

# **GUPTER PUNCHER**

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[WARNING: Strong Language, occasional ideas.]

Price: Vincent

Issue: three of seventeen

**V**

**Christian Slater. William Shatner. Clint Eastwood. Jack  
Nicholson. Dennis Hopper. Ron Howard. All chasing it...**



Gupter Puncher is alive – [www.yearzerowriters.wordpress.com](http://www.yearzerowriters.wordpress.com)

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All stories are copyrighted with that guild in the US...the Writers’ Guild, that’s it. So don’t fuck with my stories. All pictures were used with kind permission of: [www.picsearch.com](http://www.picsearch.com), Fox Searchlight, Emilio Estevez, Robert Downey Jr., The guys from the last issue didn’t seem to notice their pics here, so I’m starting to lose a little of the fear.

This magazine promotes YEAR ZERO, it does not represent nor speak on behalf of it. All celebrities used in the Pynchon stories are fictional versions of themselves. Dennis Hopper did not hit his ex-wife with a hammer.

I really hate adverts, but...

‘Benny was of course lying. He had been drinking that night but those three nights before it had been spent at home, on his couch in front of the TV, watching Superman 2 and worrying that he wasn’t doing enough with his life and that he really should’ve been on the streets and not lying in comfort, from which nothing of worth could ever be written. After all, there was no social truth in General Zod.’

Like it? No?  
Well, how about this?

‘What would it be like to wake up in the morning and think that, on that particular day, someone might catch you and take a knife to your skin?’

Piece of shit?  
Ok, fair enough...

Buy my book.



[Note: you have not just read a 6 page advert for my book.]

## Editorial

[Вероучение]

This editorial probably shouldn't be here.

I was going to scrap it, along with the Politics, the letters, Nikolai's journey through the night, the news, maybe Tomomi's column too...

...all for the glory of Thomas Pynchon.

If you don't know him he's a writer who's been hiding like a pro for the last fifty years of his life. He doesn't do interviews, he doesn't do book tours, he doesn't go to festivals and shake hands and tell people how he writes.

"Well, writing is solitary, so what I do first is get up and stroll down onto the beach and just look at the sky. Then, somehow it all just comes to me..." etc, etc. This is what they usually say, isn't it? Well, Pynchon doesn't. I don't know how he writes, no one does apart from his wife [who is actually an agent in New York. It's common knowledge she's his wife, poor woman. She must be looking over her shoulder every time she gets in the car outside the office...]

Maybe he sits in Starbucks and writes there?

Maybe he's sandwiched between two wannabes; him typing out the next 'V', them just typing.

Krist, that was low, I shouldn't have written that. Everyone's got an equal chance, right?

Anyway, Pynchon. He started out with a novel called 'V'. Two guys chasing someone or something called V, and one of the first novels that really publicized the idea of the modern conspiracy. As in, those two characters know very little and they think that someone higher up knows a lot more.

Pynchon wrote it, people adored it, but it never got made into a film. Why not? Probably because no one could find him to ask for the rights.

But this magazine has recently found out that a lot of actors have tried. Christian Slater, Bill Shatner, Jack Nic to name a few.

In this issue, six of us are going to tell you what some of these actors attempted when going after Pynchon. I hope you don't mind. I mean, I did say I was gonna scrap some regulars, but in the end I didn't have to get rid of that much. We still have Tomomi and her movieland, Nikolai and his whores...

Also, the thing about the first eight pages...

I do have to tell you something important. You've probably noticed this in the last two issues, and you'll notice a lot of it in this one...it's YEAR ZERO, the new writer's collective. Basically, we're releasing our first books on September 1<sup>st</sup> and, as we have no reputation as of yet, I am using this space to ask you to take a look at the previews we've written and see if you'd be interested in reading more.

As I've said, we are amateurs, but we write our little hearts out and, fuck it, I think we're quite decent. In fact, in my mind, Dan and Larry have written two of the best books I've seen since 'The Savage Detectives' came out.

As for 'Benny Platonov'...krist knows what standard that is. Some have said uneven, others misogynist...one guy asked me where exactly it was going? I don't know, you guys decide.

**Oli Johns – [<http://yearzerowriters.wordpress.com> – this link will be relentless, sorry]**

## Letters from the adoring crowd...

[Кита и США ясно единственные страны которые имеют значение в мире сегодня.]

Compiled by Genichiro Takahashi

### **We're irresponsible...**

Dear magazine with three readers,

I'm aware your magazine is free, and that you are only accountable to yourselves, but what I have just read is a disgrace. I'm referring to the column written by a certain "man" called Nikolai Stavrogin.

I'm a fairly liberal guy, but to pick up a piece of media that children also have access to, and see words like 'whore', 'fucking' and one that I am too abashed to even type, is too much.

You are irresponsible in the extreme and should be ashamed. I have duly reported you to the media complaints commission.

Anonymous

### **We're arrogant...**

Absolute drivel. Who is this Captain Wong?

Greatest guitarist of the last two decades, he says. Where? On Youtube?

I have never read anything so big headed, egotistical, self-satisfied, arrogant and conceited in my whole life.

If you had any credibility you'd kick him to the kerb and fast, But wait...you're free media. Oh dear...

Neil Tenant, London.

### **We're inept...**

I read with interest your piece about Asian actors in Hollywood last issue, and was particularly excited about this new romantic comedy starring one of my favourite actors, Hiro from 'Heroes'. Unfortunately, after looking for hours online, I found that this film does not exist.

In other words, you based a huge part of your article on a lie. Is this common practice for your magazine?

Angry Hiro fan, Sydney

[Ed - Yes, very common.]

### **We're immoral...**

Magazine from the devil's ass,

You may be free, but people will not be fooled. Take your foul language and get ready for fire, my friends, I would pray for you, but you're sick and stupid and don't deserve it. I hope the fire is super fucking burny for you and your stupid mag.

Anonymous, by e-mail

### **Goodbye Bango...**

First issue, what have we got? Amateur music reviews, amateur film reviews, a piece of shit short story about some guy no one knows.

Second issue? Well, that's a surprise, must be self-financed. Oh wait, you whine about no one helping you in the editorial. Great modesty there, pal.

Third issue? Don't, just don't. No one's reading, pal, trust me.

Bango, London

### **JJ returns...**

What did I say? What did I fucking say? You send one more of this piece of shit and I'll drown you in lawyers. Comprene?

JJ ABRAMS, Star Trek, muthafucka!

[Ed - You're a stubborn, man, JJ. But you'll come around.]

# Politics

[Иллюзион изменения]

Politics, again, awooga.

And still no one to write it, so it's me writing about things I don't know, again.

Let's see, what do I remember?

Iran went nuts then went quiet.

North Korea is firing off missiles like a kid on one of those shitty online war games.

Honduras got bored and tried to liven up Central America a bit. People thought wow, until they realized it's a little place. Seven million people? There are hamlets in China with bigger populations than that.

Obama is just passing the time until he gets on the after dinner speech circuit.

Really, who gives a shit?

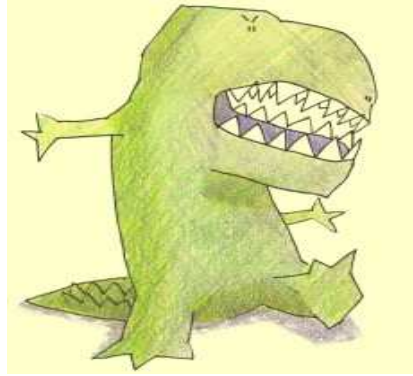
I tried to go in depth on Iran. I read everything, all the different sides of it, the critics, the view of the West, of the East, the middle, outer Space. You know what? I ended up confused. I couldn't answer people when they asked me what I thought about it all. I couldn't figure out an opinion. It's no fun when the bad guy gives benefits to the poor.

Everything is politicized and I'm sick of it.

If you think you can write about any of this shit then come forward, apply, write something better than the shit above because, frankly, that's the best I can do with politics.

## Christian Slater Vs Thomas Pynchon

Pursued by **Oli Johns**



Standing awkward, elbow against the video store shelf, he looked down on his past and future choices. There was 'Heathers'.

Winona clinging to his trench-coat, gun in his hand, hair climbing like a wild vine for the top of the DVD cover. That was the frontrunner, the one they were talking about...

What else?

'Interview with a Vampire'.

Not really his film, more Pitt's. He book-ended it though, and it was him getting bit at the end. And wasn't his character in the other books? Shit, everyone loved Rice, why weren't they making more of them?

One of the staff, a kid, walked past and put a copy of 'I am Sam' back on the shelf nearby. He didn't notice the man a few yards away, with pilot shades and slicked-back hair climbing wildly for the video shop ceiling.

"If you put some more in this little area, maybe I'd get a little fucking attention, kid..." he mumbled.

He watched the kid go back to the counter and type something into the computer. The other one next to him looked up, saw Slater, shrugged then went back to the desk.

"You have no fucking clue, do you?" he said quietly in their direction before going back to the shelf in front. "Fuck it, what else?"

His face, same wild hair, smirking over the top of a pirate radio set.

'Pump up the Volume', yes, they had talked about that one. His agent had told him, over at Paramount, it had come up in one of the meetings. That wasn't a bad one to bring back, was it? Young, edgy, bold...when was it, twenty years ago? Krist, twenty years...anyone who knew it would be in their forties by now. Their fucking forties!

He scratched the beard that was starting to turn white.

I can't do pirate radio now, he told himself. Act your fucking age, Christian, find something that fits.

He looked back at the shelf for something that would fit.

A cover with his younger self holding a tommy gun and Patrick Dempsey lurking behind his shoulder. Krist, 'Mobsters'.

He put his head down onto the shelf edge and lightly butted against it.

A voice like God sounded out across the store.

"Mr. Slater, Sir, please don't butt the shelves. Thank you."

Christian Slater stopped his head and rested for a second then came back up and looked at the Schwarzenegger section. He saw his reflection in the silver cover of T2: Judgment Day. His hair wild, yes. His eyes still manic, irrepressibly, just like Jack's. But there was no youth there anymore. The cheeks were fat, the skin was yellowing, it was-...

"Fuck it, act you age, kid," he told the terminator on the bike, and walked out of the store, giving a quick wave to the two kids behind the counter.

The shorter kid turned to the other.

"I don't know, man, it's like his whole forehead just dropped into the lower part of his face."

"Yeah, what's with that?"

"Who knows, man? Age, I guess."

"Slater though, man...he used to be somebody."

The shorter kid turned away, prepped himself then swung back round with Slater-esque glints in his eyes.

"We all go a little crazy sometimes..."

"That's 'Scream', fuckwit."

"Yeah, I know, but it was stolen from Slater...he did it first."

"No, he-...when, when did he do it? It was Skeet Ulrich, 'Scream', 97. Amateur."

Slater was in New York, not LA.

He had been there half the year already. His agent had told him there was no work back in Cali, and it was better to stick around and try some plays on the East coast.

So far he had nothing.

He walked back into his hotel and asked the receptionist for the key. The guy's uniform had a bit of dirt on the breast, and there was some kind of green stain faded into the floor, but Slater let it go. It wasn't the best hotel in the city, but it was only for a short while.

"I'm sorry, Sir, we can't give you the key today."

"Excuse me?"

"Your credit card, Sir. It didn't-...it bounced."

"The fuck it did..."

"I'm sorry, Sir. I can't let you have the key."

"You're kicking me out?"

"I'm sorry, Sir."

Slater shook his head and looked down at the green stain on the floor. He had known it would bounce eventually, in fact, he was surprised it had lasted this long.

He brought his face back up to the man in uniform, his expression soft, tender, like it was for Marisa in that film they did...

"Shit, man...can't we just?"

...the one where he was a chef and didn't say much and...what? That thing, the monkey heart. He had a monkey heart that conked out at the end, and-...krist, a monkey heart.

"I'm sorry, Sir, you didn't finish your question."

Slater thought of a few ways to finish the question, but nothing stuck. What could he say? He had no money, nothing.

"Forget it, man. Forget it." He ran a hand through his wild hair. "You know you've got shit on your tit there, pal?"

He leaned over the desk and poked the guy hard in the chest.

"Your suitcase is over by the couch, Sir."

"Fuck you, Airbud."

He had tried for a couple of plays. The usual shit; 'Death of a Salesman', 'Streetcar', 'Oleanda'.

The last one he thought he had nailed. He went in, hair cut down and contained, eyes scholarly, face up and straight like someone who might think himself superior to women, and what? They told him he didn't look right. The director actually took him to the side of the stage and said, "Christian, it's a compliment, really. You see, whenever I see you I just can't seem to shake off 'Heathers'. I'm sorry, but it's overpowering, you're just not a professor."

He sat in his agent's house, in the living room, surrounded by family photographs. The actual family was in LA, but there were enough of them here, in this room, to make him think back to Winona.

"Nah, we were too young...way too young," he said.

His agent came in with two glasses of Gallo's red and put one in Christian's hand.

"Pynchon," he said.

"What's that?"

“The thing that’ll save you, JD.”

“You serious?”

The agent nodded.

“Shit, man, what about ‘Heathers 2’? You said they were talking about it...”

“Talking, talking...come on, JD, you know how that works.”

“But there’s money in it, why aren’t they biting?”

The agent took some of his wine, swilled it around a bit then took a little more.

“To be frank, it’s the cast. The concept itself is sound, but the cast...let’s just say time hasn’t been kind to all of you.”

Christian leaned back into the sofa, his stomach pushed out, and the agent moved in closer.

“Have you been keeping in shape, JD?”

“What do you mean? I’m running three, four times a week. I’m ready, the shape ain’t the problem.”

“Four times a week?”

“Ok, there was some pasta last night. It was a pretty big portion, I’ll admit it, hands up...but it’ll be gone the next time I take a dump.”

“Ah, JD, the pasta again...”

The agent took the rest of his wine and slid a book across the table. There was a giant **V** on the front, coloured in green.

“What’s this? Pynchon?” Slater asked.

“Pynchon.”

The way the agent explained it was like this.

Thomas Pynchon had an anxiety disorder. He couldn’t give interviews, he couldn’t be seen. He freaked out if a stranger sat next to him on the train. Those were the rumours.

His debut novel **V** had been too big for him.

The agency representing him had tried to get him into bookstores, and onto festival stages, but he never picked up. A few weeks after it was nominated for the Faulkner award they got a phonecall from him telling them he was going into hiding and that they were free to use this as his biographical detail.

“Another fucking Salinger, Goddamnit,” his agent had said after hanging up, way back in 1963.

“Yeah, maybe, but he is good, isn’t he?” said the agent next to him.

Christian read the first fifty pages on his hostel bed that night.

He wasn’t alone in the room, there were six other beds, so when the others came back a little after two in the morning, he had to go out into the corridor and read under the light coming in through the window.

By morning, he had reached page one-hundred and seventy. Some fat guy had just been arrested by the Italian police, and everyone was looking for someone called **V**.

“This is it...” he said while the six other strangers slept around him. “This is the way back.”

The agent told him the allure of Pynchon was also the problem of Pynchon.

They were sitting in one of the parks in the city, and the sun was up. Christian had the book in his hand, but when he felt the heat of the sun he moved it under his thighs.

“You mean we don’t know where he is, right?”

The agent was wearing a sailor’s hat. He hadn’t explained why.

“That’s part of it, but not all.”

“What’s the other part?”

“Have you ever heard of a Pynchon movie, JD?”

“Shit, man, I never even heard of a Pynchon anything till a few nights back. You know this...”

“Well, there hasn’t been one. He doesn’t sell.”

“So people have found him?”

“Pynchon?”

“Yeah. You said he doesn’t sell, so if he doesn’t sell that means they got near enough to ask him, right?”

“No.”

“What does that mean? He’s got a rep?”

“No, I mean, I told you already. That’s the other part of it. People can’t find him.”

“But...I’m stuck. What are you saying?”

The agent turned on his side, facing the two performance artists in ninja suits moving around a tree nearby.

“I’m saying people can’t find him, and he doesn’t sell.”

“Huh?”

“This is not, and I’ll repeat this, it is not a conspiracy, JD. There are no giants of industry meeting in expansive rooms of luxury. There is no Venezuelan cell in Florence. You understand?”

“Krist, not a fucking sound, man. Why are you wearing a sailor’s hat?”

The agent stood up, adjusted his hat and left, nodding at the ninjas as he walked past.

Another few nights at the hostel and Slater had read almost all of **V**.

“This Profane guy, the chaser, that’s me,” he whispered to himself under the blanket.

But the problem, that was still the same.

Where was he?

Where was Pynchon?

The agent picked up his phone and heard JD ask him whether or not Pynchon ever left the States.

He sighed, looked at his children frozen in the photographs, and answered that Pynchon was always in the States, at least that was the rumour.

He also told him that he had been joking when he had suggested doing a Pynchon film, and that the joke had run on too long.

“I was following the book, JD, don’t you see? You’ve read it, haven’t you?”

“You mean you’re the dentist guy?”

“What? No.”

“Wait...you’re **V**?”

“Jesus, no. JD, look, there is no chance of doing this thing. It was a joke, let it go. Go back to the plays, do some auditions, see what happens.”

Christian went online and googled ‘reclusive authors’.

Three names came up, two of them familiar. Pynchon, JD Salinger, and the other one he had never heard of, some guy who wrote ‘The Treasure of Sierra Madre’.

It said on one of the sites that Nicolas Cage had tried to track Salinger down once, before he married Patricia Arquette. It didn’t say whether he had found him.

Nothing on Pynchon. Krist.

He sat in the hostel room, counting out coins on his blanket, building up piles of ten dollars.

If there was no one who knew where Pynchon was then how to find him?

The green **V** on the white of the book by his pillow caught his attention once again. The book, was that it? Were the answers in the book somewhere?

He thought it through.

Authors were well known for writing about themselves. He knew when he acted he brought his own experiences into the character, so Pynchon must’ve done the same with **V**. The locations he used, not the foreign ones, but the ones in the States, they must’ve been the places he went to. The places he could still go to.

He picked up three piles of coins, and the book, and went downstairs to pay for another night in the room. The guy behind the desk asked him how many more nights he’d like the room for.

“Not a hell of a lot longer, pal,” he said back with Jack in his eyes.

On the train, he phoned his agent.

He lied and told him he was on his way to an audition, something by Pinter, but while they were talking, just for the hell of it, could he tell him if there were still alligators down in the sewers, and if yes, was there any covert kind of way to get down there and have a look.



“You wanna go into the sewers, JD?”  
“No. Shit, no.”  
“He’s not down there, y’know?”  
“I don’t know what you’re talking about. Who would be down there? That’s nuts.”  
“Listen, JD, before you do anything silly, you should know something. You’re not the first to try this. Others have looked for him.”  
“Others? No shit, you mean actors?”  
“Yeah, actors. I don’t really know why, it just kinda gets hold of people when they read that book, and they go looking for him. Big names too...Hopper tried it, Shatner, Bobby Duvall. Even Jack had a shot at it, way back.”  
“Jack Nic?”  
“The very one.”  
“You serious? You mean, I’m treading in Jack’s shoes?”  
“No, JD, that’s the thing, he chased a little, but he wasn’t dumb enough to go down the sewers. So, just...take a breath, and think about things, think about it rationally. Don’t go into the sewers.”  
There were a few seconds of silence. The agent could hear shouting in the background. Then Christian came back on.  
“Listen, if anything comes in can you leave a message at the hostel? Thanks.”  
“JD, wait...the hostel? What’s wrong with your cell?”  
The line went dead.

It was darker than he thought it would be down in the sewers.  
In ‘Hard Rain’ they had used unnatural lighting, that was why you could see what was going on. But in the real sewers you had nothing, not even the caged lights they put up in mines.  
“Krist, can’t even see my own asshole down here...”  
Christian moved slowly through the muck and the shit, calling out “Thomas” every few seconds. Sometimes he would shout “Mr. Pynchon” as a sign of respect.  
In his hand was a fake shotgun he had bought from a costume shop. He had tried a real gun shop first but they told him he’d have to wait a few weeks for his authorization to clear. They were strict in New York, but he had no time to wait around.  
“Mr. Pynchon?”  
He thought about the coin mountains sitting back on his hostel bed. He had enough for three more nights then he was out.  
How the hell had it come to this? He used to lounge by a pool every morning, reading the LA Times and Variety. When exactly did that go?  
“Fuck it, if there’s a way down then there’s a way back up.”  
He thought of Supergirl climbing up the rocky slope in the Phantom Zone, with Peter O Toole pushing her ass and shouting “you can” at her knickers before falling off.  
Helen Slater, that was her name. He remembered he had seen her at that party, just after ‘Supergirl’ had come out. They had talked, and there was some coke, and-...Did they fuck?  
And where was she now?  
Maybe she was reading Pynchon like him. Maybe she was down here somewhere.  
“Helen?” He added her name to his search. “Helen Slater?”  
There was a splash nearby. He turned to where he thought the sound came from, but he couldn’t be sure as he couldn’t see a fucking thing.  
“Mr. Pynchon?”  
The splash turned into a series of splashes and he could hear them coming closer, coming towards him...  
“Wait, Mr. Pynchon...it’s me, Christian Slater.”  
He held up the fake shotgun and gripped the plastic barrel tight. Sweat fell off his head into the shit around his waist.  
“Mr. Pynchon, I’m here for **V**. Please!”  
He pulled the trigger.

## *Movie land, the best of all lands...*

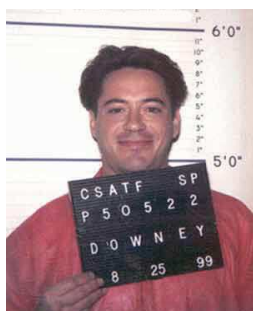
*with Tomomi Leung*



Last issue, I did *Wolverine* and *Public Enemies*, and Oli tells me the films weren't far enough on the horizon for a spec piece. Well, firstly, hey, not my fault. No one told me how far behind you guys were. I mean, I wrote that *Wolverine* stuff in early April, and then Oli brings out the mag in late May. And the *Public Enemies* thing, dude, estoy inocente, seriously...it just came out here in July, and suddenly it's this great film that everyone's giving four stars to, when I know for a fact that wasn't the case after those test screenings. Was it my fault Michael Mann edited without sleep for five months? Shit, dude, no way.

Also Oli was all critical of the way I was writing. He said it wasn't distinctively American enough or something arty like that, and then he said you guys would read it and you wouldn't believe, like, I was actually out here. Well, dude, resident for seven years now. If you don't believe it then whatever...you can moan about it and I'll just keep on writing.

Anyway, this intro is getting to be, like, huge, so I'm gonna just start writing what I've heard lately and you can wait and see if it all happens or not. But don't expect much, I do have a life to attend to, and auditions, remember...



**SHERLOCK HOLMES**

You all know this one, right? I think it's not out till something like late fall, but they've started up on the promo stuff over here, and that means all

the nasty bitching stuff is coming with it. And when I say bitchy stuff, you know I'm talking about Jude Law. That guy, he's so almost cute, but then you see that peeling hairline and his angry little face and you just wanna back off and give the little man some space. I mean, he's not exactly tall, you know that right? Don't get me wrong, he's not carrying a box onto sets, but he looks pretty silly whenever someone normal sized is around. But here, it's not too bad on the height front as Bobby Downey ain't exactly a giant either. No, the problem's somewhere else, so they're telling me. You see, there are two things you need to remember. Guy Ritchie needs a hit, and Guy Ritchie needs a fucking hit. Seriously, the dude's on his last legs. In fact, the

way he's handling that set, he's on robot legs. Downey's not happy. He just wants to do his funnyman schtick and leave. But Ritchie won't let him be funny. He keeps doing two or three takes then moving on, no ad-libs. My sources tell me it's come close to slaps a few times, but Downey usually backs down and goes to his trailer to...well, hopefully not to shoot up, but let's face it, it's gonna happen, isn't it? No one goes through twenty odd years of junk and really puts it behind them. But anyway, back to the film, and Law's not happy either. He's playing Watson, and he's been talking up the role to the media, saying this Watson is a bit more of an action man, but the way I hear it, he's not getting any real meat to square up against. Apparently, Ritchie doesn't think he's man enough to convince, so he's been shifting the action onto Downey, who, like I said, just wants to be funny. All in all, I'd say the shit's really going to hit with this one, and, honestly, it's Ritchie who's going to get covered in it.

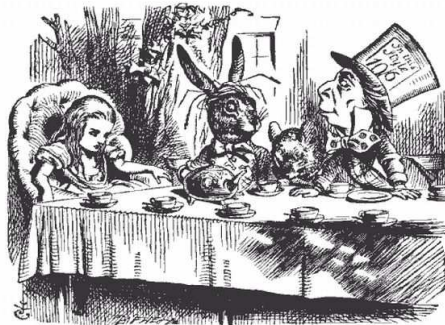


### INCEPTION

This is a strange one...the biggest director of last year, a cast of stars, a plot that no one's talking about in any real detail. What's going on? Nothing too good, apparently, or that's what my pretty assistant friend is saying from the Toronto set. See, the studio have given Chris Nolan over 200 million to spunk all over some sci-fi film that isn't based on a novel or a comic book. Are they nuts? I mean, it may have DiCaprio and Michael Caine and a load of other cool faces, but how much are they expecting to make back on this? This is really what I don't get about the industry, even after seven years here, and I'm only writing this because no one's going to read it, but you don't spend money on directors, or stars, you spend them on concept, on franchises, on fucking remakes. Right? You take that 200 million and you save it for the next Batman.

Because one thing even I can see, original sci-fi does not make back your money. Shit, even the 'Grudge' films make back more cash...

...speaking of...remember I told you about the shower scene I shot last issue, the one with the little Grudge kid. Well, the fuckers cut it. Every last trace of me, dude, is gone. Which is a bit of a bitch actually as the last two months haven't been the best. First, the Grudge, then the 'Alice in Wonderland' thing. Did I mention that?



### ALICE IN WONDERLAND

To cut it short, Anne Hathaway fucked me. Or Tim Burton and Hathaway fucked me. I suspect it was both, but I know the biggest push came from that prissy bitch. I guess it's well known she's a closet racist, especially towards Asian women like yours truly [Ed. – err...are you sure about that, Tomomi?], and when she saw me standing over her shoulder in one of the 'off with her head' scenes, she cut the scene and went into a huddle with Burton. I could hear some of it too, it's not like she's quiet about it. 'A fucking Jap playing-card, Tim?' That's what she said, exact words, I swear. So, like, five minutes later and I was gone. Burton didn't even have the balls to tell me himself, he just sent some assistant Asian guy over, and before I knew it, I was standing outside a closed set.

And I'm not saying a word about what happened with Paul Schrader. Well, just one. Motel.

God help me.

## Clint Eastwood Vs Thomas Pynchon

Pursued by Lawrence Gray



I knew young Bob Pynchon when I was a kid. We called him Bob because it was short for Tom. We didn't know any better. It was just after he published his story Entropy. Everybody thought he knew what he was talking about but it was all in the title, the "what" that he knew that others thought he knew was a lot but was nothing. Or something.

Clint on the other hand had been no youngster when he first came across the octopus that glowed in the presence of a missile strike. He thought it was cool. Plenty of time to duck 'n cover. BBQ'd, he thought it gave him the same powers. He played misty on the ukelele after sucking it off the stick. It was his inspiration. Screw all that Rawhide shit, let's get into the movies before it's too late. So when he heard I'd met Bob, he noted it down, filed it in his sock drawer and fifty years later gave me a call growling, "Get that son of a bitch, we gonna make a movie."

He decided to make it in Japanese because hey, nobody would know the difference. There was always something Anime about Bob. Just take a few glimpses. A monster streaks across the sky and the sub-clauses pile on as it reeks its message of curling smoke making those names that sell the toothpaste, cue for a jingle of the tingle tongue taste fresh as mountain stream after a case of never alone with a strand, though woodbine was most likely preferred. Those were the days when "Hello Kitty," meant Sheriff Dillon wanted a blow job. And Bob was a sailor, so one thought, though in reality Bob was a mechanic in a hot rod speedshop, all crewcut and red neck, an oily rag and a college football shirt giving one for the old gipper.

I met him when he was twelve with a superman comic in his pants running around with a cape and making his magic creature call that seemed to sound like the leader of a North Korean communist dynasty. His jokes were always with himself. There was no pushing it out, tongue in the cheek, how's your pussy missus, like a cheep vaudeville clown off the slummy back streets of thirties London. Which is just as well as Clint,

like Margaret Dumont with the naked Marx boys, would never have got that. Though apparently they gang banged her in a train. "I've never been so insulted in my life!" "Well, just stick around some more!" What Bob did get was the mystery, the man with no face, riding into town with mad cap bag full of rantings and raving calling down doom gloom and the apocalypse: an Elmer Gantry with Eng. Lit. in his GI Bill knapsack. It was all hysteria. Roofs fell in. Missiles zoomed across the universe, OM! Nothing will change his world but a quick hunt for nothing, no motive, only motivation, robotic, pre-programmed. That was the essence of Bob, or Trebor as his permanent pack of mints to disguise the alcohol stench from his parents would have it. Trebor became Tobor, the first cinematic Robot with a heart of gold. Hence Rob, Bob, not Tom. Tobor was a great Saturday morning picture house favourite among the Batman serials where the guy always jumped out of the car you saw falling over the cliff the previous week. Trebor walking backwards for longevity calibrating the frequency German submarines communicated at, was never fooled. He noted it down and phoned it through to Mr V-V-Vonnegut.

So did Clint and now he had the money, he wanted in. What a wheeze to film the unfilmable, to create the events that slide by with each sentence, a film stunt in itself. He would use a big close up on the pen as it was all written long hand in a cold water apartment on the East Side somewhere because it is always the East Side and it is always some dingy little apartment somewhere where the artist is supposed to discover themselves and then be miraculously found. The truth of course is that he stank of money and paid the unpublishing house to take him off their list and let the New York socialites promote him and bribe all the academics of UCLA to write PhD thesis on the deathwish mechanoids of Manchuria, all made of Bakelite.

Clint loves Bakelite as well. He would use no other telephone but the Bakelite bone if he could, cheroot in mouth, chewing the backy and swallowing instead of spitting. Which of course means there is gonna be one hell of a bit of day making trouble. You don't get no tougher. All an act of course. He watched it backwards in the editing room and saw everything reversed. Mincing around in his frock and his long curly haired Shirley Temple wig, "Call me the love that knows no name." If only the world knew, but they would not want to, because icons are icons and it takes more than an ugly wife to blot the horizon. But that was the appeal of Bob for Clint, the sense that somewhere over the rainbow there was a silo just for you and the walls would come tumbling down, as the song goes: Off comes the roof, down comes the ceiling, out goes the door, in comes the windows, it's all out of control! Good old William Slothrop, centuries forgotten, and out of print!

Holy Cephalopods, the plot is impenetrable, but then that is not necessary for the list, the word horde, the guarantors of immortality for they circulate words forever until of course they do not. That was the trouble, this writing for posterity, it always assumed that it mattered when it never did. It would all come tumbling down, turn to dust, and no-body would be able to find the old programmes that could read the code anymore. Which is why Clint wanted to update it all because no-one reads this stuff anymore, they just watch it, in three minute chunks if possible.

So I called Bob. He was drunk. In fact he was always drunk. He wrote what he knew: the sailors in the dance halls, the life on mars, the whole seventies modus operandi. Cut Ups, inner worlds, the consciousness unconscious, the drug fuelled Lawrence Ferlingetti of it all and if you could just do it at such great length you were literature and if Clint could do it at such great length, three part, four part, five hour long versions for the Blu-Ray aficionados, and do it quick, cheap, hand held, no fuss no muss with all the interns who would all be glad of the opportunity, then there would be light. Or at least a Kazoo! "Who dat man!" "Why, dat is Gabriel!" And all God's chillun got bombs! Anyway, that's how I put it to Bob. He was easy to find. Like I said, you just gotta know the right, a-huh, bar.

Open a door at random and yell "Bob", you'll find someone.

"Hi Bob, fancy meeting Clint?"

“Sure. What the fuck.”

And then you bring the man in, in his hat. He always wears a hat. His head is cold. And you can't see his eye. He has only the one, the one staring eye above the beak. It is a little known fact that Clint has eight arms. It makes him a multi-tasker of enormous capabilities. You can see that for Bob is was love at first sight. He rolled up his sleeve, unzipped the latex and hit the love function. It was a mess. There was Ink everywhere. It was as if Anais Nin had met a football team and squirmed like a squid sandwiched between them all. It was a great spectator event, college football at it's all American best meets monster truck rally, with the great bar strung out bar after bar of infinite regression, sailors, salesmen, gunslingers and gangsters, tier upon tier, four dimensions, five dimension, a pyramid of cheer leaders without their pants twirling on well greased baseball bats. It has to be seen, to be believed, this land of red-haired, green-eyed baboons, white skin with a few freckles, kissing thin brunette girls in slacks.

“I guess it does said Bob,” listening as Clint explained his beatnik mission.

“A man has to know his limitations though,” Clint said giving the “but” to the pitch. “Unless of course you can supply some of the funding.”

“And er, if not?”

“It'll look like shit.”

“That's the way I like it.”

“That's the way it'll be then.”

“Deal?”

“Done.”

And so the real work began because the writing is nothing, just a deal breaker, just a slab of words for the money men to rest their cigars on. The writer disappears and the re-writers re-write and they too disappear and in the end, the houses fall, the exits are blocked, the screams cancel each other out as white terror turns to white noise. Rock n' Roll wrecks the seats. Multi-plexes as tight as refrigerators, replace the People's Palace, the walls tumble and here we are with the screen a dim page spread before us, white and silent. The film has broken, or a projector bulb has burned out. Everything, not just the movies, has got smaller. Fin.

[Note: In the meeting with Clint, Pynchon said he wanted to go check out the towels in the bathroom and never came back. The writes, the re-writes, the promotion of the film were all a sham. And the hotel bathroom was on the seventeenth floor. Bob could fall, Bob could fly, pick one.]



Clint remembers, Pynchon...

## The first books from YEAR ~~Ø~~

### 1# Benny Platonov *Gupter Puncher/Oli Johns*

**Ok, what's it about?**

Benny Platonov will save the eight-hundred and fifty-seven homeless of Hong Kong.

**Why?**

Benny's a writer, an artist without the art, but that's just a detail. The art will come, the words will come.

**Yeah, but why the homeless?**

Benny has a heart. He cares. And the opposite, he hates.

**Oh, who does he hate?**

Them. The rich.

**Anyone else?**

His students, those he teaches at the University. They are all rich kids. 'What do they know of suffering?' he asks pretty much every lesson.

**So, he's bitter then?**

Yeah, possibly. He's a lot of things. This is what literature can do better than film, right? It can get inside someone's head, or it can show more sides to a person without making it seem out of character. So, Benny is many-sided, a dreamer, a romantic, but also unsure of himself. And he can be a real cunt sometimes.



**So, if anyone wants it, where and when do they get it?**

It's on [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) now, and will be on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) by October. It's a long book so the price on lulu is a little expensive, but it should be cheaper on amazon if you want to wait a bit longer.

**And in bookshops?**

Not yet, maybe not ever. We're unagented, unpublished the normal way.

**Hang on, what does that mean for the quality of the YEAR ZERO books?**

Well, I'm glad I'm interviewing myself and have the opportunity to ask and answer that question, because, in my mind, the quality is better. Except my book, of course. That's a wildcard, might be good, might be shit. This is because I'm an amateur. But the others, they just don't have a big enough market to get accepted by the industry. Basically, they got in, but the agents said they just couldn't continue as the market wasn't big enough. Anyway, I'll let them answer this one for themselves.

**Great, let's see what reviewers have said about 'Benny Platonov' so far...**

*"[The author] gives us a reference to the unevenness of the writing within the novel itself, begging the question: Is this just a didactic, novel-length response to his own shortcomings as a writer?"*

- STOO SEPP, *Funk n' dunk Magazine*

*"...from the opening paragraph it is apparent that this 'thing' was written by a pervert. A few more paragraphs and we can add misogynist. I dread to think what kind of writer we'll have by the end of it..."* - TOSCKA, *Schlock is my frock*

*"I was out by page twenty. Crap."* - SIMON WARDLE, *Pol Pot Pit*

*"[The author is a] PISS FUCKING, CUNT WAFFLE, DICK TIPPING, SLUT CAMPER..."* -

ANONYMOUS, *the Internet*.

*"...a guy sits in a park drinking beer and watching tramps with fannypacks, and he's hurting, apparently. So what have we here? He's gonna pick them all up and turn their lives around, get them jobs, give them some self-respect and change their lives? Ah no, wait...that's right, he's a writer. He's gonna write about them..."* - TREEHORN, *The Internet*



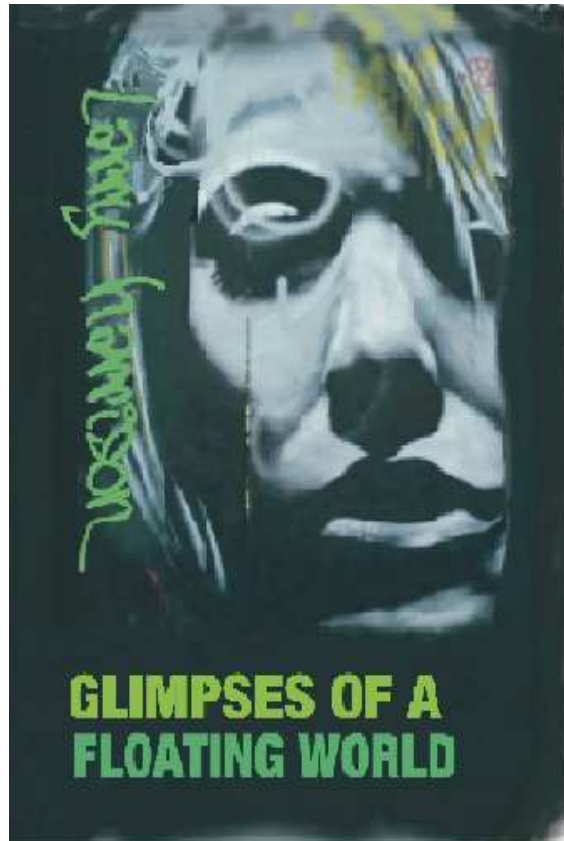
## The first books from YEAR

### 2# Glimpses of a floating world *Larry Harrison*

#### Nice cover, is that someone famous?

It's Ronnie Jarvis, the hero, or rather anti-hero, of *Glimpses of a Floating World*. He's a heroin and cocaine addict in London, in the early Sixties—a junky, whose attempt to escape the influence of his father, a senior police officer, leads to big trouble.

The story opens in 1963, when it was common practice to prescribe narcotics for addicts, although this policy operated alongside laws which penalised unlawful possession. Addicts like Ronnie Jarvis received a daily supply of heroin and cocaine, but could be prosecuted if found in possession of any unauthorised drugs. Ronnie is arrested for the illicit possession of opium, and after doing a cold turkey in prison, he's transferred to a country mental hospital. When he is pressured into becoming an informer, Ronnie deliberately supplies false information, in an attempt to embarrass the police—and especially his father. Unfortunately for Ronnie, his information results in the conviction of a gangster, owing to the routine police practice of planting evidence. This makes Ronnie a marked man.



#### So, it's about London in the Sixties then?

It's about the real Sixties, not the make-believe era in which middle-class kids became hippies and smoked dope, without ever inhaling. It's about heroin, cocaine, incarceration in mental hospitals, police corruption and gang violence. The Sixties were far from being an innocent, peaceful time: when the decade began, the death penalty was still in force, and youngsters were routinely flogged for offences against prison discipline. English seaside resorts were given over to mass brawls between Mods and Rockers, and London gangsters had celebrity status.

#### There's nothing about Hong Kong?

No, not directly. But any story about the international drugs trade concerns Hong Kong, because the War on Drugs has its roots in the way Britain excluded the US from Far Eastern markets through control of the opium trade. As Marx showed, the revenues from opium virtually paid for the administration of British India in the nineteenth century, and Hong Kong was at the centre of the drive to export opium to China. I

wrote an article about this with Kam Yi-Mak. Since tobacco provided the funding for the establishment of English colonies in America and the Caribbean in the seventeenth century, we argued that Britain might never have become a world power without drug dealing.

### **Addiction made Britain great?**

You could say that.

### **So what did the Americans think of opium?**

In the nineteenth century, America was engaged in an economic struggle with Britain because opium was China's most costly import, and there were no revenues left to purchase US goods. This became linked, in many American minds, to the broader issues of anti-colonialism, the struggle for national Prohibition, and an extended vision of America's manifest destiny: it was God's will for America to lead the world to sobriety. This mission suffered a temporary setback with the repeal of Prohibition, but the energy and resources tied up in the battle against booze soon flowed into the campaign against opium, the opiates and cannabis.

### **Didn't the British believe opium smoking was wrong?**

The British took a pragmatic view. If the Chinese must kill themselves through opium smoking, one English MP declared, it was better they did so for the benefit of the British economy, rather than those of our competitors. And the Chinese had created the social problems around opium use through their policy of prohibition, when the sensible course of action would have been to regulate consumption through taxation. The British resisted US demands to put an end to the opium trade, and the Foreign Office fought a long rearguard action in defence of opium, which was not outlawed in Hong Kong until 1943.

### **What's all that got to do with the Sixties?**

The UK toleration of opium use was reflected in the policy of permitting family doctors to prescribe heroin and cocaine to addicts, which continued until the late 1960s. Lax prescribing, especially from private doctors, led to a small black market in pharmaceutical heroin and cocaine, but the availability of medical care, and the low price of illicit drugs, meant that there was virtually no organised criminal involvement in the British Isles. The black market only began to flourish in London in the 1970s, when prescribing to addicts was restricted and the police given a lead role in responding to addiction. Since then, law enforcement has consumed the greater part of the resources allocated to drug dependence, and the number of people in the UK who are dependent on heroin has increased from under 400 in 1962 to an estimated 280,000 in 2006.

### **So you've written this book to highlight a failed policy?**

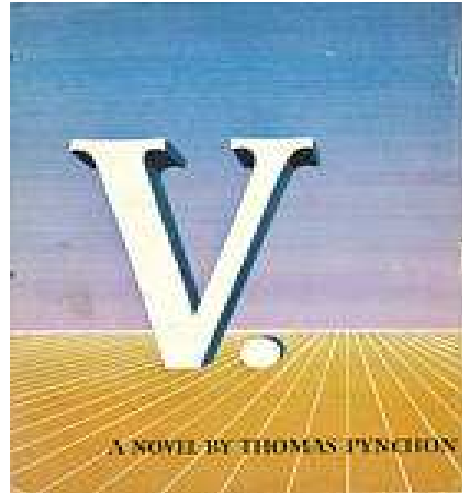
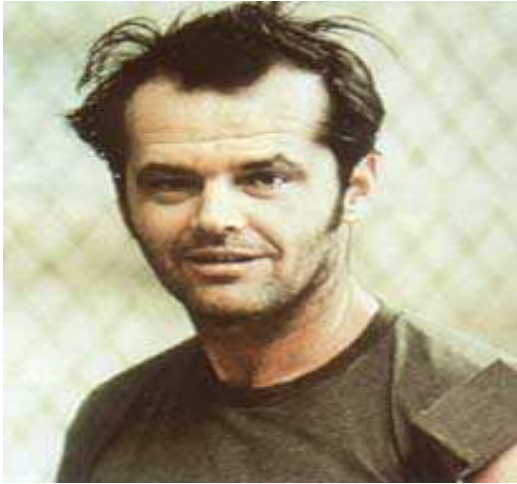
Not really. The book isn't intended to be didactic, and hopefully it's quite funny in places. But it's true to say that the driving force behind the book is anger at the hypocrisy associated with drugs policy, and the nonsense talked about treatment and law enforcement. Setting the story in the early Sixties also provided an opportunity to revisit a recent history that has been thoroughly mythologised. Television documentaries offer the comforting story of Flower Children who wanted 'love'n'peace', smoked dope rather than harmful skunk, and stuck flowers in the helmets of policemen. The story told in *Glimpses of a Floating World* is much closer to the truth.

### **And it's out now?**

Yes, out now on [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com), same as Oli's. Or Gupter's. I'm never sure exactly who's doing what where he's concerned. It'll be on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) by October.

## Jack Nicholson Vs Thomas Pynchon

Pursued by Atom Egoyan Jr



Jack watched from a few yards behind. Dennis and Peter and their disciples flowed off the stage, Dennis crowing about something to someone, Peter picking out the next woman to put in his bed.

Jack followed them down, a few faces coming his way, but not many. He wasn't the star, it was theirs.

Later, when the others were in the bar, he sat outside with the phone to his ear. "It's a son of a bitch, Warren. The attention these guys get. And, shit, don't get me wrong, man, it's deserved, they've nailed it, but...it's gotta be my turn soon, know what I'm saying?"

Warren, far away with a woman sitting opposite him, shook his head and said, 'yeah, for you and for me, Jackie.' By his side was a joint.

Jack signed off and hung up the phone. By his side there was nothing. He went back to his apartment and dropped down on the sofa, alone. On the desk, his copy of the book, his **V.**

### **'One flew over the Cuckoos nest' and thoughts of Profane, the Chief and rape, the Chief and sex, a community of men...**

Milos told Jack why the scene was important.

Jack nodded. He looked at his director and compared him to Dennis. Taller, more stable. He compared him to Roman. Way taller, more European in his attitude towards art.

Jack wondered if they were making art.

Milos called 'action' with the 'ac' booming and the 'tion' quiet.

Jack walked away from the nurse, the villain, and sat down in front of the TV. He looked around at the others, gave the audience some time to understand that he was testing the other nuts as an audience which might participate, and then he started commentating. There was a game, and he pictured it. One he remembered from a few years ago.

During the scene another part of him detached itself and asked continuously which exact part of this scene was art. Sure, it says something, but is it art?

Jack didn't have a trailer, he had a room.

Milos had insisted on it. He had called the entire cast onto the set, into the institutions common room, and he had told them that in this film, there were no stars. Jack hadn't argued.

He sat on his bed and thought of the others sitting on their beds. Brad Dourif, Danny Devito, the Chief. Were there really no stars then?

On his pillow was **V.** He picked it up and flicked through the first hundred and fifty pages. That's where his character was. Profane. The bum, the drifter, the counter-culture icon.

He practiced a few lines, testing the rhythm, seeing if it made sense coming out of his mouth. He didn't say much, Profane, but he had a way.

"Under the street...under the street," Jack mumbled.

Brad Dourif was playing dead. Or he was already dead.

Jack looked at him and tried to work up the emotion needed to strangle the nurse. It was Brad, he had his whole life ahead of him, he was so fucking cute. What did she do?

He turned and stormed to her desk.

As he stormed he thought about how far he should go. Feel the character, express his rage, he wants her to die. This was art, wasn't it?

He reached her and sprang. His hands went round her neck and he held on as tight as he could, and he even dug his nails in a little. She started to turn blue, but Milos didn't stop him.

Jack looked at her face then at her arms. She was strong, she was fighting back. What should he do? Harder? Should I kill her, Milos?

Milos stopped him and said, 'Jesus, Jack...'

Jack sat on his bed again, thinking about the scene.

It was a woman he was killing. Was that what he wanted? But it was Kesey, not him. 'Son of a bitch,' he said, 'it's Kesey. He wrote the damn thing.'

He turned to the book again, to his **V.**

Profane would never do that, would he? He was different, Pynchon was different. His canvas was broad, Kesey's was small. Pynchon was talking about the world, big, big, huge.

His Profane, when he played it, would be big. He'd be everyone.

The Chief was on top of him, holding the pillow.

Jack couldn't show a thing. He had no mind.

Milos called action from the side and the Chief brought the pillow down onto Jack's face.

"Son of a bitch, you're-...loosen, loosen, you fucking-..." Jack tried to say as the Chief smothered him.

Jack lay still faster than he probably should've, and the pillow was removed. He tried to be still and not breathe so they wouldn't have to do it again.

As he lay there, he felt the thighs of the Chief pressuring his waist. They were huge. He was huge. Six-eight, broad as a tree-cutter. He imagined being in bed with the Chief and letting him play around with his tiny white ass.

On his bed, Jack wrote the script for **V.**

His version started with Profane, it journeyed with Profane, and it would end with Profane.

He stopped and thought about the Chief, sitting naked in his room.

"Son of a bitch...a body like that..."

He thought of the others, all the guys on their beds, naked.

"Shit...what's this, man?"

Jack made a note on the script page. 'More girls, more sex.'

### **The 'Shining' and the way Jack saw Stanley's control of everything...**

Stanley told him to do it again.

"You sure about that, Stanley?" Jack asked.

Stanley told him that it wasn't right, that he had to do it again.

"Shit, if you say it then..."

Jack walked into the bar and sat down on the stool for the thirty-second time.

Jack sat in the hotel lobby, after hours, looking over the script.

Stanley had told him it would only be a couple of months. 'There's not actually that much to shoot,' he had said.

It was the ninth month of the shoot. The weather was changing, becoming brighter.

"Son of a bitch..." Jack muttered. "This one...you're not gonna like it, are you, Stan?"

He was looking at the scene for the next day. The one where his wife found what he had spent the winter writing.

Jack wondered how he should portray madness. He had his own doubts, his own depressions, but they weren't these depressions. They weren't anything to do with madness. What should he do?

He thought of the book, his long suffering **V**.

There's madness in Stencil, he thought. Fuck Profane, he's a bum. I need Stencil.

Jack knew Stencil. He was a paranoid, a conspiracist, it was a madness he knew he knew.

Jack crept up the stairs, shaking his hair about, saying whatever came into his head.

Stanley watched from behind the monitor.

Jack told his wife she was a nosy bitch and he was sick of it. He held up his fingers when he told her he was sick of it.

She swung the baseball bat, the warning swings. He swatted them away, but he knew she'd swing big soon.

He got closer and closer and thought about how he'd fall down the stairs. Then he counter-thought about how a true madman wouldn't think about that.

Stanley called 'cut.'

He came over and shouted at the wife. He told her she was swinging all wrong and that it was ruining the scene.

"Shit, Stanley, swing seemed fine to me," Jack said.

"No, fine is wrong. Perfect is the only acceptable result."

"Perfect, perfect, does it even exist, Stanley? What about those...happy accidents, that unexpected chaos?"

"Do it again," Stanley said and walked back to the monitor.

Jack sat at the typewriter, talking to the pages.

He wasn't mad, he was feigning it. Yes, he was a feigner, he had decided.

"Fucking caretakers in the snow...fucking Stephen King...you're not any madness I know," he said to page forty-seven of his script, his burgeoning **V**.

Stencil was at the dentists now. He was asking the guy what he knew about the conspiracy, the world of **V**.

Jack knew the madness of Stencil. He wouldn't need to feign that.

Jack sat with his back against the hedge while the make-up artist put the snow on his hair and made his face look frozen.

Stanley paced up and down nearby, holding pictures of people frozen in blizzards and telling her that it had to be perfect.

Jack thought the make-up artist was pretty so he told her they should have a few drinks in the hotel bar before the shoot was over.

"Jack, don't talk to her," Stanley said.

"Shit, Stanley, we're not even filming."

"No talking."

Jack didn't say anymore to her. He sat still and thought about how fake the film would look when it was finished, how lifeless it would be.

"You know, Stanley, my next film...there's gonna be a guy just like you," Jack said.

Stanley didn't respond.

"Yeah, he's gonna be a dentist," Jack added.

## **‘About Schmidt’ and the idea in Jack’s mind that it was probably too late to do much of anything anymore...**

The tall kid, the director, told Jack to control his face. ‘Keep your lips straight, your eyes down, your body slumped,’ he said.

The idea, Jack had been told, was that the character was tired. He didn’t have the energy to react anymore, even if he was reigniting his life.

Jack thought about what the film meant. There’s an old guy, he hasn’t got long left, he wants to affect something in the world.

He wondered if it was art.

The scene played and he sat in the hot tub as Kathy Bates came over and took off her towel.

Play the scene, Jack,’ he told himself, ‘you’re not a star. Play the age.’

He sat in his trailer, alone.

There were no photos on the desk, no woman in the bed. Only the book on his pillow, that loyal **V**.

He flicked through it and searched for a character he could play.

Seventy years old. No credibility for Profane anymore, and too old for Stencil. So what was left?

Godolphin, in his eighties. Jack read a few of his scenes and shivered. The old man, the one who found

**V** then lost it, the one with no discernible mind-view.

The phone rang, it was Warren.

“Hey Jackie, how’s the new kid?”

They talked about the film he was doing, and how the new kid was pretty good but not quite the same as the old ones, the Polanskis, the Hoppers, the Formans.

“To be back in the day, huh?” Warren said.

Jack told him about **V**. He told him he was thinking of playing the old man.

“Godolphin? Shit, Jackie...it’s that bad?”

“It’s a son of a bitch, isn’t it, man? Age and...just age.”

Warren, sitting far away in the Mulholland hills with a woman waiting in his bed, told him it was a bust anyway, Pynchon would never give the rights.

Jack shook his head and said, ‘shit, you’re probably right.’

He hung up and put his head down on the pillow. He looked at the book, at the giant **V**. and its full stop, at the name, Thomas Pynchon.

Thirty years ago, that’s when he should’ve done it.

‘It’s all a son of a bitch,’ Jack muttered.





## Journey to the end of the night...in HONG KONG.

[Кажде время вы идете вне в Гонконг вы встречаете клоуна. Так не пойдите вне.]



Zoosk. Myspace. Adult friend finder.

Oli told me to write those names first. He told me it would be like a launchpad, teasing the reader into going on into the column. I guess it might work, I don't know. I don't really know how to write, so I just did what he said.

Anyway, this week I was checking them out, those kinds of sites. I thought it was getting kinda dull going to the whores all the time, and I guess maybe I found some self-respect too. Not too much, but enough to make me think that maybe I shouldn't be paying for it all the time.

So, out of all of them, I guess I hit Zoosk the most. And I can't say I wrote the greatest messages ever as that heroes programme was on TV while I was typing. It was the last episode, I think, and I'm not sure which season it was, but it was the one where the guy with the funny mouth and all the best powers was helping the guy who couldn't die get into some vault somewhere. I don't know what the guy wanted, but he seemed to be smirking a lot, and I thought, wow, he must have some hidden power if he's pulling faces like that. Ten minutes later and the little Japanese guy is taking him and putting him in a coffin somewhere, and the guy does nothing. I don't know, it just seemed a bit shit. What if that guy with one eyebrow found him, then what? He'd just stand there like a punchbag?

OK, I probably wrote too much there...I know I always get sidetracked by TV, but I can't help it, it's what I like. And I can show restraint. It's not like I write the whole column about it, and I was gonna write something on that 'Castle' programme, but I'm not. Well, just one thing, quickly...that trailer for it, where he takes the gun off that other guy and wiggles his head whenever anyone speaks to him. What the hell is

he saying in that? I watched it over fifty times, I reckon, and I can't understand a word of it. Is he American? Does he have a throat?

There I'm done, back to Zoosk.

I'll explain a little...it's a dating site and you search through photos of average looking women until you see one you think you might be able to fuck without turning the lights off. Then you send "wink, wink" and if you're lucky they message back and say they wanna fuck you too.

But, I don't know, I'm still not convinced. It's a bit indirect for me. I'm used to meeting women and being led to the shower. There's no talk, it's just 'here's what I got, let's go to work.'

Anyway, I did try the others...myspace, Adult friend-finder...but they were like the two extremes. One was tame and full of princesses, the other was full of women without heads shoving their muff into a camera phone. I really don't get it, why are they showing me that? I fuck under a blanket, I lick with my eyes closed, I'm not a biologist. Put your fucking knickers on.

So, I did meet one girl from Zoosk. I talked to her once on MSN and then she agreed to meet me in that big shopping place in Kowloon Tong. So far, so easy...

I got there late and she's waiting outside the coffee shop, and honestly, she looked kinda like a librarian, but I was there so we went in and talked for a while. As we were sitting on the couch I started touching her leg and her shoulders, just to see if there's any chance of a fuck that night, and lo and behold, she put her hand on my thigh. So, back to my place, and maybe three hours later she's riding me on the couch, facing away from me like all the girls do with the movie star on 'Entourage'. But, even though it was kinda inevitable, it still took six hours total to get her on my cock. And the morning after, she wouldn't leave. She wanted to have lunch.

Krist, it'd never happen with a whore.

**Nikolai Stavrogin**

## FILM PRETTY MUCH EVERYWHERE



### Shutter Island \*\*\*\* Scorsese the thief?

Another issue, another exclusive. This time it's little Martin and his adapt of the guy who wrote Mystic River's Shutter Island, a novel the guy who wrote Mystic River himself said was 'a time-passer, a cheap thriller made to lighten the psychological load.' I guess that means he was depressed after writing about Kiddie fiddling in...shit, this is the third time I'm saying this, and it's only the first paragraph...Mystic River. What it also means is that Scorsese's passing the time again until...well until nothing, really, let's face it he's pretty much spent in terms of his own stories to tell. All he's got now is style and other people's visions, so let's see how he's getting on...

First off, a reference to his last one, 'The Departed'. A lot of people said it was a time passer, that 'Infernal Affairs' was superior, that it was slick but what was the point really? These people are idiots. And there's one scene that serves as a response, a quick comparison between the two versions of that film: One, Tony Leung gets shot in the head and the director puts on the tape and plays some flashbacks while Andy Lau does what? Goes back to his trailer while the audience *feels*? Two, DiCaprio gets shot in the head and there's no sound, just the elevator doors trying to close. To sum up, and to move on, Scorsese is superior to almost every director out there.

So, what does he do with Shutter Island? He steals, pretty much. From Bunuel, Renoir, Powell and Pressburger, Chris Columbus. But that's ok, because he tells every interviewer he steals and what he steals from, just like Tarantino, and isn't that admirable? He knows there's not much else left to innovate in film so the only way to proceed is to look back at the weirdest films made from the days of yonk and rip them off.

Anyway, back to the film

The plot is basically DiCaprio and Mark Ruffalo, as cops, going to a mental asylum on an isolated island to find an escaped nut [Emily Mortimer]. The power goes down, DiCaprio starts seeing his dead wife [Michelle Williams], and Ruffalo walks around pointing his gun a lot and trying to turn on every lightswitch he comes across. It sounds generic, but it sure doesn't look that way as DiCaprio has a weird, semi-bowl haircut and wears the uniform of a nut for most of the film, and the shots Scorsese uses [or steals] are very unsettling. Example, there's a scene where DiCaprio holds his dead wife and ash rains down from the ceiling, and it looks like two different styles of scene melded together, but in an impossible way. It's too hard to express exactly what it looks like, but I haven't seen anything like it since the flashback scenes on 'Ghostship.' Another scene shows DiCaprio talking to another nut behind bars, I think it's the nut from 'Watchmen', the guy in the inky mask, and the shots skew and vary, incorporating the cell bars and the position of the actors in quite incredible ways, so you forget which of the two guys is actually the captive. I doubt Mystic River guy had that in mind when passing the time with his cheap thriller.

The acting? DiCaprio seems to have hit a rut media-wise, meaning he keeps knocking it out of the park, but the reviews stay the same. Very good, but no higher. I guess it's not his time right now, and others are in line for the superlatives, but here, in this film, he shows that he is probably the best young actor working today. There are perhaps two slips in the film, two moments where I didn't totally believe in his character [they were both scenes with his wife, perhaps showing a habit left over from the turbulent marriage to Winslet in his last film], but on the whole he's convincing, his face, his eyes, his shuffling, awkward body language transforming him from solid cop to a kind of madness. Ruffalo, on the other hand, gets screwed. Why did he choose another role like this? The straight guy, the serious one, the guy trying to get the power back on without any kind of history to his character. I don't know. He's adequate, but the role's a waste.

And Scorsese? He's winding down well, stealing and styling, and making very good films out of average material.





## Inglourious Basterds \*\* Quentin the writer?

Two stars seems harsh, but this has been coming for a while now. Tarantino's on his seventh film as director and where's he at? The same place he was with his second film pretty much. Let's look back.

Dogs: Bright start, different, lots of talking.

Pulp Fiction: Great structure, lots of talking.

Jackie Brown: There's a disease of modern reviewing, I think it's called revisionalism, where if a film gets a muted reaction on its initial release then ten years later it must be an underrated work of genius.

But, really, ten years later, Jackie Brown, is still a piece of shit with lots of talking.

Kill Bill 1&2: Lucy Liu screams 'muthafucka' in Japanese. I'm getting bored.

Basically, Tarantino's regarded for his dialogue. This, according to most critics, is what makes him special. But does it? The man himself has said that to be a great writer, you have to challenge yourself. You have to write more than one voice. So where's the challenge in 'Inglourious Basterds'?

It opens with a twenty minute scene, a two-hander between a French farmer and the Jew Hunter, Hans Landa, where the latter subtly interrogates and tries to smoke a pipe. As a scene it's fine, tense and exciting, but within the actual plot it is basic and generic. And this stretches to the rest of the film. The plot is simply about revenge, the characters are all versions of Tarantino, and the dialogue is just things that he says in real life.

But isn't the dialogue his strength? Not really, not anymore, not for me. I'm sick of the way he talks, I was sick of it by Jackie Brown, and in Kill Bill it was embarrassing. Someone like Kurt Vonnegut, he managed about ten books in the same voice before I started getting bored of it, and Tarantino managed two. The irony is he still believes it to be riveting, and perhaps it is for some people as you still hear people quoting it, but he has to know that his real strength is in his ideas, and when to end a scene. The whole concept of Inglourious Basterds is its selling point, not the plot itself, but the idea of fictional characters coming into history and doing what ever the fuck they want with it. The way Tarantino puts in that opening scene and lets it run and run, and the way he does it again later with a twenty minute bar-room scene. The way he doesn't give a fuck what people think when he kills off Hitler at the end. This is the base he should work from, not the dialogue.

Can I go back to the dialogue again? Fuck it, the dialogue he puts into his characters' mouths is painful at times. It's so elaborate, it's so one-note, like every one of them is a gobby, big chinned twat who used to work in a video shop and knows a shit load about films. Brad Pitt, yes, he gets a different accent, and others get different rhythms of speech, but it's all the same shade of Quentin, isn't it? In fact, in all his seven films I think there've been two characters which have been different. DeNiro in 'Jackie Brown', and Hans Landa in this. Apart from that, krist, he even wrote a group of women who sounded like him, four fucking women who spoke and thought like Quentin Tarantino.

So two stars then, and a plea to Quentin to write a film about a mute.

Recommended by Dan Holloway

### Young Guns \*\*\*\*



What if this is as good as it gets?

'Reap it Murphy, you son of a bitch.'  
Emilio Estevez looks like a kid and does a decent job of being unpredictable, and it's a good thing he's tiny as he can fit into the trunk that gets thrown out the window at the end. Seriously, is that really possible? That trunk lands hard. Anyway, the best parts are in the first hour or so when Charlie Sheen and Estevez are battling for control of the gang, but then the film wimps out and lets some fat guy on the shitter shoot a ridiculously curious Sheen in the guts. And when shot, why does he react like a broom's just been shoved up his ass? I've never seen anyone shot for real, but is that really what happens? Special mention for the end too, although I dislike the way Charlie [not Sheen] gets shot to pieces and no one seems to give a shit. And how does Chevez sneak out of the house to get the horses?

### Henry Fool \*\*\*\*



Hal Hartley avec scarf = pretentious cock.

Hal Hartley was either a pretentious cock before he made this, or he was boxed into a corner and came out swinging that way after it was praised. Either way, the film doesn't suffer much for it, in fact, it's lifted as the main character aims to develop himself into a famous writer. Actually, he tells the family he stays with in the film that

he already is. And as we all know, anyone who calls themselves an artist, without anything to back it up, is a pretentious cock. [Note: that probably makes no sense as a through line – this film is good, Hartley has the art to back it up. But he's still a cock.]

### Blackbeard \*\*

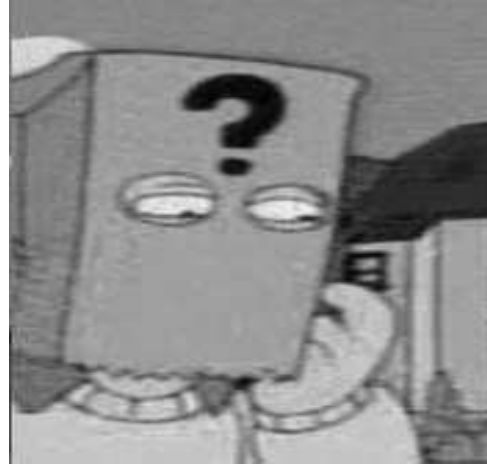
I think this was a TV serial as it went on forever and had Angus MacFaddyn as Blackbeard, a sure sign you won't be seeing this in a cinema. It was watchable, and MacFaddyn sure drank a lot...actually, he was a huge man in this, which is what a pirate would likely have been back in the day, so credit to him for sensualising. But two things bugged me: The black slave not given any lines, and the way the hero, Lieutenant Maynard, had a waxy face. Also, when he fights MacFaddyn at the end, he shoots him after being beaten in a fair sword fight. And almost none of the other pirate characters are given good death scenes, they just seem to fall over and die. Disappointing.

### Vacas \*\*\*\*

I've been meaning to promote Julio Medem's films for a while now, but every issue I remember a piece of shit film that gets written up first. Well, Julio, Gupter Puncher is about to give you two more fans. It's a Spanish film, the plot showing two rival families living in a field near each other, arguing, fighting and scheming through sixty years and three generations. It starts with a young man pretending to be dead and ends with his grandson, in the Spanish Civil War, standing up to Franco's men. Between that you've got the young man growing into the Granddad and trying to live with his act of cowardice, and trying to stop the other family, the nastier family with a nastier granddad, finding out about it. Medem keeps the two families isolated quite well, and shoots the nastier family's farmhouse in shadow so you know that the granddad's a cock. Seems basic, but that's just the tip of it, as each farmhouse changes over the years, each scene focusing on a different aspect or room of the house. And if arty shots ain't your thing then there's a sex scene in the barn and a tense chop-off as the two families race each other to cut the most trees.

## Dennis Hopper Vs Thomas Pynchon

Pursued by Donald Barthelme Jr.



I blinked, and I was coming out of the campus in Berkley with Fonda and Jack and the kids were leading us somewhere, shit, to the streets, man, they were leading us to protest, man, and Fonda had his arm around my shoulder, and Jack was trailing a little behind, and I was just a little ahead, shit, yeah, that one kid in front, the one with the short skirt, she was leading us and talking back to us, or me, and she was telling me I hadn't blew it, I hadn't blew it because something had started because of me, something beautiful, but ugly, and I said back to her, yeah, baby, something beautiful, as my eyes went down to her swinging little hips and her tight little ass...

I blinked, and I was back from Peru with a piece of shit film in my hands. I was sitting in my apartment alone, thinking of moving somewhere bigger before, but now I couldn't, not now, man, not with this piece of shit, in my hands. But maybe it wasn't shit, maybe there was something there. Maybe if I took it up to Berkley...

I blinked, and I was in the jungle. Francis...shit, Francis, man, he was saying something to me, something about my lines, but there was more than one Francis, shit, man, there were a thousand fucking Francis' and they were luminous, or half of them were and, shit, man, I told one of them I'd make my own shit up...

I blinked, and I was on a beach getting married. Shit, man, who was the bitch? We were standing in front of a fucking rabbi and saying our lines...shit, man, a rabbi, was the bitch Jewish? And then she was kissing me and telling me there was a future for us and she knew I could be different for her, but I was already walking for the bar...

I blinked and Jodie Foster was coming out of a shower...shit, man, she had no fucking clothes on, and she was reaching for a towel, but I had moved it, and she couldn't get it, so she had to stand there with no fucking clothes on, and, shit, man, she was mad about that, she was shouting at me, 'Dennis, fucking hell, where's the goddamned towel?'

I blinked, and I was holding Sandra with that fake detonator thing in my hand. Opposite was that kid, Reeves, standing there straight as a fucking broom, man. Shit, I said, 'I'm gonna be this nut forever, man,' and Sandra said, 'Dennis, it's just a film.' I scratched my head with the fake detonator, and rubbed my eyes, and told her back straight, 'Shit, Sandy, you don't get it, do you?' She didn't, none of them did...

I blinked, and some frizzy haired punk was sitting on a couch next to me, watching fucking soccer on the box. Shit, man, there were cameras too, they were everywhere, and I had lines again, but I didn't wanna say them. Then that guy came in, the fat guy from the Sopranos and he said something, and I just looked back and said my line, but, man, inside I was a different vibe. 'You've reduced me, man, you've fucking reduced me,' was what my vibe was saying...

I blinked, and then coughed. I was in my apartment, alone. A bottle of Jacks was on the table beside me. 'Shit, man, one bottle,' I muttered through another cough, before I saw the second bottle on the floor.

Beside the second bottle, that book, the giant, green **V.**

### **End of an interview [a battle against retrospective]...**

**Interviewer:** That moment, on film, felt like a release for you.

**Dennis Hopper:** Yeah...shit, man. A huge release. Just having that mask on, man, just feeling that pseudo-air, y'know, man, it just...it just...shit, man, Lynch knew what he was doing, I'll say that straight, man. The guy's a God.

**Interviewer:** And he's still going strong, that's the amazing thing.

**Dennis Hopper:** Man, he's like a human battery. I don't think he's ever gonna stop. And y'know, man, we still talk a lot, so maybe, I don't know, man, maybe we'll think of something to do together.

**Interviewer:** Yes, sounds interesting. [The interviewer stands up]. Ok, thank you so much, Mr. Hopper, for your time, and I'll let you know when the interview comes out.

**Dennis Hopper:** Shit, man, we've only just started, sit down, man, sit down.

**Interviewer:** I'm sorry, I think I've covered most of everything I need for the piece, if there's anything else I need, I'll...

**Dennis Hopper:** What are you saying, man? We've just talked about the old shit. Shit, man, that's not the extent of me, I've got loads of shit in the pipeline. Just sit down, man, I'll tell you about the shit in the pipeline.

**Interviewer:** Actually, this is kind of a retrospective, Mr. Hopper. We're interested in your career as a whole, how you affected film in the 60's and 70's, Blue Velvet, things like that.

**Dennis Hopper:** Retrospective? Shit, man, that's not cool. That's not cool, man, that's not what I came here to hear. The pipeline, man, what about the pipeline? I've got shit to say, man. Sit down, listen, come on, man.

**Interviewer:** I'm sorry, Mr. Hopper. My editor's the boss, not me.

The interviewer gets his stuff, thanks Hopper once more then leaves.

After he's gone, Hopper puts his hand under his thighs and pulls out that book, Pynchon, the giant, green **V.**

### **Hopper and Michelle Phillips [two brief scenes]...**

A man and a woman sit on a beach and watch the tide coming in. The man, Dennis Hopper, has his arms around the woman, Michelle Phillips, his body closed around her like a shell. The tide comes in and they don't move. They laugh as it hits and goes under them and slowly rises up to their waists. Hopper kisses her and asks her why the whole world can't be a beach.

A man sits alone in his apartment on the phone to a woman. The man, Dennis Hopper, has his hand on a glass of Jacks. The phone rings for a long time and finally a woman answers. 'Miscellaneous,' Hopper says as a greeting. 'Dennis, is that you?' she says back. 'Sure, baby, it's Dennis.' They talk for a while. Hopper asks her what she's doing and the woman, Michelle Phillips, tells him she's working in TV. Hopper tells her that's great, and that he's working on something new, something she might be interested in. 'Not Pynchon?' she asks. "Baby, it's real. I'm getting in." She says she doesn't believe him. She says it's the same line he always uses when he's drunk and wants her to come back to him. 'Come back to me, Mish, I'm changed,' he pleads. 'Fuck you, Dennis. Fuck you.' She reminds him of the times he used to beat her black and blue, and sometimes green, and he says back that it was never really him, it was the "prison of the mind." She reminds him of the time he couldn't find anything to hit her with, so he went to the hardware store and bought a hammer then brought it back home. Hopper says again it wasn't him. She hangs up. Hopper reaches for the next bottle of Jacks. He screams at the wall as he pours. He drinks the bottle. He cries.

I picked up that book, the giant, green **V**, and I read it again, all through the night, shit, man, all through the fucking night, from the start to the tedious bit in the middle with those fucking Germans in Africa.

Profane, man. I am Profane. Or I was him, man. I'm not shit anymore, but back then, when I was flying, I was him.

I read the parts with Profane, with the alligators and the way he went down there, shit, with a fucking shotgun, man. He shot those big, green bastards to shit.

I phoned my agent in New York and told him that I was fucking exhausted with LA and that I was coming up there to find Pynchon.

"God, not again, Dennis."

"Don't take that vibe with me, man. I'm fucking coming, no obstacles."

"Who's after him this time?"

"No one's after him, man. I'm after him."

"Not Jack? Warren?"

"Shit, man. You still calling me a disciple, fucking Jack this, Warren that. I'll show you, man, I'll show you."

"Dennis, look. Pynchon is impossible. No one gets him. No one. You know that."

"I don't know shit, man."

He put the phone down, breathed then picked it back up, redialed, and told the agent that he was still coming and that when he got there he wanted to see a list of all the directors interested in doing this.

"Dennis..."

### **List of all the directors who said no [including reasons]...**

**Fincher** – It's Hopper, no way.

**Soderbergh** – I'm busy filming tribesmen fucking, sorry.

**Sayles** – I don't do the work of others, even Pynchon.

**Cuaron** – I don't get Pynchon, sorry.

**Spielberg** – I don't feel Pynchon, sorry.

**Coppola** – I'm reinventing myself. No more adaptations.

**Beatty** – It's Hopper, no fucking way.

**Tarantino** – Pynchon’s a fucking snob, man.

**Araki** – I’m not big enough, sorry man. And it’s Hopper.

**Polanski** – I’m too depressed to do much of anything, right now.

**P.T. Anderson** – It’s Hopper, I don’t think so.

**Scorcese** – If there’s room for Leo, sure. Hopper? Jesus, I don’t know...

**Ratner** – Pynchon? Dude, where do I fucking sign?

I looked at the list. Everyone’s out, everyone’s burning bridges.

“Ratner’s interested...you see, at the bottom there,” the agent said.

I scrunched the paper up into a little planet and threw it on the floor.

“Shit, man...”

The agent rocked back in his chair.

“There’s always Howard?”

I phoned Howard. He was still on set for that fucking Da Vinci crap. I didn’t want him, but, shit, man, I had to get someone, and the ginger little sell-out was a name.

“Shit, Ron, how’s it riding, man?”

“Dennis, I’m in.”

“What’s that, man?”

“Your guy told me all about it. Pynchon, right? You want to do Pynchon? Well, buddy, I’m your guy. I am your guy.”

“Shit, Ron. That’s news I wanted to hear, man.”

“You get the rights, we’ll start asap. ASAP, Dennis.”

**A conversation the night before [between Ron Howard and Ewan McGregor, in a bar in Rome, with a bottle of wine already drunk]...**

Ewan puts his glass on the side. It wobbles and falls backwards, onto the floor.

“I was thinking, Ron...”

“Yeah, Ewan, that’s great, really...”

“I was thinking about you, Ron. That’s what I mean.”

“Great, Ewan, what were you-...”

“I was thinking about the abuse you always get, Ron. You know? From them, the critics, the cunts. And I get it too, man. Right? I did Star Wars, they jumped on me. I did this, they jump on me again. All that shit about the paycheck, right, that’s what they talk about, and, whatever...but you, you get it worse, man. You know what they call you? The Hack-man. They call you the Hack-man. Why? Because you have no character, no flair, no...what is it? No style on film.”

“Oh, Ewan, you’re on the money there, it’s so true. They really do give me a hard time...”

“They do, Ronnie. But it’s shit, isn’t it? I mean, how bad are you, man? Really? I mean, you’re not, are you? Not in the slightest. You’ve done some great fucking films, man. Apollo 13, Beautiful Mind, the others ones...and you’re solid too, You’re always solid. That’s a good thing, man.”

Ron reaches for the bottle and pours some more red into his glass.

“Solid, Ewan, gee...that’s something, I guess...”



"Solid as fuck, man. You are SOLID. Don't forget that."

Ewan leaves an hour later. Ron stays for another bottle, staring into the mirror opposite the bar, trying to think of imaginative places to put the camera if he were filming this scene.

I told my agent that now we had Howard, all we needed were the rights. He said again that it was impossible, but I wouldn't hear it. Shit, man, I mean, if you start thinking things are impossible then what you got?

I told him that there was only one way to get to Pynchon and I knew exactly what it was.

I sat in my hotel room, a three star place with shitty room service, and made my plan.

Pynchon had a wife, you see. And, shit, man, she was here in New York, just round the corner. And that meant that bitch was going out of her office, every night, getting in her wheels and going back home to Pynchon. So, all I had to do was go with her. Shit, man, why was I the first to think of this?

I stood opposite the building she was in.

Melanie Jackson, literary agent, how the fuck did a hack like you ever get someone like him? Shit, man.

I put my hands into both pockets. There was the gun in one, and that book, the giant, green **V** in the other. It was perfect.

On my face there was no mask. Why would I need one of those, man? I was a face myself, and if this did get fucked up then all I had to say was I was wearing a Dennis Hopper mask. No one would think it was really me. I mean, shit, man, I was Hollywood.

She took a long time to come out.

I passed the time by imagining myself as all the characters I'd been, standing there, different motives, different plans for how this thing should be done.

### **The plan and motivation of Frank Booth [Blue Velvet]...**

Cuckoo in the hole, baby, I see you coming, I see you.

[Breath]

You won't make a sound, baby, will you? Shit, you're a good girl, you're from a good house, you won't make no noises for uncle Frank, will you? And it's just a good time, baby, nothing out of the normal. Me, you, in the car, we'll drive up there with a smile to see Thomas and...you will smile, won't you little Dorothy? You know how to smile? Good, baby, because I don't wanna have to help you with that, really, not an inch. You gotta do it your own way, baby, on your own terms...

[Breath]

Ok, get in the car, Dorothy, get in the car...a little drive, baby, come on, start the car, we're going for a little drive...

[Breath]

Shit, baby, don't call me Dennis...I don't know any fucking Dennis...it's uncle Frank, baby, don't make me say I'm anything else...I'm uncle Frank...

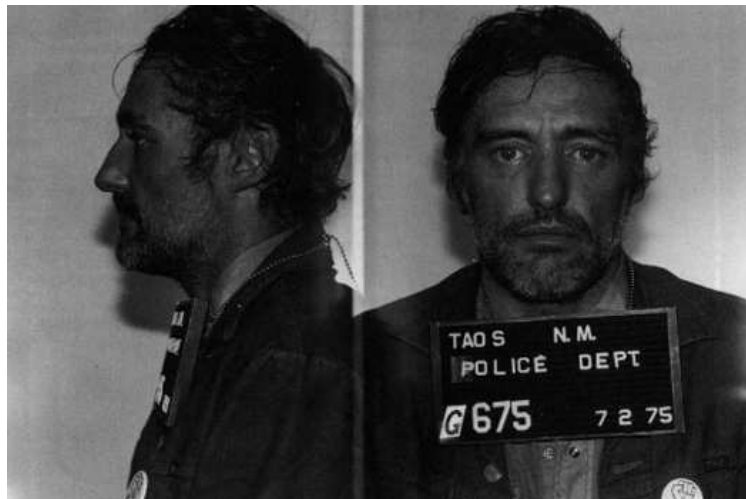
[Breath]

Keep driving, baby, wherever it is you go, just keep driving that way and we'll be smitten. What? This? This, baby, stop looking at it...nothing but a gun, nothing but a tool...you don't need to be worrying about this, baby...not when it's uncle Frank holding it...

I blinked, and, man, I was in a car.  
There was a woman next to me, driving. She was shaking. I was holding a gun.  
“He’s not in, please, he’s not there...”  
I looked at her. It was the man’s bitch, Melanie Jackson.  
“Shit, man, you’re Pynchon’s wife...”  
“Please, please...I don’t-...what do you want?”  
I scratched my head with the gun.  
“Shit, this is not cool, man, this is not cool...”  
Outside were all the cars and the people and the houses and the whole rest of the city that would know about this soon, the next morning even. Dennis Hopper kidnaps wife of famous writer. Hopper off the rails. Hopper blew it.  
“Shit, pull over, let me out.”  
“What?”  
“I said pull over, bitch, Pull the fuck over, let me out of the fucking car,” I screamed.  
She pulled over and I opened the door and put one leg out, but, shit, man, I had to explain this, I had to tell her what the thing was...  
“Shit, listen...I didn’t mean to-...”  
She screamed ‘bastard’ at me and accelerated with my other leg still in the car. I fell down and got pulled along a couple of meters before being released.  
“Shit, bitch, what the fuck you-...”  
I got up quickly, clutching my leg, and hobbled off, hobbled far away from all the faces gathered round me, whispering ‘it’s him, it’s Hopper’.

I sat in the prison cell alone, with no glass of Jacks, no phone, no bail, no anything except a sprained ankle and grazes on my face.

And one other thing, man. In my jacket pocket, that book, that giant, green **V**.





## MUSIC IN HK

### The guy who played with Neil Finn

#### Words by Captain Wong

Mate, they're after me.

The music's gonna take a back seat this week, because there're things that need to be dealt with. Or people, mate, there are people that need to be dealt with.

Last week the head man comes in and says some guy's written in to moan about me. Some twat called Tenant. So I read it, and, mate, it's a fucking joke.

Let me whip out some clarification, because some twats who don't know two shits about music, like Tenant, clearly need some.

I'VE BEEN IN THE STUDIO, MATE. I'VE BEEN ON STAGE WITH NEIL FINN. I PLAYED BASS FOR HIM. I'VE COME UP WITH INTROS FOR MORRISEY.

*Suedehead*, mate. Remember that? The first single off *Viva Hate*? That was me. No joke. Poor Morrissey, he was tearing his hair out, mate, he was walking up the fucking walls, until he phoned me. You see, we know each other from some Jools Holland gig back in the late 80's and he never forgets me, not when he's in a fix.

You see, Tenant, Mozza knew he had to make *Viva Hate* count. People were starting to talk. They were saying Johnny Marr was the real talent, that Mozza was all lip and politics. It was a complete revision of The Smiths, and fucking hell, mate, even the bass player was getting more credit. So, what did Mozza do? He phoned me, mate.

And what happened next, Tenant? Were you even alive, mate? Or are you just another fucking spotty kid in a fucking Bloc Party t-shirt?

Anyway, I'll tell you what happened. *Viva Hate* came out. Thirteen songs, some average, some decent, one glorious. And which one was that, mate? Something you played? No, it was *Suedehead*, intro by Captain Wong. And the keyline, 'why do you come here, when you know it makes no sense to me?' Me again, mate. Seriously, ask Mozza, he'll tell you. He was

sitting there, in a fucking Camden street, writing some wank about the library keeper in old Alexandria and trying to relate it to Thatcher, but it wasn't working, mate, and I told him, "Mozza, mate, it's not working, is it?" And he said, "Cap, I'm a writer, but I know I'm trying too much with this. I'm surrounded by forest and I know they're gonna crucify me if I don't come up with something."

So, I sat down and I looked around, and there's this shitty looking street with shitty buildings around us, and I just said to him, look mate, keep it simple, keep it vague. "Vague, how?" he said back, and that's when the magic happened. 'There's shit all over this street. Why do you come here, Mozza, why? It makes no sense, mate.'

And that's it, mate. That's what Captain Wong does, he fucking inspires. Is that what you do, Tenant? Tell me, mate, whose ear you got right now?

And before you write in again, saying, 'where's the credit for it then?' I'm gonna tell you, again, that it doesn't work like that, mate. The best don't need to give it, and I don't need to hear it, not from the press. Because I've got their ears, mate. I know what role I'm playing.

And if you don't understand it by now then I can't help you, because, mate, how many different ways can I say it?

And, Tenant, if you wanna know whose ears I've got then let me make a short list for you. Neil Finn, played with him. Morrissey, saved him on *Suedehead*. Billy Corgan, he phones me every week, mate. Last week, he phoned me. "Cap, I still can't find an angle, a way back in. Maybe I'm too old for all this," he said. And what did I say? "Bill, mate, you've got the same problem, you're trying to go forwards, not backwards. Revisit 'Rhinoceros' and go from there, mate." And there's more...[Ed – I think that's enough, Cap. How about the local music scene?]

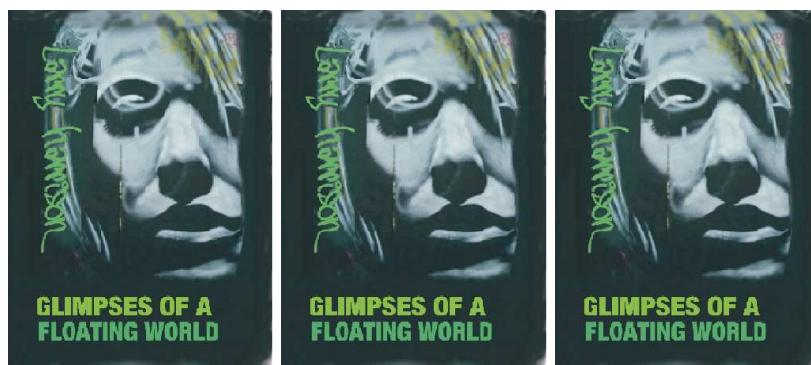
Fine, mate, what's happening locally?

Some shit called 'Born to Hula', mate. Another two-piece, 'The Yours'. Honestly, they're so shit I'm not even gonna give them sub-headings.

## **BOOKS EVERYWHERE**

[Вы около прочитать самую беззастенчивую штепсельную вилку в виду того что Сталин бредило к селянин о его пятилетнем плане.]

### **GLIMPSES OF A FLOATING WORLD** *Larry Harrison \*\*\*\*\**



I'm the best person in the world to review *Glimpses of a Floating World*, because I am Ronnie Jarvis. I'm the real life person that this book was written about. I know what really happened, and how much of the story is made up. You see, this writer, Larry Harrison, came to interview me and he promised he'd tell it like it is. It was supposed to be my life story, but he bloody invented loads of it. Just for starters, he had me killed off, when as you can see I'm very much alive.

Some bits of it are true, and are more or less what I told him. The stuff about life in the Loony Bin is all true; that's just what it was like. It was wicked what those nurses got up to. And the stuff about life in prison is pretty much true; that's what it was like in them days. Still is, pretty much, except they can't flog you, and they run a more relaxed regime nowadays. In the early Sixties, the screws were all ex-army, and they ran the borstals and YP nicks like army glasshouses. Everything had to be at the double.

The Duke of York is a real pub, and many of the characters that Harrison has hanging around Soho, like Billy McGuinness, are real. He was famous, Billy McGuinness. The junkie Tony Moss was real; I knew him well. He hanged himself in Brixton prison, like it says. And Bing Spear, the Home Office official: he really did used to turn up at the all-night chemist's at midnight and check all the prescriptions. He was a good bloke, and he knew everyone's Christian name. A proper gentleman.

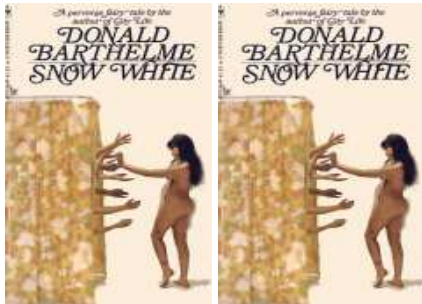
But the book is full of Porkies. My father was never a copper, and no one ever accused me of being a grass. That is slander. I've got a good mind to sue Harrison for that. He took a number of liberties with the truth, making out that I was a grass, and a liar, and a tea leaf. And, in the book, all these tarts behave as though I wasn't a very experienced lover, whereas in reality they were all crazy about me. Honest, I could have had any one of those girls around the Duke of York. I was a good looking boy in them days. Larry Harrison made me out to be some kind of thicko, just because he's one of those people who doesn't recognise comics as art form, which is what they are. And he claimed that I was drug pusher, which is a diabolical liberty. That sort of talk can get people into trouble. So I shall be consulting my solicitor, and unless I get an apology, and a correction, I shall want financial compensation.

In the front of the book, Harrison has what they call a disclaimer, where he says all the characters are fictitious. Well, my brief says that won't wash. We can show that the book is based on an interview that Harrison conducted with me in 2005, especially as he didn't even bother changing my name. What corrections am I demanding? I want to have the Ronnie Jarvis character well-respected among Soho faces. He's a friend to several blues guitarists, and lusted after by all the girls. He does not sell heroin, and no one wants to bump him off.

## Books – Recommended

### Snow White Donald Barthelme

\*\*\*\*\*



A boat trip: Barthelme, a writer, looks at the water and sees a woman. Hair as black as ebony, heart as pure as the driven snow. He thinks of a film, but not a story.

The lecture room: He, the writer, tells others what to write. 'You write in lines, don't you?' he asks each of the students. They don't understand. What are you writing, they ask back. 'Nothing original, perhaps.' Nothing, they ask? 'Well, I did see this woman at sea, but no story.'

His apartment: The writer sees the woman again. But different. Hair as black as ebony. Heart as slutty as the dirt dragged through the driven snow.

A subversion? Of what? Don't make it obvious, Donald. Please, not obvious.

In the bar, with the details: The writer, drunk, creates scenes on the whisky top. A Disney slut, living with seven men. They, the seven men, have leadership issues. A Prince. Yes, but he's muddled. She hangs her hair out of the window for him, but he may never climb up. In the meantime, she fucks the seven men.

Something different: 'What haven't they seen before?' the writer wonders.

At the end of Part One a questionnaire appears, asking the reader if the text, so far, has been emotional enough.

The future, forty years later, a magazine writes that this is the weirdest, most inventive book it has ever seen. And you will enjoy around sixty-two percent of it. The rest will frustrate.

### Ginny Good Gerard Jones \*\*\*\*\*

If you're not trying to crack the writing industry then you probably won't know Gerard Jones. If you are, you'll probably know all about his website. The shorthand, if agents don't play nice, Gerard bites. They don't return his book, he calls them a cunt. 'How would you feel,' he writes on site, 'if you had written the single greatest work of literature of the last century, and they ignored you?'

The greatest? Big words, let's see...

First, the basics: Ginny Good is a memoir, where famous names [Gordon Lish, Courtney Love] are called out, and things are said to be almost completely true. It's the life of the author, remembered mostly forty or so years after the events, and it's also a love story, a tribute, a struggle that slowly twists into a warning about...about a whole lot of things, I guess.

The eponymous woman is the hook, and Jones, caustic, mellow, other traits, follows her around, lovesick most of the time. Is she worth it? That's what the book depends on, and, honestly, I'm not so sure. She's weird, and suicidal, but comes very close to being nothing more than a pastiche of Sylvia Plath. The girl, you just know it, is not going to end well.

So, what else is there?

The author's voice? Yes, Jones can write, sure, and he can entertain, but he writes in short, tight sentences and, honestly, after a while it gets a little exhausting. But then, just when you think you're out, he slaps you in the face and drags you back in, the best drag being the most bizarre threesome scene [high on crack] you've probably read.

So, back to it, the greatest?

Don't be silly, but it is worth a damn, so get online and buy it then get his follow-up too – 'Oprah Winfrey and the Mayonnaise man.' That one in three: angry, ludicrous, different, perhaps.

## William Shatner Vs Thomas Pynchon

Pursued by Richie Dowling



As the applause died, the Shat lumbered over to his position at the podium. Damn corset, he cursed. His belly was squeezed so far back his diaphragm was lodged up between his lungs and he could breathe only in short gasps. He looked out at the auditorium and saw a mix of eager listeners and smirking professors. Go ahead, he thought. Laugh. Everyone does. He wiped a bead of sweat from his brow, making sure not to move his hair, and cleared his throat. A stab in his stomach made his fists clench. The girdle was just too tight. He would have to speak *that* way. The way everyone imitated like it was some big joke. Well, so much for gaining a little academic respect. He squared his shoulders and gave a practiced look of humility. This was it. Showtime.

“Thank you for. Such. A wonderful welcome.”

Cheers from the crowd. “Go Bill!” “We love you!” “Yeah!”

The Shat smiled and waved a hand to quiet the fanboys. “It is an. Honor. To be here. Today. And listen to the.” This time the pause was not for breath. What in God's name was the name of this thing? He glanced down at his notes. Okay. “The lecture on De. . . construction. And the search. For Moby Dick in. Star Trek Two. The Wrath of. Khan.”

More wild shouts and whistles.

“Without further. Ado I hand over to. Professor. Dan Holloway.”

He stepped away from the dais as the elegantly-dressed don glided in to take his place. A quick handshake as they passed, the professor saying, “Love your work, Mr Shatner.” The Shat nodding his head, no breath left to speak.

He clambered down the steps to the front row where his seat had been reserved, sank into the plush leather and immediately fell asleep.

## V

He came to with a start, arms flailing. Looks of bewilderment from the people sitting on either side. Where the hell was he? He saw the bearded professor up on the stage and remembered. The lecture. He gave whispered apologies to those around him and lifted a sleeve to his mouth to clear off the drool.

The professor seemed to have reached the climax of his speech. “And so in conclusion,” he said lifting an arm high, “The inevitable inference we can draw is that Khan is Captain Ahab, condemned by his own obsessive desire for revenge on the whale which is, of course, Captain Kirk.”

Thunderous applause rocked the room.

The Shat was motionless.

Had he really just said that? Captain Kirk a whale? Captain James Tiberius Kirk? A big, fat whale? Was that how they saw him?

He heaved himself up out of the seat and stormed his way through the standing ovation.

A thin, old man reached out to grab his arm. “Where are you going? We haven’t finished.” It was the Dean of Studies. “There’s the thesis by Mr Skips on TJ Hooker and Paradise Lost.”

Shatner shook himself free. “I’m going to the john.”

## V

Standing before the mirror, cold water dripping from his face, he realized things had indeed gone down the toilet. A life’s work summed up by comparison to a whale? He shook his head, banged a palm on the marble sink. Had they no respect? No idea of the sheer acting skill it all took? Had they not seen Boston Legal?

Stop it, Bill, he ordered himself. Stop feeling sorry. Pull yourself together.

But when he looked at the pudgy, wrinkled face in the mirror, the face that garnered respect only from geeks and nerds, he knew the time had finally come. Yes, it was time to pull his *selves* together.

He yanked a paper towel from the dispenser and dried himself. Then he pulled out his cell phone and speed-dialed his agent.

“Yo, Will,” came the answer. “How’s it hanging?”

The Shat growled, “Quit it. You’re fifty years old.”

“Sorry, Will. You know how it is in Hollywood.”

The Shat knew all too well. “Listen. I want you to do something for me.”

“How’s the university shtick going?”

“Never mind. You’ve heard of Thomas Pynchon? Heard of V?”

“Well sure I have, William.”

“I want you to get in touch with his agent. I want you to option the film rights.”

Laughter rasped through the speaker. “Film rights? William, *everyone’s* tried for film rights. Spielberg, Ridley, Miley Cyrus—no one gets diddly from Pynchon. The man’s a nut.”

“No, he isn’t. Tell him it’s Shatner. Tell him it’s William Shatner.”

The agent paused. “Sure, William. I’ll do what I can.” The disbelief in his voice was obvious.

“Do it now. Get back to me when you’ve got approval.”

The Shat cut the connection then made another call, this time speaking in a hushed voice. With a sigh he put the phone down on the side of the sink. Why hadn’t he done this earlier? He shrugged. The truth was he knew the world hadn’t been ready. And it never would, unless he made it ready.

Minutes passed. Finally, the phone rang. His agent. He lifted the phone to his ear. “Good God, William! We got it! We got the film rights!”

“I told you.”

“And the guy wouldn’t even let me make an offer. Soon as I said your name, he just caved in. One dollar, Will! One freaking dollar! I’m going to call Variety. This’ll put you right back on the map, baby.”

“No,” he said. “Wait until tomorrow. There’s something I have to do first.”

## V

Head held high, the Shat entered the hall. He ignored the well-wishers, ignored the patronizing looks from the professors and paraded slowly, majestically up to the stage. It felt good to do this. Should have done it long ago.

Once again he cleared his throat and prepared to speak.

“Ladies and. Gentleman. I'm not sure. You're ready to hear. This. But I'm going to tell. You something. I should have. Told you. Before.”

Whispers hissed through the room. Somebody called out, “Are you gay? Like Mr Sulu?”

What the hell? What were these people thinking? “No. I'm not gay.”

The guy moaned in disappointment.

The Shat put on his serious look, the one he'd used when outwitting God in *The Final Frontier*. “I've been. Keeping something. Secret. From you all. Hiding a part. Of me. A part I felt no one would. Take seriously. . . I had. To work under. An assumed name. Who would take. An actor like me. Seriously?”

“What are you saying Bill?” a man called out.

The Shat pressed his hands together in a solemn gesture. “You all know. Me as William Shatner but. I also. Work under the name of. Thomas Pynchon.”

The words echoed round the auditorium, fading into silence.

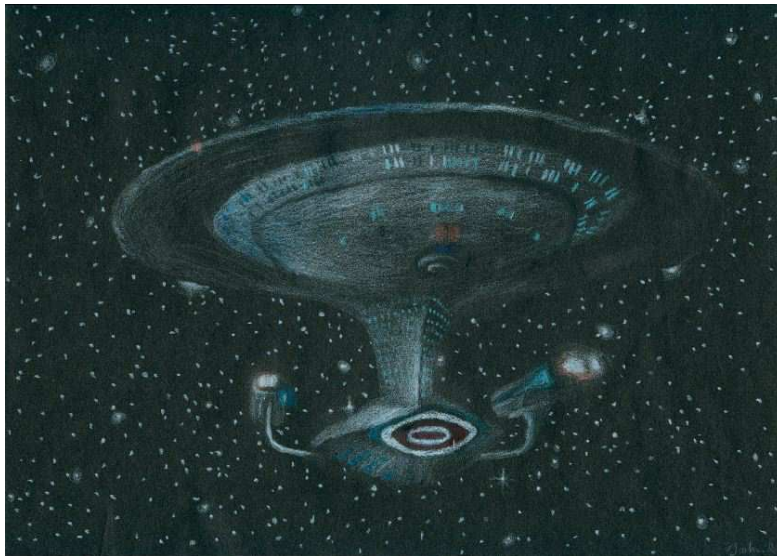
And then a single handclap somewhere in the back. That was all it took to break the barrier of stunned amazement. A tidal wave of applause broke out, crashing through the room sweeping everyone up, and drenching them all in joy.

William Shatner/Thomas Pynchon just stood there, bathing in the admiration of his peers. Fans and professors alike clapped their hands, united for the first time in pure and profound respect.

There would be questions, of course. Doubts. After all, he'd faked photos and put a lot of effort into the false identity. But he would answer everything with the truth. Finally.

And then he wondered, should he tell them about the *other* assumed name? The other secret life? Would they be able to withstand the shock? It was one thing to be told that Captain Kirk was responsible for some of the greatest novels of the twentieth century, but would they believe he had also. . .

The Shat/Pynchon shook his head. No, that would have to wait for another time. He was already heading where no man had gone before.





## INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT DOWNEY JR

[Немногая укол не повернуло вверх.]

Words by Jatinder Singh

“This is the one, Jay, don’t fuck it up,” Oli told me.

“You know I won’t.”

“Don’t interrupt, don’t intrude, don’t interrogate. Just let him talk.”

“Right,” I said and left, already sweating. That was my mission. The three I’s. Don’t even think about it.

I was in the hotel lobby waiting to be called up to the room. He was up there with another journalist now, another digger who had found out he was in town.

Robert Downey Jr. Back on form. He was out, now he’s back in. Oh krist...I felt under my arms. It was damp. I looked around the lobby for voyeurs, but everyone was busy with themselves so I slipped down into my chair and checked the armpits. Nothing there.

One of the staff came over and said he was ready to see me now. I nodded, picked up my water bottle and tried a line to get myself talking.

“What kind of mood’s he in, do you know?” I asked.

“I’m not sure, Sir. I’m working at the desk.”

“Oh right, yeah.”

I took the elevator up to the fifteenth floor. There was some shiny metal in there. I held up the underarms of my polo shirt and checked again. They were damp, I could feel it, but in the reflection, nothing.

“Krist, I fucking love you...” I said to my black polo shirt. “Fucking black as night.”

The elevator doors opened and the other journalist was there, playing back his tape. We said ‘hey’ to each other and I asked him if Downey was in a good mood. ‘Not bad’ the guy said back then stepped into the elevator. I looked back at him before the doors closed and saw that he was looking at my shirt.

What was it? I checked again. Nothing. Krist, stop it, Jay, there’s nothing, you’re home free.

The corridor ahead was empty. ‘You can’t fucking trip me, Downey, you cokey cunt,’ I said in hard, quiet breaths as I walked.

In the room, he was sitting on the couch, waiting for me. He smiled, got up and went for my hand. I put the water bottle down on the table and apologized for the wetness of my hand. ‘Water, y’know?’

‘Gotta drink it,’ he said back, fast.

We sat down and he waited for my first question. But I couldn’t remember it. I was in a room with Robert Downey Jr. We were going to have a conversation. Oh krist, what was my question?

“Sorry, did we switch roles?” he asked.

“No, no, it’s-...I’m just thinking of-...I’m just...y’know, planning the-...” planning the what? Krist, krist, black shirt, black shirt, calm down. “...first question.” I raised my voice, “and here it is...” I laughed, he

jumped. “err...now that you’re back, like Iron Man and...the others...do you fear the old way coming back?”

“I’m sorry, old way?”

“Yes, the old way, the bad times, I mean. Do you fear something will destabilize-...derail you in...in some way?”

Krist, he was staring at me. Robert Downey Jr was staring at me. Black shirt, black shirt...

“I’m not really sure if I’m getting you here, your question’s a bit out of whack, but I think you might be trying to spin this round to the drugs stuff, right? That’s what you wanna know? Am I reaching for the coke again?”

“Yes, yes, the drugs,” I said, elated, sweating. He understood me.

He pulled himself closer, his hands playing with each other. Was he nervous too?

“Listen, man, normally you guys like to play nice for a bit first then broach the crack questions, and that’s the way I like it. Don’t get me wrong, I’ll talk about anything, I’m gregarious on Iron Man, Chaplin, coke whatever, but I appreciate a little respect first.”

I didn’t want to, but I looked into his eyes. There was no make-up. Dark circles, dark eyes, he was mad. I couldn’t hold it and looked away.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t want to do that-...I didn’t mean to start at that...at that moment,” I said to the couch.

Black shirt, black shirt...

“So the answer is, yes, I’m scared of drugs, but no, I’m not using anymore. Ok?”

I nodded and said sorry again.

“Next question.”

Next question. I looked at my notes. There were questions written down, but I couldn’t make sense of them. The words were dancing out of place, they were blurred, they had no meaning. I couldn’t understand anything. Then a thought. What if you can’t ask another question? He’s waiting, he’s looking at you. What if you physically, mentally cannot ask another question? Oh krist.

“Do you have another question?”

Black shirt, black shirt. But it wasn’t the sweat anymore, it was the room. I was trapped. I wanted to leave but couldn’t. He was there. He wouldn’t stop me, but I couldn’t leave. There was a deal I had made, an arrangement with reality, to ask a set of fucking questions. It was the same as being trapped in a box, only the lid and the sides were expected procedure, not physical blocks. Expected procedure? Krist, stop, stop...

“You really haven’t got the hang of this interviewing thing, have you?”

The words danced on the page, they danced in my head. They wouldn’t make sentences. The only words I had were panic and infamy. Black shirt, black shirt, black fucking shirt.

“I’m sorry, can I use your bathroom?”

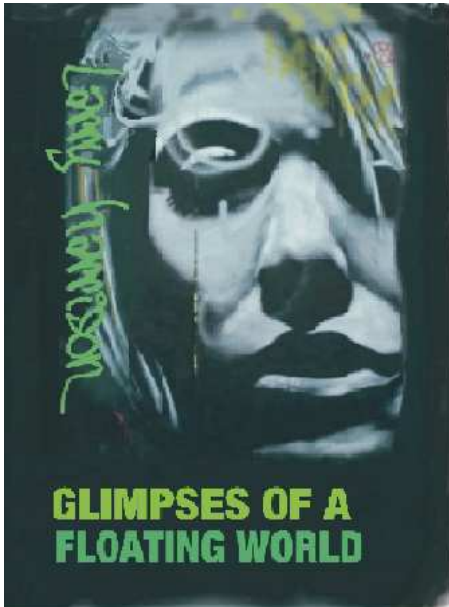
I stood up and walked over there before he said I could. I heard him muttering something behind me, something about the interview being over. I blocked it out and just tried to get to the bathroom.





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