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MIT Information Systems

In "Saint Patrick's Day" VooDoo

LOOK THERE! Condiments in trouble!



Letters to the Editor — page 5 Kissing up, shouting down, and shameless self-promotion.

The Big Screw Jobs in Life — page 14 Not for the faint of heart, or for reading over lunch, by Jennie López.

1987 — page 9 For everyone who thought the hard part was "getting to the top," by Charles Forsythe.

Commander Coriander and his Trusty Sidekick Cilantro Boy — page 14 Herbal tonics and why spicy food stays with you all day, by Jason Bucy.

Interview with Concussion Ensemble — page 17 More shameless self-promotion. It's out magazine, we can do what we want, by John Dzenitis.



Beyond Maximum Horror, Part III — page 21 This one's almost finished, we promise, by Pete Finkelstein.

The Snap Dragon Chronicles — page 25 by Henry Chiu, just like the Energizer Bunny.



When to Run — page 30 Love in the 90's. Advice from a man who calls himself "Jaemz", James Fleming.

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Courtney Moriarta

FROM THE PUBLISHER



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Kent Lundberg	Jennie López	Adam Dershowitz	
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Hani Sallum

Luke Sullivan

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Next Submission Deadline : April 18, 1994.

LETTERS TO VOO DOO

Dear Editor,

Saw the new issue [Feb '94]. All in all, a fine publication, filled with the sort of tasteful, highquality features that my own literary efforts are proud to be in the company of ...

Jesus! What a lot of demented student brainsnot!

Cordially, G.L. Dryfoos

Anybody got a tissue?

Dear Editor,

If I read the title correctly, VooDoo is the "Journal of Humor". How did the two articles by Jason Bucy ("I Laughed, I Cried, I Projectile Vomited" and "8 Bits for a Night of Pain") ever get past the Editor? They weren't funny or even marginally entertaining. They just sucked. I read VooDoo for entertainment. If I want to hear people bitch and whine about money and lousy entertainment, I can find plenty of that elsewhere.

Matt Knapp

Yes, but we don't charge by the minute.

Dear Phos.

I'm a truck driver with homosexual leanings. My question: Why is Semi-Monthly published biweekly and Bi-Weekly published semimonthly? Alan Blount

Can't help you here, Alan. We publish bimonthly.

Jeepers Kent.

What is "VooDoo"? On the surface, VooDoo appears to be a hilarious compilation of witty and pithy jags on relevant topics. Deeper down, it seems to be a labored attempt to stretch 10 jokes over 50 pages. Deeper still, there is something even more horrible afoot. By reading between the lines and at the edges of the pages, I have realized that VooDoo is actually a grand machination aimed at ruling the world. What follows is my research detailing the chronological activities of VooDoo, MIT "Journal" of "Humour." Seen together, these seemingly unrelated events form a sinister tapestry of doom, or at least bowel trouble.

March 1919: VooDoo is born to mother Phosphorous, or vise versa.

1919 - 1950: VooDoo is a nice quiet magazine. All police records from this era are sealed. Neighbors report that VooDoo, "always kinda keeps to itself, but answers politely when spoken to."

The word "darn" appears April 1951: in VooDoo. In a retraction written by the Editor-in-Chief, the word "rats" is used.

March 1963: The word "fuck" appears in VooDoo for the first time that people born after 1934 can remember.

May 1977: The word "fuck" appears 68 times in one sentence.

September 1979: VooDoo encourages the Freshman to, "study hard, become diverse, and love one another," but in a way that sounds facetious.

October 1988: Voter registration across the country doubles, with most of the new registrants named "V. Phosphorous."

November 1992: Clinton is elected president of the U.S.A. He brings a cat named "Socks" to the White House, but the cat also responds to "Phos." Aides are stymied when their stock of tequila disappears as soon as they replenish it.

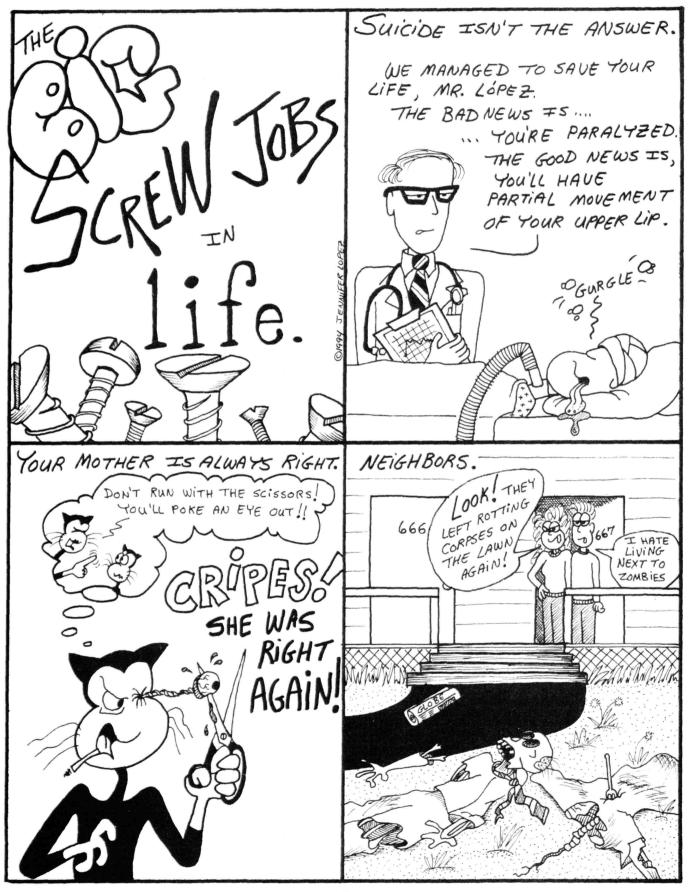
December 1992: Les Aspin, MIT graduate and disloval VooDoo reader, is anointed Secretary of Defense.

February 1993: VooDoo lampoonstm Aspin in several articles.

January 1994: Aspin resigns.

April 1, 1994: VooDoo 75th Anniversary Smoker, starring Concussion Ensemble and other amazing people, is held in the Walker Memorial Building, 9 p.m.

John Dzenitis





- Q: What has 14 arms, 23 heads, 16 strings, and is on a Stampede
- A: Something in the back of my refridgerator.
- Q: Right. What else?
- A: Uh,... ...Concussion Ensemble? Right again! Damn, you're good at this!

the absolute sensory experience of CONCUSSION ENSEMBLE LIVE



You can see the band that all cultures with language are talking about at the

VooDoo 75th Anniversary Party and Smoker (No Smoking) Friday, April 1, 1994 in Morss Hall of the Walker Memorial Building

but wait, there's more ...

VooDoo has assembled an entertainment smörgåsbord the likes of which you've never seen:

- Concussion Ensemble: rock with four percussionists, two guitars, bass, a concience, but no mercy.
- *MIT Jazz Collective*: only one drummer, but showing that you don't need a goatee to dig it.
- Vinovana Performing Group, MIT Folk Dance Club: well, there's not much room left on this line.
- Samuel Jay Keyser, Associate Provost: a special recorded message explaining why I'm not there.
- Will the Jugglin' Dude: odd things thrown high into the air with little attention to audience safety.
- Kent Lundberg, VooDoo Magazine: who we are, what a Smoker is, and why I'm so darn happy.
- MIT Boxing Club: currently under negotiation.

As if that wasn't enough, we're still taking applications for other performers. If you have something that you've been wanting to do in public, and it's arguably legal, contact us at voodoo@mit.edu or 253-4575.

With special thanks to the Peter de Florez Fund for Humor at MIT.

1987

by Charles Forsythe

It was near the end of my Senior year — early May, I suppose — and I stumbled out of the darkness into the East Campus courtyard clutching the final copy of my Thesis. I was ready to kill, or party, preferably both.

Augmenting the dull orange of sodium vapor lights was a small campfire, built in the sand volleyball court. Around it sat the usual late-night crowd, stoned on something and talking about how Jimmy Hendrix would have transformed the world into a musical paradise if only he hadn't choked to death on his own vomit. As usual, Paul and Rick dominated this topic. Rick made sense in his passion for Hendrix, parading around campus with matted, long hair, scruffy beard and an endless supply of Greatful Dead concert T-Shirts. Paul, however, had never quite gone that far into the hippy fashion and had now retreated completely in preperation for his upcoming post-graduation job designing guided missle systems. The spectacle of someone who looked like the head of the Young Republicans pontificating about the mind-expanding qualities of Hendrix's guitar solos was endlessly amusing. Desmond and Craig, who sat on the other side of the fire, seemed dumbfounded, and sat there glassyeved and motionless.

Desmond was a hairy man. Big and hairy. He really looked like he should be straddling a Harley rather than perched pensively around a campfire at America's pre-eminent year-round camp for nerds, but contrast was his specialty. He attempted to keep his face clean-shaven and his valiant efforts ended at a line on his neck where his shaving ceased and his abundant body hair began. Rather than wearing motorcycle boots, as I usually did, he prefered to be barefoot and his massive feet protruded from his jeans, pink and furry like props from "In Search of Big Foot." On closer inspection, one might realize that Desmond was not a wayward motorcycle gang member, but rather, a giant mutant hobbit.

If Desmond was a hobbit, then Craig had to be an elf. He was lean and sharp-featured like the classic elf. Furthermore, he had a habit of tossing out smart-ass remarks in his English accent, just as you'd expect from the elf character in the Grade B swords and sorcery epic.

Craig and his gargantuan companion snapped out of their haze as I approached, clutching my thesis in its folder.

"Have a seat; join the bloody fun," called Craig. Desmond, who saved his words for when he got drunk, whereupon they'd come gushing out in garralous torrents, merely nodded. Paul and Rick continued unabated, "Hendrix could see music on a blank sheet of paper," explained Paul, "You wouldn't see anything, but the music was there. Actually there." There wasn't any point in acknowledging me, Paul. He knew that my guitar heros only knew three chords — or four, in the case of Marky Ramone — and that they sang, or rather screamed, songs about what jerks overintellectual hypocrites like Paul were. I really just wanted to grab him and say, "What? Are you some kind of dumshit?"

"I finished my thesis," I dropped into the sand next to Craig and Desmond.

"This calls for a celebration," chirped Craig.

"Like what?"

"Why don't you read your thesis to everyone in the dorm," Craig swept his hand around to indicate the entire, quiet, dorm.

I shook my head in a slow, deliberate way. "It's three in the morning and I remember what they did to Goldfarb freshman year when *he* tried that." It hadn't been pretty. I shuddered. Maybe it was getting cold. "Anyway," I continued, "it hasn't been signed yet or anything. I've got one copy for my advisor, one copy for the department and a spare copy for my files."

"How about the circular file," Paul had caught a rare opportunity to get a dig in at me.

"You mean the *cylindrical* file?" One of Craig's less inspired smart-ass remarks.

"I was thinking more along the lines of the spherical file, Paul, in fact, the hyper-spherical file." I responded. "Why not the hemi-spherical file?"

Paul was really not good at snappy comebacks and usually resorted to "Blow it out your ass," after more than two or three attempts at wit. He pondered a retort. "Yeah, hemi-sperical." said Desmond in a voice that suggested he'd just remembered something important.

When Desmond spoke, it was not so much the fact that he bothered to utter words without the aid of a pitcher or two of beer, but that he was so incredibly *serious* in the midst of yet another blithering oneupsmanship session. We all paused and he spoke again, "You should tape your thesis to the Great Dome." The mutant hobbit had issued a quest.

. . .

In my sleep-deprived daze, I essentially floated down the infinite corridor, accompanied by the looming, furry Desmond and Craig the elf. Soon I was waiting for the elevators just outside lobby 10. One descended and I lurched towards it automatically. Desmond grabbed me. "Not that one!" He stepped inside, pushed a button and stepped out. The empty elevator dutifully returned from whence it came and we resumed waiting. I knew that Desmond was sometimes oddly obsessive, but I failed to see why any elevator that could go both up and down failed to satify our needs. The other set of doors opened and Desmond motioned us in.

The logic of Desmond's choice became clear. I had never noticed before, but only one of the elevators had buttons all the way to the eight floor. As Barker Library only went to the seventh floor, it stood to reason that eight was the land beyond: the Great Dome.

Abruptly, Desmond began a frantic search of his pockets. It was as if he had suddenly remembered that he had left a scorpion in his jacket and now wondered what it was up to. Since I was exhausted and anxious to proceed, I pressed "8." The elevator, like all good objects at rest, continued to remain at rest. Desmond, like all good objects in motion continued to stay in motion. I mumbled irritably, "It's broken." I wanted to sleep.

"This will fix it," Desmond produced a speaker magnet which had been hiding behind his wallet. What it was doing there, besides erasing his ATM card? I had no idea. He placed it against the wall of the elevator and began pressing the "8" button repeatedly while moving the magnet in a slow spiral. Suddenly, the elevator sprang to action. I understood.

"A magnetic reed switch enables the eighth floor." Desmond nodded. Craig, one of MIT's only political science undergraduates at the time, had no idea what had happened or what I had said to Desmond, yet he grinned and said, "Cool," anyway.

The elevator arrived on the eighth floor, which turned out to be remarkably similar to the basement: bare concrete and cinder block decorated with occaisional outcroppings of giant duct-work. The only thing distinguishing this floor from the one at the other end of the elevator shaft was a set of windows leading to what appeared to be a walled-in walkway encircling the base of the dome. Above us, in the duct-filled gloom, the ceiling sloped gently inward in all directions; we were right under the Dome.

Most of the windows were covered by permanently-welded gratings, except one on which the grating was fastened by two heavy-duty padlocks. "Does anyone have lockpicks or can I go to bed now?" Desmond grunted, somehow managing to convey great annoyance with an utterance that lasted only a few hundred milliseconds - tops. I knew I was being rude; after all, this was supposed to be my great moment and I was supposed to be gushing with excitement, but instead I was gushing with... well, with whatever is gushing through you when you're really, really tired. I was excited, but now I knew how to get on top of the Dome, so the process had been reduced to a problem already solved. I figured if that was sufficient to declare completion in Mathematics, the purest of sciences, it was good enough for me. "Shit! I don't have enough equations in my thesis."

Luckily, I was not asked to explain my outburst, as Craig decided to get involved. With the cinematic flair only the British can summon in real life, Craig announced, "I have a paper clip!" and he held the shiny office supply aloft, arching his back slightly as he did so. "That only works in the movies," I began my Introduction to Lockpicking Speech, "For real locks, you need a torque bar and a rake..." "Perfect!" barked Desmond, snatching the paper clip from Craig and marching confidently towards the intimidating metal barrier. My voice trailed off and I slumped into a posture of exhausted resignation.

I knew damn well you couldn't pick a lock with a paper clip and I was pretty sure Desmond did too. Then again, in the Hollywood context invoked by Craig, Desmond had continued the scene flawlessly. I glanced at my thesis to see if it had turned into a script; I don't think I was in this scene. The cameras kept rolling.

In a re-enactment of the annoying, technically-

incorrect lockpicking scene from a hundred cheesy movies, Desmond unfolded the paperclip, inserted it into the keyhole and began frantically jiggling it about the belly of the lock. And just as in the annoying, technically-incorrect lockpicking scene from a hundred cheesy movies, the lock sprang open, obdiently, in a matter of seconds. This is the point in the movie where my will to suspend disbelief gives out. Desmond repeated the proceedure on the second lock and it became clear that indignant disbelief was not an option. The locks were open. Two miracles. One more and he'd qualify for sainthood.

Desmond smiled, well aware of what I was thinking. "These locks only have one pin. You can pick them with anything." I started to speak. Desmond, efficient as ever, didn't wait for my obvious question. "It was the Lone Hacker, he disassembled the locks." I started to speak. Desmond: "You pack them in sand and bake them until they're really hot. At that point, the metal has expanded to the point where you can knock out these two structural pins and the lock comes apart. Then, when you're done messing with it, you reheat it and knock the pins back in." These revelations left me in awed silence.

I contemplated the concept of disassembling mechanical devices at several hundred degrees Fahrenheit while we emerged onto the walkway. After a partial circumference, we encountered an aluminum ladder. "Last part," Desmond grinned demonically, "You first."

As I departed the top of the ladder, I was glad we hadn't turned back. The Dome was larger than I'd imagined; it was not nearly as steep as the Little Dome and I walked upright from the base to the top. When Craig and Desmond arrived, I removed my rolled-up thesis from where it was tucked in the back of my pants. "We forgot tape."

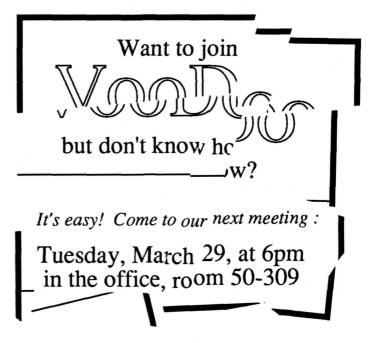
"Never mind," Craig had a better idea. He took the papers from me and began tearing them into confetti, intermittently throwing handfulls of it into the breeze. The peices fluttered away and down to the ground nine stories below. They looked like moths crash-landing in Killian court. When the last appendix was on its fragmented way, we decided it was time to go. Desmond led.

. . .

"The ladder's gone." It wasn't like Desmond to waste precious words on mere humor. Unfortunely, Craig and I were not witnessing the emergence of Desmond's less-furry inner child; the ladder really was gone – carried away by the same wind that bore my shredded thesis.

Instant panic and paranoia set in. What if it wasn't the wind? What if it was the work of some surly physical plant worker who was now, as we waited, summoning the Campus Police? Even if it was just the wind, the Eastern sky was starting to turn the color of the lights that lit the campus below. Dawn was breaking and we had about fifteen minutes before we became embarassingly visible.

Desmond began to remove his pants.



The sight of the hairy gargantuan dropping his trousers instantly inspired visions of horrifying scenarios I care not to recall. What if *Desmond* had deliberately knocked down the ladder? He was the last up and the first down... "What are you doing?" Craig asked calmly.

"I'm going to use my pants as a rope and climb down," was the equally calm reply.

"It won't work," I insisted, "Your pants will split at the seam." If we were spotted walking down the inifinite corridor with Desmond in his underwear, we were certain to be arrested for something or other. Still, it was our only hope, and as I had been wrong about everything else that night, I expected Desmond to ignore me. "You're right," replied Desmond, resolutely re-zipping his jeans. "I can't jump in bare feet," he added, voicing Idiotic Plan B.

"I'm going to jump," Craig spoke up. My eyes

widened. "Just down to the trench you idiot."

"Right," I smiled weakly. My time of talking my friends out of stupid heroics was past. Better them than me. "It's about five meters, though."

"More like four. I'll hang off the ledge," He removed a pair of glasses from his back pocket and handed them to me, "Hold these." After being relieved of his breakable cargo, he crouched down on the rim and slowly slid his legs over the drop. Soon he was hanging by his arms, only his fingertips visible to Desmond and me.

He couldn't have hung there for more than a few seconds, but in that time, I managed to invent an entirely new set of physical laws. Somewhere in my vigorously educated brain, I knew that when Desmond let go, he would begin to move in the direction of the net forces he was experiencing - in other words, he would fall straight down. In a more immediately accessable part of my brain, I was convinced that there was a heretofore undiscovered force that acted on pale, skinny Europeans falling next to walls. This force, in the space of, perhaps, three meters would propel him at least two meters away from the wall - just enough for him to miss both the trench and the retaining wall and plummet into the inky depths of Courtyard 13. I waited for the ensuing shriek and sickening thud. Time stopped. Death died. Luckly, Craig didn't.

Craig impacted on the gravel walkway below with a reassuring crunch. "Ow." Broken ankles? "Skinned my palm... there goes my sex life."

"Very funny, just hand up the ladder," I just wanted to go. Birds began to sing in the trees far below us.

"I can't really see it without my glasses..." Great. Just great.

"Oops, almost tripped over it." Craig began to struggle with the ladder. The ladder swung up. The ladder dropped suddenly. Craig groaned. The ladder swayed back towards us. It didn't make it. Craig dropped the ladder noisily on the gravel. He was out of breath, "Just... a second. This is... a bit... a bit of a bugger I'm afraid." Great. Just fucking great.

The ladder resumed its spacial meandering. It's course was no steadier than before. I felt we were doomed to watch Craig laboriously wave the ladder about like a giant, unwieldy magic wand until he collapsed from exhaustion. It was at the greatest moment of my despair that Desmond completed his third genuine miracle in a 24 hour period.

He darted forward, beyond the edge of Dome, beyond the limits of personal saftey and beyond the limits of the Physics in which I had recently renewed my faith. A sprawling, simian arm scooped through the air and then the entire mass of Desmond reversed itself and recoiled onto the Dome. Desmond sat motionless for a moment, holding the ladder suspended at arm's length. With great care, he eased it down until it was leaning securely against the wall.

As I began to climb down the ladder, I finally found my opportunity to contribute constructively to the ordeal. I noticed a tattered piece of rope hanging off the end of the ladder and I pointed out that, "Next time, we should tie this little piece of rope to an air vent or something." "Good idea," Desmond nodded. "Yeah!" Craig looked up from his bleeding palm which had held his complete attention for quite a while.

My after-the-fact innovation had worked the last bug out of an otherwise elegant method of reaching the top of the Great Dome and although no one said anything for the remainder of the trip back to East Campus, I could tell that it bestowed a sense of accomplishment on the group and lifted our spirits.

. . .

When Craig, Desmond and I stumbled into the courtyard, the day was definitely beginning. "Neurotics build castles in the sky and psychotics live in them." Rick was putting the finishing touches on a sand castle he and Paul had built in place of the campfire. "And Zen Masters..." Paul was lying in the grass as the edge of the volleyball court staring up at the firey morning clouds, "Zen Masters *are* castles." I'd had enough already.

"Paul, you're so full of shit that if they gave you an enema you'd fit in a shoebox." Paul shot back the usual: "Suck my dick!"

"Don't say that too loud," I let loose my entire aresenal of snideness for this one, "they might not give you a security clearance at the bomb factory." In his brightest rhetorical move to date, Paul changed the subject. "Where've you been anyway?"

"We went to the Great Dome," I replied with calculated disinterest.

"Yes, it was quite an adventure," Craig stepped forward and made sure to gesture noticeably with his bloody hand. "While we were up there, the ladder fell down."

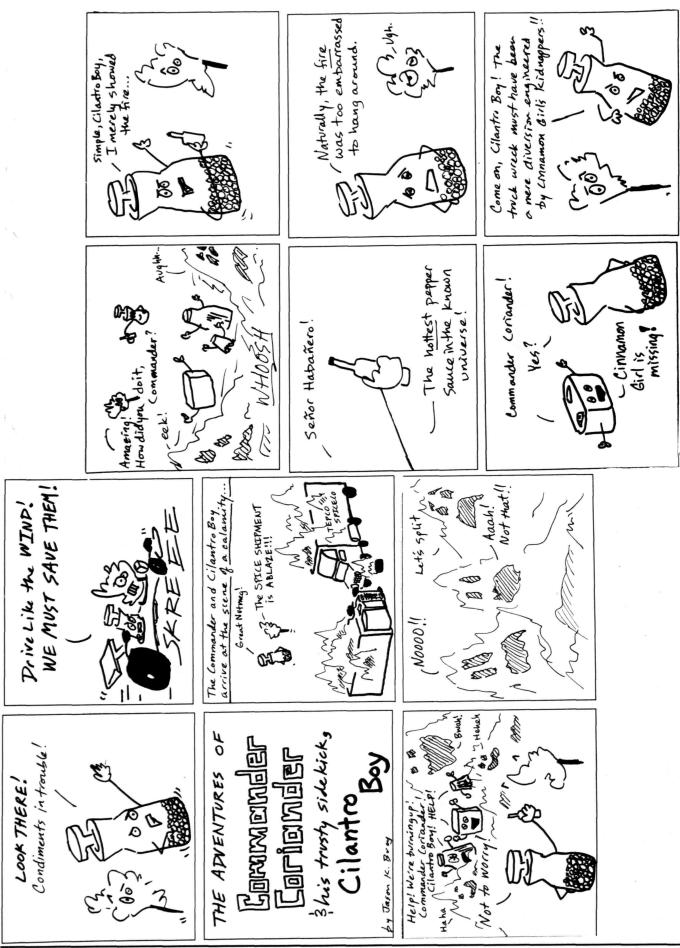
Paul propped himself up on his elbows and looked at us with a puzzled expression, "What happened to the little rope you tie to the air vent?"

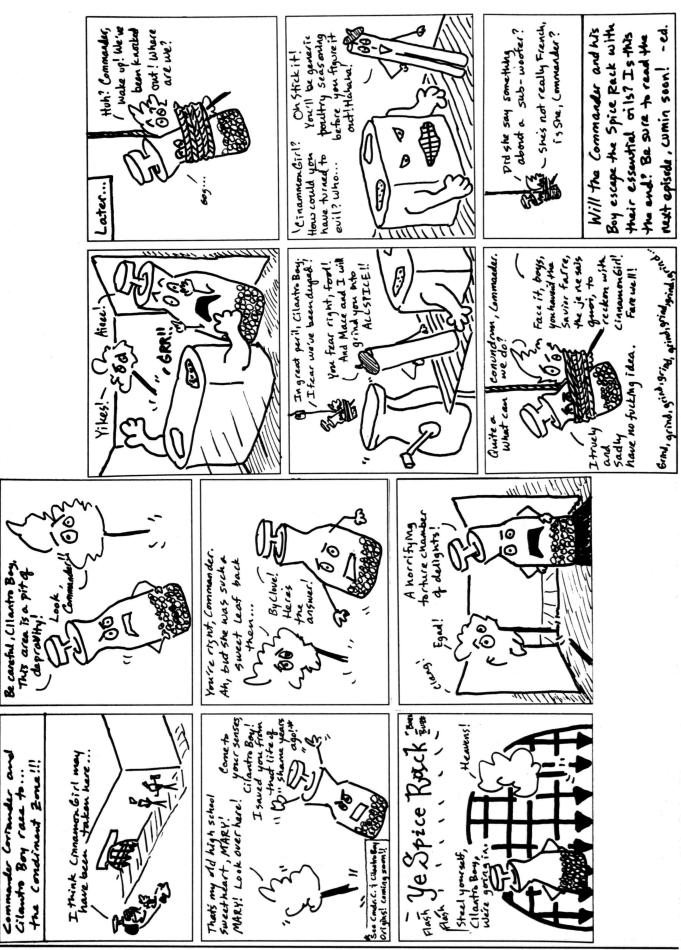
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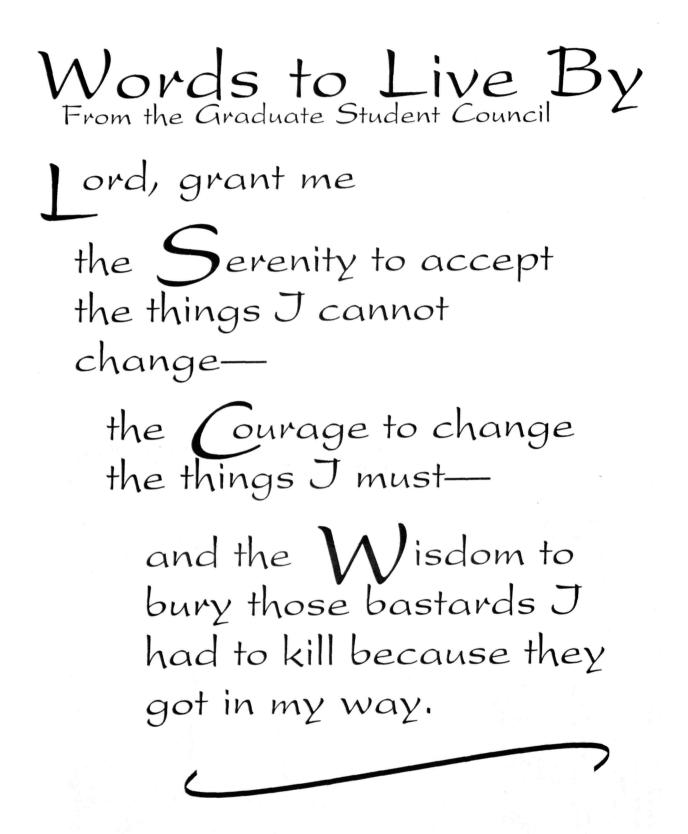
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1	1	REPOST: Deb's Tails 2: Up On the Roof
1	1	A Story: "Tease"
1	1	Re: A first time
1	1	Re: Adventure of Lisa 11-15
2	2	story: A Little Study Break
3	з	test
4	4	How come there are so many faggits on this group
1	1	Story: Sonya Harken on Ice (brutal?)
6	6	Re: story, mom help out
17	17	Lesbians
1	1	Sharing Lovers
2	2	Re: Pigs!!!!
2	2	No subject
1	1	Invitation Part 5

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Interview with Concussion Ensemble

by John Dzenitis

I decided that instead of trying to think up something funny for this issue (have you noticed that I've been doing that?), I would do an interview with VooDoo's favorite band. They're not our favorite just because they have a song called "Voodoo". They're our favorite because our social reputation, along with most of our budget, is in their hands. This is the first time we've had either. (Reputation and budget, that is.) Come see them at VooDoo's 75th Anniversary Smoker (No Smoking) on April 1st, or I'll tell them where you live.

Rich Gilbert is 1/7 of a band that is 4/7 drummers and percussionist: Concussion Ensemble. Though in the minority as a guitarist, he is on good enough terms with the rest to serve as a band spokesman occasionally. Most of this transcription bears a reasonable resemblance to what was actually spoken, but don't quote either of us on that...

JDz: I'm required by the bylaws of our magazine to inform you that this device strapped to my forehead is recording our conversation. Do you have any questions? [confuses the interviewing arrangement and interviewee]

RG: Not that I can think of. Can we get a copy of VooDoo at some point?

JDz: Definitely. There are about 23,000 back issues in our office that we can't unload. We've started flushing them down the staff toilet, but it keeps clogging up. [lies. we use the public toilet.]

OK. To start off, could you describe the band lineup for our listeners at home?

RG: Well, we've got three standing drummers in the front of the stage and one standing percussionist with a rack in back. In between them are two guitarists and a bass player. [demonstrates, somehow, with the fingers of one hand]

We definitely spotlight the drums, and it's the calling card of our band. On the other hand, we don't have them in their standard role. Their motions are different and their playing is different because they're standing at the sets.

The percussionist has some drums, but he prefers to be called a percussionist. He's got traditional pieces like an African drum called a Djimbe, and he's also made things like storage containers into drums. What normally catches everybody's eye is a hanging rack with essentially a bunch of different pieces of metal. There's a big spring, miscellaneous pipes like you'd find laying around in the trash, a parking sign, stuff like that. Each piece has it's own pitch and timbre. He's a firm believer, as we all are, that music can come from anything if it's played in a musical way.

APPROVE

PHOS

JDz: What about the Concussion Ensemble sound itself? [presses generic question that every musician hates]

RG: That's hard to describe in a few words, because we're really trying to create something new and drawing on individual creative inputs. It's rock oriented because that's the background that we all have and we enjoy playing it. The music is all instrumental and obviously has a strong rhythmic base, but it's not a 50-minute drum solo. We go to great lengths to craft songs with real structure, melodies, textures, and dynamics.

It's difficult to get the right point across to people without them seeing us play. Very curious and adventuresome people are intrigued immediately, people who tend to be conservative are a little scared...

JDz: It's probably the armadillos in your trousers.

RG: ...or at least wary, because they think that it's going to be tedious. When they actually hear us play, the most common reaction is surprise at how musical it all is.

JDz: I saw you guys headline downstairs at the Middle East. It surprised me that there was so much going on, but that it was still very tight and clear. [Another thing that surprised me was how expensive it was. Note: you will never get a chance to see Concussion Ensemble for a lower price than at the VooDoo 75th Anniversary and Smoker. *Paid Advertisement*.]

RG: It's not like a group with four people just stampeding all over each other. Each part is written to fit together, and everyone is listening to what everyone else is doing. We've definitely spent a lot of time working on that. JDz: Having a plethora of drummers in your band, you should be uniquely qualified to answer this question: Why do guitarists and singers say, "Peace" all the time, but drummers never do. [ruins interview momentum, gets mercedes tattoo by mistake.]

RG: I don't know, man. That "peace" thing kills me; I don't get it. I'm into peace too. "Peace." Because there's no war here right now, I guess. Most of it's a rehash fashion thing; some kind of romantic nostalgia for a time that never was. The regurgitation of the 60's that's going on now is so unlike what it really was, but all waves of nostalgia are like that. They capitalize on certain symbolic qualities of an era. It's like they get the clothes, but they don't get the meat.

JDz: Or in this case grain, or bean curd, or whatever.

RG: It's true, man. They don't get the grain.

JDz: So do you think that drummers are less friendly? [flogs issue]

RG: The drummers in my band? They're totally friendly. They're incredibly friendly because they're spotlighted.

JDz: They're finally satisfied? [flogs dead issue, harder.]

RG: They're finally satisfied, and they're finally recognized. We recognize that drums are a musical instrument, and drummers are musicians - creative musicians with good ideas. They're so many bands where it's like they're not even considered a musician.

JDz: That's the famous "three musicians and a drummer" type of band. [increases level of inanity]

RG: It's astounding what people can convince themselves of. [has mercy]

JDz: What do you do as far as covers and writing your own music? I thought I heard a Rush song at the Middle East that night. [searches through beer-sodden fog]

RG: No, no. No Rush covers, man. We only cover a couple of songs. "Mission Impossible Theme" is one. That's a natural. Occasionally we pull out the classic drummer song "Wipeout". [laughs]

JDz: That used to be required playing for all drummers. [can only think of the name "venturis", which he knows is wrong. cries.]

RG: Exactly. There's a song that when we come to the break everyone plays the drum fills, and it sounds so powerful to have something like that played by four drummers simultaneously. All the other songs are band compositions. Some were written by an individual and brought in. Sometimes they're written by the band together; when we're jamming, something develops out of that, and we follow it. That's great because you end up with a composition that is much more than the product of any one mind.

JDz: Speaking of much more, can you name two things different about Katarina Witt at this year's Olympics? [breaks momentum, again]

RG: One thing different is that I didn't watch them. [dodges bullet]

JDz: Concussion Ensemble was nominated as one of five local Cutting Edge Acts in the Boston Phoenix Music Poll. On the other hand, Nirvana was listed as a national Cutting Edge Act. How do you guys feel about that? [baits]

RG: Well, the categorizations are frequently silly and often misguided. Also, depending on your opinion, some of the nominations seem pretty suspect.

JDz: But not yours. [apparently tries to piss off interviewee]

RG: Well, it might be - not in my mind, but maybe it is to another person. [merciful, again]

JDz: I'm just kidding. One of the reasons we wanted to get you guys is that you do seem to be about to "break", and I think that's what those polls reflect.

RG: It's nice to be nominated, but even winning wouldn't really change what we're doing. Winning a poll is often more a function of name factor than musical quality. On the other hand, it's nice to be recognized for what you're doing and who you are.

JDz: How is your music industry acceptance? [ties shoes]

RG: It's funny, but the people who work in the entertainment and music industry, at least in this country, frequently seem to be intimidated by something that they can't quite put their finger on. I don't know why. [muses]

JDz: Maybe they're screwed by the nature of their jobs. On one hand, they need something that is proven to be popular so they can be sure to make money. On the other hand, it needs to be different enough to be unique so they make more money than the other guys. That's why so much is incremental progress, slightly different sounds, slightly different lineups. It seems like you guys have skipped a few steps and made a major change. [lies down to rest]

RG: I think that's definitely true. One of the things we're starting to feel out is Europe, because

it seems that they may be more open in some ways than the U.S. industry.

JDz: Along those lines, you have no singer, which probably freaks some commercial people a little bit.

RG: Oh yeah. Not a little bit. A lot. There are people who think that every rock band needs vocals.

JDz: I may be somewhat skewed, but it seems that the vocals are the worst part of a lot of rock bands. The vocalist is either the person who is least shy or can't play an instrument. If you had to pick a singer for just one show, or two shows, who would you pick? [baits shamelessly]

RG: We have done some work with singers. We've thought about doing a project where we bring in guest vocals for different songs. I couldn't really pick out just one as a favorite.

JDz: How about Frank Sinatra? [baits without a morsel of remorse]

RG: Frank Sinatra would be amazing, but I'm not sure that he's in his best years right now. If you could put us together with Frank Sinatra from the late 50's... Better yet, with Frank Sinatra and an orchestra conducted by Nelson Riddle, that would be an amazing combination. The singer from the Butthole Surfers would be great too. Any singer that has a powerful or distinct sound could work with this band.

We've recorded three songs with Barrence Whitfield from Barrence Whitfield and the Savages. He's a great R&B singer - a really soulful guy. That's already been very exciting because it's made the band play differently to accommodate the vocalist.

JDz: Where do you think you stand in terms of national attention? [ties shoes, again; moves to D.C., reinvents government, moves back.]

RG: We're getting a buzz. We're catching on in various parts of the country and the world. It's like we're starting little fires in different areas...

JDz: Michael Jackson did that too...

RG: ...and we're starting to get airplay here and there. It's like they're playing us in Washington, then some place in Utah starts playing us a lot, then Texas, Minneapolis, and like that. We're getting some trickles of national press, which I hope will be building. In a couple of weeks we're going down to Austin, Texas for the South-By-Southwest musical conference. We're going to work our way back and do two weeks of touring between there and here.

JDz: What Concussion Ensemble recordings are available to the public? [orders another nectar of the gods. finds a hair in it is it a god's hair?]

RG: There's the CD "Stampede" and a 45. We've got some other recorded material, but we're not sure how we're going to put it out yet. We may either do an EP, or do some more songs and put out another album in six months time or so.

JDz: Is the CD the sort of thing that you can get at a local store, or do you have to send away to Germany for it?

RG: Everybody's got it: Newbury, Tower, you know. We also have them at the shows.

JDz: Are you'worth every penny of [giant sum of money for a student publication]?

RG: Definitely. Without a doubt. Sometimes people don't realize how much is involved with seven musicians, a lot of equipment, sound people, roadies, and all the time that is behind the actual playing time.

JDz: Do you have shows that stand out in your mind as really terrible or really great? [fumbles for the final time. takes out cyanide capsule hidden in lapel.]

RG: Fortunately, there haven't been any really low points. No major catastrophes. As far one best show, I don't know. We've all got a lot of experience, and everyone plays consistently at a very high caliber. I think the band is pretty incredible. Every second or third show, in the middle of it, I think, "This is really tremendous." I'm really excited to be involved with all of this. [breaks into song]

Editor: ...and VooDoo is rabidly excited to have Concussion Ensemble as our featured musical guest at the 75th Anniversary Party and Smoker (No Smoking), April 1, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. in the Walker Memorial Building. Be there, or be hunted down at home and expertly ridiculed. Want to improve **Student Government**? Sick and tired of **not** seeing anything done? Tired of the political **mumbo-jumbo**?

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Beyond Maximum Horror, part III

by Pete Finkelstein

Well, that pretty much put Baby Vetterlein His killing power multiplied over the top. exponentially, which doesn't seem to add up until you consider that He eventually granted His disciples the authority to recruit new Initiates. Killing everywhere, frantic, panicky-eyed, zealous killing! Everyone was dying now; not just the homeless and the stupid, but the elite power brokers sitting in their Mazda Miata's with cellular telephones clutched in their pudgy, filet mignon-fattened hands. The rich and the beautiful joined their humble, sluggish, do-nothing brethren in returning to the soil from which their frames had been fashioned. Baby Vetterlein just would not let up. The West Coast fell, then the Midwest. Offshoots of the Babe's campaign of terror sprouted and bore repugnant fruit throughout the Americas and Europia. You might pick up the newspaper one day and read the startling headline, "People Dying at Prodigious Rates in Country X", say, or perhaps "Everyone Not Alive in Location Y". These are just typical examples.

And back at the White House Oval Office, all was not jollity and happy-go-lucky good-old-boy joshing. The situation wasn't looking particularly promising. Civilization was staggering around, trying to get its legs under it before it toppled over into the abyss. And President Ferd DiMarcino knew this. He could read the handwriting on the wall. All the signs were there. And so one day, in another one of those tense who's-gonna-break-thesilence-first scenes, he clutched at a final straw.

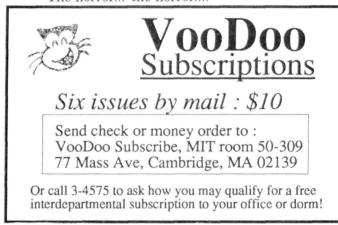
"I didn't want to do this, but... it might be time to call in Colonel Jonathan Steele and the Enforcement Squad."

Jonathan Steele was what you might call a loose cannon... but it would be prudent to avoid doing so to his face. The Top Brass had recruited Steele straight out of the Digsford County Behavioral Reformatory for Young Gentlemen in Digsford, Colorado. At the age of 15 he had strangled his dog, stolen his old man's Busch-Winston 9000 emitter-collector pulse rifle (firing standard case-mounted, recoilless, predictor-corrector, retractable tip, armor-piercing shells), and gone on what you might call a shooting spree. Twenty-three crippled or dead victims later, and wiser to the tune of a slap on the wrist from a kindly old judge who couldn't bear to see a child's future slip headfirst down the water slide, Steele was precisely the man-fodder the military needed to jump-start its hyper-soldier training program. His progress through the Rank and File had been stellar: Top of his class Horrible Dismemberment and Mutilation in School, distinguished service in the Mercilessly Relentless Training Brigade, first-rate marksman, practically unlimited ability in the tactics of Assured Unilateral Destruction... you name the area of expertise, Steele had more or less walked all over it and taken it to a new level. But somewhere along the line, things had begun to go sour. His methods became ... unsound. He began to break away from the fold. He shaved his head and studied poetry. He read aloud from Eliots's "The Hollow Men" and Frazer's "The Golden Bough". He burst into tears at inopportune and socially embarrassing moments, weeping inconsolably at the unspeakable horror of simply being alive. And finally, just as the Big Boys who call all the shots had decided that, no, Steele probably wasn't four-star general material after all and that it might be prudent to terminate his command, his career, and (while we're at it) his life, Steele had simply vanished... taking several of his most devoted followers with him.

And the Enforcement Squad was born.

Steele had gone deep underground, beyond all traditional means of communication or approach, and was now almost as much legend as he was substance. The last official communique the Holy Alliance Army had received from the renegade was a tape recorded short wave radio transmission of Steele's insane (?), profound (?), bewilderingly pompous and disjointed (?) musings: "I dreamt of a slug crawling along the edge of a straight-razor. The slithering, mucilaginous flow of the creature's repulsive body across the glittering metallic edge" [static, breakup of the transmission] "...amusing sombrero. Well, who could have guessed it? The pile of little inoculated arms, hacked off and mouldering in the sunlight... the buzzing of myriad flies.... I wanted to cry, I wanted to tear my teeth out, I didn't know what I wanted to do. The multitudes of the dying, the endless misery, the untold horror...."

Tape hiss, more static. And a croaked whisper filled to overflowing with infinite dread and sorrow, "The horror... the horror...."



Now that you have this token explanation of Col. Steele's background in hand (just barely enough detail to make the ensuing scenes comprehensible, if not enjoyable), let us return to the Oval Office. President DiMarcino picked up a convenient telephone sitting on his desk and dialed information.

"Yes, could you please give me the series of numbers required to dial the telephone and communicate with Col. Jonathan Steele and the Enforcement Squad? I would prefer to have the numbers in the proper sequence so I need not try all possible permutations thereof. Thank you, I'll hold."

After getting the number, he called Col. Steele, who came to the White House directly. Ferd DiMarcino extended the hand of friendship.

"John, great to see you. Where's the Squad?"

"Oh, they... they had a little trouble getting a cab, I'll wager. Do you mind if I have a refreshing draught of seltzer water? Thanks awfully." Steele sat, crossed one fully pants-covered leg over the other, and eyed the assembled cabinet and bigwigs warmly. "I'm guessing you've called me about the Baby Vetterlein mess. No luck thwarting his grandiose purge of all Humanity, I suppose?"

"Let's cut through the civilized veneer, Steele," President Ferdinand DiMarcino spat cruelly. "Can you do Him or can't you?"

Steele sprang from his seat, grabbed the Pres-

ident by the throat and rammed him up against the wall. He poised a thumb over DiMarcino's eye and replied,

"Look, let's get something straight. This Kid is tough. He's a regular one-baby slaughterhouse. Dispatching Him isn't gonna be easy. You don't seem to understand the totality of the risks involved. I'd prefer a slightly more temperate discussion of the difficulties attendant upon this monumental mission you're so hot to send me on. Is that acceptable to all the assembly? And the people said..."

"Amen," came the throaty, reverent reply from the fat cats and power brokers, the movers and shakers.

"Good." He caressed the bulging eyeball underneath DiMarcino's quivering lid, then allowed the pink, mewling shell of a man to slump in abject submission before his gonad-laden virility. "Look, I'll take out your trash for you. I'll do your dirty work. I'll clean up the little messes that are so inconvenient for you to parade before the public's scrutiny. But I'm going to need total, unquestioning support from this Administration. That means you must be willing to commit yourselves unreservedly to a policy of no-holds-barred terror. We've got to work on the Kid's level. From a practical standpoint, I will of course demand carte blanche and full legal immunity for myself and for the men of the Enforcement Squad, who will represent an integral part of this operation. As far as equipment is concerned, here's what I'll require to dispatch Baby Vetterlein: One (1) family-sized station wagon. One (1) U-Haul trailer. Three hundred and fifty (350) gallons of pasteurized cow's milk. Two (2) 8-foot sections of aluminum unistrut or roof rain-gutter material."

He paused, his jaw setting in a rigid line of gritty determination.

"I'll need the address of Mommie Profundis. "And one (1) atom bomb."

. . .

I wish I could have wrapped the story up in the last section, because this really has gone on long enough. Any "oomph" this tale had petered out somewhere between the first and second of Mommie Profundis' press conferences. Well, look, that number-in-parentheses humor/comedy thing didn't work. And you don't have to be Newgate Callendar at the New York Times Book Review to tell that the ripoff of Col. Kurtz from "Apocalypse Now" has been (to this point, and don't hold your breath for the future) an awkward, artless hodge-podge. But you know how an author will fall in love with his characters and his plot. Mr. Author Boy just has to keep writing to show everybody how he can use those Big Words and be really creative and imaginative and everything. Well, I'm sorry Kid Hemingway, but the junior high school Gifted Class writing projects were due last week.

Ooooh, breaking the Fourth Wall and winking at the reader in self-deprecating humor.

Stuck-up, prissy little momma's-boy writers who think their fecal logs stack up neatly one atop the other and smell like a mixture of rose petals and lilac water.

Ooooh, writing.

Col. Jonathan Steele sped across the Nevada desert, the tires of his '67 Ford Impala station wagon lapping up the miles on Commonwealth Highway 535. Behind the station wagon a U-Haul trailer bucked and bounced across potholes and washboard irregularities, Atom Bomb #7456H-K (mounted in an Atom Bomb Convenience Carrier support carriage) riding within. Steele was on his way to meet a certain painted lady of dark soul and questionable character, whose identity will become all too apparent to you as this gripping story unfolds (like it's that big a secret to begin with). The Colonel's steel-belted fingers gripped the steering wheel with icy, gritty determination; his icy, gritty eyes scanned the unfolding road before him, missing nothing, capturing and instantly assimilating details you and I would have either whiffed on completely or misinterpreted so badly that we might as well have kept our eyes The station wagon's AM radio blared shut. defiantly against the night's oppressive silence: Puffy Hollander and the Enforcement Squad were playing a rousing version of "Kill the Fatted Calf" to the tune of the Young Gods' "L'Amourir". Col. Steele found himself tapping his toes in time with the bouncy, vibrant music. He began to whistle cheerfully, his eyes dancing with impish merriment. But with an abrupt and violent shake of his head, he rammed a meaty fist into the radio; the old Delco shattered and died with a crackling, hissing belch of electrical sparks and pops.

How dangerous to lose sight of your mission, he thought.

Grimacing, he steeped himself afresh in the sheer horror of Man's little problem.

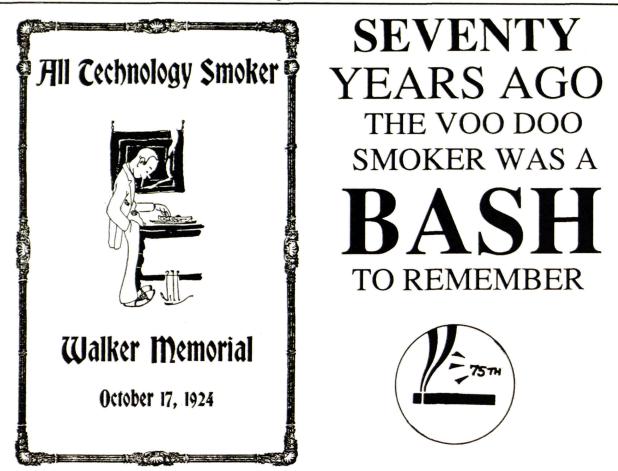
At length he pulled up outside a cabin sitting alone on a windswept mesa. Pulling himself from the station wagon with a grunt, he walked cautiously up to the cabin's gracefully textured hardwood door, pressed his ear to the richly-detailed Baroque panel, and listened carefully. Hearing nothing, he tried the doorknob. The burnished brass rotated slowly in his hand, the gentle pressure of metal on flesh delighting his senses and granting him covert access to the dimly lit gloom within. A lone figure stood in the cabin's spartan living room, which was humbly furnished with a card table, several folding chairs, and a simple cot layered with golden straw. Col. Steele withdrew a Browning pistol from his shoulder holster and quietly approached the manifestly feminine silhouette.

Mommy Profundis turned her head and speared him with a burning glance, a gesture which was, unfortunately, lost to Steele's vision because the room's sole lamp stood behind her; rather than illuminating her features, the light merely spawned a protective retinue of shadows which clung to the woman's body. The Dark Mother was standing on a common bathroom scale, her feet deliciously comfy and toasty warm in a pair of fuzzy pink slippers. Two metal handles depended from the ceiling, allowing her to support a fraction of her weight with her arms rather than placing it all on the scale. In this manner she could trick the scale into reading whatever weight tickled her fancy. Col. Jonathan Steele covered the remaining distance between them with feral agility, then placed the pistol's barrel against the pallid, cool skin of the Dame of Doom's forehead. Mommie Profundis scanned Jonathan Steele's eyes and sought the essence of the man's outlawed. turbulent heart. Her gleaner's search uncovering, not the juicy, heavily spiced meat of strength and courage, but only the soggy breakfast cereal of the mercenary's ambiguous loyalties, she rapidly lost interest in the situation. And really, who wouldn't turn first to the Mother of the Annihilator for a reliable character evaluation?

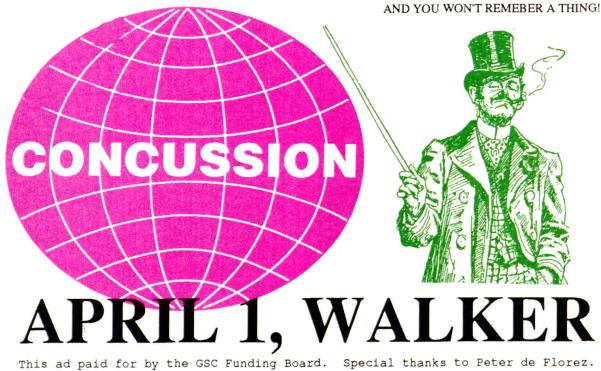
The scale read a deceptive 105 pounds, and Mommie Profundis rejoiced.

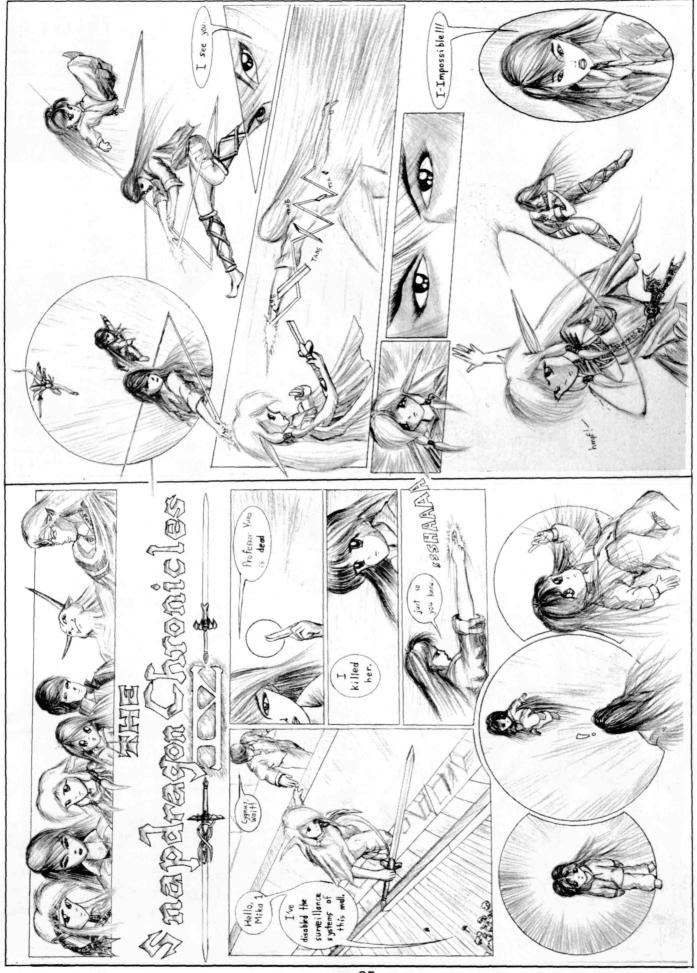
"Goodnight, Mommie," Steele said, and pulled the trigger.

...to be continued



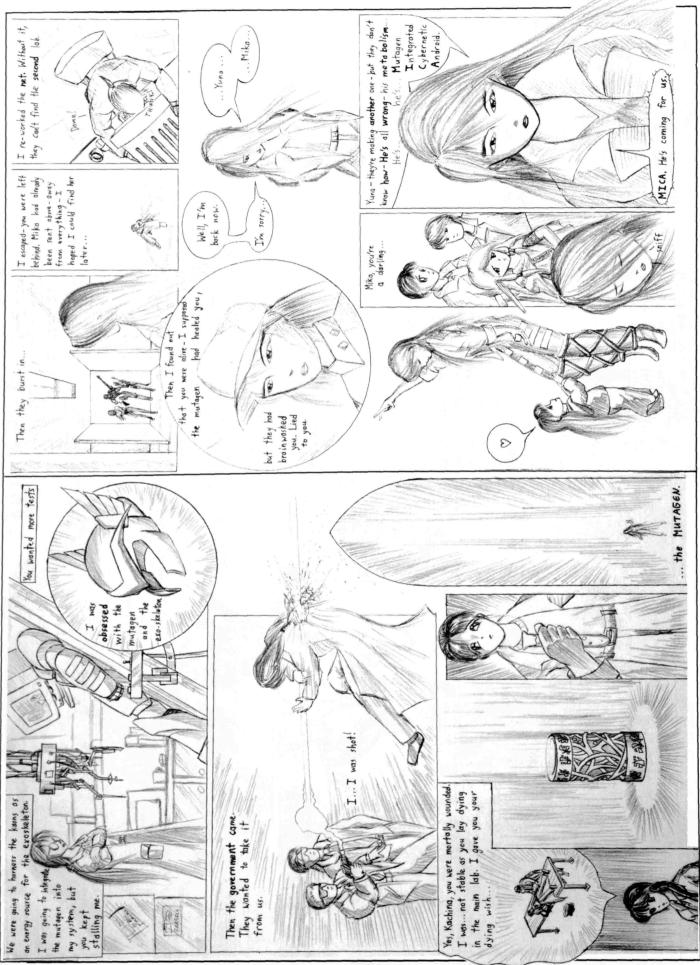
THIS YEAR IS GOING TO BE A SMASH













When To Run

by James Fleming

I thought I'd take a break from David and his crazy drugged out "One Night" adventures for a bit and embark upon a matter just as close to my heart, that is, dating. While not strictly a guide, I would like to convey a few general rules of thumb about when to date, when not to date, and when it is simply necessary to run.

I'm not entirely sure whether I'm qualified or not to write this. In high school, being a nervous, insecure, self hating egomaniac, I never had any dates at all. The root of my insecurity was my stutter, a speech impediment that I've had since childhood. It embarrassed me so much that I was too shy to approach anyone, and my self esteem was so low that I rejected out of hand any girl foolish or bold enough to make any romantic overtures.

Compounded with the speech impediment was the all too familiar "nerd" stereotype that almost all of us labored under in high school. High School girls wanted the captain of the football team, and the basketball team, not the math or debate team. There were some girls who liked me, but they were sort of nerdy, you know?

At MIT, however, I was awakened into a whole new world, as I imagine almost all of you were. Suddenly, everyone, really, everyone (even the athletic people) were your peers! Yes your peers! You could talk to them! Like humans! You could talk about math, and philosophy, and physics, and other "smart" things and both be engrossed by it! No longer being the only one in the school who could do an integral, you suddenly found that here, omigod, here, you were normal. And, furthermore, the nerdy women, suddenly didn't seem so unappealing. Instead, they became your friends, and if you were fortunate enough to be in a coed dorm, you understood what it was like to LIVE with these creatures with two X chromosomes, you learned that they were PEOPLE like yourself, full of problems, not strange beings beyond mortal comprehension. This, at any rate was my experience.

Back to dating.

Freed at last from the stigma of being smart, and unwilling to let my stutter get in the way of *amore*, I found that I was suddenly dating. I've had about eight or nine serious girlfriends over the years at M.I.T., and several more flings, and though that sounds high to some and low to others, I think it's actually about the right number to have seen a broad spectrum of human interactive behavior.

Okay!

Never date women who don't like men. I've done it. Swear to god. You're sitting there together, just finishing a fine dinner, and suddenly she'll start telling you about how awful men are. Damnedest thing. Then when you're not properly sympathetic she gets all mad at you. I suppose you should be flattered. Confiding in you she clearly doesn't consider you *really male*. Don't do it.



Eating together is very important. Meal-taking is a fundamental sacrament of human comfort. It's a ritual, a bonding experience. You go out to eat with your friends. It's fun. Not coincidentally, it's one of the few ways, distressingly few ways, to politely, legally, and publicly stimulate your brain's pleasure center. Make sure, really make sure that you and your prospective loved one like the same kinds of food. Make sure you can sit down, and have a meal together. There's all that "love conquers all" bullshit, but don't believe it. If you and your girl cannot sit down in the same restaurant and eat, you are doomed. Trust me.

Mothers. The instant, and I say the instant, you hear her say: "My mom and I are best friends! We tell each other everything!" Run! Now! Run! Don't wait to hear the next sentence! Don't kid yourself! Just go! It won't work! From there it's a short trip to "My mom called last night, she asked if we had sex. She said condoms aren't safe enough and we should use some other stuff too." Is mom a nurse? No! Of course not! Just nosy! Unless you want "mom" regulating your sex life forever and giving you that disappointed look when you go visit her house, RUN!

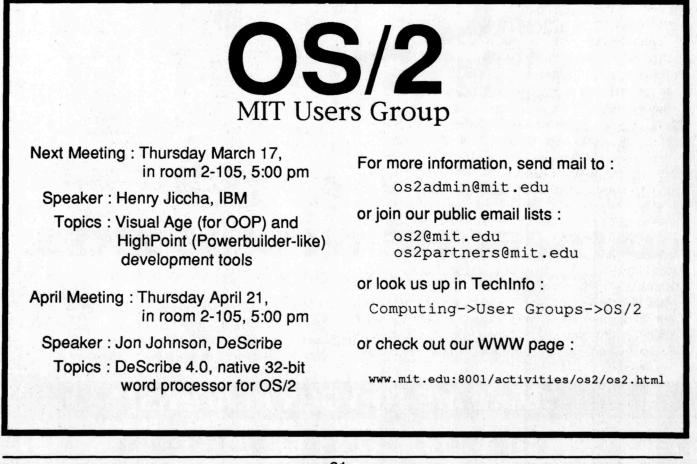
Don't date sisters, and I don't just mean not at the same time. Oh maybe you can do it. Maybe if one of them lives in Antarctica, or is estranged from the rest of the family. Or maybe if you and the other sister live 60,000 feet under the sea in a top secret government lab. Otherwise, you are playing with forces you don't understand. My two cousins dated the same girl once. They were brothers, still living at home, together. The girl dated one brother, then the other. If you ever want to see a house of strained smiles, furtive glances, and sudden outbursts, that would be the place. Just walk away.

Never travel with someone you don't really know. This is a bonus tip, because it doesn't just apply to girlfriends. If you don't know them before the trip, you will by the end. Oh yes, jedi, you will.

Beware of dating people within your major. You can get away with it, but its better if there's a big age difference (I don't mean date your T.A.) The potential for competition and/or envy is quite great. If you don't break up, you will merge into one sublime academic being, and be mocked by your friends.

Date people your friends have dated! You know where they've been! Date your friends' friends so much that you no longer have a simple circle of friends, but instead have a psycho-sexual network of them. Breed only inside this tribe. I can't explain why, just do it. You'll see.

By the way, my name is James, and I'm six feet tall, dark haired, and my phone number is, uh, oh, never mind.



ALIENS GRAB MIT PRESS, SLASH PRICES ON HUNDREDS OF TITLES!

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. - Little green aliens said to be no more than four feet tall have temporarily gained control of the MIT Press, and through the use of hypnosis have turned the Press staff into robot slaves. Ufologists speculate that the motive for the alien takeover is an urgent need



Alien spacecraft, shown here, melds cosmically with MIT dome, allowing invaders to come and go virtually unnoticed. allowing invaders to come and go virtually unnoticed. allowing invaders to come and go virtually unnoticed. this planet. Officials fear that the aliens have telepathically compelled the zombie staff to liquidate the shelves. The immediate result:

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Here is a small data sample of what's on line:

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