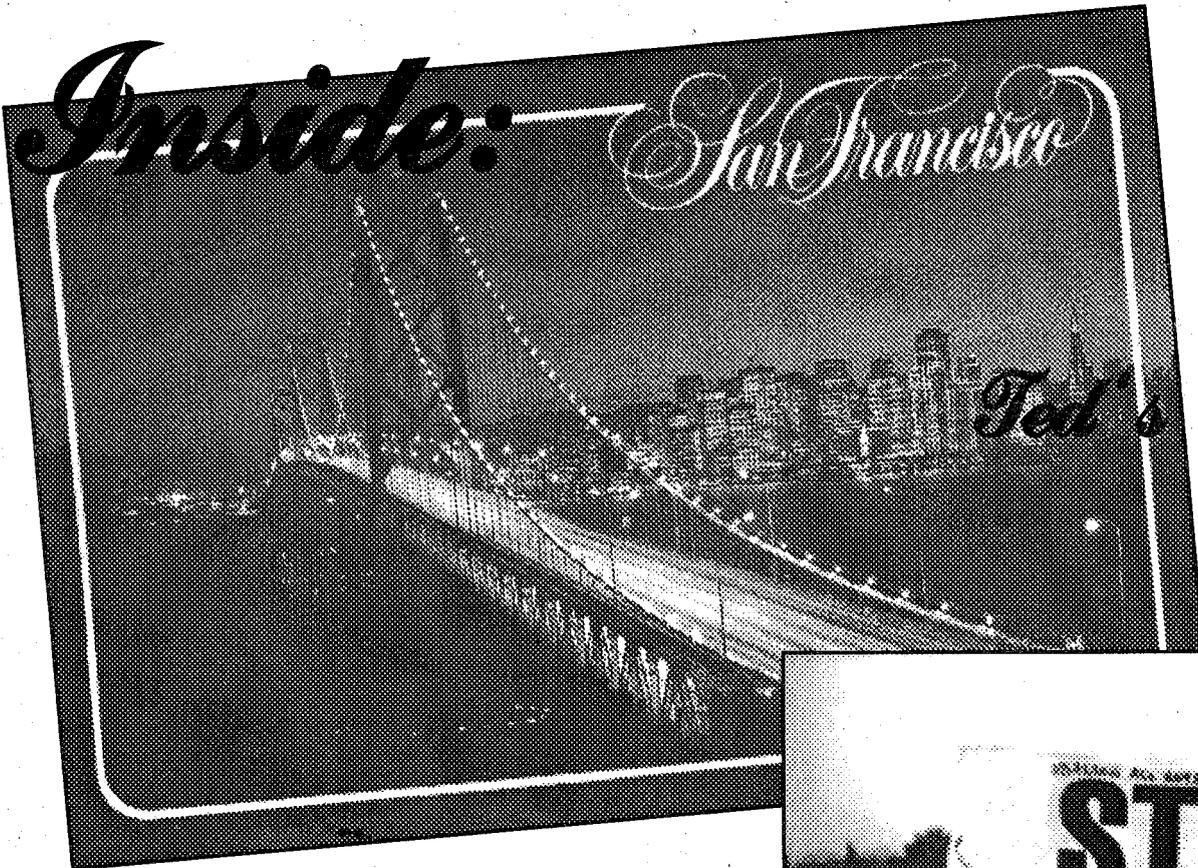


The  
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# PRESS

Vol. XVII No. 16 The Revolution Will Not Be Televised August 5th, 1996

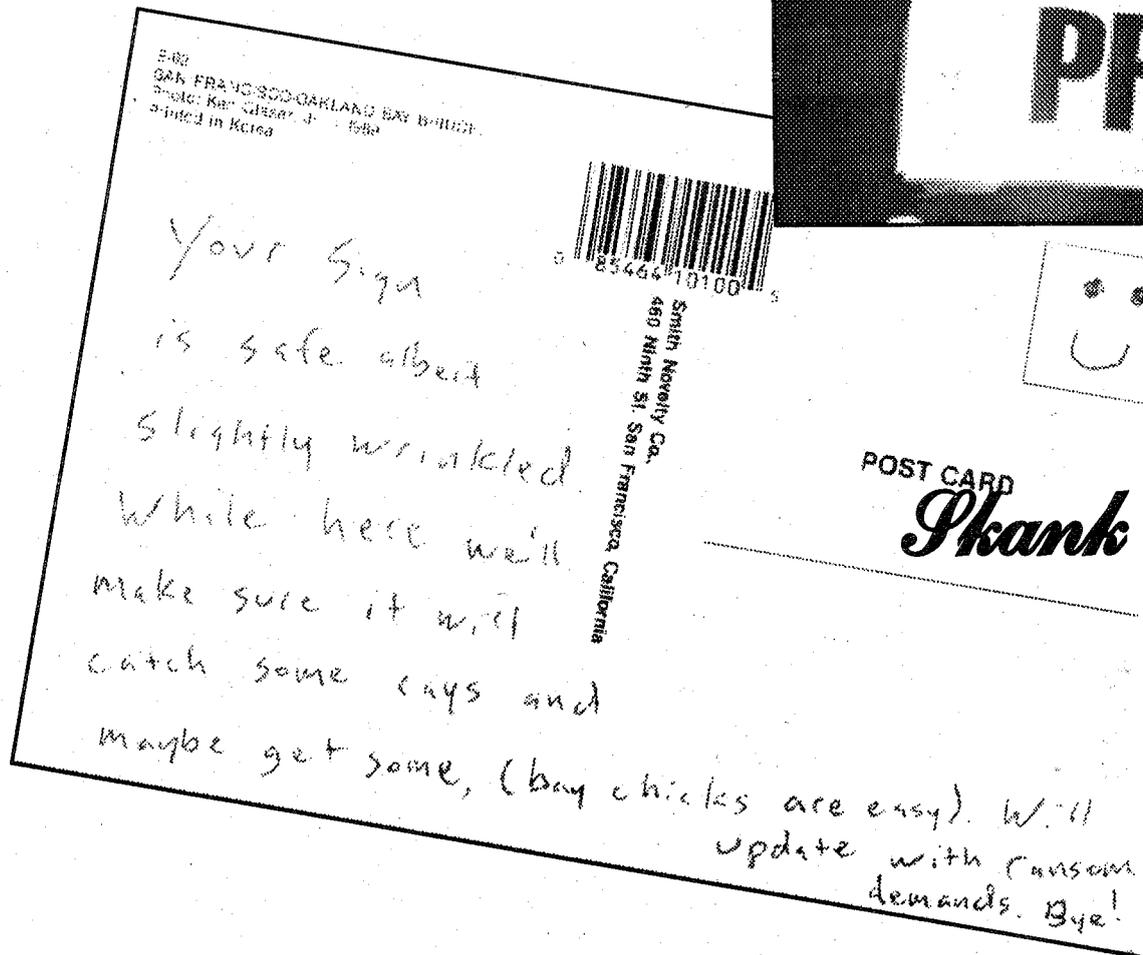
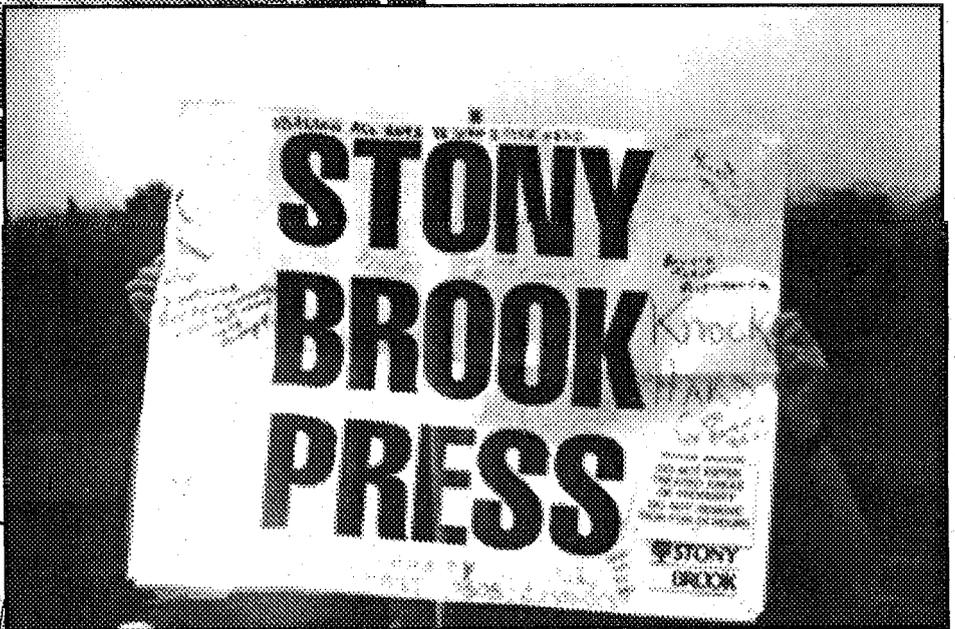


*Inside:*

*San Francisco*

*Ted's last hurrah*

*The Jesus Lizard*



*and Lowell!*

# Broder On Washington

By David S. Broder  
Special to the Stony Brook Press

WASHINGTON—When President Clinton addressed an education summit of governors and business executives in Palisades, N.Y., late in March, he won headlines by challenging the states to set rigorous requirements for promotion and graduation of all their students.

Calling for "meaningful standards" in the schools, he said, "While I believe they should be set by the states ... we shouldn't kid ourselves. Being promoted ought to mean more or less the same thing in Pasadena, Calif., as it does in Palisades, N.Y."

The thought was not a new one for Bill Clinton. A decade earlier he had led a bipartisan effort, along with such Republicans as Lamar Alexander of Tennessee and Carroll Campbell of South Carolina, to raise the standards of American education across the board.

In the late 1980s, those governors got their colleagues to set out a half-dozen ambitious national goals for school reform and said they wanted to be held publicly accountable for reaching them by the end of the century. President Bush embraced them at an education summit in Charlottesville, Va., in 1989 and made them the centerpiece of his 1990 State of the Union Address. With urging from Clinton, Congress put them into legislation in 1994 and voted funds to help states achieve "Goals 2000."

Last month, almost unnoticed, Congress scuttled that grand plan and the same President Clinton signed a bill which may make Goals 2000 a tooth-

less tiger. Both the Republicans who forced the changes and the Education Department officials who told Clinton it was OK to acquiesce insist that nothing has been lost in the process—that individual states will continue to press for better results from their schools. But for a reporter who watched the birth of the effort to create national goals and standards—so our kids measure up to international competition—this looks like quite a comedown.

Under the old plan, groups of scholars were given federal funds to develop national standards for core subjects. The English panel produced what many have called useless jargon. The history panel's first try was highly controversial; its second, much better. Math, science and civics standards were almost universally acclaimed. The standards were voluntary, but the Goals 2000 program—adopted by 46 states—encouraged competition in standard-setting by having all the state plans sent to Washington, where panels of educators from other states could rate them.

Now, each state will vouch for the worthiness of its own plan, without reference to the national standards. And if it chooses, it can bail out of the standard-setting exercise and instead use its share of the \$350 million appropriated for the program to buy computers for classrooms or other high-tech equipment.

In fact, that is the ardent hope of the man who wrote the classroom-computer option into the bill, Rep. Ernest Istook, R-Okla. "My desire was to zero out (kill) the money for the program," Istook told me. He was delighted when the House Republicans did just that last year. But Sen. Arlen

Specter, R-Pa., his opposite number on the Senate Appropriations Committee, got the money restored in the Senate and when they went into conference to meld the bills, the two men had to cut a deal.

Under pressure from his own party leaders, Istook agreed to fund Goals 2000 for another year. But he insisted on new language explicitly giving states the option to divert their Goals 2000 grants into classroom computer purchases and he wrote the governors personal letters urging them to spend their dollars for computers, not standards and tests. If, as Istook predicts, most states go that way the whole federal standard-setting exercise that Clinton helped launch a decade ago may end. But the White House signed on, knowing that few would recognize how far the president had moved from his original position.

That is how the system works in Washington these days. And what of the governors who started all this standards-raising effort a decade ago? Veterans such as Wisconsin's Tommy Thompson (R) and Colorado's Roy Romer (D) say they could care less. They have a new scheme in mind. They are attempting to put together a private clearinghouse for individual state reform efforts, with corporate support. The structure, the staffing and the financing are not yet in place, but Thompson and Romer say they will be soon.

I hope that is true, but for now, the United States remains one of the very few advanced nations with no national standards for its schools. And parents still must guess whether their children are really getting a 21st-century education.

**"Bye-bye, boys! Have fun storming the castle!"**

The Press says goodbye this issue to two of our most, um, esteemed alumni. Scott Lusby, former Arts Editor (and amateur ornithologist), is moving to the verdant pastures of North Carolina, and he's agreed to take our current Executive Editor, Ted Swedalla, along with him. Scott's got a job teaching (he'll be molding the minds of our next generation- scary!) and Ted hopes to find some sort of job in the publishing biz.

**"Think it'll work?"  
"It'll take a miracle!"**

So we wish them luck and all that stuff. Feel free to send us articles and stuff, but if we see either of you within a hundred meters of the office, we've instructed our guards to open fire.

# FEAR AND LOATHING, THE GERMAN WAY

By David M. Ewalt

Whenever I watch "The Price is Right," and the "Showcase Showdown" comes on, I have this fantasy about that big wheel coming loose and crushing people in the audience.

It's not that I'm a particularly sadistic person. I just think it would be entertaining. The Germans have a word for this, "schadenfreude," which translates into "joy at other's misery." (It's no big surprise that the Germans brought us this bit of terminology. Just look at what they did to Poland).

Schadenfreude is that gleeful feeling you often experience when bad things happen to other people. It can be as simple as giggling when a friend trips and falls, or as complex as fantasizing about a grisly game-show massacre.

Why do we find the misfortune of others so satisfying? Psychologists might say that we're simply relieved the problem isn't ours, and that relief manifests itself as pleasure. Then again, psychologists might also say that guys who smoke cigars are symbolically sucking dick, so we can't take their opinions too seriously.

No, schadenfreude goes much deeper than mere relief. Its roots lie not in simple instincts like self-preservation, but rather in more complex emotions like loathing, hatred, and sheer malice.

Imagine, for example, this scenario: You're watching the evening news. The lead story; a construction worker in the city working twenty stories up dropped a hammer, which hurtled to the ground, smashing an old woman's head open and leaving her dead on the sidewalk.

You're relieved it was her, not you, but are you *happy* she died? Of course not, unless you're some sort of psycho. You'd be disturbed, shocked, grossed out... and you'd probably change the channel to something bland and unthreatening, like MTV.

Now imagine the schmuck on the sidewalk was somebody you really hate; Rush Limbaugh or Hillary Clinton or whoever else really pisses you off. Would you feel joy if they got brained by a ball-peen? Hell yes! I know I'd dance a little jig if that bloated swine Limbaugh got turned into a chalk outline on the sidewalk. And if he took out Alanis Morissette when he fell over, I'd probably pee myself out of sheer joy.

That's the darker side of schadenfreude; the sadistic, angry underbelly. If Rush dies it's pleasurable because we *hate* him, not because we were spared his fate. In fact, we hope he suffered, that the hammer just winged him, and that he slowly bled to death as a long line of eco-freaks, femi-nazis and welfare cheats walked by and spit on his massive butt. At least I do.

I'm sure I'm not in the minority, though, as far as these violent fantasies are concerned. Everyone experiences a little schadenfreude now and then. Take, for instance, a concert I witnessed earlier this summer. In July I went to one of those cheesy all-day music festivals, and folkish-rock singer Jewel showed up as a surprise guest. She got about halfway through her first song when some genius in the crowd lobbed a frisbee at her, hitting her hard in the nipular area of her left breast. I saw this on the big stage-side television, and man-oh-man

was it funny. A few days later a local TV station did a documentary of the concert, and they showed the video clip. I have it on tape now, and when parties I attend get really moving I like to whip out my Jewel tape and show it to the party-goers, often several times, in slow motion. It's an embarrassing—and doubtless painful—moment for Jewel, but we love it.

Of course, the Grand Poobah of schadenfreude stories is that of Mr. John Wayne Bobbit. Bobbit, for those of our media-retarded readers, is the unfortunate fellow whose wife chopped off his Limbaugh with a ginsu knife. Ask any guy what the most horrifying thing you could do to his body is, and he'll tell you that outside of forcing him to have sex with Janet Reno, it's slicing off Mr. Winky. But despite that, the American public loved the Bobbit story. Letterman even took some time off from Buttafuoco jokes to tell Bobbit gags, we liked it so much. Was this because men were relieved it didn't happen to them? No, men don't even like to *think* about such things occurring... and besides, the real fans of the story were generally women. No, John Bobbit became a laughing stock because we all have a sick, twisted side which delights in the pain and suffering of perfect strangers. And that's the cruelest cut of all.

Sorry. Couldn't help myself.

So what's the point of all this? Well, if more people understood the concept of schadenfreude, maybe I wouldn't have gotten a ticket last month for throwing marbles off the roof of my apartment building.



## Cheap Car Buys, Part II



By Martha Chemas

The eagerly awaited conclusion of a two part series of thought provoking analysis of the car market is here at last. Actually, I have come to the conclusion that no one reads my articles (except you), so I will be using this space to palaver endlessly and maybe somewhere the subject of automobiles will arise.

Like many of you, when I take road trips I time myself. I realize this is a geeky thing to do, but enjoy it nonetheless. On a recent trip (Triboro Bridge to Montauk Point, one hour and forty-five minutes) I was pulled over for speeding. The ticket summoned me to appear in the town of Southampton court on a specified day. Luckily, I overslept and missed my time. Upon calling the courthouse, a kindly-sounding woman informed me that the date on my summons was wrong and that I should just mail the damn thing. Moral of this story? Oversleeping has its merits.

My antique (read: old) car burns a bit of oil when it does more than seventy mph. As a result, a puff of black smoke is discharged via the exhaust when, after having reached the aforementioned speed, I let up on the accelerator. I have learned to manipulate this anomaly to provide me with some entertainment on the road.

Typical situation: I am cruising along the Northern State and in my rearview I spot an Acura Legend approaching quickly. Traffic is dense, but manageable. Acura man is power weaving and decides that (after passing me) it would be a great idea if he came to an almost complete stop *right in front of my car*. It seems that there is some fauna on

the side of the road worth observing. Instead of blinding him with my high beams, I plan my assault. As the road opens up, I take the lead. With Acura man now behind me, I accelerate to a smooth seventy. I signal right. Acura man speeds up in anticipation of my move. Just before I break right, I ease ever so gently off the gas and...GOT'EM!!! The smoke bomb detonates beautifully and I speed off in the right lane. When he catches up I feign ignorance as I sing along with Chuck D. I am currently experimenting with the notion of portable oil slicks.

I have other Spy-Hunter adventures. This week the muffler on my car died. When I approach in the old auto it sounds like a small cesna attempting takeoff. Interestingly enough, this mechanical difficulty causes my auto to fill up with dark grey smoke on the inside. Instead of trying to repair her, I decided to go with it. I have since hung a disco ball from the rearview and a strobe light on the ceiling. Look for the roving nightclub on the Northern State, Club Audi.

In New York City there is some kind of law that prohibits motorists from talking on their cell phones while driving unless they have a speaker phone device installed. If you've ever driven alongside a drug-dealer on the BQE you understand that this is a marvelous law. The other day I was nearly driven off the road when Tony Montana in training started screaming and gesticulating wildly while chatting with a business associate. He nearly slammed his oh-so-tastefully-gold accented Benz 190 into my passenger side door. This is somewhat of a hazard. Come to think of it, I've probably done the same thing.

## Top Ten Trekkie Pick Up Lines

(And it's trekkie, not trekker! That's like the fat kid who gets teased in the schoolyard saying, "Don't call me lard-ass, call me lard-buttt!" It's an insult, you don't get to choose the content.)

- 10) Wanna see my tribbles?
- 9) Babydoll, open up your Transporter Pattern Buffer enough to let me into your heart.
- 8) Baby, you just caused a warp-core breach in my pants.
- 7) I need it, girl... I'm in Pon Farr.
- 6) Well, yes, I am a 35 year old virgin.
- 5) Your wish is my Prime Directive.
- 4) I am fully functional.
- 3) Prepare to be boarded.
- 2) If you were my girl, I'd bathe.
- 1) You have the conn... to my soul.

# Change is a Big Suck-Type Thing

I'm comfortable here. I realized that recently when it came time for me to leave campus for the summer and return to Brooklyn. I had to go out, look for a job, leave a lot of my close friends, and put myself into a situation that lacked security.

Maybe that's a part of what I love about this place, about this time. I feel secure. I feel wanted and needed and important and special and at home. I've worked hard to carve out a niche for myself, and it feels good to bury myself in that niche.

We're all hiding here at school. Admit it, you know how scary it is OUT THERE. In here, we know the rules. You may get tired of those rules, or you may not like the circumstances surrounding your being here or you may be anxious to get out, but in here, you know what to do. We're in school and it's all most of us have ever known and we look out at that next step and we think, Oh, Shit.

When it comes time to leave I know I will feel all those emotions I felt at the beginning of the summer; except tenfold. It will be permanent. I'll have to jump off that particular cliff and try to rely on what I've learned in here to help me out there and I know I will be fucking terrified.

I've made friends here at The Press who I know will be at my funeral. I've honestly had the best time of my life and nothing could ever make me forget what has happened here.

So I understand a little bit of what Ted (Executive Editor for the so-called Golden Age Press) is feeling. He's moving to a new place, a scary place, a southern place (it takes a special kind of person to want to move to North Carolina). He's leaving everything I take for granted about right now.

He's packing his bags and he's loading his car and he's saying goodbye and he's closing this part of his life. It's over: *now* is over and he knows as I know as well as everybody else knows, it's never coming back.

I can only imagine what that will be like. I hope I deal with it gracefully and I hope I leave something of myself behind as well as taking a few things with me

(Ted, you only *think* you're taking that recliner). I hope people will miss me because I know I will miss them and I hope I'll leave having made a difference, however slight that difference may be.

Basically, I hope I go out like Ted.

He's guided us into new territory. The Press when he took over and The Press now are two entirely different publications. We've won awards and gotten ourselves in all the right kinds of trouble and told good stories and pissed off and pissed on all the right people. We've had more fun than should be legal (and at times wasn't).

Ted would call us a big ass-kickin' thing. And we are, and we'll become one even more so. So we look forward to what lies ahead with a mixture of excitement, apprehension and ignorance. Excitement because we have some pretty lofty plans for the future, apprehension because a lot of our best people are moving on and leaving us to our own devices, and ignorance because we think we are the shit. I think the ignorance part is important because in order to take over the world, you have to believe it is possible.

I believe it is possible, I believe you *can* change things and I believe you can not only leave a mark, but you can leave a legacy. And when the time comes for me to leave this all behind, I want to be able to say I tried my best and things were a little better for it.

So, yes, we are ushering in change. We're even looking forward to it. That in no way diminishes what has come before, but rather it seeks to take what before has taught us and apply it in new ways, ways that will do justice to those that have come before.

I can only be grateful to you Ted, for putting up with us and for being there and for being my friend. I think I speak for everyone on staff when I say you will be missed, more than maybe you suspect. Stay well, don't let any rednecks fuck with you, don't hesitate to kill Jesse Helms if you should see him, and don't worry about us, we'll be fine, we've had a good teacher. Now fuck off.

## Letters

To the Editor;

Two public-safety officers held a question and answer discussion with the summer '96 Orientation Leaders as part of the OL's training. During this discussion, I asked the two officers to explain the bicycling and skating (both inline and skateboard) policies. The officers explained that recreational skating and bicycling are illegal on campus. According to the two officers the only type of skating and bicycling that are in fact legal are "destination" skating and bicycling. This means that students are only permitted to skate or ride their bicycles to class.

Does public-safety have the right to prohibit bicycling and skating on campus? Stony Brook is a state university that is public property. Skating and bicycling are only two of the recreational activities that were advertised when I considered attending college at Stony Brook. Was I misinformed by the administration at Stony Brook when they mentioned the beautiful campus with miles of bicycle trails?

The officers' argument was that these activities bring crime onto campus. I have been skating on campus for several years and not once have I encountered skaters vandalizing the university. Unless you consider moving the bicycle racks at Javits so skaters can grind (when the skater slides across a surface on the truck or blade of their skates) down them. I will not deny the fact that some skaters use wax on the concrete to make grinding easier. This should be treated as graffiti, again not a crime that all skaters are guilty of.

I am an "aggressive" skater. This type of inline skat-

ing involves grinding and riding down stairs. I acknowledge that these are dangerous activities, however, I use special pads and a helmet every time I skate. I also only skate when no one is around. Skating down the stairs at Staller when classes are in session is both reckless and stupid. If a person on inline skates fell on campus that person, not the school is liable for all injuries both to the skater, or if reckless, anyone else who might be injured.

If the University wants to regulate these activities, public-safety should enforce a helmet and reckless endangerment law. Students who bicycle or skate on campus should be forced to wear helmets. Students who use wax should be charged with vandalism and those who skate in heavily occupied areas should be charged as reckless.

There have been times when I have gone skating at night with my friends when I have been hassled by public-safety officers. One could argue that while I am being chased around by a public-safety officer for skating, someone is being raped, having their room or car burglarized, or selling drugs on campus. I think that public-safety could use their time and energy more efficiently if they went after the real criminals on campus.

Michael T Kramer

**CORRECTION:** In issue 16, we incorrectly attributed responsibility for activity fair discontinuation to The Division of Campus Residences. This is in fact the responsibility of the Orientation Program.

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WE GOT'S MAD SKILLZ

# SKA FOR LIFE

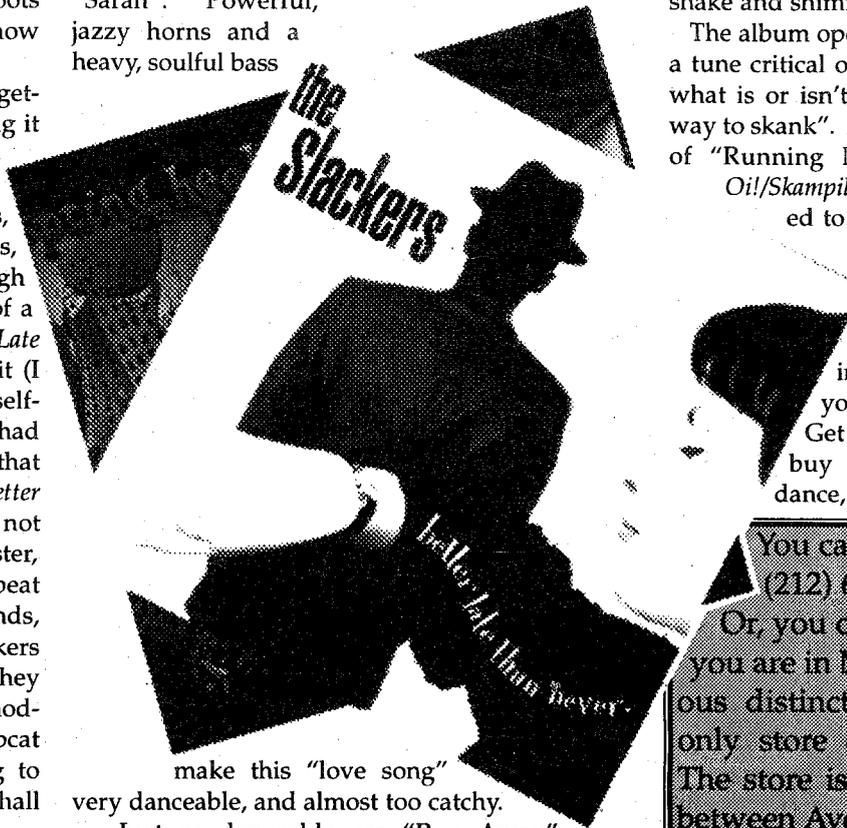
By John Giuffo

Thank God for Moon Records. Ska is currently undergoing another rebirth, spearheaded by ska-flavored hits by bands such as Rancid, No Doubt and The Mighty Mighty Bosstones. More importantly, though, Moon Records has kept ska's roots alive, insuring that anyone who wants to know what ska really is, has the ability to.

I take my solace in knowing that while ska is getting popular, there are still those bands keeping it real by knowing their roots, playing faithful music and still helping the form to grow. One such band is The Slackers. New York natives, and a fixture of the NYC Ska scene for years, they've finally gotten their shit together enough to release an album, a fact that's given a bit of a self-deprecating nod in the cd's title, *Better Late Than Never*. These boys have mellowed a bit (I guess we all do with age); when I bought their self-titled, self-released ep about two years ago, I had gotten familiar with a version of The Slackers that played a much-more up-tempo style of ska. *Better Late Than Never*, however, while different, does not disappoint. Whereas previous songs like "Sister, Sister" and "Ray Gun Sally" pounded out a beat much more related to some of the 2-Tone bands, *Better Late Than Never* shows us that The Slackers not only know where their roots are, but that they can take that knowledge and redefine what modern ska is. Along with other bands such as Hepcat and The Scofflaws, The Slackers are helping to keep alive ska: the real deal, blue beat, dancehall musicianship.

The album opens with a reworking of a Nat Adderly song from 1960 entitled "Work Song", an

instrumental tune which sets the roots-reggae tone for the rest of the disk. Complete with mock vinyl crackles and pops, and a pause halfway through the cd (supposedly to turn the record over), the album shows its intent to pay respect to early 60's ska. The highlight of the album, for me, is the bluesy "Sarah". Powerful, jazzy horns and a heavy, soulful bass



make this "love song" very danceable, and almost too catchy.

Just as danceable are "Run Away", "Pedophilia" and "Treat Me Good", begging the listener to skank, and the uninitiated to learn how.

No less danceable, yet firmly planted in the third-wave tradition (the first and second waves having hit in the 60's and late 70's), is Connecticut band Spring Heeled Jack. Their latest release, *"Static World View"*, is a dangerously infectious collection of bouncy, upbeat songs guaranteed to make you shake and shimmy.

The album opens with a song called "One Way", a tune critical of those who would seek to define what is or isn't ska, declaring, "there's only one way to skank". Also on the disk is a studio version of "Running Man", (featured on last year's *Oi!/Skampilation Vol. 1*) another song dedicated to the skank, that most infectious of dances.

All in all, a very good modern ska disk; less aggressive than the Bosstones, yet still capable of having more widespread appeal than your more traditional skå bands.. Get thee hence to a record store and buy both disks, grab a partner, and dance, motherfucker, dance.

You can contact Moon Records at (212) 673-5538. Or, you can visit the store next time you are in Manhattan (It has the dubious distinction of being the world's only store devoted entirely to ska!). The store is located at 150 E. 2nd St., between Aves A & B. Or, e-mail your order or questions to moonska@pipeline.com

## TRAINSPOTTING

By Jeanne Nolan

With its release in U.S. theaters last week, *Trainspotting* is on its way to a well-deserved 90's cult film standing. It's a graphic portrait of five young guys in Edinburgh, Scotland. Their friendship is bound by the love of football (Gaelic-that is), shagging and Iggy Pop; yet any form of trust between them is overpowered by their individual need to survive.

Renton is the young Scottish heroin addict whose charming manner perfumes his repulsive lifestyle. It's through his narration that the audience enters a stream of surreal images of the enjoyment, addiction and withdrawal of heroin. Renton and his mates create the perfect balance of character. First there's Sick Boy, who thoroughly enjoys his heroin, and supports the motto, "never trust a junkie." Begbie's addiction is not to heroin, but to violence. Tommy is honest and clean, yet his straight edge lifestyle does not prevail. Then, of course, there's Spud--the eternally goofy dope fiend who brings forth laughter in the most grim of situations. You can't help but love this pathetic being. Ewan McGregor, who plays Renton is already huge in Britain and his face is showing up all over U.S. newsstands. However, the hilarious and powerfully natural performances of Jonny Lee Miller (Sick Boy), Kevin McKidd (Tommy), Robert Carlyle (Begbie) and Ewen Bremner (Spud) cannot be ignored. As I



watched these five work together I could see them as young lads tromping across the Scottish countryside and I detest what they grew up to be.

Renton and his mates came from the brilliantly warped mind of Scottish writer Irvine Welsh. He's created a multitude of low-lives in his recently published, *The Marabou Stork Nightmares* and in the short stories of '94's *The Acid House*. *Trainspotting* is Welsh's first novel and was adapted to film by

director and screenwriter John Hodge, who successfully maintained Welsh's hilarious perversity. American audiences may lose some through the thick Scottish brogues, but that's just another excuse to see this movie more than once.

The soundtrack to *Trainspotting* is chock full o' Brit-pop, including Pulp, Blur and Primal Scream. Renton's rantings on everything from dental care

to despondency are thrown at us above the clamor of Iggy Pop's "Lust for Life." The aggressive trance of "Born Slippy" by Underworld swings through as many vibrant rushes and contemplative lulls as *Trainspotting* itself. Also included on this incredible disc are Deborah Harry and Lou Reed.

Along with the praise of this film, there have been claims that *Trainspotting* glorifies heroin and will promote drug use amongst today's youth. Maybe there's a different translation between generations, but *Trainspotting's* crude images of dead babies, splattered feces and AIDS did not exactly make this member of "today's youth" run out and stick a spike into her vein. Beyond all the drug hype there's lessons on life-death-family-friends and lovers. A friend is not always a friend, there's an extent to their love. A parent is always a parent and their love goes further than you'd think. As Begbie learned, in today's silicon age, women are not always women and you wouldn't want to love them as much as you'd thought.

With its bitter reality and inventive cinematography, *Trainspotting* is a refreshing change from the recent crap spewing forth from the mainstream American film industry. It's nice to see honest creativity and talented writing rather than being bombarded with multi-million dollar special effects.

# M O V I E S

## Aliens, Hunchbacks and Miracles

By Chris Cartusciello

### Independence Day

Have you ever had a huge man grab you by the lapels, shake you around violently, throw you to the floor, hold you out a fifth story window and, just when you think you can't take it any more, pull you back in with just enough time to catch your breath before it starts all over again? Probably not, but if you want that sort of rush of adrenaline then *Independence Day* is about as close as you're going to get.

The opening of the film is a masterful setup in that there is none. There is no exposition. No character development. No, "Oh my God, they're coming!" We see everything as it develops and learn the situation as the characters do. This natural progression is a rarity in films today. From the first scene, the moon being overshadowed, to the final retribution the audience is brought into the action and becomes enthralled in the tension on screen.

The plot is quite simple. Aliens have come to Earth in the hopes of extinguishing our species and taking over our planet. They soon find out that advanced technology is no match for human will and perseverance. By this account it's nothing that we haven't seen before. Look at any of the hundreds of alien invasion movies spit out by Hollywood and they all tend to blur together. The difference here is style and heart.

Style is in the form of some of the most impressive visual effects seen in a long while. The total destruction of major cities, such as New York and Los Angeles, is disturbing to watch and the sight of these massive spaceships hovering over the landscape is awe inspiring. These sequences may not be new to anyone familiar with modern day sci-fi but the most mind-boggling part of these scenes is how low-tech they are. Scale models of the cities were built on a vertical plane (because fire travels up) and blown apart with everyday pyrotechnics. Cars and people were matted in later. Flying saucers may have come a long way since the hubcaps of Plan 9 From Outer Space but here they were still built by hand, taking a step back from computer generation. Not that technology didn't have a hand in the look of this film. The outstanding dogfights between the American jets and the alien fighters were all done on the motherboard. Obviously incredible special effects bring people to the theater but it takes more

than that to keep them there.

This is one of those rare summertime action movies that has characters you actually care about. They are real people put in an unreal situation who react just as we hope we all would. From Will Smith's spunky fighter pilot, whose courage is uplifting, to Jeff Goldblum's well meaning computer geek, who gets his chance to save the world, this film is full of likable, believable characters. Even Bill Pullman, as the pure as gold president, makes politicians seem almost human.

The performances from all of the players are winning ones. Smith shows a true star quality that was lacking in his last film, the buddy-cop movie *Bad Boys*. Here he is the glue holding the rest of the puzzle together and he provides the viewers with the single most satisfying part of the film, as he gives one of the unwanted visi-



*Esmerelda and Quasimodo share a moment*

tors a right jab square in the head. The always reliable Goldblum gives us a variation on the character he portrayed in *Jurassic Park*, even borrowing a line straight from that film. He has become one of the most endearing actors working today and bigger things are to come his way. (He is the main character in J.P.'s sequel, *The Lost World*, due out next summer). The two make a great team, throwing quips back and forth in the heat of battle. Pullman is quickly emerging from his, "I know that guy. What was he in?" roles to a true leading man. His young, idealistic president has all the conviction you wish a real one had. His rousing speech to the pilots before they take off to fight

at the end of the film sends chills up your spine and makes you want to go and jump in a plane and take off with them. The rest of the solid cast includes Judd Hirsch, Mary McDonnell and from "Star Trek: The Next Generation", Brent Spiner, as a loony scientist working within Area 51 on one of the downed spacecrafts. (Rumor has it that the filmmakers took the script to the Department of Defense in hopes of getting help making the movie. The D.O.D. loved it and said they would help, only if all references to Area 51 and Roswell were removed. Needless to say, no military help was used in the making of this film.)

Harking back to the science fiction, B-movies of the 1950s, *Independence Day* is an homage to everything those films took seriously. It has corny dialogue and super-patriotic characters with a definite common enemy. Producer Dean Devlin and director Roland Emmerich, the team behind the sci-fi adventurer *Stargate*, borrowed freely from these classics and had fun in the process. They've built a solid action movie that doesn't play down to its audience and gets you on your feet cheering for our heroes to "whip E.T.'s butt."

### The Hunchback Of Notre Dame

If you go into Disney's newest animated spectacular hoping to rid your memory of the awful *Pocahontas* and bring back the joy of their best work, *The Lion King*, you will only be partially satisfied.

While *The Hunchback Of Notre Dame* does erase any remains lingering in the back of your mind of the Indian girl saving John Smith it can't compare with Simba saving his pride. This is not to say that it is inferior to the *Lion King* in any sense. It is just that *Hunchback* is the complete opposite of everything that film was.

If you are looking for a light happy story, don't. Much of their newest effort is dark and brooding. If you want bouncy, radio-friendly songs don't expect them here. The music is sophisticated and flowing, almost operatic. What you do get is the most beautiful animation since *Beauty And The Beast* (the story this most closely follows) and a wonderful story full of funny and caring characters.

*The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is a film that soars higher than the towers on the famed cathedral. The story is about Quasimodo, a deformed orphan child taken in by a cruel master and forced to grow-up within the walls of Notre Dame. Having no contact with any people, he makes friends with the stone gargoyles (two of the names, Victor and Hugo, are an

# M O V I E S

homage to the author). As expected, they provide the comic relief in the story. Longing to venture outside he chooses the one day he won't be chastised for his looks, The Festival of Fools, a Mardi Gras type celebration. Soon he is discovered and is saved from the abuse of the crowd by the beautiful gypsy girl, Esmeralda. Quasi loves her but she "just wants to be friends." The rest of the story has Quasimodo's master, the evil Judge Frolo, trying to rid France of the gypsies and rid his mind of his lust for Esmeralda.

Disney has succeeded where many thought they would fail. They have transformed a deformed character, always thought of as a monster, into a lovable adolescent who just wants to be accepted. There are detractors whenever Disney puts out another animated film and this one is no different. Fans of Victor Hugo's classic tale feel betrayed by some of the changes. They took out many of the religious overtones to try to make it more accessible to a wider and younger audience and adding singing gargoyles is sacrilegious to some who strive for literally integrity. The fact is that this version might get people interested in the original story and could introduce it to a whole new generation.

The voices behind the faces are perfectly chosen, as always. Tom Hulce (Amadeus) gives Quasimodo an innocence needed to care for this character. Demi Moore is the perfect model for Esmeralda. The animators gave their creation Moore's body and movements, even to the point of her dancing around a pole, as in her recent film Striptease. Kevin Kline is his smug self as Esmeralda's love interest Phoebus.

The animation is flawless and many times it was hard to tell if what you were seeing was real or not. The endless landscapes and detailed cities are breathtaking and lets you know that Disney has lost none of its famed style as years have gone by. If anything they have improved along the way.

The songs, by Alan Menken and Stephen Schwartz, flow well with the story and don't seem out of place. They are powerful numbers with meaning behind them and are belted out

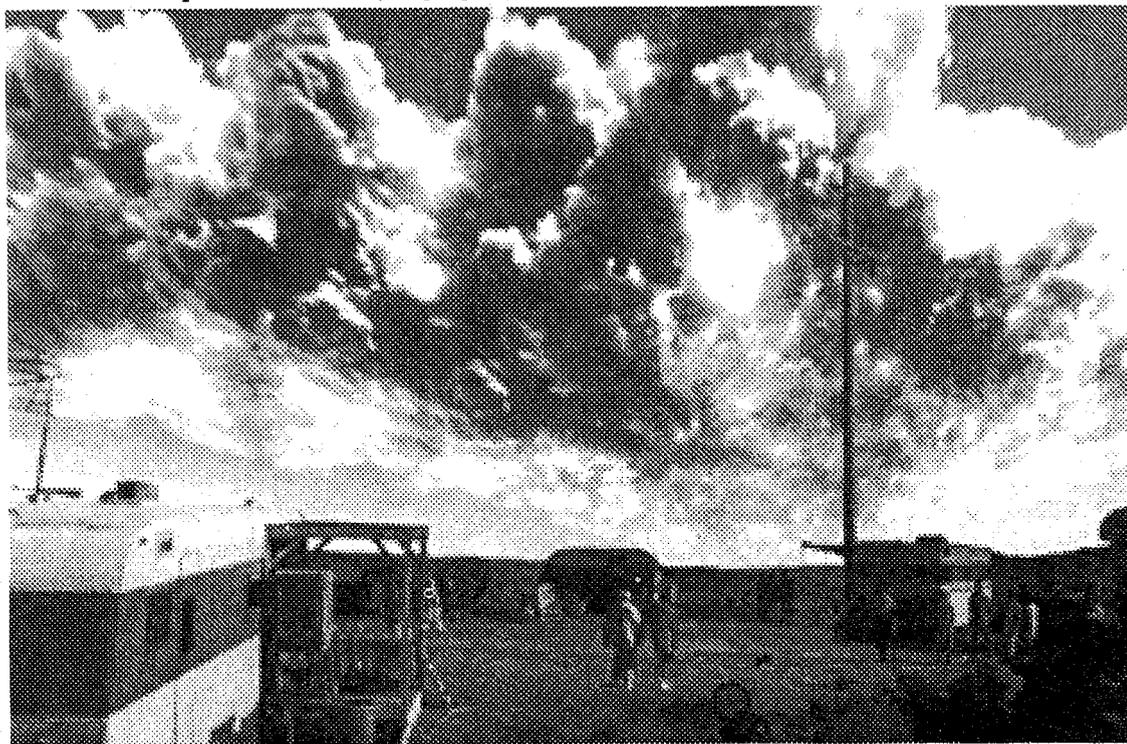
with passion not heard in a musical in ages. The music is the best put out by the studio in years but, sadly, is not going to be Oscar worthy. There is no Elton John or Vanessa Williams to add celebrity to them and you won't be hearing them on the airwaves anytime soon.

Probably the most depressing part of Hunchback is the fact that it will not be as well received as it should. Even though Disney has reduced the number of religious references the film is still full of them. How could it not be when the main action takes place in a church? A couple of the songs discuss praying and God



*John Travolta ponders the mysteries of life*

which may be too heavy for a kids' film. Parents who listen to groups calling the movie disturbing and inappropriate will keep their children away. These are going to be people who don't realize that the film has the most uplifting message for any child to learn. Do not judge people by how they look. It is sad to



*The aliens attack a trailer park in ID4*

think that some will not get this point and will, themselves, judge this movie unfairly, many without seeing it first.

John Travolta's latest excursion into "take me seriously" territory is this tidy little film. It is the story of George Malley, a likable, small town, garage mechanic who, on his 37th birthday, is struck with the power to learn and decipher at an incredible rate. After gaining this power his friends, who he's known for his entire life, become afraid of him and Lace, a girl who never paid any attention to him, suddenly finds herself falling in love with the big lug.

The film handles the story well and in a fairly realistic manner. It is assumed by all that this power was given to him by aliens through a flash of light he observed that fateful night. As he invents new sources of power and fertilizers for his best friend's farm the town becomes more suspicious. Only the town doctor, well played by Robert Duvall, and his best friend (Forest Whitaker) don't give George any grief about his new found knowledge. Even Lace (Kyra Sedgwick) is skeptical until George predicts an earthquake, then she is alternately scared and intrigued. Eventually the FBI gets into it wanting to know how George cracked a secret code. (He was just playing around.)

The film is enjoyable for about 3/4 of its length. Then it seems as if the filmmakers didn't know how to end it. There is a nice turn of events then the film goes downhill and tries to pull at the heartstrings.

Travolta is in fine form as George. He plays both sides, the not so bright and then the inquisitive side, equally well. He comes off as a character more interested in why this is happening than in showing off his recent I.Q. upgrade. Everything he does with his power is to help someone else. This selflessness goes a long way in making this character so likable. Without this, the film would fall flat right from the start.

The most unrealistic part of the film is the reactions by all of George's friends. It is understandable that some people would be wary and scared, but the meanness that comes out is not what you would expect from lifelong friends. Another annoying part of the movie is that at times it seems like an extended music video as our characters drive around in endless pickup trucks (since that is all anybody seems to drive in these small towns) songs from the soundtrack blare. This is a cheap way to extend the length of a film and get as many want-to-be hits heard.

On the whole the movie is a pleasant diversion from the usual summer fare. Travolta has done a good job in solidifying his return to major films.

**Phenomenon**

# MAC & ME

By Lowell Yaeger

I have to admit, I haven't been a big Jesus Lizard fan for very long. A few summers back, on a quest to obtain an album or two whose work would summarize the band's existence, I picked up *Show*, their major-label live debut, and while I was impressed with both the angular musical dissonance and bizarre lyrical content, I didn't pay close enough attention to become an addict until the release of 1996's *Shot*, their first studio album on Capitol Records. Quite possibly one of the best albums of the year, *Shot* is a psychotic slab of noise-punk, a musical blend of wispy abstractions. Imagine watching *Faces of Death* while tripping out on speed and you might get a close approximation as to what the experience is all about, from the croaked phone conversation on "Trephination" to the chant of "well-heeled

and girlish" on the opener, "Thumper." After that, I had to get the rest of the albums, reveling in Duane Denison's bleeding-finger guitar lines, David Wm. Sims' super-fast bass, David Yow's atonal wailing, and Mac McNeilly's skin-smacking mix of rock and punk. As a prelude to seeing them live this month as openers on *Rage Against the Machine's* American tour, I was recently given a chance to interview Mac the drummer, and found him to be



as polite and engaging as the music is hostile and chaotic. He talked to me in a gentle Southern accent about touring, recording, David Yow's testicular behavior, and Lauren Hutton. After exchanging pleasantries, we got down to the nitty gritty.

**Me** I know that Duane Denison and David Yow and David Sims were all part of a similar music scene when The Jesus Lizard was formed. After they put out that EP *Pure*, how did you join?

**Mac** Well I had met them a few years ago, David Yow in particular, at an Austin nightclub that another band I was in at the time, we were playing. We just got to talking, traded phone numbers and said "maybe one day" and then a few years later I get this call from David, they had done that drum machine thing [*Pure*] really as a project, and then they decided they wanted to be a functioning band and play live, they called me up and I tried and it worked (laughs).

**Me** What bands were you in previously?

**Mac** A band called 86, from Atlanta, a band called Phantom 309 — all these numbers (laughs).

**Me** Do you find the drums to be substantially less conventional in The Jesus Lizard than elsewhere?

**Mac** I don't know if I'd say less conventional. There's a lot of basic rock beats. It's really not that complicated, it's just a matter of trying to make it interesting in a certain rock framework. You know, where people can still swing with it even if it's not straight.

**Me** How much of the writing do you contribute to?

**Mac** Pretty much it's all equal as far as when we come to arrangements and our own ideas, give each other suggestions.

**Me** Is the relationship between the band members tense or is it relaxed?

**Mac** First thing we do in the morning is kick each other's ass (laughs). And then we go around sulking and hating each other the rest of the day, so we can't stand each other enough to spit out the bile and then we go and play.

**Me** Are you kidding?

**Mac** I'm totally making a joke.

**Me** Oh, I couldn't tell, because you know, some bands really do that.

**Mac** No, we're really relaxed, and I really can say we don't fight at all, I think we're old enough to where we're doing this for the fun of it and the music. It sounds really simple, but it is.

**Me** What's the current status of the band's relationship with Steve Albini [the former frontman for Big Black and uber-producer for many of the earlier Jesus Lizard releases]?

**Mac** We don't really talk to him much, that's really about where it stands. We don't think about him too much, we just don't have much contact with the man, really.

**Me** What happened, didn't he disown you guys after you did that live album [*Show*, the live album released on a major-label whereas Steve Albini refused to work with anything on a major]?

**Mac** Well, he's got his own opinions about things, which he's entitled to. That's fine, you know?

**Me** How do you feel about him acting that way and then going off and recording the new Bush album?

**Mac** Well, yeah, it seems to be a bit of a contradiction, wouldn't you say (laughs)? But I'm not here to worry about mean stuff, you know?

**Me** Of all the albums you've worked on, which are you the most pleased with?

**Mac** That's hard to say, because there are elements of all of them that I like a lot. From the standpoint of the whole sound or a particular song, I don't know if I could answer you with one of them.

**Me** What's the craziest touring experience you've ever had?

**Mac** Uh, hmm, that's a tough one because there's so many (laughs), I'll get back to you on that one.

**Me** Do you prefer to sleep on the bus or in a hotel, and why?

**Mac** Umm, hotel. If you can work it out that way it's a lot more relaxing.

**Me** What's the worst, most annoying-to-be-with band you've ever toured with?

**Mac** Um, I don't know, we've played with bands for just one night or something like that, that we haven't toured with, that are pretty out there.

**Me** Where did you grow up, what was it like, and what made you want to be a drummer?

**Mac** I grew up in Atlanta, and went to college, and later, eventually moved to Chicago. I play drums because I tried playing guitar and taking lessons and it wasn't coming as fast as I wanted. I didn't want to play scales, I wanted to play songs. Then just listening to the Beatles and stuff like that, and then you get Led Zeppelin...

**Me** What's a typical day on tour with The Jesus Lizard like?

**Mac** Well, it's full of surprises, you never know what's going to happen next. That's a good thing.

**Me** Was touring with Ministry a positive or negative

experience?

**Mac** Positive, I'd say, on the whole, we had a good time. I here weren't any drawbacks to that tour, really, it was very easy for us to get up and play.

**Me** Did you guys get a lot of positive reactions from the audience?

**Mac** I'd say it was positive, yeah, I think that we were a fair match for Ministry as far as an opening band. We didn't ever get booed off stage, you know, it was a pretty warm reception.

**Me** Are you glad that from behind a drum kit you can't see your lead singer twisting his scrotum into

what is known as the "tight and shiny"?

**Mac** (laughs) Yeah, I'd count it as a blessing.

**Me** The first time he did that, what was your reaction? Was there any warning?

**Mac** I don't know, I think I may have seen him do stuff like that before, but not in a live entertainment setting.

Once in a while, I laugh so hard I can't keep playing. I try to not look over that way. Sometimes I'll find myself kind've getting lost in a song, look up, and there he is.

**Me** What can one expect from the set-list, are there songs that almost always get played?

**Mac** Um, yeah, I'd say, well, we're doing some new ones now, also. We usually always play

"Destroy Before Reading," "Bloody Mary," "Dudley." It's hard to say, we've been trying to work in new songs, like "More Beautiful Than Barbie," "Now Then," "Mailman."

**Me** Who is your favorite porno star?

**Mac** (thoughtful grunt) I don't know, I think I'd tend to go for the ones that arc, like, the underdogs, that you don't hear about every day. They're probably working their ass off. They're probably better looking (laughs).

**Me** If you could watch any two women get it on, who would they be?

**Mac** Any two women? Maybe... Lauren Hutton and a clone of herself.



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We shared a few other memories, including the band's attempt to perform emergency surgery on a dying dog in Hattiesburg, Mississippi — and it lived. In the event that this interview made enough of an impression on you to see them live, they'll be playing Roseland 5 times in August, all in support of *Rage Against the Machine*. All of the dates are very sold out, so you'll have to buy tickets from scalpers. Anyway, if you are going, I strongly recommend arriving early enough to catch The Jesus Lizard, they're quite a band.