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# craccum

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
- AUG 2007  
GENERAL LIBRARY





# LETTERS

## Don't mix drinks with drugs

Dear Craccum,

Congratulations on an open, investigative treatment on drugs in your Week 11 issue. So often we are subjected to sensationalist nonsense from the media about party pills, cannabis, and the seemingly ubiquitous 'P' (how street quality speed, which is on average less than 65% methamphetamine, can be branded 'pure' is beyond me), it is nice to hear some facts for once.

A few points for Joel though... yes, BZP is a 'body heavy' drug, as all stimulants are. But of all the people I know who have taken party pills, none have had the effects you described – except for one, who mixed them with alcohol, spending the whole night in a delirious haze, vomiting everywhere before passing out and waking up the next morning, head ablaze, in Auckland Hospital. Stimulants are crap, huh? But the fact is, he had a shitty night because he ignored the myriad health warnings on the packet about drinking alcohol whilst on BZP, and even if he didn't trust them, any decent literature on the subject would have told him the same thing. As such, it was really his own fault – and I have to wonder, was your bad experience on BZP due to the same factor?

As for illegal drugs, it is true that some LSD users have had flashbacks. But research on the incidence of flashbacks in LSD users has shown that the drug does not cause flashbacks except in those with a pre-existing physiological condition, which would cause them to have flashbacks anyway. So though it is true LSD is a trigger of flashbacks in some people, it is not a cause, and the condi-

tion could have easily been triggered through over factors, such as stress, or bad diet. As for ecstasy, I don't know where you got the idea it "screws you in the head" - bad quality ecstasy, perhaps (according to some sources, half of the 'E' pills sold in the UK have no ecstasy at all), but as a pure compound it has no known long-term side effects, is less addictive than most recreational drugs, and due to its rapid development of tolerance - after about 4 weeks of weekly usage, 'E' will give little effect, even in high dosages - it has low potential for long-term abuse. This is without noting that in over 40 years of recreational usage, only two people to have died from taking ecstasy, and not because of the drug itself, but because in a paranoid attempt to avoid heat exhaustion they drank stupidly large amounts of water (in one case, 7 litres in 90 minutes) and died of electrolyte imbalance.

Kinda makes you wonder why it is illegal...

Nick H

## Anger manifests itself in the form of a wanker

Hello Craccum land

I am here to let the whole university know about what is going on at the lending & the enquiry services department of the General library. There are about 25 of these dumb fuckers in the lending department. The people at the lending desk are supposed to be polite and nice and helpful but fuck these people are so rude. There is this one girl she looks as if she is high on something or as if food has stuck in her throat and she can't even fucking speak properly and

the two people at the information help desk are always on the internet surfing net. Wonder how much do they get paid for doing that?? And that is not all; there are these three or four gay guys who are always outside having their smoking break outside the library (you know who you are). I do not have any thing against them but fuck they are so rude to lot of students and I have had many bad experiences with them. When you ask them a question they get fucking angry at you and are not really helpful to anyone. These idiots get paid to do a proper job. It is not like as students we don't pay fees to use the fucking library facilities. It is quite comforting to know that government funding and the student fees go to these fucking rude bastards as their salaries. If any of you out there get attitude from those wankers at the lending & enquiry services then I suggest that people should get together and get a petition going or something. I am just sick to death with the attitude of the people at the lending desk and enquiry services at the General library. So all the people at the lending & enquiry services I hope all of you die slowly and a really painful death.

Library hater.

Please read Joe Nunweek's excellent article on customer service in Issue 12 of Cracum. Perhaps it will persuade you to be less of a demanding and condescending prick – Eds

## Finally, some recognition

Hi Matt,

Congratulations on a good article on "media in crisis"! You have written a very well researched article covering all the

main angles, certainly from my point  
view. Thanks very much!

And thanks for sending me a *daily*...  
I put the mag in the coffee room for  
people to read over their lunch, and  
off several copies of the article and  
them on all the noticeboards. The  
reporter, Andrew Austin, seemed to be  
impressed by what he read. The mag  
itself is amazing – an unbelievable  
information from the newspaper  
old!

With best wishes,

Simon

I need to point out that this letter is from journalist Simon Collins, not myself. Coverdale. If it was from me, it would be so gushing in its praise. You see me and Matty have this thing where he does something 'balanced' and 'researched' and I call him a 'wanker' I have to work with him, after all – Simon

**We weren't the only ones who were moved. Awww! Hook up, hook up!**

Dear Girl-who-you-know-if-you-think  
about-it

I'm not really sure why I'm writing this, because out of 30 000 students at UCL, I doubt highly that I can guess who you were writing to. But I suppose, as I couldn't help but blurt out your feelings, I kinda need to do the same.

I dunno if I believe in love at first sight. There can definitely be a 'click' pretty early on, but in this case, I'm totally lost... I've never heard of love at first read. I can tell you how quickly I was taken by your anonymous letter last week. Your writing, in your well-spoken manner, your

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lost-in-this-situation wit and self mockery and modesty, your loving despair... Awesome traits I tell you.

Call me a sissy... maybe I am. But if personality has anything to do with attraction (which it does), you hit the nail on the head. True, you could be an overly sweaty bearded woman with green skin and 2 toes on each foot, but till I see that, all I can see is just an awesomely intriguing person.

So it seems I, or you, have created a love triangle. If you really are as cool as your letter makes you out to be, then gosh he's a lucky boy, whoever that may be... could even be me I suppose. So then, at least tell me, what paper did this happen in, how do I know it wasn't, in fact, me? And if not, tell me at least that all your friends are as cool as you, and tell me where in this massive but lonely university people like you hang out?!! I'm not one who lacks friends at all, but this is something else...

Sincerely yours,

Guy-who-you-probably-don't-know-at-all (joeblogs1357@hotmail.com)

## We told you, we didn't write Kate...

I found the inclusion of 'Kate' and her mascot of a pink soft octopus in Craccum last week a fascinating and much needed addition to the usual fare. Craccum often feels like a sausage fest with boobs and bad cock jokes abound. (The issue with the 'Cocktower' cover leaps to mind). *Eds - that was last year.* Not to criticize sausage fests in their own right (an integral part of male education I say!) but the Kate section certainly creates some balance. (Though I'm sure you Craccum editors are none too happy, a whole 15 pages of encroachment!) *Eds - we included Kate because we're nice, not because we had to.*

However, tucked among the neat pages of guerrilla girls and chocolate reviews was the shocking discovery of sexual horoscopes!! (Even featuring a d.vice ad placed conveniently below). As I reviewed my Sexual Activity of the Month (Aries - anal sex), I couldn't help musing what the more religiously inclined female readers might make of this.

Perhaps a trickling of embarrassment seeing mildly explicit cartoons if moderate, to maybe considerable disgust if extreme. What I am of sure is, if this was America, it would be outrage to the words of degenerate perversion and profanity.

Well for one thing (you Christian Taliban out there), sadomasochism is actually quite enjoyable, and for another, first have a hard look at your understanding of sex before you criticize.

Religion of all kinds has had a huge role in controlling female sexuality in innumerable ways. Everything from Mus-

lim head-scarfs to chaste Christian virgins, religion is responsible for oppressing millennia of women and organizing society to meet patriarchal male desire. (Granted, it also does other things, eg. start crusades, teach family values, etc, but that's off the topic). Think for second of the religious social mechanics behind 'giving away the bride' or 'saving yourself'. You body shouldn't be some kind of product to be owned, bartered and received 'unspoilt'. If you disagree with me, don't argue, go read an anthropology book.

So before you religious ladies (or even gentlemen), start sending indignant letters of protest against such influences, consider the controlling patriarchal influence of your own religion. It's influence and role in deciding the very private and personal sphere of your sexuality and sexual expression for you. Thankyou.

Mr. Liberal

PS And do try some role-play. It's good fun.

## The author of this letter has probably dropped out, but we'll print it just to stroke his ego

Dear S & M

First of all I'm very pissed off with u guys, after reading issue 10, it was stated in the back that there would be no more of my weekly dose of Craccum till next semester. But low n behold another suddenly appeared in all the stands. Issue 11 discussing a topic very near and dear to my heart. For too long I have flipped through your pages with rambling and abuse about alcohol and politics, where the fuck are the drugs?!! I thought NZ was very tolerant with its substance abuse. So I was very glad to see the coke o'd chick on da cover, it was very comforting. Now I personally don't care if marijuana is legalized or decriminalised as me n my druggie mates have never felt as if we were 'breaking' the law, frequently enjoying jays at our own pleasure in any location especially round uni. And yes party pills are for pussies. So all I can say is more bud plz. *From, In love with myself*  
PS Do you where I could skaw sum coke???

## A pint of confusion concerning absinthe

Dear Rachel,

Thank you for your interest in my column. However, I would like to discuss your points and clarify my own, my apologies for not making myself clearer to begin with.

Thujone is indeed the ingredient historically purported to have hallucino-

genic effects. However, a quick perusal of Wikipedia reveals that no evidence exists of any scientifically documented hallucinatory effects created by said chemical. However, you are right partly in talking about wormwood, as thujone is found in wormwood.

Secondly] although your> punctuation #get's somewhat | unusual around this point ]perhaps one absinthe shot too many^[ yes, "ultra" is what I meant to say. Indeed, you quote correctly most of your measurements. However, a jug is usually slightly less than 1L. We hire them out, and it can exactly fit three 330mL bottles, not taking into account any foaming. Still, this is 39.6mL of alcohol, more than a supposed absinthe shot. I don't know about your girlfriends, and so I am only using myself as reference: a shot takes me approximately five seconds from purchase to consumption; a jug takes about an hour. If you jug-sculled in five seconds, I would be as turned on and surprised as if you were to hold down an absinthe shot. If you would like to meet up in Shadows, I would be happy to pay for the jug if I got to watch a girl (or a group) do a five second jug scull. Inform Matty if interested.

Thirdly, try mixing it with water. It's like drinking a black jellybean, and you don't look like a dick for ordering bourbon and coke.

Lastly, and quickly because this is a bit long, I agree that aniseed does taste wicked, and green is fuckin' cool. Perhaps try Pernod or Marie Brizard Anisette (same taste) on St. Patrick's Day (where everything seems to go green).

Mucho aroha,

[anonymous liquor store dude who is the most awesome person ever and is never wrong, has thoroughly researched all articles, and yet still does not criticise Rach for anything other than her punctuation].

## Craccum is in the Library. No shit

Re: Free Internet: excitement abounds

I'm delighted to read that Paul Crimmins has found the Library, even if it is through the "dubious" back door. (Letters, Craccum07, Issue 12) Everyone loves a bargain and Paul is obviously no exception. What Paul didn't know is that the Library has been providing free Internet access to hundreds of web sites for over 10 years through our EZProxy authentication system. Rather than trawl through the long list that Paul mentions it is a lot simpler and more efficient to use the front door of the Library web site - LEARN.

Here you are able to search, browse and link through to 700 databases, 80,000 e-journals and 280,00 e-books. And there are NO INTERNET CHARGES to your NetAccount - although you will need login if you are off-campus.

So, no need to take up arms and "resist, rebel, defy". Free access to information at the University of Auckland is already available at:

<http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz>  
Brian Flaherty  
Assistant University Librarian - IT  
The University of Auckland Library

## The Muslim Dairy: as evil as Munchy Mart?

Dear craccum I just bought some batteries from the dairy at the corner of Mt. Street for use in a digital camera and found that they didnt work. I went back to the store to see if I could at least get them to have a look at the batteries just so I could figure out if the batteries or my camera were bad. Here is where the shit begins to go crazy and hit the fan.

The lady behind the counter seemed to feel that by saying that the batteries might be crap was a personal insult, she started ranting with the highlights being:

"Where are you from?"

"this is new zealand you cant do it here"

"go to dicksmith, try there, you wont try it there, just because we are a corner dairy you want to stay stuff like this here"

This was soon followed by the oldest I assume store owner, coming out from the back and putting in his own 5 cents:

"Where are you from?"

"We dont want people like you here"

"Get out"

at no point was I ever rude to any body in the store. At no point did I act in a provoking manner and At no point did I question their nationality. I dont understand what defective batteries have to do with where I am from and I didnt them to be both rude and insulting. It was good with comebacks I would have asked them if they would behave the same way with anyone of NewZealand origin. I was disgusted by the filthy way they treated me. Its not the way I treat a customer, Ive been in New Zealand for 10 years and Ive never been in a situation where I was so insulted or made to think that the colour of my skin or my origin had anything to do with a purchase I made in a store.

I know this sort of behavior would be unacceptable at Dicksmit and other stores so what gives the right to a corner store to act in this way. I dont want to say dont shop there but the next time you go there keep in mind that you buy defective goods, you better not look like an immigrant because youll be the rest of new zealand doesnt treat you as an outsider, small minded people like the 2 staff members mentioned at the dairy will not just treat you better, they tempt they will go on to insult you.



## Pull our troops out! I mean, um, the president sucks?

Dear Craccum,

Nothing's really inspired me to write or do anything 'student politics' like before, but right now I'm a bit pissed off and there are a few things that have to be said. I might be scathing, but hey, the truth hurts, doesn't it? Sorry it's a bit long.

Frankly, Lesieli Oliver has been a crap invisible president. I could use the word 'incompetent' but I think her 'record' speaks for herself. Where are the 'more events/vomiting in the quad' promised? Where's that golden jug award she promised last year (whatever that is)? Has she figured out the name of her Womens' Rights Officer yet? What has she actually done in office? Have you ever seen her in the office? Have you ever seen her, full-stop? Have you received any emails from AUSA all year? Where's the leadership?

In 2006, she got the slip at SRC last year when she pleaded it to vote to amend its minutes retrospectively to show that she was there for one of its meetings, thus avoiding being lapsed. Yet in 2007, she decides to vote against the same motion regarding her vice-president in pretty much the same situation. Hypocrisy, I say.

A quad pigeon told me that she's also

a Young Nat, which is even more odious than a Young Labourite! She must be gagging to be a National party MP - why else is she so eager to gain political office? 'No political agendas' my arse.

And why do we see her, desiccated former student politician Graham Watson, and i-sold-drugs-in-the-quad-but-i-was-trespassed-so-now-im-bitter Nick Keesing talking so much together? It's in their interests to have a puppet. After all the dodgy things I hear about those two, I'd be worried too.

Oh yeah and shes pregnant too. If she wins a second term, I struggle to see how she's going to raise a baby AND be a full time president in election year at the same time? Apparently she only comes in for 10 hours a week now, even though shes paid over \$400 for 40 hours. I don't think students are going to be well-served by that. It's not like AUSA's her baby.

Graham Wilson

## What about the munters?

Generation Y is a new buzzword for TV news media, Herald on Sunday and trashy NZ Herald supplements. It involves making an outlandish generalisation about an entire generation with only a small handful of observations as so called evidence of an intergenerational difference.

There is far more variation within generations than between. On 26th June, Close Up treated a small group of dim sounding hairdresser girls with nasally voices, in their early 20s as representative of an entire generation. Treating this group as having something common to all people of that age group is ridiculous.

This age group contains sports arseholes, glue sniffing South Auckland pseudo-gangsters, flighty consumerist homos, dry looking Labour voting lesbians, greasy computer science students, emos, self hating post-modernist humanities students (who are narcissistic about their self hate), sour faced insular ethnics, drunken engineers, perky Christians with gel in their hair, scruffy activists (that look like they smell) and many more groups of people who fit into their stereotypes quite well.

Dim sounding hairdressers with nasally voices in their 20s (with names like Brianna, Tara or Danielle) would be far more similar to dim sounding hairdressers with nasally voices in their 40s (with names like Darlene, Noeline or Latrine).

In addition to ridiculously low sample sizes, generation Y 'studies' are also age confounded, in that it often assumes no one changes their actions or outlook as they age. For studies that take age into account, there is still the 'rose-tinted glasses' problem.

Close Up and the trashy media it has

copied, severely lack substance. Fuck, they suck.

- D

## Crack 'Em returns

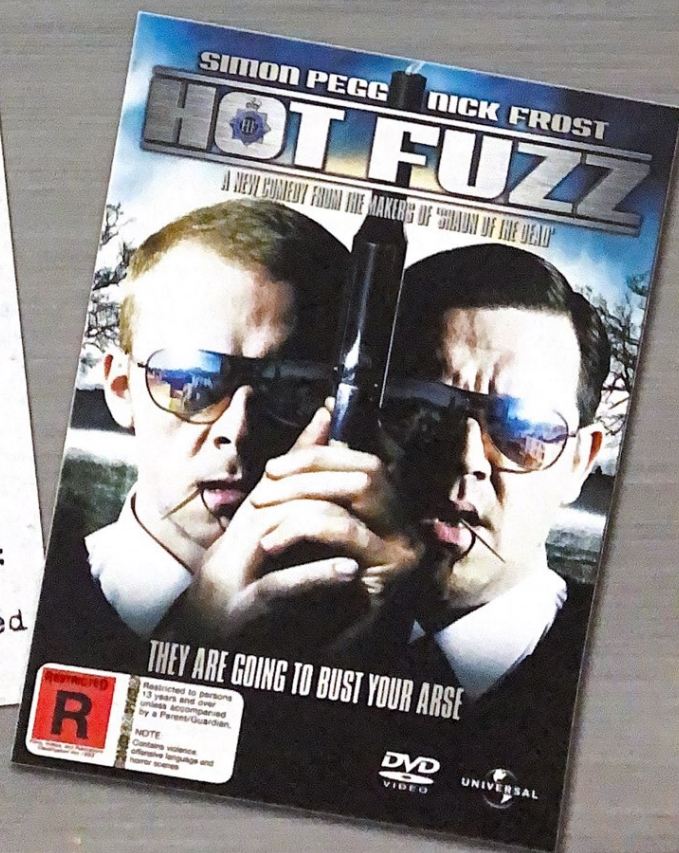
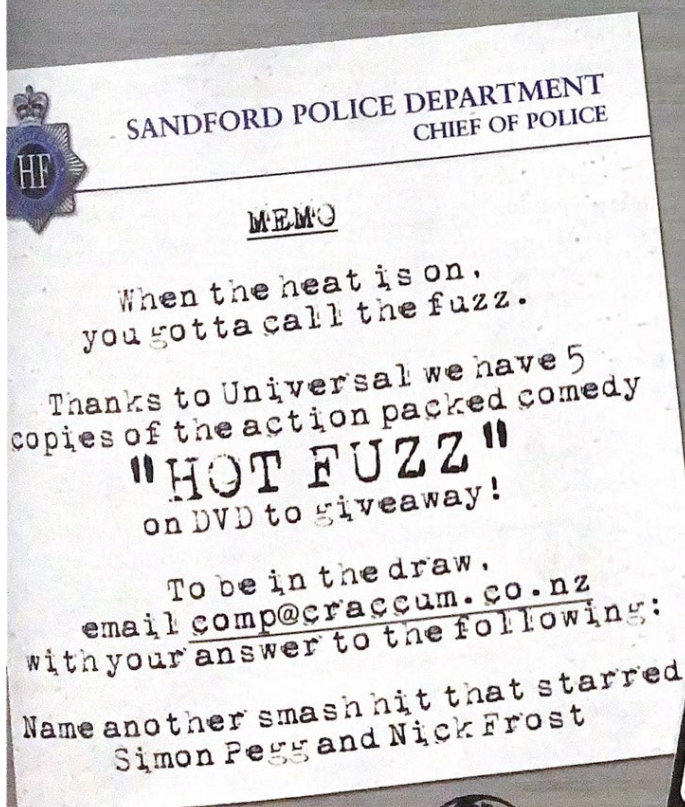
So once again we see the re-emergence of the pisspoor showermat that is 'Crack-Em', by the illustrious Nick Keesing with help from his sidekick Graham Watson.

Frankly people shouldn't believe everything they read. Sometimes it's just shit. They're so keen to attack others of secret agendas and manipulations. They pulled the same tricks last year during the elections and no doubt they'll do it again.

Their particular obsession with a Princes St Labour conspiracy thing just bugs me. They're just a club. A political club yes, more active than others, yes, but it's not some fuckin' conspiracy. If some do-gooders want to run for office, fine. But stop painting them as part of some nefarious conspiracy when no such thing exists.

I'd say that Graham Watson should be transparent and disclose his political affiliations (National and Act), and the candidates he supports (the 'independent' ones), before he starts attacking others. Graham Watson was president of AUSA before most of us were born - what is he still doing hanging around campus and meddling in student affairs? Doesn't he have a life?

Hugh





# Craccum NEWS

With Paul Litterick

## Accountants high-five university for accounting coolness

In a desperate attempt to appear cool and hip with the kids, the University of Auckland has used the word "kudos" in a media release. The press statement related to an award from the NZ Institute of Chartered Accountants, who are widely recognised by scenesters, emo kids and most other subcultures as like the coolest kids on the block. Word.

The Chartered Accountants have given this University their award for the Best Annual Report in the Tertiary Institution category of its 2007 Annual Report Awards. The judges rapped that the 2006 Annual Report had "provided a comprehensive set of information that displayed, in a very readable narration, a clear sense of what the organisation does. Its statements of service performance were well linked to its objectives with a good balance of both qualitative and quantitative information." ZOMG.

Craccum can reveal, exclusively, the University business plan for the next financial year:

1. Raise fees.
2. ???
3. Profit!



UOA TOOK HOME THE BEST ANNUAL REPORT AWARD: THE MOST GLAMOROUS AWARD IN THE EXCITING WORLD OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTING.

## AUSA Executive condemned by Craccum staff

The Editors and staff of Craccum are united in condemnation of the behaviour of members of the AUSA Executive at the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA) conference in Christchurch during the mid-year break. Whilst members of the Victoria University Student Executive behaved in a consistently appalling manner, our own elected representatives did nothing noteworthy. This neglect has led to a catastrophic lack of news and gossip.

Examples of the commendable actions of Victoria University representatives have been published in *Salient*, which is believed to be another student newspaper. VUWSA Education Vice-President stole a Debt Monster costume and wore it while hiding in a cupboard. VUWSA Queer Rights Officer Rachael Wright attended a formal dinner in a miniskirt and faux-fur crop-top sleeveless vest, with the words 'safe space' written on her stomach. She also stripped in a Christchurch bar, and urinated on a street in front of her Executive. The VUWSA "Activities Officer," who goes by the unlikely name of Bernard Galaxy, reportedly licked her urine off the footpath. Members of the Vic Executive staged protests and exploited standing orders. They also walked out of a session after one of their motions failed, leaving behind three members, who later found the others scoffing the afternoon tea.

By contrast, AUSA representatives David Do and Hyo-Jung Kim found the conference "quite interesting in terms of both content and discussions." Hyo-Jung Kim attended the Women's Conference, which focused on menstruation, with sessions on Paid Menstrual Leave, GST on tampons and Reusable Pads (yuk). David Do attended the Men's Conference, which was dominated by whiney emotional issues, such as "breaking down emotional barriers that prevent men from talking or sharing emotionally with each other." Both representatives made detailed notes of the main conference, which Craccum staff cannot be bothered to read.

The AUSA representatives observed that the weather was "cold" and that the "recently renovated library has an indoor garden." David Do reported that he does not like karaoke but Hyo-Jung does. Riveting.

Craccum is saddened by this appalling lack of misbehaviour. Other universities have demonstrated an ability to provide news, gossip and scandal which is lacking in AUSA representatives. Other student newspapers can publish stories about representatives indulging in urinary fetishes, whilst we have someone whose most noteworthy event was tracking down a package which had been delivered to him.

As an award-winning student newspaper with a reputation to maintain, we at Craccum expect worse from our elected representatives.

## Avril Lavigne's talent called into question

Singer-songwriter Chantal Kreviazuk has apologised for suggesting that Avril Lavigne stole one of her songs. Kreviazuk, who comes from Winnipeg and is a lot less famous than Lavigne, had implied that she had written a song called 'Contagious', which is on Lavigne's latest album, but was not credited. The allegations were made in an interview with *Performing Songwriter* magazine. Subsequently, she withdrew the allegation, saying she never intended to call Lavigne's songwriting ability or ethics into question. Meanwhile, Avril Lavigne is herself the subject of a law suit in the USA. The Rubinoos, a New Wave band who were briefly popular in the late 1980s, allege that Lavigne's annoying hit song 'Gothic' sounds suspiciously like their song, 'I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend'. Both songs have a chorus with the line "Hey! Hey! You! You!" Lavigne's manager has said that she is a "collaborative song-writer", which means that other people do most of the writing work.

## Girl kills family, realises she is alone

A thirteen year-old girl from Medicine Hat who killed her family now regrets that she is alone in the world. She wrote a letter to her deceased parents after her arrest for slaughtering her family saying "I wish I could take everything back. I wish it hadn't happen [sic], I wish you were with me right now. Because now I have no one."

The girl, who cannot be named, helped her boyfriend murder her mother, a holistic healing practitioner, father and little brother at their home. Her parents had objected to her relationship with the boyfriend, who is 25. The couple had watched *Natural Born Killers* before the murders and had sex afterwards at a drug dealer's house. Then they tried to flee to another Province but were soon arrested.

The astonishing stupidity of the killers has been further confirmed by letters between them written when they were in custody. In one letter, the girl wrote "My lawyer tells me we're legends, making closer to immortality it would seem." In another the boyfriend proposed marriage, a proposal she accepted. The court was also shown a really bad poem, which was found in her school locker on the day of the murders. It began "May the fire and flame of all hell come and greet you at death's doorstep/May the hatred and anger built of burning infernos fill you and overcome you." The girl's creative writing talents were also shown in the letter of apology, in which she wrote "I am writing in response to the events of Sunday morning. A terrible thing happened, something I feel was all my fault. You must know I love you all dearly and am in my prayers. I wish peace upon your souls in the summerland."

The couple met at a local mall, where he impressed her by performing dumplings in his tea. The age difference between them was an issue for her parents. It will also be an issue for him, which the girl can serve a maximum of six years, due to her age, he is likely to be imprisoned for life.

# canada NEWS



# media snuff

With Matthew Backhouse

Last month, a worrying trend in modern journalism was highlighted by local and international media outlets: the aggressive scrutiny of individuals by the media. This is hardly a new development, but it is a trend that is being increasingly driven by dwindling newspaper circulations, ruthless competition for stories and an ever-growing rivalry between publications. The predatory imperative to get 'the scoop' has led to what Mark Sainsbury describes as a "feeding frenzy," while Tony Blair last month characterised the media as a "feral beast."

As the BBC reported, Blair was particularly scathing of British newspapers in their scramble for a share of a "shrinking market":

"He said fierce competition for stories meant that the modern media now hunted 'in a pack'."

"In these modes it is like a feral beast, just tearing people and reputations to bits, but no-one dares miss out," he said.

The result was that the media was increasingly 'and to a dangerous degree' driven by 'impact' which was, in turn, 'unravelling standards, driving them down.'"

These are strong words from a man who has actively wooed the media throughout his time in power, especially considering how moderately Blair has been treated by the media in even his weakest moments. But Blair's words are not merely hypocritical - they represent a dangerous precedent, one where politicians may seek to regulate the media to their political advantage. Culture spokesman for the Liberal Democrats, Don Foster, commented:

"Hints at the need for increased regulation of the press are deeply worrying. Politicians may not like what is sometimes written about them, but a free press is the best safeguard for accountability and against corruption and hypocrisy."

A fair comment, but the flip-side to press freedom in such an aggressive market is that unethical reporting can go unchecked, unless it veers into the realm of defamation. Case in point: the New Zealand Press Council's recent ruling on Deborah Coddington's infamous *North and South* article about Asian crime. *North and South* has not apologised for printing the article, and inadequately complied with its Press Council obligation to publish the substance of the ruling. Coddington continues to stand by her opinions, describing the Press Council ruling as "pathetic" in her *Herald on Sunday* column.

Coddington received nothing more than a slap on the wrist for making sweeping generalisations, but what happens when the "feral beasts" run smear campaigns against individuals? It happens all the time to politicians, as Blair duly noted, and the media can be equally ferocious towards individuals who attempt to serve the public interest.

*Close Up* last month highlighted the plight of Debbie Gerbich, the woman who anonymously outed the Shipton sex tapes and subsequently committed suicide earlier this month. Her partner, Bill McNeilly, told *Close Up* that he believes the media's harassment of Gerbich was

a significant contributing factor in her decision to take her life. Mark Sainsbury likened her treatment by the media to a "feeding frenzy."

Gerbich first spoke out about the sex tapes to the *Sunday News*, for a price. Jim Tully, senior journalism lecturer at the University of Canterbury, told *Close Up* that he has "huge concerns about chequebook journalism" because "it can lead to embellishment ... and entrapping people into selling stories." Nonetheless, he praised the *Sunday News* for honouring its agreement to protect Gerbich's anonymity.

However, Gerbich's anonymity did not last. *The Herald's* Steve Cooke discovered her identity and ran comprehensive background checks on her. Cooke's colleague, Patrick Gower, appears to have subscribed to a bondage personals website in order to retrieve information from Gerbich's profile, which listed "policeman/policewoman/prisoner" and "rapist/victim" under activities. Steve Cooke then attempted to harass her into talking by threatening to reveal details about her life. "Any reasonable person reading those emails would detect a note of intimidation and bullying, and I think there's a threat implicit in those emails," commented Tully. Gerbich didn't talk to Steve Cooke, but the *Herald* ran stories on her regardless.

*The Herald's* actions were questionable, but as Tully noted, "the confidentiality rests with those who have given the confidentiality," in this case the *Sunday News*. But when the issue enters the public domain "it doesn't stop other people from wanting to discover who it was and to reveal whatever they choose to reveal."

What protection does an individual have in these circumstances? The criminal system provides protection if there are overt threats of violence, but Tully points out that "in this particular case you've got a fairly vulnerable person who is being subject to quite obvious intimidation, and I can't see an easy protection for them in those circumstances because we have very aggressive media these days." Tully further commented:

"I think we live in a media age where it's open season in every sense. Once this woman was in the public domain ... there was a public interest in knowing more about her. She was making serious allegations in a serious manner, so there is an argument that we need to find out who it is, and we need to tell the public who she is, so they can make a judgement as to the credibility of that person. People want people to front up, and the credibility lies with people who are open and honest, like Louise Nicholas."

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*The Herald's* Steve Cooke didn't see any need for such accountability himself, refusing to comment on *Close Up*. "This is where you leave yourselves open to ... charges of hypocrisy," says Tully. "The media are going to expect people to front up, to be named, to be transparent. They wanted this woman to be named and transparently accountable, and yet they're not going to front."

Tully then touched upon the same concerns that Blair raised last month - the increasingly competitive and market-driven nature of the news media:



THE FERAL BEASTS SWOOP IN ON A TEENAGE P ADDICT



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RIGHT KEYS  
AND YOU  
COULD WIN!



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# evil walks these halls

## ALI ALATAS'S AUCKLAND RECEPTION

**On Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup> May, the ASEAN at Forty conference, organised by the NZ Asia Institute, was held in the Clock Tower at the University of Auckland. ASEAN is the Association of South East Asian Nations. One of the speakers at the conference was Ali Alatas – Indonesia's former foreign minister and current advisor to the Indonesian president. Dion Walker investigates Alatas's sordid background and the local response to his visit.**

### Ali Alatas

Ali Alatas was Indonesia's foreign minister from 1988 to 1999. During most of that time, General Suharto was dictator of the nation. During his time in power, Suharto's regime murdered at least half a million people deemed political opponents (and their family members), invaded West Papua and wiped out close to one third of East Timor's population.

Alatas was the regime's chief apologist in the international arena. Alatas's work helped the Suharto regime receive support from the US federal government and a lack of outspoken condemnation by foreign governments over the atrocities the Suharto regime was committing.

In 1995, while in Dresden, Germany, Alatas pulled the fingers at a group of protestors calling for the release of the East Timorese resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao. Gusmao was eventually released and became president of East Timor once independence was won. During the 1997 APEC conference in Canada, Alatas announced that if any Indonesians were participating in the protests outside, they would be severely punished if they ever returned to Indonesia.

In addition to war crimes and human rights abuses, members of the Suharto regime stole huge fortunes from the government's coffers, including taxpayer revenue; mining, oil and gas revenues; and loans from the World Bank and IMF that the people of Indonesia now have to pay off. Suharto's ill-gotten gains are estimated by Transparency International to be between \$15 to \$35 billion US. The Alatas family became beneficiaries of crony capitalism, eventually gaining partial control over several garment sweatshops.

Alatas filled an important role in the Suharto dictatorship. The more one learns about Alatas, the more one discovers that he assumed his role out of greed or unitary-state fanaticism rather than as a result of coercion. If the principles that were held to Ribbentrop (Nazi foreign minister) at Nuremberg were applied to Alatas, Alatas would be hanged for war crimes.

### The protest

The Suharto regime murdered thousands of students for belonging to opposition groups or simply speaking out against the regime; yet a high ranking member of this regime was invited as an esteemed guest to the University of Auckland. Protest was necessary to spread awareness of and show opposition to Alatas's villainy and his invitation to this campus.

Before the protest started, my brother Cameron and two others decided to enter the conference room, since the advert on the university website claimed "All welcome." The conference was held in the tiny presentation room of the Clock Tower. All of the seats were taken, mostly by suits. A diplomatic protection squad (DPS) member immediately ordered Cameron's group to leave the room. The DPS members are special cops that dress in a way that makes them look like the bad guys from *Prison Break*.

Once Cameron's group left the room, the protest started outside the Clock Tower.

I entered the Clock Tower through a back entrance. I went up to the ground level, and a DPS member told me to exit the building. I asked why. He said that the Clock Tower was reserved for a private function. "Even the basement?" I asked

with a puzzled expression. "Yes," he answered. I was about to question him on why the entire building – which was a public place of many functions – could be off-limits to students due to a conference that took up only one small room on the top floor. I decided not to, because I saw a glimpse of two men in blue uniforms. I soon found out that they were security guards, not cops.

Minutes passed, and several uniformed cops arrived. One of them occupied a Clock Tower balcony at the back. Another was roaming. The other two guarded the front entrance, preventing anyone from entering the Clock Tower, including students and *Tearaway* journalists not participating in the protest.



### Media coverage

The only TV news coverage of the protest was on *Darpan The Mirror*, a news and current affairs show on Triangle TV, played 19:30-20:30 on Fridays. Cameron was interviewed. The ASEAN organisers refused to appear on camera when commenting on the protest outside. The organisers told *Darpan* that they were "skeptical" of the protesters' "sincerity" and said the "sole intention" of the protesters was to cause "chaos."

### The NZ establishment

On the 23rd May Helen Clark had the following to say about Alatas at the Alliance of Civilisations Symposium dinner:

*"On that note, it is my honour to introduce His Excellency, Mr Ali Alatas, one of Asia's most respected statesmen, and a good friend of New Zealand's for many years... The New Zealand Government greatly values Ali Alatas taking time out from his exceptionally busy schedule to be with us and address the symposium this evening, so that we can all benefit and learn from his very considerable international experience."*

National MP Tim Groser spoke at the ASEAN conference. When Groser visited East Timor, he encountered widespread support for Fretilin (the resistance movement) and independence. He said that he couldn't understand why East Timorese wouldn't support the obvious compromise of substantial autonomy.

If Adolf Hitler was alive today, Nazis and Labourites would probably want to lick his arse. The AUSA Execs were invited to a meeting. Alatas was present at the night before. Fortunately, not all of them have this power worship complex (probably just the self proclaimed matriarch have this). I've heard that at least one AUSA Exec was intending to say something to Alatas but didn't get the opportunity because he was too busy being eyed by the DPS for dressing casually to everyone else.



PHIL GOFF LAUGHS AT ALI ALATAS'S JOKE ABOUT THE DILI MASSACRE. WANKERS



# NEWS SATIRE

## a learning experience?

By David Parfitt

"A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes" - Mark Twain

Since journalism arose, it has coexisted alongside news satire. News satire is a type of parody presented in a format typical of mainstream journalism, and it is extremely prevalent today, both on television – with programmes such as *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* – and on the internet, with satirical websites such as *The Onion* and any number of satirical blogs. While innocuous when taken for what it is, one must question whether the general populace has enough cranial aptitude to sift out the satirical from the real journalism. This is where problems arise: some people might not recognise satire for what it is and feel that they have been informed, or worse yet, they might recognise satire for what it is, and still believe that they've learned something.

Let us rewind 150 years, to when a young newspaper reporter for the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise* started writing spoof articles which later went down in history as the first satire recorded in print. The author of the pieces, Samuel Clemens (a.k.a. Mark Twain), was shocked to discover that his 'hoax' news had become so successful in convincing his readership of untruths that he was dismissed from both the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise* and a San Francisco-based publication. After his satirical pieces were not perceived for what they were, he was said to utter the above quote.

In the 1960s satirical news popped up all over the United Kingdom's airwaves, with shows by the likes of Peter Cook, Alan Bennett, Jonathan Miller, David Frost, Eleanor Bron and Dudley Moore. These shows were later copied in the United States, albeit with a talkback-style presentation, by the likes of *Saturday Night Live*.

The most popular contemporary satirical news shows are the aforementioned duo of *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, which appear on the US channel Comedy Central and are syndicated worldwide. *The Daily Show* is an unholy matrimony between comedy and *Larry King Live* where it seems the purpose of the show is not – as Bill O'Reilly suggested to

Jon Stewart – just for "yucks," but to actually promote prevalent social and political issues through a comedic medium. Even FOX News is launching a news satire program, which looks set to be the only informative show in its line-up: *The Half Hour News Hour*.

But one must wonder if, as in nineteenth-century Nevada, people have trouble perceiving the line that separates the satirical from the factual. In a recent *Craccum* survey, respondents were asked whether programmes like *The Daily Show* were informative news media. Twenty-three percent responded no, fifteen percent answered yes, and a whopping sixty-two percent said that they didn't even know that *Transformers* was in cinemas yet. This evidence aside, a 2004 report by the Annenberg Public Policy Center used a sample of 19,013 adults to find that, on a six-item political knowledge test, people who did not watch any late-night comedy programmes in the past week answered 2.62 questions correctly, while viewers of *Letterman* answered 2.91, viewers of *Leno* answered

## Satirical news – a format that is in contempt of all other media – is actually intelligent, informative and (h)ilarious: the three 'I's of good media.

2.95, and viewers of *The Daily Show* answered 3.59 questions correctly. That's a difference of sixteen percent between *Daily Show* viewers and those respondents who did not watch any late night programming. These figures seem to suggest that satirical news – a format that is in contempt of all other media – is actually intelligent, informative and (h)ilarious: the three 'I's of good media.



Jon Stewart: the most trusted man in America?

One cannot disregard the amount of trust that the general population invests in its news-readers (remember, Judy Bailey can do no wrong). But does this cross over to the satirists? Enter Jon Stewart, a fake news host. Funny and arguably the most entertaining interviewer in politics, Stewart has become today's Walter Cronkite. Actually, not today's Walter Cronkite, who has been painted as an out-of-the-closet myopic liberal. No, Stewart is more likely 1974's Walter Cronkite: the most trusted man in America. His *Daily Show* on the Comedy Channel is arguably the most consistently witty show on television, and it also just might be the most honest news show, fake or real. Of course, one must also take into account the statistic that Bill O'Reilly provided in his interview with Stewart on *The O'Reilly Factor*: eighty-seven percent of Stewart's viewers are intoxicated while watching *The Daily Show*. I'm sure that Cronkite didn't need alcohol or marijuana to be trusted in the same way that Stewart is, but never mind.

Whether you're drunk, stoned, or meth'd

up, satirical news has something to offer in terms of informative viewing and maybe – just maybe – some humour. This is, of course, based on the premise that viewers are actually able to discern satire from fact, which there is unfortunately no evidence in support of. But if the research we have is to be believed, then people actually do learn about the issues of the day from the non-issues of the day.



# reorientation '07

July 16th - 20th

8 FOOT SATIVA  
STATE OF MIND  
PACIFIC HEIGHTS  
WITH PDIGSSS  
SLIPPING TONGUE  
TYRA AND  
THE TORNADOES  
DJ EXILE  
CRAZY QUAD EVENTS  
AND MORE!





# Timetable

## Monday

### Formula Keg

(Quad, 11-1)

Form teams and compete to be the fastest keg racer in all of Auckland University as we set up a race track in the Quad. Be the next Lewis Hamilton or Scott Dixon! Except on a keg... Prizes of bartabs to be won!

### Badtown with The 4 Mexicanos

(Shadows Bar 9pm, Free to AK uni students with student ID, \$10 others)

**badtown** - 3 piece west auckland ska/rock/punk/reggae band. Lou Dog on the 6 stringer and 1st vox, muttrox on the skins/bv's and matty on the 4 banger n bv's. Been around nearly 3 years and have an album due out very soon. Won the first round of the rock scholarship on the rock, then got a new artist recording grant from nz on air. Won Alt tv's first series of top of the rocks which led to recording hopeless situation at york st. Made a video for it and now have just scored a grant to make a video for jenny rude. Play the tracks and watch the first vid @ <http://www.myspace.com/badtownnz>. We've a summer tour in the making around x mas n new years so stay tuned for badtown...and the rocks.

**The 4 Mexicanos** - They're a four piece rockin' ska band from out west, all bout 19 or 20, Adam on vox and gats, Jude on vox and keys, Jon on skins and Paul on bass.

Ya can look them up @ <http://www.myspace.com/thefourmexicanos>. Mad skanking music.

## Tuesday

### b-day

(Quad, 12-2)

AUSA's premier globe trotting radio station presents a day of bands and DJs from the bfm stable right to you in the Quad, don't cats normally have to pay for this sort of thing? Not you!

### Pub Quiz, Soulsion

(Shadows Bar, Evening)

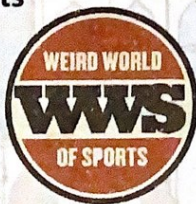
**SOULSION** - a groovy originals funk/rock band, with a unique style, that also incorporates the sounds of hiphop/pop/reggae into their music that can only be matched by the groups high energy live performances and mastiff stage presence.

## Wednesday

### Weird World Of Sports

(Quad, 12-2)

Bill and Ben from Pulp Sports host the C4 televised debut of the Weird World Of Sports. Form a team and participate and claim your 15 minutes of fame on nation wide TV! Today's weird sport... Water balloon beach volley ball! Prepare to get wet and see The Quad get transformed into a holiday resort style beach for the day. Never to be repeated! Well maybe if they let us...



### Eight Foot Sativa with Slipping Tongue

(Shadows Bar 9pm, Free to AK uni students with student ID, \$10 others)

**8 Foot Sativa** - New Zealand's premier metal band 8-Foot Sativa have risen from the Wild West of Auckland becoming a household name and creating Metal history in New Zealand. The huge success of their three previous albums, national tours, break-through chart positions and exposure in the main stream media has never before been seen in this country by a heavy metal band. As all 8 Foot Sativa fans are aware, the band have endured many line-

up changes and obstacles over the years and yet always come out on top. With the current line up they're leaner and hungrier than ever. Industry and band politics will always take a back seat



to what is central to the 8 Foot credo; making kick-ass music. In 2002 the bands debut album Hate Made Me achieved Gold status in New Zealand, putting 8 Foot Sativa at the top of the food chain straight out of the gate. 2003's Season For Assault garnered five star reviews, entered the album charts at number 6, and made it to number 1 on the independent charts, a first for a Metal band in New Zealand. In 2005 8 Foot released their third album, Breed The Pain, recorded in Sweden with Studio Underground's Pelle Saether (Carnal Forge, Fleshcrawl). The band so enjoyed the dynamic with the veteran producer/engineer that he was brought on board for the bands latest album release, 'Poison of Ages'. AUSA is stoked to be able to snare 8 Foot Sativa to perform on campus for Reorientation '07, fresh from the release of their new album - should be a huge night!

**Slipping Tongue** - New up and coming rockers "Slipping Tongue" are here to support Eight Foot Sativa - they've been here once before supporting Blindspott at Orientation '07 and they got such a good reaction from the heaving crowd at Shadows we had to bring them back for another show. A stonkin' rock band with a female vocalist that has everyone in the industry standing up to take notice.

## Thursday

### What Would You Do?

(Quad, 12-1)

Fear Factor meets Who Dares Wins meets the twisted minds of the AUSA Events Team. Compete for cash prizes if you dare. Prepare yourselves for the most disgusting trials of eating products both alive and dead that you'd never touch in a million years... Unless someone offered you the right amount of cash? Right?

### Tyra and the Tornadoes with The Midnights

(Shadows Bar 9pm, Free to AK uni students with student ID, \$10 others)

**The Tornadoes** - Formed by Auckland-based collective Opensouls and with special guests drawn from New Zealand's top acts - including Fat Freddy's Drop, The Reeloc Live Band and One Million Dollars - The Tornadoes and vocal sensation Tyra



Hammond have set the standard for the local funk/soul scene since their 2005 debut. Having already treated discerning listeners to a handful of highly sought after 7" vinyl releases, the group are currently working towards a full length release for summer. With a reputation for high octane live performances and drawing on funk, soul, afro-beat and latin influences, The Tornadoes are putting their own stamp on the music they love.

**The Midnights** - Based in Auckland, New Zealand The Midnights represent live reggae at its raw and exciting best! The Midnights original reggae sound is infused with a hypnotic blend of psychedelic soul, jazz and rhythm & blues and distinctively always combines a gritty rhythmic basis with a sweet melodic top end. The Midnights specialty is their live show, which is renowned for tightness, danceability and improvisation. The group intersperse their more direct soul reggae songs with adventurous fusions that flex and reinterpret the genre with wild dashes of horns, improvised harmonies and raw rhythmic workouts that leave every crowd bathed in a satisfied glow. The Midnights have built a strong following around New Zealand and shared the stage with the best

of the country's Roots groups including Fat Freddy's Drop, Kora, Salmonella Dub, Katchafire, Cornerstone Roots, House of Shem, Rhombus, Batucada Sound Machine, Unity Pacific, The Kingites and many more. The Midnights have also supported International artists from South Africa (Tidal Waves), Australia (Dubdoubt) and Jamaica (opening for reggae originators the legendary Skatalites).

## Friday

### Clubs Day (Quad, 11-3)

AUSA affiliated clubs demonstrate what they can offer to you if you join. See performances both weird, wild and most of all, enjoying! And you can join them and experience it for yourself!

### State of Mind, Pacific Heights with P Digsss, Ransomplay, DJ Exile

(Galatos Bar 8.30pm, Free to AK Uni students with student ID, \$10 other students, \$20 public)

**State Of Mind** is a duo consisting of Patrick Hawkins and Stu Maxwell. The two certified audio engineers met in 1999 through the drum and bass scene in Auckland, New Zealand. Finding that they both shared a background in hard rock music, and even trip hop, it was drum and bass that was the most powerful musical link between the two. State Of Mind host the 95BFM drum n' bass show 'Next Level' (Thursday 11pm-1am [www.95bfm.com](http://www.95bfm.com)) bi-weekly (with DJ Presha handling the other weeks) and as DJ's have played several major music festivals in New Zealand including AUSA's massive Orientation '07 gig at the St James, Phat 06, and Resolution 2005, attended by some 7000 people. November 2005 saw the boys play support on Concord Dawns national NZ tour, and in August 2005, they played support on all 3 dates of Pendulum's 'Hold Your Colour' LP tour across New Zealand which was a massive success. Internationally they have also travelled to Australia to play support for Matrix and the USA's Dieselboy, and are planning a USA / European tour for early 2007. Their sets are always show stealers and the reputation of dancefloor filling domination these two talented DJs bring is spreading fast. This is the one and only show off campus for AUSA's Reorientation '07, and with a stellar supporting lineup including Pacific Heights featuring Shapeshifter members Reno and Pdigsss with special guest Nick D, Ransomplay and DJ Exile, this will absolutely go off!

**Pacific Heights** - DJ Reno - A leader in the underground New Zealand music scene, Pacific Heights founder Devin Abrams (DJ Reno) is renowned for his production talents and energetic stage presence. Devin's love of music grew from the jazz greats and the soulful sounds of Motown.

He is an acclaimed saxophone player and attended Christchurch Jazz School where he became a founding member of top New Zealand band, Shapeshifter. With Shapeshifter Devin constantly tours throughout New Zealand, Australia and Europe building crowds into a frenzy with their energetic and electrifying live show. Shapeshifter have enjoyed a great amount of album sales and have picked up a huge variety of awards, in 2006 they were awarded a phenomenal 3 awards at the New Zealand bnet music awards for Best Live Act, Song of the Year for "Bring Change" and Album of the Year for Soultice, which just recently went platinum. Devin has a fast growing reputation as a top DJ, as he DJs around New Zealand and Australia in the genres of hip-hop, soul, jazz, disco, house, funk, broken beat and drum and bass. Devin has had an extremely busy and successful career to date. He has released four albums, two EPs, and one mix CD to date with Shapeshifter and Pacific Heights, as well as doing session work and remixes for a range of top New Zealand acts. There are no signs of this talented musician slowing down - he is currently recording his second Pacific Heights album, featuring top New Zealand vocalists which will be released early 2008. Co-Headlining with State of Mind, and with special guest P Digsss riding shotgun, this is going to be a monster set at Galatos!





# A Statistical Deconstruction of Fucking

## ReO-Week

"Statistics are like women; mirrors of purest virtue and truth, or like whores to use as one pleases"

— Theodor Billroth.

Ah, ReO-Week! Normally O-ing for the second time is awesome, but not with this sort of O. There's more first years, kids who realised they can't hack the second half of seventh form, and then there's the rest of us – old, haggard, and knowing that any Os we experience this week will be poor, tasteless, and lacking in any merit whatsoever, just like an episode of *Survivor*. But this week's column is for the former. There is no doubt that many people new to UoA will be looking for an easy lay this week; we intend to, in the spirit of charity and all that shit, point you in the right direction. And not with our penises: with STATISTICS.

We began with two postulates, perceived as true by many:

- 1) Commerce girls dress like they're from the Shore.
- 2) "Shore girl, sure thing" (Shore girls are sexually promiscuous, and easy).

>> Therefore, commerce girls are sexually promiscuous.

### STASTICAL EVIDENCE:

We have very strong evidence that commerce girls are more sexually promiscuous than other girls. **Girls who do commerce are, on average, between 5.4% and 42.1% less likely to be virgins than girls who do not.** Girls who are not virgins are infinitely more likely to have had sex than girls who are virgins. Therefore, in Re-O week, or any other week, if one is looking for a sexual partner, one is between 5.4% and 42.1% more likely to get lucky with a commerce girl than a not commerce girl. This is assuming:

- 1) Virgins will not have sex in Re-O week: if you've waited this long, the chances are one week will not make too much difference.
- 2) Non-virgins will have sex again in Re-O week: once you pop, you can't stop.

however, these assumptions are fallible. Firstly, the fact that you're reading *Craccum* – and an article about statistics, no less – implies you have no friends (it's true. Get your mind out of the gutter and read something cool instead – eds). Also, the

fact that Shadows will be your haunt of choice means you will smell, and be drunk; therefore, even if you get into position, so to speak, you will not be able to perform. Thus, your chances of scoring this week are somewhere between none and zero.

We have extremely strong evidence that the more years since a girl was last a virgin, the higher her number of sexual partners. **For each year since a girl lost her virginity, she is likely to accumulate between 0.3 and 1.9 sexual partners, on average, or averagely 1.1 people, or,**



WHILE THE PROBABILITY OF THIS MAN GETTING SOME TONIGHT IS AS CLOSE TO 1 AS YOU CAN GET, UNFORTUNATELY THE CHANCE OF YOU EVER BEING IN THIS SITUATION IS JUST AS CLOSE TO ZERO. THAT'S WHY THE SHORE IS SO USEFUL.

even more averagely, 1 person a year. Therefore, in Re-O week, there is a 1/52 chance that a girl will have sex with a new person. This is of course assuming that sex is spread evenly over the year. If my personal preferences are anything to go by, it is. And by that, I don't mean none all year round. Giggity.

**Inquisitive Statistician No. 1:** *How much would someone have to pay you to have sex with them?*

**Commerce Girl:** *I guess a bottle of vodka would do.*

### SOCIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE:

Given that we don't have any further evidence to explain the perception of commerce girls as loose front-bums, we're turning to explain things sociologically. And evidentially. But mostly with reference to society.

We probingly investigated Takapuna, the traditional breeding ground for many university-age

shore girls, on a Thursday night, the traditional breeding night for many university-age shore girls. We also probingly investigated Takapuna girls. Being the manly men we are, we started off in a place called the Sin Bin. What we found was an alarmingly high level of the cock, and a correspondingly alarmingly low level of the front-bum. Around the corner was the Copper Room, with an equally alarming ratio of cock to front-bum. Therefore, I put it forward that guys on the shore have it sussed, in that they realise if they all band together, there are no guys for the girls to get.

Thus, the guys have overcome the prisoners' dilemma. The girls, having experienced the lack of male attention, feel compelled to seek this attention actively, and, thus, they throw themselves at men at the first available opportunity. However, unbeknownst to them, this behaviour pattern has become so ingrained in shore girls that they feel that they must continue it in Auckland-proper, whereas guys here, accustomed to adopting the traditional pursuer-role, interpret this role-reversal as promiscuity on the part of shore girls.

### CONCLUSION:

This theory is borne out by the statistics. **100% of shore girls interviewed were from the shore.** Thus, it stands to reason that they are in fact shore girls, or, more accurately, girls from the shore. Given the fact that "shore" and "sure" are homonyms, **it is an indisputable fact that anyone from a shore of any sort whatsoever is sure.** Thus, shore girls are skanky-ass biatches. Assuming this to be true, and assuming premise one to be true also (that commerce girls are from the shore), **anyone looking for cheap, easy sex over Re-O week ought to hang out around OGH.** Make like a camel, and hump.

Also, it could just be that shore/commerce guys sure are metro-wankers; thus, shore guys are not actually smart enough to have overcome the prisoners' dilemma, but have simply created this situation by an obsession with themselves and whether their hair is spiked up properly. Guys on this side of the bridge never need to worry about whether they're spiked up properly. Perhaps a topic for a future column.

Matt and Pabs



# TECH NEWS WITH DANIEL SLOAN

## PS3 BLUES

There must be some very worried businessmen in Sony Computer Entertainment headquarters in Japan, as Sony has had to apologise for using the Manchester Cathedral in the shoot-'em-up game *Resistance: Fall of Man*. There is some good news for Sony, though, with the PS3 outselling the Xbox 360 at a rate of more than 2:1.

## WII ARE THE CHAMPIONS

Console sales figures for June show the Nintendo Wii outselling the PS3 at a rate of six to one. The Wii is also hot property in the US, with many chains unable to satisfy demand and customers using web-based tools such as the 'Wii Finder Widget' to find stores close to them with stock.

## BARCELONA!

AMD's 'Barcelona' quad-core processor will be shipping in the US in April. Intel's quad-core offering has been on the market for some time, and according to company reports, has sold just over 1 million units. Intel's 2.4 GHz Q6600 is currently selling at \$815. 'Barcelona' will debut with a clock speed of 2 GHz.

## IPHAIL

Turns out Apple's iPhone won't work with Telecom or Vodafone sims, due to the exclusive nature of Apple's deal with AT&T in the US – although it has been confirmed that the SIM protection has been cracked already. While negotiations with Vodafone are apparently underway to bring the iPhone here, there is still the small matter of the repressive mobile bandwidth charges in New Zealand. There is also the not-so-small matter of the price – \$499 US for the 4Gb model, with an 8Gb model costing \$599 US.



## MINORITY REPORT BECOMES A REALITY

Ever read a Sci-Fi book from the fifties? You know, the ones where we're going to have flying cars, robot butlers and live in houses towering miles above the surface of the earth by 1999? We've reached the 21st century, and the closest we've come is training guide dogs to crap directly into plastic bags\* (which is thoroughly awesome, don't get me wrong). That all changed earlier this year with Microsoft's announcement of a new technology called 'Surface'.

Surface, according to MS, is a computer that "turns an ordinary table-top into a vibrant, interactive surface" – meaning that it is effectively a touch-screen monitor that you use as a table top. Microsoft's demonstration videos indicate that Surface computing will move users away from the desktop setup of monitor, mouse, keyboard and box. Surface users, much like the computer technicians in *Minority Report*, will be able to use their hands to physically shuffle photos and arrange windows (instead of using a mouse) or even paint with their fingers or use a brush.

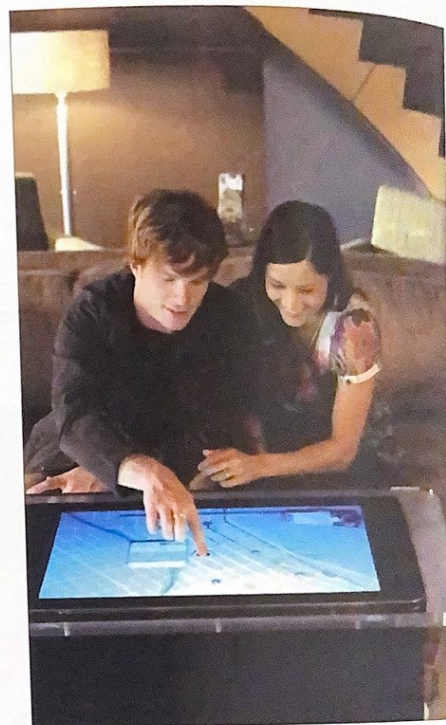
Surface's hardware consists of a 30 inch touch-sensitive screen that sits on top of a box, much like a solid-base table. The components of the computer are held in the box under the screen. Surface runs on Vista and also has wireless capabilities. Because of the unique way it interacts with peripherals, it has no USB or Firewire ports. But this doesn't mean it's any less connectable – far from it.

One of Surface's more revolutionary technologies is that it allows more than one user to operate a computer at a time – the current generation of computers will refuse to cooperate if you press four or more keys – and, as you can imagine, this represents a pretty big step in terms of usability. Microsoft's publicity hasn't just focussed on the home-users; if you believe MS, there are potentially dramatic commercial and retail applications for Surface as well – such as having an entire restaurant menu at your fingertips, or accessing your bank account by simply putting your credit card on the screen. Put a digital camera on Surface, and the images will be downloaded automatically and shown in Polaroid-style snapshots.

While it seems like a big advance, Surface isn't the first of its kind. Early last year, it was reported that the US Military is actually developing an interface much like the one seen in *Minority Report*. There are also reservations about how far Surface can go as a purely Microsoft endeavour – like all electronics, someone in Asia usually manages to make a cheaper and better version. While Microsoft may have invented the concept, it will be the cheaper, generic brands that push it in to the realm of affordability. But if the current generation of video game consoles is anything to go by, that could take a while. Especially when there's a much cheaper alternative that lets you write and draw with your hands and fingers as well – it's called paper, and costs a damn sight less than the \$10,000 US that the Surface will set you back.

While Surface seems like the best thing Microsoft has come up with for some time, there are some questions; will the Surface computer get up and run away if you don't activate it properly? Where's the 'ANY' key? Come to think of it, where the hell are any of the keys? And will we get used to the 'blue coffee-table of death'? Only time will tell.

*\*At the time of going to press, no one has invented a practical flying car. D.S.*





# a genus of failure: SHIT DATES

We all know how the perfect night should go – dinner, dancing, perhaps even going home with your partner of choice for a spot of the old coitus. But for some of us, finding a boyfriend or girlfriend can be difficult, or even life-threatening. Dan Sloan and Kremlin Josephine examine the realities of when dates go wrong.

## The 'Plumber' Date

### SITUATION

You find yourself at a candle-lit table, dining out and conversing with your 'special friend'. Somewhere between the witty repartee and the second course, your date begins to regale you with a story of his epic battle with a septic tank that was doing tsunami impressions on a dirt farm in Whitford. Not surprisingly, the vindaloo you ate twenty minutes ago decides to make an encore appearance, and you rise to excuse yourself with a mind to get to the ladies as quickly as possible. After a few minutes of power-chucking, you hear your date banging on the bathroom door, asking if you've blocked the sink, and if so, not to worry – he's got the perfect tools for the job in the van.

### ANALYSIS

Why does this disastrous date fall into its own category? Due to the boom in the housing and property market, skilled tradesmen are in short sup-

ply, often working long hours in order to capitalise on the boom of commercial activity. The problem is that this 'boom' has been going on for a few years now, robbing many tradesmen of their social lives, and consequently, many tradesmen now totally fail in any romantic situation at all. Should we really be surprised? Plumbers work with pipes, brick layers are obsessed with the 'perfect lay' and carpenters spend their whole lives living in the shadow of a man who died almost 2000 years ago.

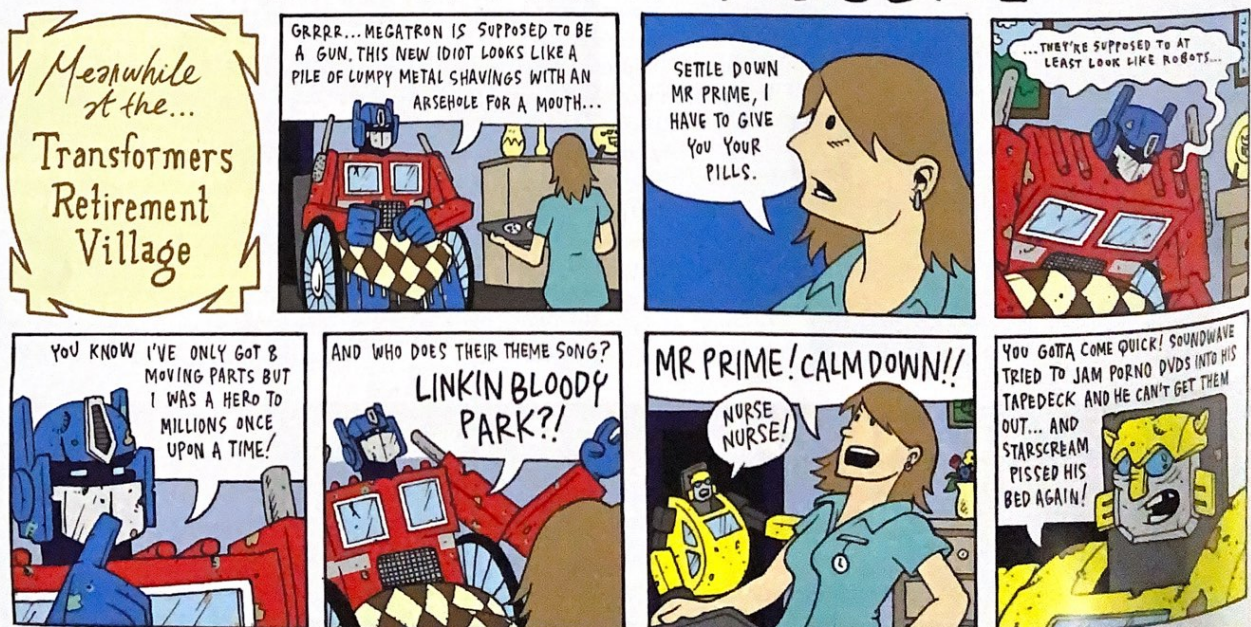
## The 'Blind' Date

### SITUATION

At home on a Saturday? Nothing to do that night? 16? Why not ask that girl you've been talking to online for years if she wants to check out a movie. You choose what can only be a piece of cinematographically ground-breaking film – *Charlie's Angels 2: Full Throttle*. You get dropped off (by Mum) ten minutes before your agreed meeting time. Twenty min-

# SMOKE VS WATER

## BAD JOKES IN DISGUISE



email smokevswater@hotmail.com



ures later, a short, ginger Australian walks up to you and asks if "you're the guy I'm meant to meet". Overwhelmed by the enthusiasm, you grab tickets and decide to go for a walk around the block (which at this age is naturally Mission Bay). Both of you ask relatively awkward and fumbling questions, and you realise you've forgotten her name – despite talking to her on MSN for three years.

#### ANALYSIS

Blind dates are usually a disaster, but this one has a few special characteristics that make it a classic. While it is not unusual for one person to forget the other's name, total amnesia by both parties is a rarity. While it may seem cute and charmingly sweet, an entire evening of conversation consisting of probing questions is excruciating. A good movie is crucial, and although *Charlie's Angels 2: Full Throttle* did star Demi Moore, pointing out that she was "incredible in *Striptease*" is not a smart move, especially if your date later turns out to be a Jehovah's Witness. After this date, she will block you online when you fight about 1992 F1 World Champion Nigel Mansell's moustache – at least, that's why she said she blocked you.

### The 'Booty Call' Date

#### SITUATION

You started your evening with notions of dinner, dancing and cliff-top romance. What you got is efficient, satisfying-yet-unfulfilling sex. Nothing more, nothing less. It would have been nice if he'd actually taken your underwear off, instead of just ploughing on through. The next morning you will find yourself sitting in a café in Ponsonby, reading the *Herald on Sunday* and crying behind your enormous, coffee-coloured glasses. A horrible realisation dawns on you – you spent less time talking than you did getting ready: congratulations, you've been used for sex.

#### ANALYSIS

The 'booty call' is a time-honoured, ruthlessly efficient, almost German-like method of acquiring sex. The booty call is effectively prostitution without the champagne and money; no James Bond-style small-talk, just good honest chocolate. There is little need for intimacy, and you both need to understand that there can't be – lest one of you (almost invariably the female) gets attached. Think of a booty call as a sexual game of 'Capture the Flag' – get the orgasm and get the hell out.

### The 'Not a Date But He Thinks It's a Date' Date

#### SITUATION

Your friend (who has asked you out repeatedly in the past, and who you have repeatedly politely declined) asks you if you would like to "go grab a drink", which you foolishly accept. Showing up at the agreed time with Americas-Cup-boats-racing-to-the-start-line precision, this charming man presents you with a bunch of expensive long-stemmed roses. An unexpected change of plans see the scheduled 'drinks' turn into a full three course meal, after which, your friend tells you that you are driving somewhere to a special, secret romantic place (which later turns out to be Browns Bay). Clearly unable to contain his excitement, your friend accidentally reverses into a brand-new Volkswagen Golf.

By now you begin to fear for your life, and while he assures you he is in 'complete control', he refuses to disclose your destination until you are travelling at over 140km/h over the Harbour Bridge. At the wind-swept beach with icebergs washing ashore, he decides that this is clearly the most romantic place on earth and asks you out. Somehow, you have managed to avoid being overwhelmed, and once again decline. Your date suffers an onset of depression and laments his life without a girlfriend, declaring that the best shrinks money can buy can't help him. As the nightmare comes to an end, it dawns on you that he is effectively the human equivalent of a Panda, and you spend the rest of the drive home stifling your laughter as you imagine him chewing on sticks of bamboo and crying "I'm soooooo sad".



FREE TO A GOOD HOME... OR ANY HOME THAT WILL TAKE IT, I GUESS

#### ANALYSIS

Well, where to begin? First of all, your date (who was Russian) is clearly in touch with his historical roots. His Cold War hangover shining through as he took his Soviet anger out on a symbol of German capitalism, a Volkswagen Golf – the 'people's hot-hatch'. Secondly, in absolutely no circumstances is Browns Bay to be considered 'romantic' – unless you are putting in the same 'romantic' league as Gallipoli during spring in 1915, or nude beach for the middle-aged and obese, Ladies Bay in St Heliers. If your prospective suitor turns into one-man Fallout Boy concert when you reject them, you can probably feel vindicated in your decision.

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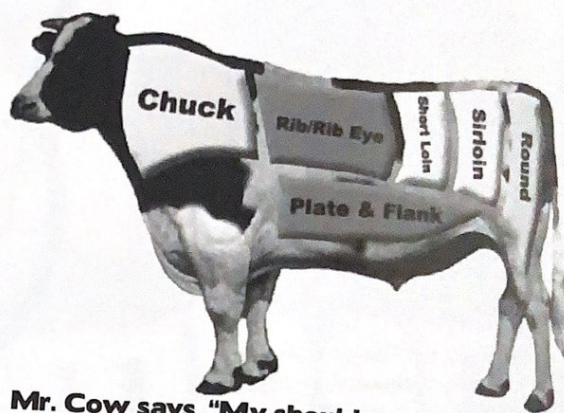
# the WINTER

Eat the flesh and drink the blood: winter salvation through stewing

You know it's winter when you can't remember when you last had a salad. Clean, fresh tastes are easily forgotten when all you want to do is grind your teeth on the bone and lick gleaming fat from your lips. This is a perfect time for a stew. And the best bit is that they're damn easy to make.

The stew I've chosen here is a French classic. This does not mean that it is hard, but it does mean that you need to respect the required cooking time. A stew is not just meat idling poached in stock; you should aim to generate a unified flavour and texture, with the gravy breaking apart the meat, and the meat thickening and flavouring the gravy. Time and heat will make a singular taste.

I struggle to see how this classic dish is significantly different from the basic standards that my granny could churn out. Except for the requirement of red wine, which transforms these dishes from the clean tasting traditional British affairs to dark and rich treats that would be right at home in any good French restaurant. But please, if you want to impress yourself, don't use Don Pedro; use a red that costs more than ten dollars.



Mr. Cow says, "My shoulder meat is perfect for slowly stewed boeuf bourguignon"



## Boeuf Bourguignon

### Ingredients

**About 250grams per person of thickly cut stewing beef** (like chuck or blade)

**1 bottle of mellow red wine** (not expensive, but one that you would want to drink)

**1 cup of Beef stock** (the best is that ridiculously expensive, but ridiculously good Essential Cuisine packets - I've seen Chef Simon Gault walking around Parnell with a box of the stuff)

**Lots of salt and pepper**

**A few large carrots, or maybe a parsnip or two in substitution**

**3 - 4 onions**

**A few cloves of garlic**

**A long, freshly cut rosemary stalk or 2-3 bay leaves**

**1tbsp flour**

**Olive oil for frying**

### Equipment

**A large heavy bottomed pot and a wooden spoon**

Prepare the meat by taking it out of the fridge for 30 minutes or so until it approaches room temperature. Then cut it into large chunks. You want the meat to really stand out on the plate, so cut it into nice portions about 4 cm cubed. Season liberally with salt (a thick pinch per person) and freshly cracked pepper. Prepare the onions by thinly slicing them.

This next bit is important. You want to brown the meat, giving it a rich colour, but crucially, will also want to produce a thick *fond* of brown meat paste (in fancy speak - caramelised muscle glycogen) on the bottom of the pot that will help thicken the stew and give it a rich colour (use a bit of effort with your wooden spoon to scrape it off the bottom and avoid burning). Achieve proper browning by heating a lot of olive oil (coat the pot bottom by 1/2 cm) to almost smoking hot and use only small batches of meat. If you use too much, the pot will cool and you'll only render the meat a slate grey. Stir violently to avoid sticking and charring. Reserve each browned batch on a plate.

When the final batch has been removed, turn the heat down to medium and add the onions, stirring well to avoid turning then to crisps while the pot is initially hot. Let the onions sweat down till oily and soft - they should also be browned by the *fond*. When the pot heat has dropped after a few minutes, you can afford to take your eye off it and prepare the additional ingredients. Cut the garlic like the guy in *Goodfellas* does - extremely finely so that no one gets too large a hit of garlic (you want to be frying it so it will retain a lot of its potency). Prepare the carrots and parsnips by slicing them in two, lengthways, and cutting diagonally to a thickness of 1-2 cm. The large size of the veges, like the meat, has little to do with taste and everything to do with presentation - you want to see what you're eating, and not have all the elements visually drowned by the stock. Additionally, you could use whole baby carrots, leaving the stalks on for a restaurant grade look. Don't forget about the onions.

After 10 minutes of gentle frying, use a sieve to mix the flour with the onions - this will help thicken the eventual stew. Add the wine in a glug or two at a time, so that the heat is kept in the pot and the wine is continuously reducing. Aim to use most of the bottle, but you've done so well so far you may as well pour yourself a glass. Return the meat to the pot, along with the vegetables, garlic, rosemary and/or bay. Aim



# stew

is a lot easier than you think

have everything submerged in wine, and then use the stock as an extra measure to lift the flavour, and make sure that everything is still submerged following hours of reduction.

Be patient. This will take at least two hours of constant simmering for the meat to be rendered tender, taking time to stir it in case anything starts sticking to the bottom, and returning any *fond* that sticks to the side of the pot with the spoon. Like a soup, this will collect a scum of blood albumen that won't look pretty in the final product, so skim it off with a spoon. Also, if the rosemary leaves start drooping off the stalks, you can remove them and pick out guerrilla leaves from the gravy.

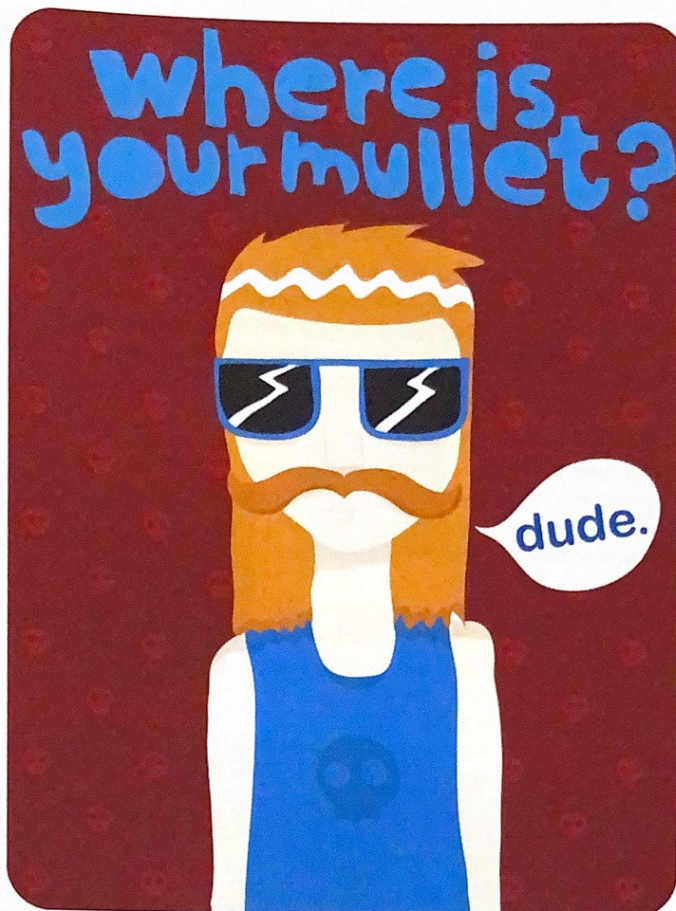
After two hours the meat fibres will have started to break apart, and you'll be left with soft flesh, and a wickedly dark gravy that would be so thick it'll look like melted chocolate icing on the back of the spoon. It should also taste like the shit. Give it a taste, and as a rule if it tastes flavourful but a bit "watery", add salt a ¼ tsp at a time until the tastes your mouth feel "full". Adjust to your liking with cracked pepper.

You could get away with just ladling out the stew on an island in the centre of a plate, making sure a thick pool of the silky gravy covers the bottom of the plate, garnished with a bay leaf or parsley. Otherwise, mashed potatoes or a pseudo potato gratin both work a treat as a side, along with a bowl of buttery beans.

## Extras for Experts!

- Juniper berries are flavourful brothers in arms with rosemary and bay, but can be a bit much to leave on the plate and bite into. By frying the initial olive oil with the juniper berries, a lot of the flavour should come out, and the berries can then be removed.
- The same goes with sinew. The silver edge of fat that many stewing cuts have hide a thin layer of sinew. By filleting this off like the skin of a fish, and frying along with the berries, a lot of the flavourful fat can be retained in the dish without the hindrance of sinew stopping your gluttony.
- Like the idea of cooking a French classic, but find beef not very compliant to your skint ways? Try coq au vin! Take the same ingredients as above, but use a whole chicken and stalks of celery where you would have parsnip, and dice all of the veges (including onions) to small pieces. Marinated a whole chicken (or drumsticks if easier), veges and wine for a few hours in the fridge, then separate out the veges, brown the chicken in a pot, reserve chicken, fry the vegetables, thicken with flour then throw in wine, meat and any herbs you like. Use chicken stock to make sure the chicken is mostly submerged. After an hour or so, when the meat is cooked through and starting to fall of the bone, remove it, cut it into four, and serve with the ladled chicken gravy, and maybe a few sliced mushrooms, bacon rashers and onions fried in butter and parsley.

Andy Farr



Eve would soon regret going to the supermarket hungry.

Vital Swank (Thanks to C. Marquis for the inspiration)



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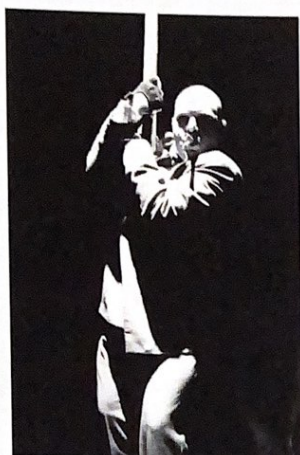
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## The Bomb

For many in New Zealand, tragedies like Hiroshima and September 11 yielded some remarkable footage. Footage that evoked terror in the hearts of thousands – footage that ignited flames of anger. But for many people – and yes, I'm making a huge generalisation here, a generalisation so big you'd probably walk past it on the street and snigger at its obesity – this is where the reaction stopped. It was awful, but it didn't really affect us, so we could store this next to the starving kids in Africa and be on with our day.

As a result, many questions went unanswered. Many questions went unasked for that matter, and one of these was the fact that people had actually killed themselves – sacrificed their lives – for their cause. What could actually compel you to do such a thing? Believing in what you were doing, sure. But as an individual it seems unlikely that you'll think "hey yeah, I should blow myself up... That'll learn 'em". There's gotta be something else, and it seems that leaders are a key factor: great leaders inspire us to act, and bad leaders don't. And it's this idea that is dealt with in The Rebel Alliance's latest production *The Bomb*, written and directed by Anders Falstie-Jensen.

Despite its serious topic matter, *The Bomb* is more farcical than tragic. Lizzie (Jo Lees), Peter (Russell Pickering), Lisa (Liesha Ward Knox) and group leader Johnny (Michael Downey) are members of The Children of Gaia, an extreme environmentalist group. Following the orders of Lafesti, they email the Prime Minister threatening to blow up Auckland

if the government doesn't meet their demands for 'world peace', and for the South Island to be turned into a nature reserve. The irony is thus immediately evident, and sets the ball rolling for the multitude of gags later in the play. One such moment occurs almost immediately, in fact, when they receive an automated 'out of office' email from the Prime Minister (Richard Rugg), which causes Johnny to break down in tears.

Throughout the play, Lafesti's influence is contrasted with the Prime Minister's own leadership, which is dismal at best and comprised of passionate spiels about tasers. The Prime Minister's orders are dutifully followed by Helena (Catherine Nola), but she doesn't kill because of him: no, she does it for her kids so that they don't have to kill in the future. Although the contrast was nice, at times it was so obvious it seemed patronising, such as when Helena dramatically stares at a photo of her children while torturing Johnny with a blow-dryer.

The cast were consistently great, with particularly hilarious performances by both Downey and Rugg, who delivered their lines with a melodramatic grandeur that perfectly captured the tone of the play. Pickering and Knox exuded an innocence that balanced well with the pomposity of Lees and Downey, and highlighted Lafesti's ability to command reverence from virtually anyone under his guidance.

Overall, the play was well written. I did find, however, that the farcical aspect fades towards the end, with the piece attempting to morph into something more serious. This transition wasn't handled as well as it could have been, and creates a lull in the middle of the play with energy levels seeming to droop. This is picked up towards the end, however, partially due to Stephen Bain's innovative multi-level set design (which makes amazing use of Herald Theatre's space): Nothing was more exciting than looking up to see suicide skydivers Peter and Lizzie jumping from the lighting rig into a safety net above the audience. The same can be said of when the police break into the Children of Gaia's Kingsland flat, not through the door but through the (paper) walls.

All in all, *The Bomb* is a highly energetic play that boasts some of the funnier gags I've seen in theatre. With yet another fine production under their belt, The Rebel Alliance are firmly placing themselves on the map as a theatre company to watch out for.

Rosabel Tan

## Motel Nights

Presented by the Auckland Playwrights Collective, *Motel Nights* is a collection of

eight short plays all set within the confines of Room 9, The Seabreeze Motel. Each play is both separated and intertwined through June (Marion Shortt) the cleaner of the motel, whose own problems soon become apparent and whose social commentaries on each patron lead to her eventual breakdown.

Rex Armstrong's *Blood on the Tracks* starts off the night, and encompassed some beautifully written dialogue, including the pretentious writer's (Tom Kane) comment that "when the train comes, nobody gets off. But when it goes, someone always leaves." The story itself was, however, a little harder to digest. Armstrong injects a metatheatrical quality into the piece in order to explore the contentious issues of creative license, truth, and ownership, but left me feeling bewildered as to what had actually happened.

*Legless* by Laurence Dolan was a whimsical and witty piece in which a bride – on her wedding night – finds out that the poetry that made her fall in love with her husband was actually written by his paraplegic best friend. Next was Bronwyn Elsmore's *Choice*, which was about a lesbian feminist who had changed her name and impregnated herself with a cup full of living-room sperm. This story didn't really seem to progress and was more of a (weak) character study. It was also during this play that I became aware of Shortt's delivery style, which was relatively uniform throughout the night. This seemed to be less due to Forster's direction and more to limited range, and led to insufficient distinctions between different characters.

M. E. McDonald's *The Getaway* was a good old fashioned tale about Roger, battling 40, and (one of?) his lover(s) Kate, a knocked-up schoolgirl of seventeen years. We know things are bad from the moment he pulls out what looks like a litre bottle of vodka cruiser, which Kate downs with ease. This leads to the brilliant scene in which Roger manoeuvres the situation so that Kate's death (murder by poisoned lolly drink) looks like suicide.

After the half-time, things got a little darker, a little more absurd, and this is indicated immediately by Forster's noir-ish lighting design, most noticeably the shadow of a window projected ominously onto the motel bed. We begin again with *Solo Tour*, where a hyped up kid (Tom Kane) breaks into Room 9 where a washed-up rocker is staying during his 'off-key' tour. Hilariously written and an incredible performance by Tom Kane, this play was a delight to watch.

Thomas Sainsbury's *Cold* was a quirky tale in which a little brother, fresh out of jail, is told that he needs to commit suicide because he's shamed the family. Things

don't go according to plan, however, leading to dark – yet fitting – consequences. Following this was the chaotic *Heaven* by Patrick Graham. The ghosts of a 9 haunt a young man who desperately needs sleep before his big job interview. This play was entertaining to watch, but because of the enthusiastically overacting. But story-wise, I'm not sure this was going.

Last was *Double Booking* by Sutton, which verges on absurdity. The Lovely June the motel cleaner had booked the room to strangers Mr. and Mrs. Smith, a vivacious woman and a timid old man in his striped blue pyjamas. Actually, the funniest thing about the play was an elderly lady in the audience. To explain, the play had a drunken player who kept stumbling into the room by mistake. The third time this happened said lady cackled loudly and shrieked "he comes again!" which elicited a belly laugh from the rest of the audience. It was an excellent end to the night.

Tony Forster's direction was evident throughout the pieces, making full use of the space provided and achieving a certain level of consistency through casting. Actors Tom Kane, Jared Turner, Marion Shortt and Tracey McGuire gave all-round strong performances, although Kane and Turner were able to exhibit wider versatility, perhaps due to the range of roles they were given.

As with any collection of short plays – whether of short films, short stories or short plays – one is inevitably faced with the problem of monotony. It is also inevitable that within a collection of short plays some will be less compelling, others clearly stand out amongst the rest. The no less true for *Motel Nights*, which, in memory, seemed to drag on at times, saying that, however, *Motel Nights* was an inspiration to watch. It showcased up-and-coming playwrights who we can expect more from in the future. It reminded us all that theatre is alive, well and thriving in Auckland.

## Read Raw

For those of you feeling tired of playing the Auckland Playwrights Collective, running a series of free play readings on the third Monday of every month at 7.30pm. These are held at the Conference Room, Grafton, which is on the corner of Grafton and Freyberg Place. Next to the Patch entrance on the right hand side.



## Transformers: Robots in Disguise

It began as a toy released by Hasbro in the 80s. A series of robots that could transform into trucks, planes, anything they saw. Pretty cool, huh? Then, in an attempt to further market the toys, Hasbro decided to follow in the steps of the GI Joe toys and market both a comic and a cartoon series. Thus, in 1984, *Transformers* the animated series was born. And damn, but it was cool. Admittedly I was a little young when it was first released, but my older brother – who worshipped the show – raised me on it, actually, that might explain my violent tendencies. Go figure.

But back to the point: what wasn't cool about them? The toys were revolutionary for their time, the cartoon was created at the peak of 80s animation where things looked to scale (a lost art today, eh?), and actually had a pretty decent – if simple – story. Originating from the planet Cybertron, the benevolent Autobots fought the evil Decepticons over the Earth's stockpile of energon. The serious subject matter of war was offset by the jokes and humour – a little campy by today's standards, but still enjoyable – but at the same time it didn't glorify war.

Then, in 1986, *Transformers: The Movie* was released at the end of the second season. Throwing the story 20 years into the future of 2005, the film introduced a bunch of new toys/characters, and proceeded to kill off half of the original cast. I think traumatic was the word my brother used. Both a box office and critical failure, the movie completely changed the series, with season three staying in its war-filled future and refusing to bring back some of the most beloved (and now dead) characters. Viewer numbers dropped, and it seemed the end of the *Transformers* was nigh, especially when Hasbro decided to turn its attention to other franchises and ceased to fund the show. November 1987 marked the end, with a fourth season that consisted of nothing more than a three part story that they called *The Rebirth*, designed to wrap up the story, bring back some of the dead, provide some hope, but also leave an open ending should funding return.

Despite the hope of the series continuing, this seemed to be the end for the West, while Japan continued to make its own series for a few years more. It was, however, most certainly the end of what was to be known as Generation One.

Generation Two was born in the early to mid-nineties and was essentially a rehash of Generation One. The cartoon was the old cartoon, just spruced up and placed into episodes in the form of 'backlogs' and 'historical footage'; the toys were mostly the same but repainted; in fact it was only the comic books – a 12 issues series released by Marvel – that was different, regaling us now with tales of Transformers that were neither Autobot nor Decepticon, merely Cybertronian. It's hard to really say how popular this era of the franchise was, as it only lasted two years before it was succeeded by a new era of *Transformers: The Beast Wars*.

*Beast Wars* was the first to move away from the original characters (although some were named after them) and told a story set many years set after the *Beast Wars* fought in earlier Generations. Now called the Maximals and Predacons, the toys were new and different, mixing the robots with animals instead of machines. The cartoon – now a CGI animated spectacle – showed these two factions crash landing on a prehistoric planet, trapped there while the Maximals tried to stop the Predacons from harvesting all of the energon and destroying the planet. By the end of the first season, we learn that the planet is not only Earth, but is Earth in the past. Not only have our new heroes affectionately called the 'Beasties' by fans) managed to travel back in time, they soon have to try and save it, as the second and third seasons revolve around Megatron (the new one) finding out where Megatron (the old one) and Optimus Prime crashed and trying to kill Prime so that the Decepticons can win the Great War, while Optimus Prime struggles to stop this.

...can you follow that?

It sounds confusing and it had its bad moments, but *Beast Wars* was one of the last great moments in *Transformers* history, gaining a whole new audience and also garnering their interest in earlier generations because of its tie ins with the show. Its successor, *Beast Machines* – the sequel to the *Beast Wars* that saw our heroes return to a Cybertron under Megatron rule – was a little more of a mistake, as the writers didn't have previous knowledge of the history and made some drastic errors in regards to... well... everything.

It was at this point that everything starting really going downhill for the franchise, and quickly, as the series was remade yet again in 2002. Called *Transformers: Armada*, this Japanese animated remake was less in common with the original *Transformers* than any of the other incarnations, mainly because it was created in that Jap-anime fashion that had so recently become popular with the likes of *Pokemon*, *Dragonball Z* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!*

Had it been its own premise, it might not be that bad, but because it carries the *Transformers* name, many old fans were disappointed by the drastic changes that threatened to rewrite their beloved

franchise. *Armada*, and its sequels *Energon* and *Cybertron*, are now commonly ignored or seen as being part of 'another universe', but the fears of fans arose yet again when it was announced that Michael Bay was going to be directing and releasing a live action *Transformers* movie this year. Would it follow the old Generations or join the Jap-anime bandwagon? Would it suck as bad as the first movie? Would Bay destroy the childhood memories of fans both old and new?

Well, I can tell you that it follows the old history, but to answer the rest of the questions you really have to see it yourself and make up your own mind.

I will say this though: after more than twenty years and many a setback, it doesn't look like the franchise is ready to lay down and die just yet.

V8

## Transformers Directed by Michael Bay

I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little apprehensive about seeing this film when it was first announced. I mean, Michael Bay is renowned for making movies that, while very pretty, often leave a lot to be desired. Having been raised on the original cartoon, I was terrified that the movie would follow the more recent (and very crappy) Jap-anime series instead of Generation One. However, it began to grow on me after I saw a few trailers, and actually took the time to look up some stuff online. When I heard that Bay had brought back as many of the original voice actors from the 80s cartoon that he could, I was practically sold. Of course, the true test came when the movie was released.

The movie begins, and although the opening setting looks like something out of a war movie, soon an ominous helicopter arrives. An ominous helicopter that, with a nostalgically familiar yet classically 80s sci-fi mechanical purr, transforms. It. Is. Awesome.

'Ah, I hear some of you say, but we already know Bay is good at setting up movies with flashy situations like this. What about the rest of the movie?' Well... after the initial setup, we are introduced to the rest of our human characters. Jon Voight as the Secretary of Defence leads the Pentagon in trying to figure out the attack, while Sam Witwicky ( Shia LaBeouf ) buys an old Camaro and attempts to woo Movie Hot Chick™ Mikaela ( Megan Fox ). I have to admit, it's here where things get a tad embarrassing. Props to all of the actors for their work, but Bay can't seem to direct anything with a pulse, and some of the scripted lines between Fox and LaBeouf are utterly embarrassing.

Just when I was beginning to really fear for my childhood memories, the Camaro (which we have already established is 'more than meets the eye'), takes itself out for a nightly drive. Sam follows and catches up just in time to see the car stand up. Literally.

It doesn't take long for the shit to hit the fan, and soon Sam and Mikaela learn that not only is his car alive, but it wants them to meet its friends. Enter the rest of the Autobots, and I gotta tell ya, hearing Peter Cullen reprise the voice of Optimus Prime was one of the best moments of the entire movie for me. Now the thing really starts to get rolling, as the Autobots race to get to their quarry before the Decepticons find it; a job that would be a hell of a lot easier if the humans weren't trying to capture them for 'study'. Before you know it, Megatron shows up, the entire human cast meets somewhere in the middle, and half the town is turned into a battle arena for a climactic ending. The effects are amazing, the transformations seamless, and any old fan of the cartoons will be delighted at both old and new 'faces' which grace the screen.

By the time the credits rolled, I had a mile wide grin on my face. Old fans will get the greatest kick, but you don't have to have seen the originals to enjoy yourself. This film is hardly perfect, but it's one of the best blockbuster movies of the year, and I think it's safe to say that Bay pulled it off this time.

Vicky Bauld

"I'm sorry, I had to use the quote."



**Early attempts for a live action movie were hastily scrapped by the studios**



## The Film Festival. A cursory glance with Matt Livingstone

When you read this the 39th Auckland International Film Festival will already be underway. Don't worry there's still about two weeks of films left for you to see. In fact, why not take the first two weeks off Uni and go and see every remaining film?

This year has the largest program yet, with an incredibly diverse array of films from all areas of the globe. As is the custom nowadays, Ant Timpson's *That's Incredible* selection is also included to give the festival a liberal amount of spice and weirdness. While several of the films scheduled will undoubtedly make it through to general release in time, for the vast majority these screenings will be the only opportunity you will get to see the films on the big screen. Here's a small selection of films that would be worth checking out. If they aren't to your tastes, then something will be (unless Lindsay Lohan movies are your kind of thing). Our advice is: don't fuck around and miss it. Look through the program and get tickets to something.

**Eagle vs. Shark (on 25 & 26 July)** – the debut feature from *Two Cars, One Night* director Taika Waititi. It's a geek romance, which stars Jemaine Clement (one half of Flight of the Conchords) and has music by the Phoenix Foundation. Sounds like a date.

**Inland Empire (on 25 July – 2 screenings)** – the new one from David Lynch. It's always hard to describe what his films are about because they're pretty bat-shit crazy; surely this one will be no exception. Just go in with an open mind and see what happens. (Yes, that is Lynch promoting the film with a cow in the picture).

**Old Joy (on 20 & 21 July)** – a story of old friendship slipping away as two lifelong buddies go bush. Stars singer Bonnie 'Prince' Billy too.

**How to Cook Your Life (on 22, 23 & 24 July)** – a doco about a Zen priest relating cooking and eating to everyday life. We all cook and eat right? So maybe you'll learn something.

**Control (on 19 & 20 July)** – a biopic about Joy Division front man Ian Curtis which was very well received at Cannes this year.

**Destricted (on 20 & 21 July)** – seven artists were each told to make 20 minute films about porn, these are the results. Okay so there'll be lots of sex, but notably some of the directors include Matthew Barney (he of the *Cremaster* cycle) and *Kids* director Larry Clark.

**Perfume: The Story of a Murder (on 27 & 28 July)** – director Tom Tykwer (*Run, Lola, Run* and *Heaven*) is back with another film that is sure to be both challenging and visually arresting. It's about a par-fumeur who gets obsessed with bottling the scent of women. Slashing will probably ensue.

**Death at a Funeral (on 25 & 27 July)** – a black comedy about a funeral gone wrong from the guy that did the puppet work (and voices) of Miss Piggy and Yoda. That sounds like it might just work. Plus it's fun to watch everything going pear shaped for someone else.

**Death of a President (on 19 & 20 July)** – what would the festival be without a touch of controversy? This film deals with the assassination of the current president so of course it caused a stink when it came out in the US last year. Go and see what all the fuss is about.



## Tried and tested Festival films:

**Half Nelson (on 19 & 23 July)** – In one of the most convincing performances you'll see on screen this year, Ryan Gosling plays Dan Dunne, the high school teacher you always wished you had. Charismatic, engaging and self-effacing, he repeatedly teaches his history class about the concept of change and how opposing forces are constantly conspiring to enforce change. This fits in conveniently with the subject matter of the film.

The focus is on the relationship between Dunne and a student of his, Drey, who discovers him smoking crack in the school toilets. The roles are reversed, as Dunne loses his status as a role-model and slowly becomes more and more reliant on Drey as a positive influence.

First-time director Ryan Fleck avoids many obviously clichés, and doesn't portray the issue as an all-out battle between good and evil: despite Dunne's hedonistic life outside school, his passion for teaching and compassion for his students redeem him to a great extent, while Drey is far from being angelic and pure – few drug runners are. Instead, the two flawed forces lean on each other, pushing against each other, but with seeming trepidation. Fleck paces this just delicately enough so that the outcome seems perfectly natural. (Reviewed by Simon Coverdale)

### Taxidermia (on 24 & 25 July)

– This will probably be the most visually original film of the festival. As is the case with many of Ant Timpson's picks, there's a good chance it will win "the most induced vomiting" award as well. Fitting really, as this film critiques human nature, but focuses on the most basic human functions. Eating, vomiting, ejaculation, defecation, sex. This is not a film for the faint of heart. The odd thing is so many of these "extremes" of film are probably not that unfamiliar to you. Director Gyorgy Palfi realises the reality of our biology and delivers a parody of biological shock cinema; it's as if Terry Gilliam tried to remake a Cronenberg film. The result is a film that will leave you wanting to catch your breath, either from laughing your

ass off, or after blowing chunks in the girl's hair in front of you. There is a plot, I suppose, following three generations of Hungarian men against the back-drop of Soviet (and the power games of the 70's and the pretentiousness of modern existence. But this is a film to be visually and audibly consumed more than thought about (the score is by Arvo Part), so enjoy. But a serious warning: the closing scenes capture perhaps the most bizarre act this reviewer has ever witnessed on celluloid. If you want to see something "a bit different" this festival, without the risk of boredom, then go it. (Reviewed by Andy Farr)

*There you have it, most of the leg work's been done for you, you have to do now is go and see a film at the Festival.*

## Inseminoid (1981)

Directed by Norman J. Warren  
Rating: 1/5

video nasty

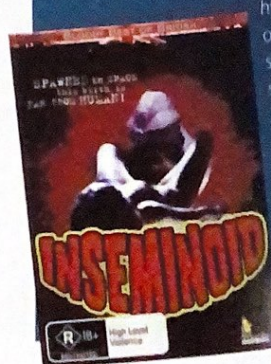
**Just briefly:** did you like *Alien*? So did the makers of this steaming pile of poo.

How promising is this for a film premise: "After team member Sandy is raped by the slime-covered insectoid creature and impregnated with alien spawn, she transforms into a tampon-like, inhumanly strong, psychopathic space vampire and promptly goes out dismembering and devouring everyone in sight." If only this perceived awesomeness was presented well in the film.

My main beef is the way the violence is handled. You're making a D-grade *Alien* rip-off so what's the one thing you *don't* have? Lots of bloody carnage – *Inseminoid* for some stupid reason shows us bugger all. Case in point: when Sandy has changed into a vampire she goes around biting people, but you never actually see her teeth sinking into juicy, juicy flesh. Lame. Also it seems that the budget would only allow for 1 litre of fake blood so there's fuck all of it. The one cool thing is Sandy's alien-human

hybrid offspring which you see for 20 seconds. Don't even get started on her alien rapist, who says his "manhood" looks like a tube with bright colours stuck through it. Oh yeah and one of the crewmembers looks like Martin (the Beaumarchais guy).

**The final cut:** so much potential for awesomeness, so little pay-off.





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