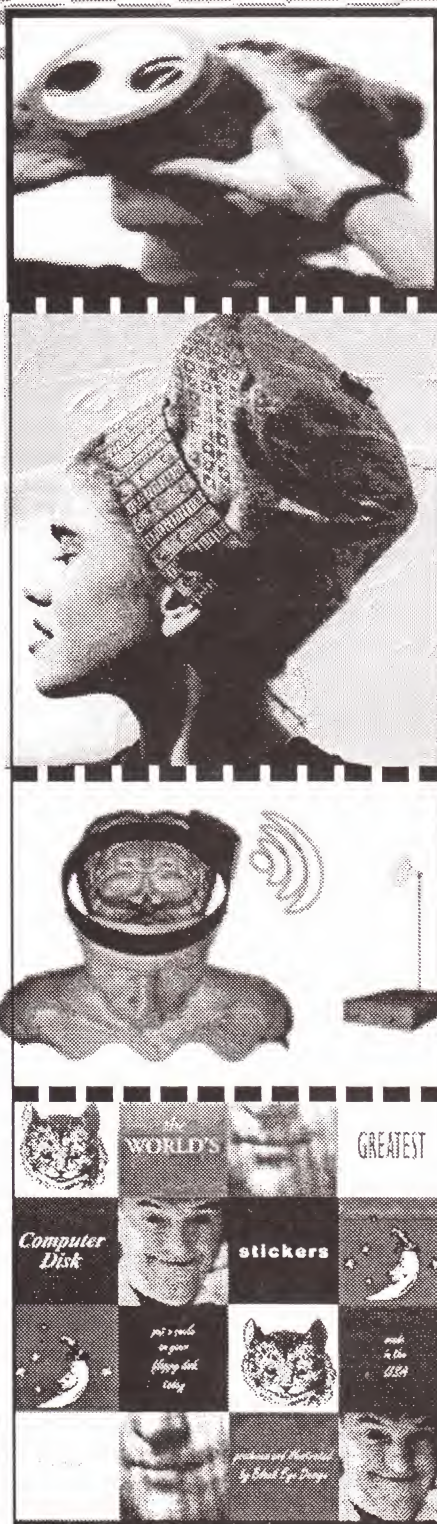
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