





MINUTIAE

SAFETY//9.10

DEPARTMENT OF SALUTATIONS	1
AGENCY OF CÖRRESPONDENCES + COMMUNIQUEÉS	2
SECOND THOUGHT	3
LADY CRUMBS	4
TOUR REPORT	5
LIFE AT FIRE STATION 20	6
SPECTRUM	7
GUIDANCE AND ADVICE	8
THE MANY USES OF SAFETY PINS THROUGHOUT THE YEARS	9
LITERATI	10
HI-FI & HEADPHONES	10
SAFE CRACKING WITH THE SILVER SERPENT	13
DETOUR ON THE ROAD TO BROADWAY	14

MINUTIAE #4

Editor-in-Chief: Danny Cohen

Copy Editor: Eric Frey

Contributors: Lucas Adams, Kyle Bosman, Camille E. Knox, Eric Frey and Danny Cohen

Comics: Kyle Bosman

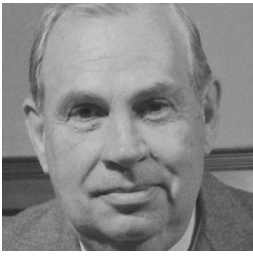
Drawings: Kyle Bosman and Camille E. Knox

Graphics: Danny Cohen

Visit us online at enjoyminutiae.com

Cover by Lucas Adams at cheeseburgersinthesky.com and therumpus.net

DEPARTMENT OF SALUTATIONS



Hi there. My name is Arthur Windsor III and I am the Senior Public Relations Advisor at Knoxbeecher, a leading technology company in Fairfax, VA. You

may have heard our name, but cannot recall work. Maybe this'll help: In 1957, we revolutionized the lightbulb with fluorescent technology. In 1992, our microwave satellites were being used by SETI to help listen for life out in space. And in 2008, Knoxbeecher was proud to have the largest fleet of unmanned drones flying in the Middle East for the United States Army, dropping an average of one bomb per minute to protect the US and her interests.

Recently, we acquired Minutiæ Publishing in a federal auction after the previous holders had to liquidate their assets. We were happy to acquire Minutiæ Publishing's vast blank paper holdings to help in our white paper publishing; It is really cheap paper. Still, we're excited that this month Minutiæ is focusing on **Safety**, one of our highest priorities, as we continue to develop an array of defense weaponry for the Department of Defense.

Our next project is "Project White Cloud," a SCUD Missile with a heart of gold. It knows better than we do. That being said, we understand the inherent danger in creating a weapon with an artificial intelligence that is capable of calculating targets by itself. That's why we have a plucky 14 year-old boy on staff at all times in case WarGames happens. Only the mind of a plucky 14 year-old boy is capable of coming up with a solution that neither our own PhD scientists, nor the highly qualified members of the U.S. Military could ever fathom. This teenager is replaced in each summer

of every year with another 14 year-old boy to ensure that he will be able to undermine our entire security set-up, defeat the hyper intelligent sentient missile, and then resign to a life with his tomboy love interest (also recruited on a seasonal basis).

The young couple will have a few good years together before he goes off to college while she stays in town to work at the junk yard with her aging father who is quickly going blind. Things will be rough until they are reunited once again when a future errant mistake of ours, most likely the upcoming "Project Whisperthought," is intent on destroying all of mankind. He, with the renewed support of his love interest, will defeat "Project Whisperthought" and decide to move back home where they will marry and settle down. Years later, Knoxbeecher's planned "Project Eternal Dionysus," will threaten the world once more. This time, along with their own plucky 14 year-old son, they will once and for all put an end to our destructive nature.

Needless to say, Knoxbeecher has thought of everything, and we're very excited for the future of protecting both you and this great country of ours (Ed. note, please don't read preceding sentence if you are not a US Citizen). ♦

Minutiæ uses invented names, except in cases when public figures are being satirized. Any other use of real names is accidental and coincidental. The contents of this magazine are © Copyright 2010 by the publisher, and may not be reprinted or retransmitted in whole or in part without the expressed written consent of the publisher.

AGENCY OF CÖRRESPONDENCES + COMMUNIQUEÉS

Gentlemen, the first issue of Minutiæ UK was highly appreciated, and yet it contains a few inaccuracies We are no longer at war with Ireland, the home of the Atlantic slave trade, or have a ban on red autos. Despite these finer points, I appreciate being able to pay for the magazine in sterling.

Guy Drebarby
Chimney Sweep
Cheltenham, Great Britain

Gentlemen, I recently received my free bag from the "Sign up a Friend, Grab a Bag!" Minutiæ promotion. However, despite being vacuum sealed in plastic, there were 4 baggies of cocaine in the bag. Would it be possible for someone to come down to the police station to pay my bail?

Cody Klein
TCBY Manager
Bethesda, Maryland

Gentlemen, in the time that it will take you to read this letter, I have escaped from the custody of your beloved FBI and have fled the country with not only the coveted Swan Diamond, but also the love and admiration of your wives. Do not fear, they will be well taken care of. That is, until I leave them one morning on the beach of a sugar plantation in the Dominican Republic. I may be the greatest thief in history, but I cannot take the memories you have had of me. Cherish them, for they are the greatest of value to you.

The Silver Serpent
Master Thief
Location Unknown

Gentlemen, I love your magazine.

Johnny "Fart" Fartelli
Credentialed Auto Mechanic and Pizza Enthusiast
New Jersey, New Jersey



"I just had to stay there another week."

SECOND THOUGHT

Might I have your attention for just a moment, citizens, but not for too long. For as your eyes read these words, the porous borders of our glorious nation are being infiltrated by the transnational sociocommunicational illegals that threaten not only our way of life, but also our very ways of living.

I am as open minded as the next Minuteman, but can we really afford to hand over the keys to our national safety to a sombrero? Nay, not for this True Citizen. There are folk in this country, the Hiders, who are ready to snatch the keys and take us right off track. These are the very same Hiders who are holding back their true identities while stealing our jobs. Over 40,000 alone are able to make the wind change its tune, but this fiddler is marching to the beat of the patriot's drum.

There are people, coming across our borders, climbing our fences, bringing along with them a dirty bomb-like aspiration to encapsulate us all in a pre-Colonial state, lacking worship. I, for one, cannot help but think about Adams or Jefferson when looking at Eisenhower's magnificent Interstate Highway System that allows us to see the purple mountains, in all their majesty, but not his majesty, for we have no king. I pray our non-regal legislature will find the wisdom to secure our spinach, eggs and lead-free non-Chinese milk.

To sew up our loose ends, there is only one solution, though which legislature is not ready to accept: our national leader, Chairman Obama, must redirect the horse of Congress to the new carrot of protecting our borders. Instead of more frou frou windfarms, we need to invest in newer barbed wire technologies. Poison-tipped and electrically charged auto-taser barbed wire to help keep our borders safe. Yet, the wire must rest on something: The Interstate Perimeter Wall.

The IPW, as we call it, would stretch from California, through Texas, around the Florida Panhandle, up the East Coast to Maine, around towards Ohio, up through Michigan, over to Washington State, and back down California. A 70-foot triply-reinforced electromagnetic steel wall is the only solution. Couple that with properly enhanced barbed wire, and we have an impenetrable shell to stop all the Hiders right in their tracks. All of this would only cost a margin of what the Kenyan People's Navy's Health Care "Reform" Titanic sinks along at.

Yet, there are those Hiders that may be able to get past the IPW through various methods of Jew trickery. These Lurkers still stalk our Great Plains. We must identify those who play their entire life in masquerade. For this, the Viper probe droid from *The Empire Strikes Back* would do us well. Not only would these droids be able to handle the variety of climates our great land has to offer, but they would easily report back to the DHS and, if necessary, blast "free-don't-ers" straight back their Guadalajara, pesos and all.

I agree that this nation should be a melting pot for one and all. Yet, just like any great dining hall, there is a maximum capacity. Once we get some of the other ones out who haven't left since the Cold War (and finally being able to get that smell out), then can we let in these new ones. Until that time comes, applicants should make a line to the right and wait their turn. Ellis Island will be ready with newly improved RFID-chip neck implants. In fact, I'll be waiting there with my ionized rubber stamp, ready to welcome you into your new home, with a copy of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, an 8 x 10 of your new American-born President, and, of course, your **SECOND THOUGHT**. ♦

THE MODERN CITIZEN

LADY CRUMBS

Every girl knows her worst enemy is the cookie jar. The velvet noose of femaledom. The Achilles heel of being a lady. Always there to embrace you with warmth and sugar when you have no man to hold you.

Daytime television personality Christianne Van Demme shares her guide to surviving the constancy of the eternal cookie jar. Listen to her, ladies. She's been there before.

First and foremost, always pay for your groceries in cash- and never bring enough cash to get anything but the basics. When you inevitably sacrifice a few apples for a bag of cookies, remember to buy only tasteless low-cal lemon cookies. Even you won't want to eat these!

Of course, when you do break into these lemon-flavored bits of cardboard, try to eat only two a day- and make them last as long as possible!

When you end up eating the entirety of the citrus bricks during a late night sob-fest watching Bridget Jones... DON'T WORRY! Just go out, get drunk, and hit on the nerdiest man you can find at your corner bar. This will make you feel better – and he'll feel better, too! Nerds are glad for any female to go out with them. Even a girl whose hips are fat with cookies. After bringing the nerd home, make this weakling your boyfriend. Do it for your future.

You should then congratulate yourself on getting a boyfriend by buying really fancy French biscuit cookies. Put them in the cookie jar. Screw the cap on tight.

When your new boyfriend is too weak to open the jar, feel free to dump him in a sugar-jonesing rage. Your angry adrenaline will fuel you enough to open and eat the entire jar.

Drunk on sugar and not thinking straight, you stumble to the store and buy some Chips Ahoy!

Chunky. Go ahead and eat these as you shuffle down the street. Then fall into the good ole bar around the corner.

Drown your sorrows in a wine that pairs well with cookies; when things get hairy and you start dipping Chips Ahoy! in your Chardonnay, you may notice a pair of sympathetic hazel eyes watching you from across the pub. They're a girl's eyes and, trust us, that is just fine. We all have lesbian affairs from time to time – embrace it!

Bond with each other over late night snickerdoodle baking parties. Eat Italian wedding cookies in bed. Savor Oreos on cold, rainy nights by the fire. But remember: like the best Oreos, unfortunately, the affair will get stale.

You'll realize that cookies are the only thing you have in common. And the relationship will just slowly... disappear.

You'll fall into despair, down a spiral of self-destruction when you realize your lesbian girlfriend was the only man you ever loved. Eventually, your friends- finding you crying and covered in crumbs on your kitchen floor – encourage you to go out again for a girls' night on the town!

You go along, unwittingly, your clubbing pants far too tight now from months of shameless eating. But, chin up! – boys love curves. And then a hot guy stares at you from across the dance floor. Encouraged by the newfound newness of heterosexuality, your confidence surges – hit on that hot tall guy at the end of the bar!

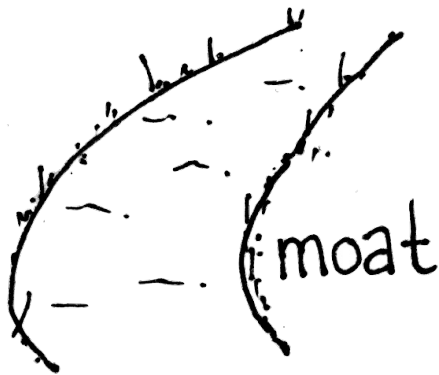
Bring him home with you! Before you sleep with him though, put the cookies you bought before your friends' latest intervention in the cookie jar and have the boy hide the jar on the top-most shelf in your apartment. Then, ever so quickly,

break it off with him before he can buy you a step-ladder.

Depressed that you broke up with the only guy who ever truly cared for you, take two Ambien to help you sleep. In the middle of the night, you will sleepwalk to the kitchen, scale the counter, climb on top of the refrigerator and, almost dying in the process, retrieve the cookie jar.

You will awake in a pool of crumbs on your kitchen floor. Again. Wiping the chocolate chips from your eyes, you take a long, soul-searching look in the mirror.

Heavier than you want to be and controlled by the feminine hormonal need for sugar, accept who you are. You are a woman. And you love cookies. It's okay! I've done it myself and I still love you. ♦



TOUR REPORT

During a recent trip to New Jersey on his "Be My Girl" tour, 15 year-old teen heartthrob, and Warner Bros. Records property, John Franco appeared as if he was going to be swallowed by the crowd of screaming tween girls.

He had just finished the encore as he was being ushered backstage. It was almost ten o'clock and Franco had to be getting back to his tour bus. This was by contractual order of Warner Bros. Records, the boy's legal guardian.

The story goes that Franco had been left in a 7-11 in Van Nuys, California when he was only weeks born. The security tape shows a person of unknown gender wearing a No Fear baja-style hood putting the infant down to add condiments to three All Beef Big Bites, pay, and leave. Without any birth certificate or any other supporting documentation, he was named after the two 7-11 workers on duty, and placed in an orphanage somewhere.

Four years ago, record producer Buzzy Silverbaum, amidst gambling woes, decided to host a singing competition for the nation's orphans called "Unwanted Voices." Along with Franco, four other young boys were picked from the youth dumping grounds and the pre-teen pop group Rasc@lz was created. While they enjoyed moderate success, the real gem was Franco, done up with a black shiner around his right eye. *Teen Beat* wrote of him that, "Despite his rough exterior, we're sure once we get one on one with Johnny, his sweet voice will make us fall in love with him all over again."

Last year, Silverbaum was in financial trouble again and sold the Rasc@lz contract to Warner Bros. Records. Warner quickly dismantled the group and started a media blitz to make Franco the number one concert seller in three months time. The state of California keeps close eyes on Franco's well being, and Warner Bros. does the same to protect their investment. In the past few years, he's gone from being one of the most unwanted children to one of the most profitable youths in America.

Franco could not be happier with his current parental situation. In the executive bathroom in Burbank, a drawing by Franco of he and the twelve board members is taped on the wall. On

Christmas morning last year, Franco was brought to the Warner Bros. Records boardroom where each board member gave him a present, nearly all purchased from the company store. The young star began to sob, at which point board member Edgar Bronfman Jr. offered him his handkerchief, which Franco now carries with him at all times. "After having no parents for so long, I'm so glad to have my ten daddies and two mommies to love me."

While on the tour bus the next morning, Franco is polishing his dance moves. Being orphanically jittery, none of the backup dancers are allowed to actually touch him. He also has false teeth to make up for years of unparented dental care. And aside from the hectic tour, Franco has also been trying his hand at penning lyrics. He shows me notes for songs such as "I Don't Have Parents (Can I Share Yours?)," "Shhhh (I'll Be Quiet, I Promise)" and "Summer Nights (Dumpster Living)" It's then, looking at his incoherent, uneducated crayon marks, that I finally see why every young girl in the nation has a crush on him: adorable pity. ♦

LIFE AT FIRE STATION 20

As told by Battalion Chief Marcus Burr of Orem, Utah

We call the coffee machine Lazarus. The youngest guy is responsible for keeping coffee in the machine and we normally run through eight or nine pots a night. We have grinds donated to us monthly by Fischer's and those are usually gone in a few days.

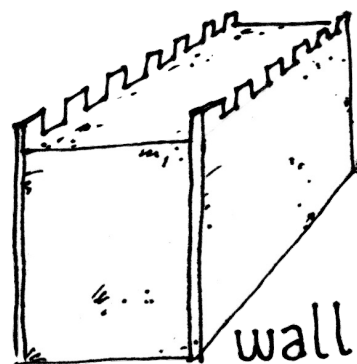
They have Bingo nights in the cafeteria area once a week, but they keep the stuff here in our pantry so we'll pull it all out on slow nights. At first we're joking around with the ball machine, but occasionally we'll all sit down and play a few

games. One time four guys got Bingo at once, which is a mathematical anomaly.

We have a dog; her name is Tilt. We call her that because of the way she tilts her head when we talk. She's not a Dalmatian because Dalmatians aren't actually that smart. She's a rescue. One time we were all watching the History Channel, this show about the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, and we swore we saw Tilt. And just when we started to get excited she reached over with her paw and shut off the TV.

We're not required to exercise but we're supposed to exercise. There are things like that; if your hair gets too long you're going to have to pull it back. The only rule that really ever gets to the guys is not to look at the crying diamond. Scratch that—the hardest rule is that we can't ever talk about Chester's wife. She was a real dog. Some of us think she's trapped inside the crying diamond.

The paintings in the main hallway change at night. At day they are very nice, very pretty scenic paintings. At night, though, inside of them little images appear of our families, our wives and kids burning alive and smiling. They show up in the paintings as if they had always been there. It is too disturbing. Pyramids of meat and crumpled horse bodies. You think you would learn not to look at the paintings but you still look. Anyway they're back to normal by sunrise, and there's a brand new pot waiting in Lazarus. ♦



IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD

It's for your own good, little missy. I don't care who is going to be where doing what — you are my daughter. You are my daughter, and I am in charge of you. I am in charge of what you do now, and I am in charge of your future. And, yes, that includes you not going to some party where there will be drinking and smoking.

I told you when you started going to parties that I would need to know there would be parents home, and no, Rachel Burtel's older sister does not count as a parent. We had an agreement, young lady, and you agreed to it. I don't care if you agreed when you were twelve, before you wanted to go to parties; you made an agreement and you have to stick to it.

And don't think I've already forgot when I had to go pick you up at the police station after that party was broken up. I trusted you. You said if you went to a party where there was drinking or drug use, you would turn right around, or call me. You can always call me, and I promise I won't get upset. I'm only getting upset *now* because you tried telling me you were going to study for the PSATs. I wish you were so studious.

What's so bad about spending your Friday night with your mother? Am I that horrible a person? Have I become that horrific of a human being? I just want to protect you. There are so many things that can derail a perfect human life. I see this stuff all the time at the family clinic. I know I don't have to tell you about Jill and her new baby boy, do I? She is sixteen! Sixteen! All because she got drunk and high at a party!

I just want to be your mother. Please, honey, I just want to love you. Open this door! ♦

I HATE YOU

I'm moving in with Dad! I hate you! I hate you! I hate you! You're always listening in on my calls, watching me write in my diary! I can't live my own life. I have my own life you know!

I have to go to this party. If I don't go everyone will think I'm some huge loser! They already think I'm a complete spaz. I was in the cafeteria the other day and some kids were sneaking out of school to go to Pizza Hut to get lunch, and I went with them and then I didn't have enough money so I just walked back to school and I got detention for skipping school. But it wasn't my fault! If you would just give me an allowance I wouldn't have gotten caught!

Please, mom, pleeeeeease. You have to let me go! I have to go. Brad Donovan gave me a ride home today and he said "I hope I see you tonight," which totally means he wants to go out with me, and now I've lost my chance forever. Do you realize that, mom? I lost my one chance with Brad Donovan. He's a screen printer! He has a neck tattoo! Brad Donovan! I'm moving in with Dad!

Do you know that Dad has HBO, Starz and Showtime? I watch the show *Weeds*. You know the magazine ad that you're always yelling at with the really hot woman on it? That's the show *Weeds*, and I can watch it anytime I want, because he has DVR in his den! I hate this duplex!

Sometimes Dad lets me have wine when I'm at his place. He and me and Heather and Heather's son Presley, we're all drinking wine and eating swordfish that dad makes on his outdoor grill. Why do I have to live with you? I just want to go to the party and now Brad Donovan is totally making out with Rachel Burtel. I hate you! ♦

GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

Susan Alan-Wenswick is a prolific Life Specialist, working in the metro Miami area. She has written several books, including most recently W.E.D: Women Ending Dating.

Hi there! My husband and I recently moved to a “changing neighborhood” in Boston. I am wondering, what’s the best way to stay safe?

First off, being married means you are likely 99% safer than most single women out there, yours included.

As for keeping safe in a neighborhood in the midst of gentrification, try mace. It’s very quick and to the point. If you prefer a less aggressive weapon, try a whistle! If you feel comfortable using it, that is: not all women like to draw such loud attention to themselves. Perhaps it would be best to practice with the mace first.

I am seven months pregnant and getting nervous about safety in the home. What is the best way to go about baby-proofing?

You are in luck: baby-proofing your home could not be easier. You will be surprised how little time and money it takes. Simply cover your locks and sockets with masking tape. Put any items with cords in your storage locker. Take your handy sanding tool and dull all exposed sharp corners and- voila! Your former love nest is now baby-ready.

Good evening, ma’am. Our records indicate that you have recently bought eight LCD television sets in-store. Would you like a corporate salesperson to contact you in the future?

Thank you for your consideration, sir, but this is a misunderstanding. You see, I was robbed recently. I was in my kitchen making s’mores over my camping stove- as I always do on Saturday nights- when the burglar came into my condo and pushed me down. When the burglar pushed me, I landed quite hard on my elbow. The pain was quite severe and I was unable to prevent the thief from grabbing both my purse and my grandmother’s jewelry.

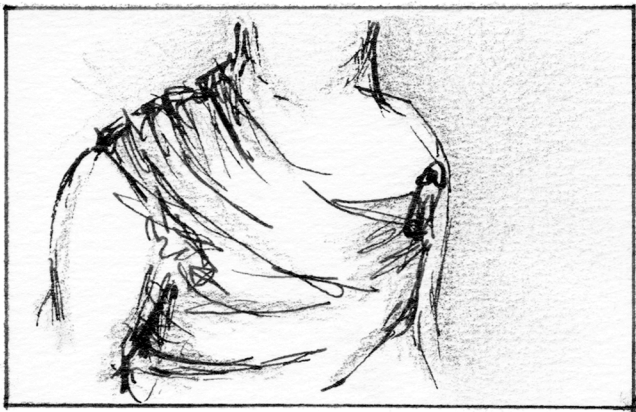
You know you can cancel a credit card, right?

I am very aware that you can cancel a credit card. However, the credit card company, after some consideration, chose not to believe my story about the robber breaking into my home and pushing me down. And though I have provided them with several photos of my bruised elbow, they refuse to see that I am the victim here and not just a woman cruising from Bar Harbor to Baltimore each day shopping for luxury goods.

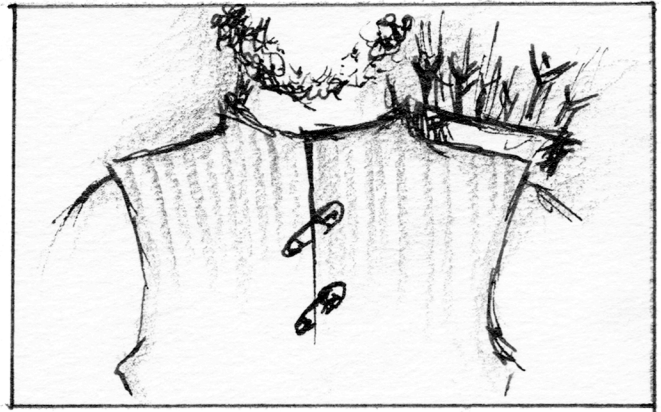
As a result of their refusal to cancel my cards, my credit score has taken a recent dramatic plummet. It became so bad that my condo board kicked me out. I packed up what little things I had left and have moved in with my sister in the faster part of town. She has friends of questionable morals and frequently stays out past midnight, if not later. I can’t sleep for paranoia that these loud hoodlums she brings home in the middle of the night are going to rob and push me. Could they be out there on the other side of the living room partition wearing my grandmother’s jewels? Wearing things bought with my high credit limit? I would be making more of a racket with the credit card company, but my elbow is still very sore and sometimes keeps me in bed all day. ♦

THE MANY USES OF SAFETY PINS THROUGH THE YEARS

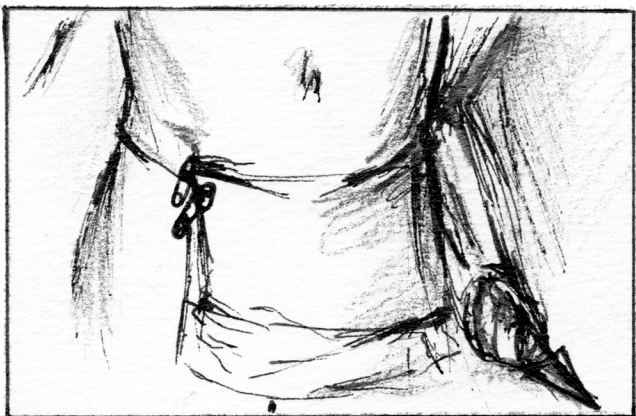
AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY



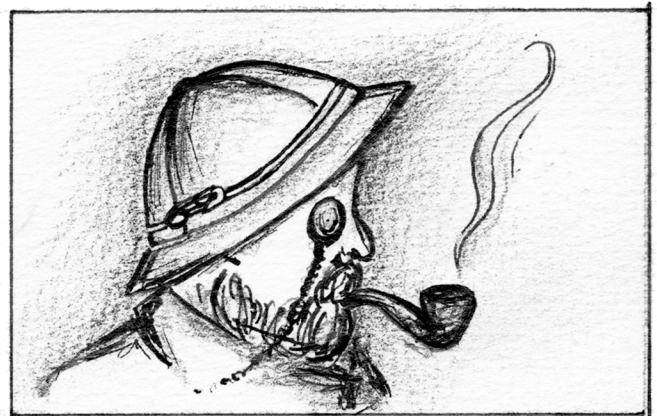
CREATING DEMOCRACY



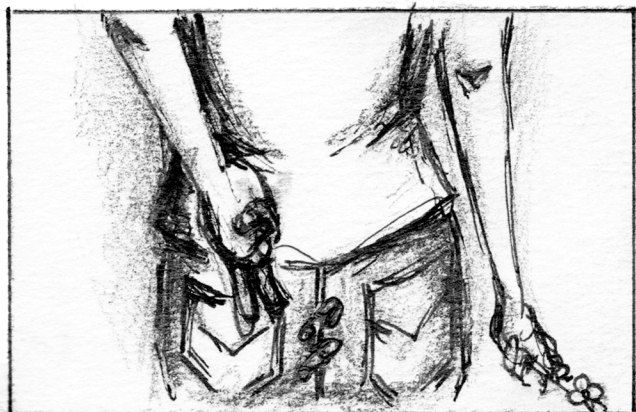
GIVING BACK TO THE POOR



DEFENDING YOUR
HOMELAND



SOLVING THE CRIMES
OF THE DAY



GIVING PEACE A CHANCE



...?

Last year, Raphael Guzman exploded onto the literary scene with *Biography of a Broke Homeboy*, shooting up to the top of many best-of lists for 2009. Yet, one list he did not even appear on was this reviewer's. Guzman's story of a "hustler" trying to decide between his old deadbeat life in the Bronx or moving to Ohio with his girlfriend's family was frustrating at best. Five pages in when Rondel saw his best friend shot down in broad daylight, it was clear what decision he could make. If I wanted to have the lives of stupid people put upon me, I'd go to my eight year old stepdaughter's classroom.

Now, the Booker New Author Prize winner is back with his follow up, *Incendiary Memories*. I'd pray that Guzman was now armed with an editor or agent who might keep him from sprinkling upsetting images into this story of a son transporting his father's grand piano across country.

I somehow got through almost the entire book before it turned out that the son was just bringing the piano to a antique dealer to pay off his gambling debts he made on his father's rival football team. What a letdown! I get enough of those still mowing the lawn at my ex-wife's condo building.

Let me be clear. Raphael Guzman is writing books that people should simply walk by. Don't be drawn in by the cute baby picture on the cover like I was. This "book" contains moments of lust, teasing and murky figurative language. Shame on Random House for not only accepting this book, but assumedly-editing, printing and finally publishing it. Shame on Random House. Do not read *Incendiary Memories*, and most definitely do not read *Biography of a Broke Homeboy*. They are loud books. ♦

It's a humid August afternoon, and the smell of aged rural life wraps up my nasal passage. I've just made the 7-hour drive upstate to a decommissioned dairy farm outside Norwich, New York, and I'm waiting for a handful of 20-somethings to return from the farmers market.

The new, hyped, indisputably Brooklyn band Crystal Wolves are in the midst of recording songs for their first full-length *Wolves Crystal*, a lightning quick follow-up to their adored debut/concert, the *Crystal Wolves Live* EP from last Saturday. Having spent the past few days in Brooklyn writing and recording from their illegally converted, illegally sublet loft space in East East Williamsburg, a change of midweek scenery was decided last minute in order to regain focus and, "do something real," according to lead singer, and de facto face of the band, Anthony Bonzaine.

The band, all originally from parts of the Midwest, met during a Meetup group for lovers of film projections in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Almost immediately, there were plans to write music together for a found footage projection show for parking garages (Called "Spots for Retired Kaleidoscopes in E Major"). Bonzaine – a young Count Chocula look-alike – describes the initial meeting as, "cherubs at a holiday mixer."

And despite forming nearly a week and a half ago, an undercurrent of backlash is already beginning to swell thanks in large part to the fanatic anticipation surrounding the upcoming album on hyperlocal microblogs such as Headphone Dummies and The Metropolitan Ave.

"No wants to appreciate the same thing or person for too long anymore. One moment they're praising him as the next DiCaprio, and a

day later he's a hack? C'mon. I mean, Paul Dano, man..." Anthony shows me the tattoo on his inner forearm of the young film star.

With Anthony: Johnny Ringle, lead guitarist (quite literally - he currently keeps 23 different axes), and fraternal twins Jansen & Antoine IV, covering pretty much anything else needing coverage along the spectrum of melody and rhythm.

Take the patented fuzz channels from The Sneeze Buckets circa 1978-1981 (prior to their left turn into proto-Hip Hop/John Hughes soundtrack territory), place alongside the honey-pot vocals of vintage Tina Marie Lovechild and the absolutely pummeling heroics of distorted power-chord purveyors Tsetse, and you would begin to veer towards the sound Crystal Wolves have become known for. Looking at the online reviews of their first tour (a two basement, one bar, four night jaunt along the L line), the webzine NWBKLYN wrote of their live show as, "the kind of thing you'd hope to find at the Flea... wrapped up in velvet crepes, sliced up and served on chic rusted copper platter."

The next day over a breakfast of caphe and baguettes, Anthony and Johnny lead me to the studio set up in the back corner of the barn to hear samples of the new recordings. Early returns combine the respectively unique strains of noise from High Top Suede Top and Fucked Up Tribe, adding the fantasy vision of Hunter Hunter. Not a far cry from Yayayode or late-era The Scoops, nor their original sound, but showing clear progression towards a new end. It's this progress that Johnny has been working on for nearly a month. "I sleep in a bathtub," he explained while tightening his guitar strings, "so I know exactly how I want the reverb to sound."

Anthony's lyrics, on the other hand, appear to make no sense at all, yet are full of common sense; sidestepping the details of his own existence for a more general one. He guilelessly shifts through an efficiently clever line while sorting out cables, "*There weren't any bodies for anybody / Nobody holds their own in the 21st century / Big boys with little toys / And girls with eccentricities.*"

The stakes are clear, bold lines drawn in the sand with every word reflecting the current climate like abstract expressionist painters. These guys simultaneously evoke nostalgia and futurophilia in the same harried breath.

I follow Johnny out for a smoke on the porch and ask him about being in a popular band without a proper release. "You wouldn't know," he spits in between puffs.

And he's right.

The bulk of the day carries forward not so much by recording per se, but by a string of several freeform "jamprov" sessions which Johnny says will "probably" end up on the record "in some form". Their riffing sounds as if you surgically removed the growling ecstasy of Big Fat's early home demos off Pump-Pistol Records for post-processing, and co-opted it for 180-gram vinyl release with The Trashbirds' analog sensibilities. Played along side, but a little bit louder than, the stomach swelling notes from Frank Blaylock and the Secondaries' 1982 release *Signs to Nowhere*. It's that form of Otherness promoted by the melodic pursuit of conversations which herds the aural activity into a stable of forthrightness not otherwise achieved.

Or as Anthony puts it, "To capture the hook within a hook... you know?"

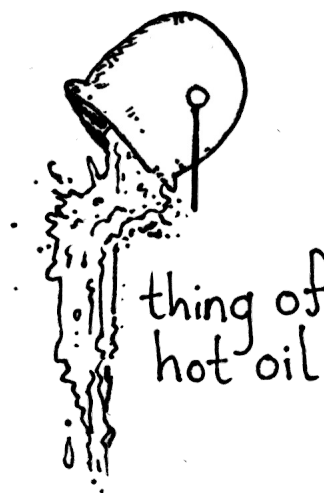
During another short break for Johnny to step outside, I casually ask Jansen, the younger of the brothers, and self-described polyintramultisonicist, for a pencil next to him. He snaps. The clear pressure of the hours, days, week of recording reaching an unbearable strain. “I do not use pencils!” he shouts, “Permanence is deliberate!”

I catch Anthony self-absorbed, interviewing a melody of specious notes before Jansen starts to play hide and seek with bass lines around his brother’s staccato tactics, and something begins to come together. Antoine IV rears his head back towards the kitchen in anticipation: tape static, bruised amplifiers, a de-tuned drum kit: the stuff hit singles are made of. The ‘52 butterscotch blonde Telecaster on Johnny’s hip effortlessly syn-copating to the rhythm from Jansen’s corner, and then, sudden squall - a cold shower of bricks; distorted pop magic a la Ghost Hearts mediating conflict with Fuck Up Tribe. A baseball bat to the head. You could just as easily imagine The Spazgags in a dilapidated room on Orchard Street, flipping each other off in between re-writing music theory with broken guitars and an old wooden chair.

The Fucktard Lamés, Pol Pot, Triangle Triangle, and The Fat Bats all swim around my head in the same public pool. Phrasally referencing The Popes on guitar situations, rhythmically ordaining nameless indies from the early 90s, and dangerously aping Stoßtrupp’s über vocal treatments. Mentioning this to Anthony, he claims that they’ve heard, “maybe two?...” of these bands. Simply plucking innovation from the air like Tesla.

The notes coalesce into a staircase of orgiastic sound horizons over distorted dolphin-esque squeals. The dizzying effect of sliding bass missives

sloping around hi-hats and crashes trumps last year’s sunset stomp inducing house goth masterpiece *Ghoulash Ghoulash* from KCP. Searing vocals punctuating a mimicry for early 00’s fadecore. The only thought allowed in my brain at this point is spatial. These young men are truly wolves, ripping the flesh of musical mediocrity with transformative bloodlust.



Listening to a rough excerpt of “Cat Calls for Niagara ____” on the drive back down, an Orion’s Belt of references jump into mind, ranging from the Sa-Pops to So What, Who Cares?!, Forlorn Unicorn to Poorest Places, Sedated Baritones, and Go Away; John Wayne Creepazoids and Co. Conspirators to The Youths, The Rakes, Futuristic Bells, Zombie Babysitter, and The Whack Jobs; and certainly the London scene that generated a stable’s worth of genre-muddling acts including Patricide Holiday The Pistol Whips, Quincy, Darcy Dork, Poached, Harbor Work, Deputy Francis, Lady/Tramp, Symbols, The Jezebel Slits, Sorcerers, Hoodlum Constables, The Tips, Finnegan’s Fake and Fucked Up Tribe.

Though it’s not even close to a fully recorded song, I do know one thing: I have experienced the new. ♦

SAFECRACKING WITH THE SILVER SERPENT

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN AFTER THE SILVER SERPENT SINCE 1995, WHEN HE SUCCESSFULLY BROKE INTO THE MUSÉE D'ORSAY'S TRIL-30x6 SAFE. SINCE THEN, THIS SUAVE AND HIGHLY SKILLED BURGLAR HAS BEEN TRAVELING THE WORLD IN SEARCH OF SANCTUARY — AND HIS NEXT BIG SCORE.

MINUTÆ CAUGHT UP WITH THE MASTER CRIMINAL VIA TRIPLE-ENCRYPTED IP-6 TELEPHONY AND GOT HIM TO REVEAL THE SECRET BEHIND HIS BIGGEST HEISTS.

67

INTERNATIONAL WARRANTS
FOR THE SILVER SERPENT

0

ARRESTS

3

GRAMMY® NOMINATED
SPOKEN WORD ALBUMS

SAFE CONTENTS	TOOLS USED	TIME (IN SECONDS)	SILVER SERPENT'S COMMENT	OWNER'S MEASURED EMOTIONAL LOSS
BARON OF HAMBYE BARON MONACO EGYPTIAN GOLD BARS	IRON-AIDED SULFURIC ACID	384	"HANDMADE POLISH MECHANISM MADE IT HARDER THAN IT NEEDED TO BE."	BEING INTRODUCED AS "MY FRIEND" ON TENTH DATE
IBRAHIM AL-KALD SENATOR JORDAN SPACE SILK	HIGH-SPEED DRILL WITH DIAMOND GRINDING WHEELS	734	"GOT DISTRACTED BY MY POETRY WRITING"	NOT GETTING INTO ANY COLLEGE WHILE YOUR STUPIDER FRIENDS GO IVY
GUY GELLAN DEEMSTER ISLE OF MAN HYDROGEN CELL HOME POWERPLANT BLUEPRINTS	CARBIDE-TIP DRILLS	65	"GUESSED CODE"	BLAMED FOR PARENTS' DIVORCE AT YOUR 12TH BIRTHDAY PARTY
PETRE ALISTE ARCHEOLOGIST VAL DE BAGNES MOSES' STAFF	PLATINUM WIRE CUTTERS & DENTYNE ICE	98	"DENTYNE ICE TO FREEZE THE ELECTRONICS"	MOTHER USING CHILDHOOD STUFFED ANIMAL TO CLEAN UP FATHER'S VOMIT, BLOOD
HEINRICH FLEDERMAUS FORMER SS OSLO CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS & SOVIET SPIES CODE NAMES	PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES, KNOCKOUT GAS & BLUEFIN TUNA	952	"TOOK A LONG TIME TO SUBDUCE THE LIVE PANTHER IN THE THIRD STAGE"	LETTER FROM HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL SWEETHEART USED BY HOOKER TO ROLL JOINT
MARIE VON SANT ANDROGYNOUS PERFORMANCE ARTIST CANNES CRYOGENICALLY FROZEN DISEMBOodied HEAD OF YOU!?	BLOWTORCH & WELDING TORCH	1255	"WOULD'VE DONE IT SOONER, BUT I WAS MAKING LOVE TO THE MARK'S WIFE"	LACK OF SELF-IDENTITY AND WILL TO CONTINUE ON WITH HOLLOW SHELL OF AN EXISTANCE

A photograph showing a person on a motorcycle, silhouetted against a bright sky, riding across a bridge. The bridge has a red railing and large steel supports. In the background, a city skyline with various buildings is visible. The title 'DETOUR ON THE ROAD TO BROADWAY' is overlaid on the top half of the image in large, bold, white and grey letters.

DETOUR ON THE ROAD TO BROADWAY

Dustin shows me an old VHS he keeps in his backpack. "There's me!" he exclaims, pointing to the leaner version of himself, in a tight black leather leotard, performing the song "It's Not Sodo-You" from the off-Broadway musical *The Fuckus*, which he co-wrote with Don Frisco in 1992. On the tape, he moves with a certain jerky grace and belts out a tenor voice that peaks the microphone levels on the recording. I watch him as he gazes at the screen, mouthing along with his younger self. "I can't believe how tight my skin was." As the song hits the finale, he grabs hold of my arm. We're two grown men sitting on a twin size bed at 11 o'clock at night, him in his monogrammed silk pajamas. "D.F.G."

The tape ends. Static.

"I used to be so young."

The next morning at 5:24AM, in Rockville, MD at the Best Western off I-270, the five members of The Melodic Method (Eastern) are dragging themselves from their shared motel rooms. They load into a fifteen passenger van, the back rows filled with backdrops, props, and costumes as well as the personal bags of each cast member. I barely get up in time to check out and join them in the van (they picked me up the day before from BWI).

Driving is Dustin Fredric Gerber, the 42 year-old leader and director of the group. Riding shotgun is the only other member fully awake, Cynthia Bellows, resembling an older sister of Tinkerbell, unaided by caffeine, while the remaining three members are in various states of waking up or falling back asleep. They have five hours to get to Northgate Middle School in a suburb outside of Pittsburgh, and get to work. Today, they will be performing in front of several hundred students the "infotainment" musical called "Saying Yes to Saying No."

"It's exciting, enchanting, riveting," Dustin explains, "Everyday is a different school and they're asking for a different show. If we're going to a nicer private school, it's mostly about abstinence or drugs or making the right decisions. At the poorer schools we're mostly doing stuff about gangs."

Dustin has been with the company for seven years and has been leading this particular group for fourteen months. He was formerly part of the main The Melodic Method group, but in over the last two years, the company has expanded and gave Dustin control of his own troupe. "Yeah, I do miss the Melodic 'main,' but there I was just another star in a sea of stars... with this I'm more like... God in a sea of planets." He woke up at 4

this morning and began preparing, including make-up ("Just because it's a magazine story doesn't mean I shouldn't look my best"), and is now doing face muscle warm-ups. "When it came down to it, they all agreed that I should be the leader of this merry band. To lead with my singular vision."

Speaking to Don Frisco three days ago, now the Art Director of The Melodic Method, in their Midtown Manhattan office, he doesn't provide many details on Dustin's troupe. "I have to say that Dustin is a very unique and valued member of our organization. We thought it best to set him off with his own troupe. We are still figuring out the kinks, as any growing business does. I can only imagine the things you'll see are just growing pains."

In late 2008, The Melodic Method had just finished a year long process of transforming from a small creative enterprise into a national company of three touring groups along with merchandise, albums and a board of directors. The board, along with Frisco, fired Dustin, citing "creative differences and professional strife." Dustin sued the company for using song material he helped conceive during the growth of the company. The settlement included giving Dustin control of his own troupe and lax oversight as long as it did not hurt the brand. Neither side is allowed to talk about the settlement, but co-founding The Melodic Method member Alex York could.

"Don and Dustin were both control freaks, but Don was the kind of control freak who always saw the bigger picture. A bunch of us were pushed out, but Dustin held on strong." York explains while we sit in his upstate New York home office where he writes music for local commercials. "I sold my stake in The [Melodic] Method a long

time ago, just to get out of it, but Dustin, yeah, he really sunk his talons in and hasn't let go."

"I take the scripts as a jumping off point. They're five years old and gathering dust. If it's my job to 'infotain' these kids, then it is my job to punch up our scripts." Dustin hands me a marked up copy of "Saying Yes to Saying No." It's difficult to read the scrawling red ink. "We've been working on it for a while and today is the debut." He's been anticipating this performance for weeks, imagining the reception to his version of the show.

"That was incredible, Mr. Gerber." "Oh, please, no, thank you, but I was only the writer, director, choreographer and team leader." "That's incredible, you are a quadruple threat." "No," I'd say, "I'm a quadruple gift." He excuses himself to go listen to to his iPod's "Hype Playlist," primarily containing Meat Loaf and the Capitol Steps.



"Dustin does have that genius spark." Cynthia tells me, or more exalts to me. "Being part of this ensemble is a once in a lifetime opportunity to go out there and influence the lives of young people." Cynthia, who refuses to tell me her exact age, hometown, or non-stage surname, has been performing in one capacity or another since she was four. She is always on. "I have a stuffed turtle named Streisand," she tells me, clutching a stuffed panda, "this is Newton-John."

What I can gather from public records is that Cynthia is somewhere in her 30s and either from Georgia or Mississippi. After doing the beauty queen circuit in her teens, she was accepted to the Boston Conservatory of Music, Dance and Thea-

ter, performing in two productions of fellow student Don Frisco. Don describes her as "effervescent and neon-ic. Like a crackling neon sign."

After muddling around through New York City in the 90s and early 2000s, she fell off the map, before turning up in 2005 on possession, spending two weeks in an Buffalo, NY jail. Cynthia titles that unrecorded time as "finding herself." She's cleaned herself up and has been with The Melodic Method since 2008, jumping straight to Dustin's group. Though it seems Cynthia was offloaded onto Dustin, but Don simply says "they work so well together. They really deserve each other."

Still sleeping in the back are Paul Gold, Caleb Clark and Lilly Fein. Lilly has her head on Caleb's shoulder, blanketing it in her auburn hair. When we hit a rest stop, I talk with Lilly. Five years out of college and unemployed, she moved to New York with her boyfriend (who has, as of yet, unfound aspirations of his band hitting it big) and three months later was getting ready to hit the road with The Melodic Method. Shortly thereafter, she and her boyfriend broke up. She's not sure who decided to do it, but she does remember the relief she felt. "It was embarrassing having these shouting matches at night outside the motels when everyone else could hear them."

Lilly soon found comfort in Caleb, himself having ended a three year relationship when he joined the Melodic Method (East). They would often rehearse together, something that Lilly admits she needs. She is a songwriter and lyricist, not an actor, singer or dancer. She even wrote some of the songs that her ex-boyfriend still performs in dive bars around New York City. "I wrote the song he sang for me. I guess that should've been a hint."

Lilly went into the audition for The Melodic Method (East) with a girlfriend of hers, who did not get in. Dustin remembers when first Lilly walked in. "Her beauty was not in her voice, and not in her face, it's far too plain, but an undefinable quality. I guess some might call it inner beauty, if that exists. Yet, when she sang, there was an honesty there that I needed to use to translate my buoyant lyrics to the children of this country." In retrospect, Lilly auditioned mostly to get away from her bad relationship.

Furthermore, it was at callbacks where she first met Caleb, which she admits may have pushed her into accepting the job. Caleb and Lilly are unofficially dating, depending on who you ask within the group. Everyone will deny it in the company of another member, but individually they'll all admit what is going on. The only person who continues to deny they are dating is Dustin, who genuinely has no idea. When I propose it to him, he laughs for nearly three minutes straight, faintly slapping at my hand. He goes on: "I can say with one hundred percent certainty that the only funny business going on within this troupe are the wisecracks that I am inserting into the scripts. I mean, they just wouldn't work. He's this super handsome rugged... and she's this... homely squirrel?"

Paul, Caleb's roommate on the road, says most nights Caleb and Lilly are together in their motel room. The sleeping arrangements are fixed: Dustin by himself, Paul and Caleb, and Cynthia and Lilly. Paul seems to not mind sharing his room with the couple at night. "They're pretty quiet. Caleb's a good guy... I've only slept outside twice."

When we arrive at Northgate Middle School, the team begins unloading their props, parking outside of the auditorium and adjacent cafeteria. I follow Paul, somewhat smaller than the rest of the

cast, as he drags boxes from the van into the auditorium. An aspiring comedian, Paul came to the Melodic Method by way of his mother, a friend of Dustin's mother. When Dustin was given control of his own troupe, Paul's mother lobbied heavily for the recent college grad and unemployed former high school musical performer. She invited Dustin to dinner at their home in Connecticut, followed by two hours of watching Paul's performances in *Kiss Me Kate*, *Guys & Dolls*, and *South Pacific*. Paul says he had little choice but to join up.

"College cost a lot of money, and there are no jobs. I'm trying to save up to move to New York, y'know?" Paul says. The lunch bell rings and seventh graders come running past us in the hallway. "I get to do some kind of entertainment, and y'know, everyone has to start somewhere."

Paul explains the practice schedule on non-performance days. All the music is played from an approved The Melodic Method backing CD (Dustin's script changes fit in to the pre-recorded backing band). They'll spend the mornings and afternoons working through the songs, sometimes in state parks or parking lots of the motels they stay at, followed by the interstitial scenes that string the show together. "After a day of doing all this stuff, I'm too tired to go find an open mic, or even just to work on my material." Paul laments, "The most I've written in the past six months are Twitter jokes... but no one is following me except for my friends from high school."

All of the members of the group find it difficult to focus on anything but The Melodic Method when they're on the road. Lilly, for example, keeps a journal of song ideas, but hasn't been able to string a full song together in a year. "All we do is this..." Lilly says, "It's fun, I like the people, but all we do is this. It's tough to think outside of

the Melodic Method." For Caleb, however, his dream of starring in a Broadway musical inches closer without him even trying.

Kept from the group, and especially Lilly, Caleb has received callbacks several times this past year. "I have this tape from a few years ago, of me doing some stuff, that keeps on getting passed around between casting directors." Caleb explains, "I know it won't really pan out. I'm not interested in getting rejected."

I press the issue, saying what if he was able to get a steady gig, being able to leave what he himself calls a "musical joke." He asks that I drop it.

Lilly, of course, knows. "I've taken a look at his phone before and heard the voicemails. I'd ask why he doesn't go for it but... I guess I'm happy that he won't be leaving... the group."

I've watched Caleb's tape and he is astonishing in it, with a stage presence of a performer far beyond his years. He has long brown hair and blue eyes. The "some stuff" he talks about is when he was the second understudy for Prince Charming in the 2002 Broadway revival of *Into the Woods*. He had one night, but on that one night, he owned the stage before fading back into the chorus. And now he's about to perform the debut production of Dustin Gerber's "Saying Yes to Saying No," for two hundred children.

1:45PM rolls around and the bell for fifth period rings. The sixth graders, falling asleep after lunch and recess, shuffle into the auditorium, with teachers leaning against the back wall. Backstage, The Melodic Method (Eastern) are holding hands in a circle. "This is just like any other day," Dustin begins, "Your entire life could end at any moment, so kill yourself on the stage before someone else gets the chance to."

For the other The Melodic Method troupes, the director will stay backstage and run tech, but Dustin does it all from a small remote control for a CD boombox. "I may sacrifice light cues, but they need me. What kind of four-star general would not be leading the charge on stage?"



Dustin comes out to preface the performance as a "journey of safe sex to sexual exploration." Then Caleb, dressed like John Travolta from *Grease*, comes out as Tad Sexman. The first song is called "What's Happening to Me?" and was written by Dustin and Don Frisco seven years ago. The sixth graders mostly giggle or pay little attention. After the song ends, Dustin and Paul join Caleb on stage and the script quickly diverges from what other The Melodic Method troupes perform.

"Hey there, brother. You got that porno?" Dustin, playing the character Chance Bastille (complete with a leotard and wig), questions Tad Sexman. "You know what you can do with porno, right my man?"

The trio then break into "Master the Bat(i)on," and the student audience picks up. The three start right into the chorus:

Masturbation is like a stay-cation.

Elation without the humiliation.

Consummation without the dedication.

Ejaculation without impregnation.

Backstage, Cynthia is ready to come on stage in an overly revealing nightgown. As the song

ends, and Paul and Dustin rush off stage, and Lilly slides a blow up mattress into place. Cynthia runs on and sits down next to Tad. They begin their scene:

"Tad, I want you to be my first. I know you have experience." Cynthia's character, Chastity Butterpants, doe-fully coos.

"I've had several previous sexual partners." Tad responds while flipping up his jacket's collar.

"Do you have a condom?"

"Aw, shucks, I don't have any skins tonight."

"You have to wear protection, Tad."

"But, come on, baby, just this one time?"

"Are you sure I won't get your STD?"

"I promise."

Dustin hits the remote and the next track, a guitar heavy minor key monster ballad begins. Originally written to euphemistically convey the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases, it has since been "Dusti-fied" to be more "straightforward." Caleb and Cynthia begin to sway back and forth as Dustin embodies the definition of the word saunter. He is wearing leather pants and a fishnet undershirt, and breaks into verse:

*Don't listen to his petty lies, he has an evil
in disguise.*

*It might seem warm at first sight, but
make no mistake, it will make you cry.*

Can't have S without the T-D,

Smoke and fire and Burning Pee.

Can't have S without the T-D,

Prickly and bumpy and discolored skeeves.

One of the teachers standing in the back rushes out of the auditorium, seemingly the play has finally disagreed with her too much. The song ends and the the next scene opens in a doctor's

office, with Paul playing the role of doctor to a concerned Lilly.

"Doctor, I'm afraid. I'm a teenager and I'm not ready to be a mother." Lily half-acts half-heartedly her way through the dialogue.

"Well, Beatrice, for a homely girl like you, there's only one way out now." Paul melodramatically says.

"I'm not homely." Lilly projects the line towards Dustin offstage before returning to the reality of the scene. "What's the way out, doctor?"

"The birth canal."

Another ballad begins. Paul and Lilly run off. The auditorium lights shut off. Cynthia hands the cast flash lights. Meanwhile, Dustin has made his way on stage in a full-body black leotard, including a face mask, resembling a shadow. He performs a three minute interpretative dance, amidst flash-lights, to what was originally a song called "Holding Hands is Enough (For Now)." It all seems tame, until Paul and Caleb run off stage to grab a bent out of shape Hula-Goop with a plush pink boa-constrictor stuffed animal tied around it.

The two hold the tear-shaped Hula-Hoop in front of Dustin as he continues to sway in a mixture of ballet and self-defense maneuvers. Dustin then slowly makes his way through the Hula-Hoop, wailing baby cries. Lilly has grabbed a bucket of petroleum jelly mixed with red food coloring labeled "after-birth" and hurls the mixture at Dustin. Cynthia, dressed in a hospital gown, sensually dances with the jelly-covered Dustin, who continues to scream.

I'm standing off stage when up from behind me comes Vice Principal Shelby, with the teacher who left earlier, in a profound state of shock. She turns the auditorium lights back on and walks on stage. The cast freezes.

"Alright, everyone, let's thank our guests for coming." Shelby says as she forces out a few claps.

Dustin removes his face mask.

"We're not done yet," Dustin begins.

"Yes you are," She walks over to the CD player, grabs the disc and walks off stage. "Yes you are."

"Hey, that's my CD!" Dustin rushes after her, followed by Paul and Cynthia.

"Thanks everyone, we're The Melodic Method." Caleb says in a defeated hush.

"Uhhh... You can buy our CDs at-" Lilly starts. Caleb shakes his head. She stops.

As the auditorium empties of kids, Caleb and Lilly run off to the shouting coming from a classroom. Shelby and Dustin are screaming at each other, with the cast watching from the doorway.

"A teacher came to get me from my office, she couldn't stand it! I cannot believe how inappropriate your skit was!" Shelby screams.

"Listen, we were on our way to giving these children knowledge that will be burned into their memories. And it's not a skit." Dustin's attempt to disarm the situation

"I am sure of the burning memories! So inappropriate. Completely inappropriate!" Shelby picks up the backing CD and snaps it half, throwing the pieces at Dustin.

"I could sue you! Assault! Breaking music!"

"I don't want anyone else being subjected to ~ to ~ your inappropriate filth!"

"It's not inappropriate filth. It's inappropriate art. But, I mean, what would a size 38 woman from nowheres Pittsburgh know about art? You probably have a stack of Twix wrappers waiting for you in your office that you think is something more than evidence of your diabetes!"

Shelby takes a moment to diffuse her anger before responding.

"You have fifteen minutes to remove your junk and get off school property before I call the police." Shelby storms out, passing the cast, who's left in the doorway and watching Dustin.

"I'm shaking, my hands are shaking." Dustin quivers while smiling. "How'd I do, gang?"

The cast walk into the classroom, not sure what to say, except for line-ready Cynthia.

"You could've understudied for Brando." Cynthia chimes in.

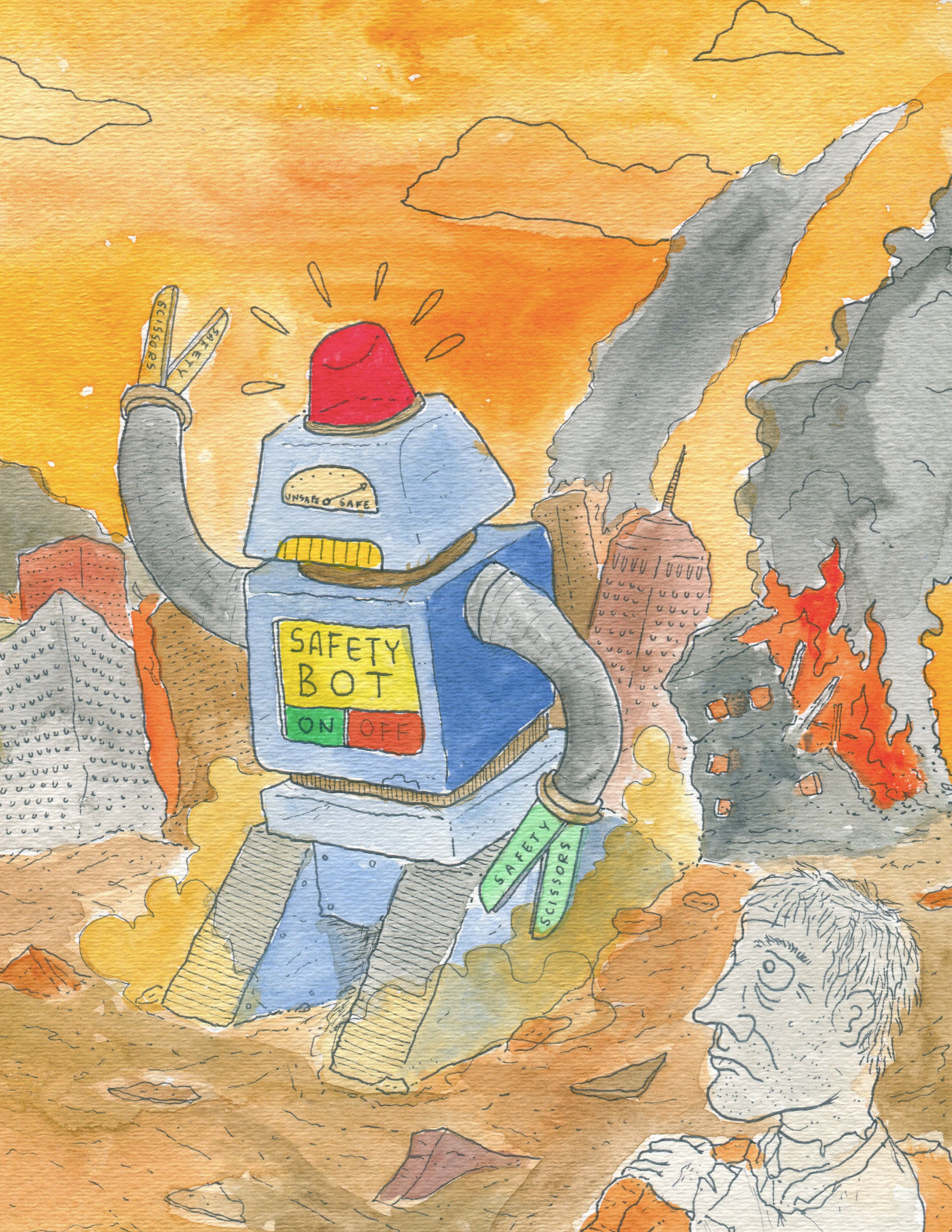
"You think?" A tear falls from Dustin's eyes.

"Let's go get our props before they burn them," Caleb says before heading out of the room.



While the troupe starts to pile their equipment back into the van, Dustin sits over on the swings, shaking his head, on the verge of tears. "I really thought that this would be the thing... I have a condo back in Hoboken with a trophy case and little gold signs where each award would go... it's absolutely empty." This is when he begins to cry, and Caleb comes over to talk to him. "Uh, hey, we're all ready and packed to go. Do you want me to drive or something?"

Dustin looks up, wipes his eyes, and heads to the driver's side. Tomorrow they'll be performing "Mistaken Mistakes" in Dover and "Driven to Drunk Driving" in Philadelphia the day after that. The group has been rehearsing Dustin's version of "Mistaken Mistakes," and it's finale song "Popularity (What A Slut)." ♦



SAFETY

