

brooke

in EDMONTON





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This zine is published whenever I feel like it. Which isn't very often.

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This zine is created using an expired copy of Adobe InDesign CS6 that my work saw fit to provide me.

Letter from the Editor

I decided a long time ago that there isn't much demand for reading zines about other cities' scenes. So when I started a zine called Broke in Korea way back in spring 2005, it didn't really talk about Edmonton that much. Some stuff did get published over the years about the scene that helped me discover punk and grow to be the person I'd become. I regret that I didn't start a zine in Edmonton before moving away. So here's the next best thing: the first issue of Broke in Edmonton, and possibly the only one (also I'm counting it as Broke in Korea 34).

Most of the content here is pretty old. Some of it is written pandering to a Korean audience, and probably parts of it didn't age well. Glancing over my writeup on the Wednesday Night Heroes, I don't really agree with a lot of what I said, and after the whole conservatorship debacle, it's kind of mean now to dunk on Britney, and also Powermann's identity has made a pretty big pivot again, but I decided against updating these things because it's more interesting as a time capsule.

After you turn the page, this zine starts off in the relatively recent past, with a report on my last Edmonton visit in August 2022. Then we dive way back into the past and crawl up through the ages toward the present again. At the very back is a short story, part of the Rapsclion's Den collection of stories I published ago.

Anyway, enjoy. If I ever do this again, it would probably be a more live zine, featuring more interviews with people doing interesting things these days, or with people who remember the same old days of the past.

Jon Twitch

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Who is Jon Twitch?

So much time has passed since December 2003 when I moved away from Edmonton, and since Indecline closed, that I should probably explain who I am.

Before I moved away, I was one of the few people who thought to bring a camera to shows and document the Edmonton punk scene. As soon as I moved to Korea, I looked hard and found the local punk scene, and then I kept doing what I'd been doing before I left Edmonton. For a while, my photo site was hosted on Indecline (indecline.net/korea), and when it closed I called the new site Daehanmindecline, a portmanteau of Korea's actual name (with the sort of racial slur removed), and Indecline. So in a way, Indecline is alive in Korea.

I co-founded this zine in 2005, and have printed around 40 issues. In time for the zine's 15th anniversary I turned it into a publishing company and began releasing books. The books aren't selling that well, but at least I'm not losing a ton of money. I've become the Santa Claus of Korea, scaring kids and handing out zines.

Writing a zine helped me to understand how to write about Korea, and I leveraged that experience to level up my career over the years. Since November 2015 I've worked at one of the country's English-language daily newspapers as a copyeditor. I also am involved in Royal Asiatic Society Korea, the world's oldest



Korean studies organisation founded in 1900, and I'm the general editor of Transactions, RAS Korea's annual journal which just printed issue 96 a few months ago.

I live on the fifth floor of a four-storey building, a one-room house with a private rooftop space, located in central Seoul, just north of a large abandoned US Army garrison. If the North ever attacks, I'll probably be among the first wave of casualties. I've been to the North twice, in 2010 and 2018.

I've driven scooters most of my time here, and after having driven Daelim Besbi 125 bikes for the past six or so years, now I drive a Wacco E6S electric scooter.

I'm divorced from a Korean but the marriage gave me permanent residence in the country. I live with two elderly cats, both now 17, who are also my most prolific writers,

having produced the publication "Cats on Keyboards."

In 2005 I discovered urban exploration and am now probably the most experienced urban explorer in the country, and I suspect I may have visited more individual abandoned buildings than anyone else. It's hard to imagine a person who could rival that claim. I've visited abandoned buildings, abandoned amusement parks (one which had a live tiger), rooftops, construction cranes, underground rivers, subway tunnels, and so on.

When I left Canada, I called myself a skinhead, and I continued doing so in Korea for years. But these days there's just a lack of skinhead peers in recent days, as it's like a muscle that's hard to flex without others around. When we brought the Business here in 2014 and Jenny Woo here in 2018, there was kind of a scramble to find relevant bands. There's only one Korean skinhead left, although we still roll out the welcome wagon whenever a new skinhead comes along, usually from overseas. I don't really actively consider myself part of any kind of skinhead movement or community anymore, but also I don't consider myself an ex-skinhead. After I started going bald around 2010, I've been pretty much resigned to shaving my head for the rest of my life.

I haven't moved away after almost 20 years in Korea because the country never stops throwing new adventures at me.



Broke in Canada

Jon Twitch
Christmas 2022

It had been over five years since my last visit to my hometown, possibly a new record.

The last time I came back after a five-year absence was 2013, and I remember being unsettled by seeing my hometown again -- just as I remembered it, but not quite. I ended up writing an article after coming back to Korea about the instances of reverse culture shock that I felt.

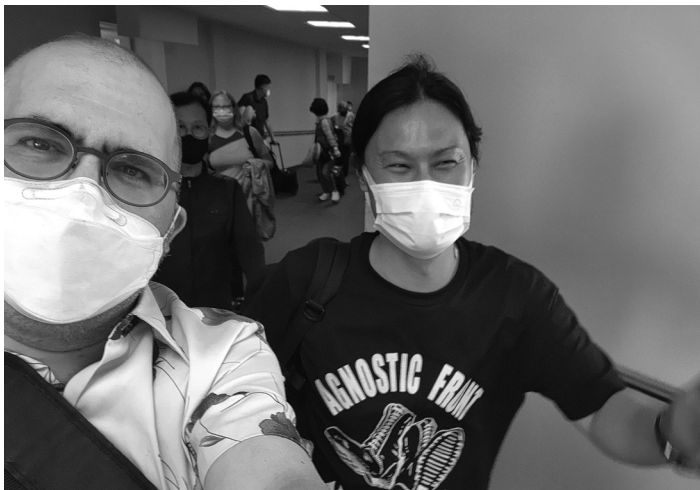
My last visit was early summer 2017, back when I was dating Kim Jong-un, and we broke up while in Canada and took separate flights back. That visit was weird because I had to spend too much time worrying about Kim Jong-un.

This latest visit, in August, was different. I still felt like an outsider, but it wasn't as jarring. Like in previous visits I had a to-do list, but it was simpler this time and had a few new ideas.

Flying out of Korea went smoothly. I hated having to register on the ArriveCan app to enter Canada, but the only real complication with doing so was you had to wait until a few days before your trip, which left me wondering if there were any urgent last-minute tasks I'd have to carry out before I could re-enter my home country. There weren't.

When I showed up at the terminal, I got a pretty major surprise: I was on the same flight as Ahn Decay, probably best known in the Korean scene as the lead vocalist of Bad Idols, but when I first met him in 2004 he was the singer of CST. He was flying to Vancouver to catch a flight to California, where he is currently living. When the plane landed, Decay's wife pushed her way out, saying they were late for a connecting flight, and I followed them out.

From there I had a connecting



After we landed in YVR, I told him "Now you're the foreigner!"

flight to Edmonton, about one hour away by air, or 12 hours by car. Both flights were smooth, and I felt my fear of flying diminished for some reason. As soon as I landed in Edmonton, it felt like my ulcer, which had been acting up on the flight, was already healing.

The temperature when I deplaned was 13 degrees Celsius, even though it was about 7pm on August 6, and the sun still wouldn't set for another three hours. The drive from the airport to my parents' home seems shorter each time, partly because of the completion of a major ring road, and also partly because my parents moved to a location nearer the ring road since my last visit. On my previous visit they were still in the same neighbourhood they'd been in when I moved out on my own in the late 1990s. Now, they were in a newer suburb, one that was a little more remote, older, and maybe wealthier. Their backyard backed onto a golf course with a big pond, so throughout the day we could see all sorts of exotic birds swimming in the water while golfers tried hitting over the water trap. My parents' home includes a shelf with souvenirs I've sent them

from Korea, including four pieces of porcelain art from North and South Korea, an Olympic torch, a 3D-printed miniature of myself, and now most recently two Hahoe masks.

Edmonton is a strange city. It's the only major Canadian city that's not close to the US border. Directly south along a straight line about 300 kilometers is Calgary, which is the second-most-isolated Canadian city, as it's about another 300 kilometers from there south to the US border. If you drive a couple hours to the west, you can reach Jasper in the Rocky Mountains. Between these places, it's only farmlands, wastelands, and small towns that aren't worth seeing. So when you're in Edmonton, you're pretty isolated.

But the city isn't that bad, especially compared to its reputation throughout the rest of the country. In land area it's slightly larger than Seoul, despite having less than 10 percent the population. The land is flat, so that if you are on the edges and you get high enough up, you can see the downtown core in the distance. Zigzagging through the middle is the River Valley, which offers



Edmonton's downtown core, seen from across the River Valley, 20220809.

brehtaking scenic views.

It's also a festival city, especially in the summer. When I arrived, some of my friends were at Edmonton Folk Fest, but I wanted to avoid it because it's known for crowds and poor logistics, plus is not free. The temperature that day got up to 25 degrees, and one friend at Folk Fest was so stymied by the sudden heatwave that she left in the middle of the day.

Instead, I went with my parents to CariWest, a free-to-all Caribbean festival in the city center square. My parents remarked that it was their first time in years being around large crowds, although coming from Seoul I couldn't quite say the same.

We spent most of our time there at the beer garden, which served Alley Kat beer, one of the main local craft breweries. I introduced myself and got some business cards, asking if I could interview someone there about the time when Alley Kat entered the Korean craft beer market, an era long since ended but for which I had many questions. It turned out the guy in charge of that was now retired and was on his way sailing around the world or something, so hopefully he'll get in touch sometime in the future. I was surprised to see that Alley Kat had grown considerably, and now offered a wide variety of interesting beers. In contrast, I discovered that my previous favourite, Big Rock (founded in Calgary and also having briefly penetrated the Korean market), was still selling the same old beers I remembered from before; only two of them -- Grasshopper and Traditional -- are any good.

It was a good feeling being in Edmonton surrounded by mostly

non-white people. Living in Korea I'm used to being the minority, and it doesn't faze me. On the contrary, I'm more worried by being around crowds of mainly white people. I talked with one guy who I think said he came from Kenya about a dozen years ago, and he said the city has become remarkably more diverse since he first arrived. While we were in the beer garden, another white guy came over and sat at our table, and quickly steered the conversation to vaccine conspiracy theories. As we were leaving, my mom made a well-meaning remark about how normally she'd be afraid to be around this many of "those people," but the festival helped her see differently. I told her, at the very least, she should really wait until we were back in the car, so none of "those people" would hear.

That night, I went to Whyte Ave, which is sort of like the Hongdae area of Edmonton, not far from the University of Alberta where I paid a lot of money to sit in classes while I learned everything I know through working in independent media like the university station CJSR.

I went to Blakbar, a seemingly newly opened live music venue in a ground-floor space directly along the avenue. I was there to see the first show of Sharp Sharp Knives, a new band by Luke, who some people in the Korean (and especially Cheongju) scene from the 2000s might know from the bands Team Dread and Bedlam Heights. Luke is now a public school teacher, and also hosts The Rockenrolleum, a radio show on CJSR. He's lived a lot since I last saw him in Korea, but as soon as



On the front steps with Adam and Aaron, 20220807.



Rich Bomber at Freecloud, 20220810

I ran into him on the sidewalk out front, we knew who each other were. His new band reminded me of the bands I knew from his Cheongju days: punk-edged rock and roll, with a really strong personal presence that has clearly been influenced by his time in front of the classroom. Oh yeah, he also had a towel with him bearing the name Same Shit, an old hardcore band from Cheongju.

The sound guy turned out to be an old friend as well, Rahil, who I remembered as the lead singer of the horror punk band Death By Dawn (and possibly one or two bands prior to it). Rahil even got a shout out in my short story collection "Rapsclion's Den," in a description of a Halloween show where he was wearing whiteface and carrying a Confederate flag, two things I clearly remember him doing, though probably on separate occasions. I recalled that when I was in university, I was invited by a family friend to judge a battle of the bands at a local high school. Death By Dawn got either first or second place, although I was actively trying not to play favourites. I also had my memory jogged and recalled that the family friend who invited me as guest judge was just recently elected as a city councillor.

The following day was a hangover day, and my dad took me for a walk around the

neighbourhood. There are some interesting urban development problems in the area, which shouldn't be that surprising for such a remote suburban area. He showed me how just on the other side of some trees was a major road, and a site where they're building the terminus for the city's next LRT line. I don't think this area could possibly stay the same after the LRT starts coming here. People in the city are all worried about gangs running subway stations, and I didn't learn enough to figure out how serious they are. My mom started a "rock art garden" in view of the LRT construction, inviting people to paint art on rocks and leave them there.

Later that day, we went to H Mart, the Korean brand of supermarkets located across North America, where I'm told by literature I maybe should have cried while visiting, though it never came to that. On all previous visits with my parents, I'd introduced them to some new type of Asian cuisine, and this time I decided it would be shabu-shabu. We also found that there were premade meal kits that you just need to heat up at home, so we got a dakgalbi one. Both meals were hits, although I can't say I was overwhelmed by H Mart. I'm only realising now I forgot to ask if they had nuruk. Anyway, it was

certainly good, better than the similar Chinese grocery stores in the city.

After that, I reunited with two old close friends from back in the day, who I used to know as Jebus and Anarchy Adam. Jebus has since had a kid and a divorce, and with hair loss looks a little more like the pro wrestler Earthquake than our lord and saviour, and he goes by Aaron now. He was always a reliable promoter back in the day and seems to still somewhat reluctantly do stuff now. When I created "Rapsclion's Den," I came up with the landlord character Moses as sort of an evil mirror-universe version of him. He and Anarchy Adam used to host the CJSR radio show "Your Weekly AA Meeting," but Adam has since quit drinking (also something mentioned in the book). Adam incidentally mentioned Drinking Boys and Girls Choir to me, a band he had heard about from somewhere, which surprised me and was a good sign because I was set to introduce them on CJSR soon.

We went to a strip mall where we ordered Nashville-style chicken, and then went a couple doors down to a cannabis store, at which I bought weed legally for the first time. Canadian marijuana stores are a little weird due to regulations, as the product has to be stored a certain way so it isn't visible from outside or something. So the place looked like an Apple store. The person working there was from the US and seemed like she may have moved to Edmonton for weed. I told her I lived in a country where it was very illegal, and probably shouldn't risk putting any charges on my Korean credit card. She explained some of the products available, and asked me if I wanted an exciteable high or a mellow high, and I chose the latter. When I smoked half a joint later, I was so tranquilised by it I could barely talk for the rest of the night.

Unfortunately for the rest of my stay, I didn't get very far through the 10-pack, because I was worried it would prevent me from doing other fun things, or even being able to converse normally with my



This sign is for where the lead singer of Metallica died, seen 20220808.

parents.

Aaron had a few interesting things to show me. He's maintained a collection of original poster art, some of the original full-sized punk posters of the city, which I've more recently encouraged him to submit to the punk museum in Las Vegas. He also has probably the largest collection of Edmonton punk music of all time, and he gave me a USB stick to fill up with mp3s, as well as I think an Old Wives CD he had multiple copies of. And he also had something else that actually belonged to me: a bound edition of the U of A student newspaper from the year I was news editor, which had ended up in his possession somewhat by accident. I opened it right up to the special Christmas edition where the paper parodied itself, and I found an article written by me that had a photo of Aaron identified as Jesus. He was pretty shocked such a thing had been in his possession for the past several years.

The next day, a Monday, I decided to go to West Edmonton Mall, one of the two largest shopping malls in North America. I grew up next to the thing, and its expansion placed a chokehold on the neighbourhood of my childhood, forcing cancellation of school construction and inviting crime to the area. I heard somewhere once that it has the highest crime rate in the whole province. Apparently, when the mall developers got shot down

The former Sandbar, 20220809. from making another expansion, they declared that they'd go to the US and build an even larger mall; that was Mall of America, although it never became overwhelmingly larger than our mall. The mall has become one of the things I needed to visit, largely out of forgotten nostalgia for a place I hadn't really liked while growing up next door.

Since my last visit, I had a chance once to speak to some Lotte executives, who told me they had been sent to Edmonton in the late 1980s to do some benchmarking on our mall, for the construction of their own Lotte World in Jamsil. And the similarities are striking, such as the indoor amusement park, the skating rink, and the giant dome roof. I grew up taking these things for granted, but now knowing the connection and having seen other, lesser malls, the similarities are impossible to ignore.

After my mom dropped me off in the parking lot, on my way in the first store I saw was a cannabis store. I guess it'll be a long time before we see anything like that in Lotte World.

The second thing I saw advertised, right inside the entrance after walking in, was the Wild West Shooting Range. I'd definitely known about it, but I'd never seen any trace of it before, nor known where to look for it. Which I preferred, because this is where a friend of mine died a violent and strange death. Blair,

who'd been the frontman of the unrecommendedly named garage punk band Metallica, had died there in 2008. All I knew was he'd jumped over the line and ran in front of the people firing guns, but I sort of thought he'd done it as a sort of joke. But recently I was contacted by a former member of Metallica, who gave me more facts that showed it was deliberately suicide.

I walked through the mall, which was peaceful and less crowded than I'm used to in Lotte World and Coex, and photographed the attractions like the waterpark, the submarine pool (which once rivalled the Canadian Navy's fleet in size), and the amusement park now undergoing a Mattel-themed makeover. I'm old enough that I remember its original name, Fantasyland, before Disney sued it and it rebranded as Galaxyland. I still have vivid memories of the 1986 accident when a roller coaster derailed and killed three people.

The one major thing I wanted to do while there was hit the food courts. I viewed many food court restaurants serving Korean food, which is something I had urged the government to pursue back in 2011 when I was part of the Hansik contest on KBS (though I don't think it's remotely fair for me to take even a little bit of credit for food court Korean food). But I didn't try any of it, because it probably wasn't good.

I had my eyes set on Taco Time, which was right there where I remembered it being on one of my early visits there, in the mid-1980s



Here's the scooter I rented from VespaYEG. It was the best way to explore a city, a great three hours, but the scooter was a little underpowered, especially on acceleration and inclines. Would not recommend for Seoul traffic.

when I was in grade 1. Back then, I was doing a social studies unit on Mexico, and our school nearby thought it would be educational to bring the class to the mall, so we could go to the food court and sample Taco Time...to learn about Mexican culture. I'm pretty sure that Taco Time had closed down, or maybe moved, but it was back right where I remembered for that long ago. That food court still haunts my dreams, even though it looks nothing like I remembered (full of brutalist stonework and fountains).

I learned during my visit there that Edmontonians often refer to the region as "Treaty 6 territory," in recognition of a still-active treaty signed originally in the 1870s between the crown and various First Nations. This is done to acknowledge the land as the traditional territory of Indigenous people, and apparently there's a Treaty 6 Recognition Day that's been celebrated since 2013.

Tuesday was a fun day, as it had one activity I'd been looking forward to the longest. It's rare I dream about being in my hometown, mainly because it's a long flight and I usually wake up after passing Japan or while transferring in Vancouver, but in the few dreams where I make it

all the way to Edmonton, I often have my scooter with me, and it takes me on adventures across the city. So I decided I needed to experience my hometown by scooter.

I found VespaYEG, which rented out 50cc Vespa scooters for prices that I'd say are reasonable if not done too often. They gave me a yellow scooter which reminded me of my own previous Besbi, which had been replaced earlier the same year after breaking down after a long life of service. My parents were horrified by the idea of me driving a scooter, even though I do it every day in Korea, because they didn't know how Canadian traffic would react. And I could understand, because that worried me too.

Just like I do in Korea nearly every week, it enabled me to drive around freely and take photos of whatever I wanted. It was a little hard for me, the author of a column in this zine called "Playing in Traffic," to stick to Canadian driving customs, such as no parking on sidewalks, let alone driving on them. At one point, I filtered forward at a red light, only catching myself after I'd already bypassed a couple cars, which didn't seem to mind. The one move that did seem valid was becoming

an "honorary pedestrian," a move in which you dismount the vehicle to walk it through a crosswalk as a pedestrian. I did this a couple times at red lights where there was no other car traffic, and it seemed to work smoothly.

During my three hours, I visited various sites I hadn't seen in almost 20 years. This included a condo development where I'd been stationed as a security guard during its construction. I also visited my (very atheist Ukrainian) grandmother's home, to find some sort of Catholic shrine in the front yard. And I explored the architecture of downtown, something I'd been yearning to do after having too many dreams where I couldn't remember the layout exactly, resulting in some pretty bizarre distortions.

One site I visited was Tipton Arena near Whyte Ave, which I believe houses an indoor skating rink. In "Rapscaillon's Den," there's one story where two of the main characters climb onto the roof to escape mods chasing them. I'd constructed this passage based largely on Google Maps imagery, so I wanted to see it for myself. Ironically, I found that sometime more recently than the images I'd seen, someone had built anti-climbing fences to keep people from getting on the roof, which gave me a laugh. Though a skilled or motivated enough climber could still make it up -- not that I tried.

I also stopped by the former Sandbar, which had been a punk house when I lived in the area and was about 90 percent of the inspiration for the site and features of the Rapscaillon's Den. It still stands, and has a weird-shaped facade that makes it hard to mistake.

One place I failed to visit was Free Cloud, a record store where I wasted too much of my money once upon a time. Its operating hours closed too early, and by the time I arrived at a little before 4, it was already closed. So I went back the next day with my dad.

Freecloud is in a building that's almost 100 years old. It was

renovated recently, and during the process, it was discovered that the building was made out of wood from bleachers, either from the school across the street or a baseball stadium. The building looks nice and new now, although the inside still seems mostly the same.

Freecloud is run by Rich, the frontman of Mad Bomber Society, the city's flagship ska band since the 1990s. Once back in the day, they'd returned from a tour and stopped by the Sandbar, only to be irritated by one kid taking pictures of everyone. Rich got so irritated, he threw a beer bottle at me. Ever since then, he would often pose for me threatening me with a bottle. This time, the only bottle within reach was hand sanitiser, and he didn't seem to like the idea of threatening me with that. Mad Bomber Society, which is still active, appears in one chapter of "Rapscaillon's Den," in which the whole band is infected in a massive outbreak of C. diff.

My sister had gone to Freecloud sometime earlier to sell some of her records (which included some of our dad's old collection). When Rich looked inside a Who album, he found instead an acetate disc of a live recording made by my dad's 1960s band Warp Factor. Apparently after my dad left the band, they even opened for the Who. Lately my dad has been talking with Rich about trying to get the recording off it, though no progress so far.

The day after that was a Thursday, and I tried to put out the word to friends to meet up on Whyte Ave. I showed up early and walked around the Fringe, one of the city's flagship festivals. While passing by the historic Orange Hall, I overheard a tour guide talking about the small building's historic significance, and I kind of wanted to walk over and interrupt, saying "I saw Death By Dawn play here."

The meeting place was Black Dog, a reliable enough pub. We had a modest turnout, which I'll just blame on the pandemic. Aaron came out again, and we



Orange Hall, 20220811

met with Leith, who I've known since elementary school days. He was in the instrumental hardcore band Nevertheless, and is now in the newer band Open Eyes, which I was invited to watch practice but ended up not making it. Nevertheless was mentioned in "Rapscaillon's Den" in the final chapter as one of the main character's favourite bands, but also a memory of the band informed one of the stories and appeared in an image on the cover. Once when I was at a party at Leith's flat, there was a TV with a sticker on it that said something like "Kill Your Television," so we decided we would throw it off a bridge (and earlier that week while renting the scooter, I revisited that bridge). Although in the actual story, the closest that gets to reality is when the main characters throw a computer off the same bridge.

A mutual friend of ours had suffered a major injury in a bike accident. While he was going through rehabilitation, there was a GoFundMe for him, which raised just under \$100,000 within about five months before they closed it. He used to be another major promoter in the local scene years before, but then he moved to Ontario and started working with larger festivals or something. It sounds like as of the last update he's doing better, so I've decided not to include more specifics including a link to the GoFundMe campaign, and I hope this is a good sign.

From Black Dog we headed to Tavern on Whyte, where Sean,

another friend, was working. Sean had been one of the main residents of another punk house, I believe the LES Bitches House, and that was probably the second-most-important influence on the book.

While we were there, we were joined by Sheri, who founded the independent online radio network KPISS.fm. She showed up wearing a shirt that said "On my way to fuck your dad," which was especially awkward because my dad was at that point driving toward Whyte to pick me up. I made sure when he arrived to get a picture of the two of them together, which my mom is welcome to use in court if she ever decides to divorce him.

I woke up the next morning and had to do a radio spot. It was my second time going on "The History of Punk" on CJSR, after a previous appearance in 2017. Over the years, I got to know more about the two hosts, so I made some choices I knew would interest them. They actually won an award for a show themed "Women of Hardcore," the social media preview image of which featured Yeji of Slant, so I determined to give them more of what they wanted. Of 14 songs, eight had female vocals. I also made sure to focus on gugak fusion, recalling on my last spot they had an interest in folk punk. The show can still be heard online if you go to daehanmindcline.com/radio.

It was a Friday, and I had plans to hit up two shows that night. First stop was the Backyard where I saw



Aaron talks with Darren through the fence at Blakbar, 20220812.

the Old Wives, a melodic punk band that appeared on volume 3 of WDI's "World Domination" EPs (the one that also had the ill-fated Gumiho -- Darren said they had a ton of copies left since they never really tried to sell them). The only member I knew was the drummer, Darren, who I remembered from back in the day drumming for the Kasuals and Les Tabernacles. In 2016 he became the drummer of Teenage Bottlerocket, after their original drummer Brandon Carlisle passed away. I know Jeff at WDI is a big fan of them, so I brought with me a TBR LP I'd bought at Freecloud and got Darren to sign it. The back cover has a big picture of Darren drumming, so he signed over that, writing "Fuck you Jeff!" It's our hope that TBR will someday come to Korea, maybe to play an IT'S A FEST!, and personally I hope there's room for Old Wives too.

The Backyard turned out to be a really weird venue that was basically just a fenced-off area along the side of a big parking lot on the edge of downtown. Coincidentally I'd driven past it the day before and even photographed it, without paying it much attention. Inside they had astroturf and lawnchairs, as well as cornhole games. While I was in there with maybe a couple dozen other audience members, the grit of the downtown core's edgeland was on full display;

homeless people passing by, a fleet of ambulances responding to some sort of emergency on the far side of the parking lot, people standing outside the chainlink fence watching for free. I felt like I was in the poverty porn version of a shark cage.

They did one set of originals, some brand new songs, and just as they were getting ready to do a set of Green Day covers, Aaron showed up to bring me to the next show (in exchange for me paying his cover).

We went back to Blakbar, a venue that was certainly growing on me, to see Kroovy Rookers. This is the band that Jenny Woo was in for a short while in the 2000s, so I wanted to see what they were like. After them was Smak, a band that was before even my time.

After those two shows, I spent my final weekend in Edmonton pretty low-key. On Saturday I borrowed my parents' car and went out for a drive. I met up with Ester, an old friend who used to be roommates with my sister, and now runs the FB page YEGuncovered, looking at urban issues in the city. We drove around a bit, something I'd been hoping to do for a while. We got a look at the Coliseum, the former stadium for the Edmonton Oilers which is now sitting empty.

And we drove all around the former Edmonton City Centre Airport, now a wasteland known

as Blatchford Field. It's amazing to me, coming from Seoul where there's a lot of intense speculation on what will happen to USAG Yongsan, to see Edmonton where people aren't really thinking much about what could go here and there's very little public attention. It looks like it will just become more lowrise suburban housing, which is a colossal wasted opportunity. Build higher-density housing, or a new mall, or an amusement park, and maybe add a transportation hub -- hell, build all those things.

We stopped at a Korean restaurant called Hansik, my only Korean meal during this trip. The galbi was mediocre, as it was marinated in a sauce that was too aggressively sweet, but the kimchi jjigae was perfect, an especially big surprise since decent kimchi is hard to find in Edmonton. I offered some of my homemade ihwaju to Ester, who did her best to appreciate the yogurt-textured alcohol but retched as soon as it was in her mouth.

It was a long evening due to the late sunset, so we spent a few more hours driving up and down the roads of downtown. She showed me the Neon Sign Museum, which is basically space on the exterior of a couple old brick buildings where the old neon signs of closed businesses have been preserved. She also gave me a great deal of information about the queer history of the city, pointing out a former gay bar right by the neon museum, which is now an office for the border patrol; traces of a rainbow flag can still be seen in the front step of the building.

On my last full day in Edmonton, I woke up and found a pile of yellow barf outside the door to my basement room at my parents' place. It had a yellow hairball so there's no question which of the two cats did it. Especially hurtful since I was the one who picked him out and insisted my parents, who were unsure about the concept of "male cats," adopt him.

Of course I know not to fly with marijuana, so none of it came with



Group photo at Tavern on Whyte, 20220811.

me from Edmonton. It all ended up in the hands of friends at Blakbar, or stowed somewhere secret for my sister to find later.

Then on Monday, I caught a short flight back to Vancouver, where my sister now lives. Vancouver looked weird to me, a Canadian city built into the mountains near the ocean. I noticed ridges covered with housing, and to me they looked like Korean moon village refugee communities. And all the apartment buildings, which had pretty impressive forms and often had balconies, didn't look that South Korean to me, so in my eyes it was like being back in Ryomyong in Pyongyang, where the buildings were all a little more majestic than Seoul's monotonous apartment architecture.

My sister was in a part of town with a Korean community, and during my entire visit I saw two separate Hongdae restaurants, and one "Insadong Seafood & BBQ Restaurant" (which sounds completely wrong to me). We visited Barge Chilling Beach, a site where an unmoored barge had washed up on a seawall in November 2021 and had to be dismantled there. My sister took me to Black Frog, which apparently was inspired by Black Dog in Edmonton, but it had food -- good food.

For the second day, we put out a call to friends living in the city, and got more coming out here than I'd seen in Edmonton. One of the people who showed up was a guy I knew from back in the day as SNFU Rob, simply because he was really into the band SNFU. Nowadays he's the lead vocalist of the "weird punk" band AK-747s, one of the other bands I'd like to see come to Korea someday.

On Wednesday, my final full day in Canada, I did my only urban exploring on this trip. Down the highway from my hotel, I'd noticed what looked like a house piled in dirt, like they were trying slowly to bury it. After seeing it out the window of a few moving vehicles, I decided to just go there. I set foot in through the window, and nearly lost my shoe in the mud inside.

The next day, I flew back to Korea, with a suitcase loaded with ketchup chips, Hickory Sticks, and Hawkins Cheezies, as well as a few other things.

On the morning of my flight, when I tried checking in via computer, I found out that I had done my rapid test one full day too early. To get back into Korea, you needed to get either a PCR test within three or two days in advance, or a rapid test within two days or one day in advance. So my rapid test was no longer valid. There was

another clinic at the airport, so my family rushed me to the airport early, which was a very stressful trip. At the airport, I was able to get the test done and the results were expedited, so no time was lost.

The plane ride back was uneventful, except the guy sitting up one row across the aisle from me kept trying to play solitaire on the in-flight entertainment system, despite having no clue at all how the game works and what cards go where. He kept trying multiple times, to the point where I was ready to snap before I started to find it funny.

On arriving in Korea, I found another complication: you're supposed to have a printout of your test results. I'd had papers for my first test, but not the second one. For people without the sheets, there was a single computer off to the side, hooked up to the internet and a printer, for people to log in to their emails and print their documents. Of course, a lot of people don't remember their email addresses, taking even more time. I was one of them, but I saved a little time by emailing my test results to the next person in line, so she could print them for me.

When will I go back next? It damn well better not be another five years. (2023 editor note: it was the next year.)



This zine wishes Eli a continued and speedy recovery. But lay off those poor @spywhales will you?

This is for Britney!

Jon Twitch
Fall 2005

Earlier this summer, I was at a Skunk Hell show in Seoul making fun of some Americans.

Just standard stuff (“Oh, you’re celebrating some sort of national holiday tomorrow? We had ours a couple days ago.”) but it got a little carried away.

My buddy Paul came up to me and said “This is for Celine Dion” and punched me in the arm.

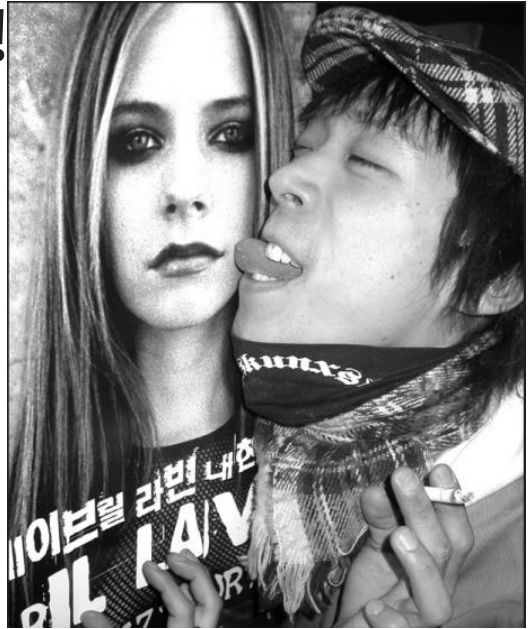
Then another guy came over and said “This is for Avril Lavigne” and gave me a punch too.

Then Josh, a big American skinhead, hit me and said “That’s for Bryan Adams.”

At that point, me in front of this big group of Americans, I said, “There’s one other you forgot about. Please, somebody punch me for Shania Twain. I beg you.”

So Josh gave me a gut shot, and I took it obediently...

Then, I said “This is for Britney!” and elbowed Josh in the solar plexus, sending him right onto his ass and



The guitarist/lead singer of Couch poses with the woman of his dreams. Avril Lavigne started touring Korea as soon as her career passed its peak globally.

making his beer spray everywhere.

Anyway, it’s too bad Molson Canadian was bought out by an American company, because I could’ve made some money selling this tale as a beer commercial.

This is dedicated to the two Canadians who will fucking read this.

Your Weekly AA Meeting with Adam and Aaron



Aaron and Adam stand outside CJSR during a holiday show late 2004 or early 2005.

Jon Twitch
Fall 2005

The following conversation took place on Your Weekly AA Meeting with Adam and Aaron on April 19, 2005, when they had Wednesday Night Heroes lead singer Graeme McKinnon show up.

Graeme: We only stick up for Edmonton.

Adam: Yep.

Graeme: Go to Hell, Toronto.

Adam: Outsiders.

Graeme: I hate you. That's why the next set is like all Korean bands.

Adam: Yeah.

Aaron: It is.

Adam: It is.

Graeme: Dammit.

Adam: We got the Couch...

Aaron: There's, uh, probably a few swears in this one, 'cause the Koreans, they're uh, pottymouths.

Adam: Well and the name of the song is "Pogo Till We Fucking Die."

Graeme: You know why? It's

because—you know why though? It's because I—I found that like with a lot of like, like—Japanese or like Korean

kind of streetpunk stuff like all the drunk bands, all their lyrics like they only know a few English words, and it's like 1234...fuck...pogo...punk...proud.

Adam: And cock.

Graeme: And all of those words will either comprise names like 123 Cock or Pogo Fuck.

Adam: Or like even on this Korean comp, like the band names, there's, uh, Cock Rasher, there's uh Ma—well Masturbation's another one.

Graeme: Oh, masturbation is fantastic.

Adam: Yep, uh, there is the Couch with their hit "Fuck it Shit." Uh, just lots of that type of thing.

Graeme: That's a great name though, Couch.

Adam: That is, yes,

Graeme: They're like, 'we gotta come up with an English word because we gotta, you know, we gotta just come over to the

Americas and we just gotta kick ass. We are Couch."

Adam: We are The Couch.

Aaron: I just know someone out there is writing all this down and we're totally gonna get slapped for this.

Graeme: No they're not, they're gonna be like "Awesome—where the hell can I buy a Couch record?"

Adam: Yes.

Graeme: And I'll tell you:

Adam: Korea.

Graeme: Korea.

Aaron: Yeah, so you gotta take off soon, right?

Graeme: Yeah, I gotta go guys.

Aaron: Oh that's a shame.

Graeme: Well, you know you guys gotta keep it clean.

Adam: We do.

Graeme: And uh that's kinda what I liked about this show.

Adam: Yeah yeah, it was a clean night, you know.

Graeme: There wasn't major buggery...

Adam: No sexual comments.

Graeme: No one was saying dick or balls on the air.

Adam: None of that shit.

Graeme: But, uh, you know shitballs wasn't mentioned.

Adam: But that's all gonna go to Hell now because we've got the Couch.

Graeme: And this is their song called "43 Football Cocks Being Jerked off onto a Birthday Cake."

Adam: Actually it's called "Pogo Til We Fucking Die," off their album

Graeme: -called "Christmas Cock."

Adam: -called "Oi Oi Let's Pogo Dancing."

Graeme: -called "Turkey Baster Full of Semen Blasted onto a Cunt Full of Tits and Balls."

Adam: Alright.

Graeme: Easy Korean for you.

Visit cjsr.com or tune in to 88.5FM in Edmonton

Every Night is Wednes

Jon Twitch
Winter 2007

In 2007 I had the opportunity to bring the Slackers to Korea, something I never even imagined possible. But the band I've really wanted to bring is the Wednesday Night Heroes, not a well known band, but still probably the greatest punk band I've seen live. We all come from Edmonton, and as long as I've been in Korea I've been thinking about bringing them over for a show.

This year was a big step in the Heroes' career. For their third full-length album, "Guilty Pleasures," they struggled to find an appropriate label. After a long wait, the album was picked up by BYO Records.

The Heroes have toured Europe and the US several times, but never been over to Asia despite my years of begging. But it looks like they might finally be ready.

There's no date yet and we haven't agreed on anything, but their promoter is very interested in planning a Korea/Japan tour. First they want to get their name out there a bit more, and contact DJs, record shops, zines, radio stations, and venues. So far they've only sold ten CDs in Japan.

Over here in Korea their name is a bit better known.



Wednesday Night Heroes play at Stars on Whyte

When I first arrived in December 2003, Jonghee and most of the Skunk Label punks seemed to know who the Heroes are. Their second full-length album is played nonstop on the Skunk van. After my last trip to Canada I brought back a bunch of Heroes CDs that were quickly bought up.

So why should you care?

The Heroes are the perfect band to play in Korea.

Born out of an isolated city with a small scene, they played for years barely making a penny, until one day they were so good nothing could stop them.

They turned Edmonton from "Deadmonton" to the capital of streetpunk in western Canada.

Not bad for a band that basically started as a joke. They started playing back in 1996 or 1997, when they

had pretty well no talent. All their songs were jokes, crammed full of "Oi!" and an ungainly combination of hardcore and streetpunk. At most of their shows they played to the same small group of school friends, which at the time included my younger sister. I was just the dorky older brother.

It was hard not to smile when they were playing, and they tired us all out on the word "oi," which has been out of favour in Edmonton to this day except among freshcuts.

It all changed at a typical all-ages show. In Edmonton we held all-ages shows in community halls, usually in some weird corner of the city, and the promoters barely made a cent of profit. One such show with the Wednesday Night Heroes featured the Saskatchewan

Visit unknownrecordsto.bandcamp.com/album/

day Fucking Night

political band Junto, who clashed with the Heroes' patriotic, apolitical friends. While Junto was onstage shouting crap like "Canada is a nation founded on murder!" the show was suddenly shut down by pissed off Edmonton punks and skinheads. Following that incident, most of the promoters in the city blacklisted the Heroes, and rumours were spread they were a Nazi band.

The Heroes got by with the few remaining promoters that would work with them, and recorded an album with their friend Nik Kozub, back then in the streetpunk band the Cleats. Their first self-titled album remains my favourite to this day, inspired by the hatred they faced from people who disagreed with their beliefs. Songs included "FAQ," dedicated to the promoters who'd banned them, where they chant "FAQ--FAQ--Don't you tell me what to do."

The true anthem of the album is "Hated 'n' Proud," where they sing

*"We're the Heroes
We're not second best
They try to turn us down
but we're still the loudest
tonight
We're the Heroes
We're not second best
They say we're hated but
we're still the proudest*

tonight"

Over time it became clear that the blacklist and the hate had only made them stronger, so promoters started working with them again.

New streetpunk bands started popping up in town like the Dancefloor Disasters, Tospots, Hit 'n' Run, Anal Rockets, Lord Anus, and the Transylvanians to name a few. The Heroes had their own side projects, including the Banzai Babies where they pretended to be Japanese, and the Moneyshots which had the Heroes drummer Todd on vocals and the singer Graeme on guitar.

The Heroes also began touring the US, coming back from their first tour with some pretty crazy stories. In Cincinnati they played in a ghetto neighbourhood to a room full of black youths who had never heard punk before, and fucking loved it. At the end of another show, they turned around to pack their gear away, and when they looked back, everyone had a needle in their arm. In one of their later tours in 2004, they played in Salt Lake City with the 12th Street Stagers, which some Korean punk aficionados might know as one of Paul Brickey's bands after he was kicked out of Rux and

before he joined Suck Stuff.

One of my favourite stories about the Edmonton punk scene begins with a riot in Montreal. The Exploited were supposed to play there but the show was cancelled last minute because some of the members were denied entry into the country. The 800 punks waiting for the show were pissed and began rioting. Meanwhile, in the same month in Edmonton, the Casualties were supposed to play, but some of their members couldn't make it over the border. Instead of rioting, two members of the Heroes filled in for the missing band members and the show went on.

Maybe after that, the Casualties took the Heroes under their wing. Their second album was released on Longshot Records, a Vancouver label that was all of a sudden putting out mostly Edmonton bands, but Longshot wanted the Heroes to find a bigger label for their next album. It was around then that I left for Korea, and spent the next four years of my life constantly asking them to come to Korea.

Maybe the Wednesday Night Heroes will come to Korea in 2008, maybe 2009. It is my sworn objective to bring them here.

(2023 editor's note: welp, that didn't work out.)

wednesday-night-heroes to hear their first album for free

Interview with a

Jon Twitch

Written in university but updated for a zine published spring 2008

Not many people have ever met a superhero face-to-face, but we all somehow know how one should act. The superhero archetype was introduced early last century, when comic book artists brought to life the world of caped vigilantes with hightech gadgets and spunky kid sidekicks; and the formula has hardly been tampered with in the last 70 years. There have been breakthroughs over the decades, where a handful of visionaries used the so-called spandex genre in a realistic and socially conscious way: most notably Stan Lee's Spider-Man and X-Men, both of which used superheroism as a metaphor for teen angst, as well as more grown-up examples like Alan Moore's Watchmen and Frank Miller's The Dark Knight Returns. All of these stories took the socially implausible world of superheroes and tried to bring it into the real world, but none of the story creators had even seen a superhero. I have. It was an awkward awakening, after reading all sorts of stories about the spandex-clad boy scouts of the sky and the square-jawed superspies who fight Nazis in all parts of the world, to meet one in real life. There was a superhero at my high school. Like characters in a comic story, our fates were tied together: he was the enigmatic superhero, and I was the eager reporter searching for a good story to publish.

My search to discover why he acted the way he did, which was enunciated in a series of personal interviews, led me past the absurdities of his behaviour and introduced the uncompromising strength of mind with which he faced a world of hatred every single day, and the responsive



Acting out a conversation with his hands

unresponsiveness of a system incapable of caring for a person who dressed up as a superhero.

Like the superheroes of lore created by experimental therapies and secret drugs (Captain America and Hourman, to name a few), Powerman's origin story (because all superheroes have an origin story) involves a mind- and body-altering drug treatment: Ritalin, in combination with a few other drugs used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder. Before he was Powerman, he was Matthew Allaedine, a prodigy student suffering from ADHD, obesity, a speech impediment, and a daily regime of bullying. Far from being a mild-mannered young man, Matthew was known for his violent temper, making him a popular target for taunting and harassment. Not the sort of behaviour one would expect from a superhero. The name Powerman first came around when he was kicked out of his welding class, and with nothing else to do, he wandered the school halls and made people pay homage to his welding gloves. That was how it began.

I first heard of Powerman's patrols of Jasper Place High School

partway into the first semester of 1995, when I was in Grade 11. He paraded around with a black cape, asbestos gloves, and a red hockey helmet, and a network of students quickly formed to report Powerman sightings. When Powerman approached, I suddenly felt like the people in comic books who exclaim "Look! Up in the sky..." Of course, Powerman didn't fly, but there were stories of his attempts to do so (it was surprising he never seriously hurt himself). Most of the time, a Powerman sighting involved watching the tubby kid charge through the hallway at an awkwardly slow and strained pace, occasionally handing out photocopies of his face and hands.

During lunchtime, he sat in the cafeteria by himself, where he ate a home-packed lunch carried in three hefty grocery bags, and held a sign inviting girls to sit with him. Occasionally, he appeared in the students' lounge, where he would read children's stories to the students sitting there. Powerman news was a hot commodity among my friends, so I decided to approach him and write an

Superhero

interview.

After one of his children's story sessions, I met Powerman for the first time, and first walked the world in the guise of a journalist. I asked him if he would do an interview with me, and he asked, "Is this for the student newspaper?" I decided it was worth a try to bring the article to Rebel Rouser, the high school newspaper; that instant, my answer to that single question determined where my life would take me for the next several years. I arranged to meet him at 3:00pm, the end of the day on the last day before Christmas break, in the Students' Council office, and despite the fact that he walks quite slowly, and that he must have left class early to get the timing right, he showed up exactly five seconds after the bell rang. All I had in mind was getting some quotes from him onto paper and laughing over them with friends, but already the idea seemed much bigger than that.

During the interview, I discovered the cliché that behind Powerman's madness was method. As well as producing an endless spray of non-sequiturs, Powerman also revealed his friendly, intelligent side. I asked him a few goofy questions, and he gave me the goofy answers I wanted: he claimed he had superpowers, but that his contract prevented him from revealing them. I kept a requisite straight face, and I laughed appreciatively at his jokes. He asked me if I ever had the urge to stand on a table and shout "I'm a haemophiliac" (then he demonstrated), and he explained that he did whatever he wanted, and enjoyed the attention. When asked why he became a superhero, he gave a number of reasons: "TV ... The fact that before I did this I got beat up all the time ... The fact that girls talk to me now ... The fact that I had no friends before." Clearly, Powerman was at least partially nuts, further



Hanging out at Jon Twitch's old apartment with a giant bear

indicated by his screaming of random words from time to time, but unlike a person suffering from Tourette's Syndrome, he controlled his shouting, in both timing and content.

Although it didn't surprise me that Powerman had created his superhero identity in response to endless bullying, I was surprised to learn that the bullying had almost totally ceased after he put on the cape and gloves. His new persona was less prone to being humiliated, as he now controlled the humiliation. Thus, people no longer picked on him, because it was suddenly more interesting to watch him pretend to crush someone with his super-vision.

In effect, Powerman had found a non-violent escape from bullying. People who used to pick on him now laughed and cheered him on when he waddled past on his patrols.

As everyone connected to the

superhero in comics, I had a deep, searing secret: I remembered him from junior high, and I was one of the kids who laughed at him. My first memory of him was from Halloween when he was wearing a Dracula costume - with the cape that would soon become part of his Powerman outfit - and I made fun of his large chest. But during the interview, he didn't appear to remember me; maybe there were too many faces for him to remember all of us. Whether or not he knew who I was, I now had this interview, living proof of his lunacy. While reciting it at a party, I suddenly became ashamed of how I had used him for laughter, and how I was still using him, so I decided to stop treating him as a joke, and treat him as a real person, although a strange and amusing one.

Powerman deserved to be more than a village idiot, and I had the resources to get his story



Performing at the Fringe in the early 2000s

out. When school started again in January, I decided to take his interview to Rebel Rouser, an eight-page monthly student newspaper. It was well received by the editorial board, an informal student organisation, but the faculty advisor later cut it from the paper with regret.

He said the administration was afraid that Powerman would use the interview as an excuse to act out; they wanted a complete ban on any official mention of the name Powerman.

Just as most superheroes aren't welcomed by mainstream society, the teachers at Jasper Place reinforced this superhero cliché. They saw Powerman as a threat to the school's social order, and he was threatened with expulsion every day, and regularly suspended from school.

Over the following months, Powerman began spreading word about "Power Day," which he never explained, but the school counsellor coerced him into cancelling it. Maybe the teachers were terrified that he would do something dangerous, as if he could find his way to some place worse than where he used to go every day before he was Powerman. By trying to squelch Powerman's games at

every opportunity, they provided him with the adversarial force necessary for his identity.

However, none of the teachers imagined that Powerman would eventually start to bore students: as the months passed, the student body grew tired of Powerman's perpetual antics.

At that point, maybe he could have given up and gone back to a normal life better than the one he had before, but he chose to refine his act and find new ways to hold an audience.

Like Powerman, I too adapted to the demands of the student body as an audience, through my work with various school publications, and I began experimenting with new ways to send a message to students.

After having the interview banned from Rebel Runes (the school literary magazine) and the yearbook, I became an editor for both publications, as well as continuing at Rebel Rouser.

Powerman's story didn't stop there, even after three dead ends and several months; the interview was as unwilling to roll over and accept judgement as Powerman himself. I used my newfound influence in the various editorial boards to pitch the interview again, but I decided to write a second

draft: this time I wanted to reveal the real Powerman to the students of Jasper Place.

In the second interview, I uncovered Powerman's secret identity; I learned that his superhero persona was the surface of a complex identity crafted by a lifetime of torment and abandonment that went beyond the school walls. I discovered that he wasn't really Matthew; his real name was Kamal Alaeddine, and that he had changed it when he switched from elementary school to junior high.

Although he said that other students teased him for his name, he finally changed it because it reminded him of his Lebanese father. His father left him and his mother at the request of his family in Lebanon, in favour of an arranged marriage; Powerman said he heard at a very young age that his father's family wanted him to leave them poor and alone in Canada. He told me about ADHD, and about his series of treatments and drugs, which caused his obesity and lisp. He told me how bullying was all he had socially known before he became a superhero, and that he went from being beaten every day to never at all. It was easier to face the taunts of his peers as Powerman, rather than as Kamal the fatherless child, or Matt the overweight spazz.

Powerman lived for attention, whether it be from revealing his innermost secrets to me, or from shouting out at inappropriate times. "Any publicity is good publicity," he told me. "Even when somebody sees me walking down the hall in my outfit and says 'Did you see that freak Powerman?' that's good publicity." He loved the attention from making people pay homage to his gloves, because while they were laughing at him, they weren't beating him up. It was more than fear of pain, though; Powerman wanted people to see his pain and acknowledge the damage they had caused him.

The faculty considered my second interview dangerous to the atmosphere of the school,



Doing a split during a street performance at the Fringe in the early 2000s

and it was banned like the first, again leaving Powerman's story, a steadily deepening one, untold.

If Powerman had an archnemesis, he, she, it, or they would have a name like Authority-Man or The Counsellor. Powerman told me about the scads of teachers who wanted to reform him, but he didn't trust them, because he thought they only wanted credit for fixing a broken machine into a functioning part of society.

He talked about teachers who whispered encouragements in his ear, telling him he could do well in school if he tried, and then threatened to expel him if he didn't stop wearing the costume. Powerman still wore the cape, but he traded the helmet for a more comfortable prism-vision visor he bought at a novelty store. Threats didn't stop him, and nobody was willing to expel a student over a silly costume, so he finished his diploma still wearing the outfit.

At his convocation he wasn't allowed to walk across the stage and shake the principal's hand, because teachers thought he might use the opportunity to act out. Despite this official erasure,

he bested the Alberta education system, escaping with his identity and dignity intact, which was more than he had when he started.

Maybe Powerman's greatest superpower was his willingness for martyrdom. He was acting out against a system designed to shuffly people like him into low-paying factory jobs and obscurity upon graduation. He was consciously making himself an example of everything he suffered. His acting out was not a cry for help: he was bringing attention to himself, so that when he did eventually become lost somewhere in the system (which he believed was inevitable), people wouldn't forget him easily.

Now, more than ten years later, Powerman no longer wears the cape and gloves, but he now calls himself Malkav Powermann, and the fire he once believed he could shoot from his retinas still burns brightly in his eyes. After bouncing between temp jobs for several years, he struck out in the street performer scene, where he was billed as the world's largest contortionist.

In 2004 he joined the Jim Rose

Circus, a famous contemporary freak show, and in October he joined them on tour in Europe.

In 2007, he was elected "funniest working man" in my hometown. Just this week, on May 20, 2008, he appeared on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno in the "Does this Impress Ed Asner?" segment (he did impress Ed Asner).

And you can thank him for this zine that you hold in your hands. As well as pushing me to stand up as a writer, he showed me that the problems of the world can't be cured by statistics, political amendments, and drug prescriptions.

I watched him stand up to more pressures and hardships than I thought the human mind could endure, and he laughed. Like most good superheroes, Powerman discovered that through self-transformation, he abandoned the past. Just as Powerman once replaced Matt, and

Matt once replaced Kamal, he is now known around the world as Malkav Powermann, street performer and freak. (2023 editor's note: he is now known professionally as Kamal Alaeddine.)

Follow @kamalcomedy on IG and get to know the real man

Cheongju Bedlam City

Jon Twitch
Fall 2008

Some of you might not know that South Korea exists outside of Seoul. For the brave few down south (who don't come up every weekend), they have to make their own fun. And that's where Luke comes in, a Canadian English teacher in Cheongju who's on his second punk rock band now. I had to ask Luke a few questions and try to encourage him to play a show in Seoul.

Broke: Tell us about Cheongju Rock City.

Luke: The name "Cheongju Rock City" was just a something stupid I thought up in my first band, Team Dread. We wanted to differentiate what we were doing from the better known hardcore scene. When I first came to Korea I was completely clueless about any kind of music scene here at all. I ended up in Cheongju by chance and it was good thing that I did. It turned out that Cheongju had, and still has, one of the most active scenes outside of Seoul.

Broke: What about the other epithet, "Cheongju City Hardcore"? Is there room for two?

Luke: As far as the underground scene in Korea goes, Cheongju will always be synonymous with "Cheongju city hardcore". Really if people have any concept of Cheongju at all it's usually just Thirteen Steps, and rightly so. The guys from MFcrew built and maintained the scene here with their own time, money, and sweat. I seriously believe that the core group of guys from MFcrew (like June from Lowblow, Dokyo from 13, Yongsoon from Attacking Forces, and Saryu from nahu) are the reason we have any bands here at all. They spent years swapping members, introducing new people to music, and playing their balls off.

That being said, I've never felt really comfortable representing

"Cheongju City Hardcore", since I'm not really into "hardcore" music. I like watching a few Korean "hardcore" bands live, but it's not what I listen to on my headphones as I go to bed at night.

Broke: What would you say about the state of underground music in Korea outside of Seoul?

Luke: It's good and bad... as it always has been. Korea should be rock n' roll paradise: small area, gobs of people, and equipment in every place you play. Bands should be able to travel to a different city every night of the week and play shows. Unfortunately, the dream never really comes to fruition. Cheongju sort of manages to survive in semi-isolation. Other scenes, like Busan and Daejeon, seem to kind of limp along too. Our town has the largest number of performing bands outside of Seoul, but the opportunities to play are kind of slim. There are all-ages shows about once every couple of months in Cheongju, and it's been like that for the whole time I've been here. Daejeon has tried to really hard to get things going but can never seem to get together enough people to build any momentum. Every year Daegu pops out a couple of bands, and Busan seems to be able to put on shows with some kind of regularity. It is actually really encouraging going to shows in Cheongju because we can almost guarantee 50 people every time. Even by Seoul standards that isn't a bad crowd. We always have a mix of older guys who used to be in the bands plus young kids coming to their first show. Nobody will ever get rich off doing gigs down here, but it's sustainable. We usually come sort of close to breaking even.

Broke: Everyone's been asked this question this issue: do you think the punk scene in Korea is in decline? You must have a different perspective than us being outside

of Seoul.

Luke: I think if by "Korea", you really mean Seoul, then yeah it does seem to slipping a little bit, compared to when I first encountered it a few years ago.

The Korean scene has always existed on pretty thin ice anyway, it doesn't take much for it to crack. The loss of a few key people, key bands, and venues is enough to bring the scene to its knees... but not enough to kill it. I'm sorry to have seen the end (or hiatus) of some of the bands I really loved, like Couch, Shorty Cat, Suckstuff with Paul, and a version of Rux that can play consistently. It's a damn shame that SkunkHell finally gave up the ghost too, that place was an institution.

It might be that the scene just got too big for its britches, too self important, and needed to die back down to a more manageable size. How can you justify 3 or 4 venues putting on punk shows on the same night when none of them can bring in more than 30 people? Seoul just became oversaturated. The actual number of people actively interested and involved in all of Korea is less than you would get in a medium sized city in North America. This should force people to think more creatively, to do things differently, and to seek out new venues. Unfortunately, Korea isn't particularly known for changing or accepting new ideas quickly.

Broke: Do people treat you and your band differently because you're a foreigner, or is everyone receptive to what you do?

Luke: I think when my first band, Team Dread, started playing we were kind of a novelty. As far as I know we were the only all-foreigner punk band Korea has ever had. I suppose it kind of helped us get shows at first, though they weren't really the right kind of shows. We toured with a Korean Skidrow tribute band and stuff like that, but it didn't open any doors in



Luke plays with his Korean band Bedlam Heights before moving to Edmonton where he hosts CJSR's Rockenrolleum and fronts the new band Sharp Sharp Knives.

the punk community. If anything, being foreigners hurt us a little.

I don't think that anyone was outwardly hostile to us or racist or anything like that. It was probably more a matter of poor communication and the intimidation factor some Koreans feel when dealing with foreigners. I also think that there was a definite culture gap between Korean and foreign punks. We were trying to play simple oldschool punk influenced by the Ramones and Forgotten Rebels, and Koreans didn't really have a frame of reference for that.

Broke: This is your second band in Korea, after Team Dread. Is it hard keeping a band together here?

Luke: It can be hard keeping a band together anywhere in the world, but it's especially weird here. Playing in a band with foreigners in Korea means that inevitably your members' teaching

contracts will end and they will take off. If you play with Koreans they either will quit to join the army (if they're young) or they will quit because there moms and dads don't like it. I admit it has been pretty frustrating to try and play with people who are 28 and have to ask their mom's permission to come to band practice.

Broke: How is Bedlam Heights different from Team Dread?

Luke: The obvious thing is that Team Dread was all foreigners and in Bedlam Heights, so far, I've been the only foreigner.

Musically it isn't that much different. I suppose thus far it has been a little less polished than Team Dread just because of the people I have been playing with. In Team Dread I shared the song writing with Johnny, the guitarist, but in this band I kind of just show up at practice and show them what to play. I know that sounds prickish

or controlling, but it isn't like that at all. The guys I'm playing with just don't have the experience or depth of knowledge about music to do it any other way. That's kind of common amongst many of the Korean musicians I've met. They play "punk" but they don't know who the Clash is.

Broke: Okay, where'd you get the mask?

Luke: I have a collection of different masks that I've worn in this band. Some of them I ordered and the one I wore in Seoul (that kept slipping off my face) was one I actually made myself. The mask thing was part of a dream I had about trying to bring some more showmanship to the punk scene. Like most of my ideas it didn't really pan out. I think most punk bands in Korea are boring to watch, so I wanted to spice it up. I'd put on the mask and go ape shit; cursing, screaming, and generally abusing the audience. I thought it would be really fun... but it just sort of freaked people out. My bandmates thought I was nuts and refused to do anything but stand around like lumps. I've played one show since without the mask and people seemed a little less intimidated.

Broke: What are your future plans for staying in Korea and making music?

Luke: I'm pretty much writing the final chapter of that book now. I've got a few more months to go and then I'm heading home to go back to University. It has been a great ride and I'll always be glad I came to Korea, but I feel real life calling me. I'll be moving to Edmonton in January.

My band is kind of in shambles right now. The drummer has quit and the guitarist has quit showing up for practice. I'm trying to scrape something together with some talented foreign musicians from Cheongju (including Ed, the drummer from Team Dread) so I can try to get in a few more shows before I leave. If nothing else we'll be playing an all-ages show down in Cheongju on October 18th. I would love to get up to Seoul one more time before I go.

Salute to a madman

Jon Twitch
Fall 2008

I got some sad news when I returned to my hometown this summer. Blair William Piggott, the lead guitarist/singer of Metallica, has died. Never heard of him? Oh, you're thinking of the other Metallica, the shitty metal band that gets off on suing its fans. Everyone knows the real Metallica played surfinspired punk rock in Edmonton, Canada.

Blair was one of the most memorable characters of the local punk scene. He had the zeal of a Mormon missionary to play music in a band, and got quite a few projects going that didn't get the chance they deserved. His most infamous band was Metallica, who actually received a cease-and-desist order from the original Metallica.

A muscle-bound Mormon in dress shirt and tie, Blair didn't look the part of a punk musician until you saw him perform.

He would dominate not only the stage, but the entire club.

His shows featured costume changes and audience participation. Sometimes he would even set up in a public area and do a surprise attack; the most infamous was when he played in the Students' Union Building to a captive audience of studying students during exam week. Often his tactics put off the audience, and sometimes his shows ended with the cops escorting him from the premises.

One of his stunts was targeted at Chris Andrich, a local community radio DJ who he saw at shows a lot. Chris was a quiet guy who didn't like to draw attention to himself, and he never danced or got involved at shows. So, Blair named a dance after him, "The Chris Andrich."



Metallica plays a show, not at Stars

Blair once spent a few months behind bars because he punched a university professor after they collided in a swimming pool. He only got an early release thanks to the influence of the city's Mormon leaders, and when he got out he was fuelled by prison-like intensity to change the world through music.

When his death was first released, the details were vague.

The newspaper article only called it "an accident." His bassist admitted it sounded at first like a

hoax that Blair himself would've come up with.

Later, it came out that he jumped over the barrier at a gun range and was presumably shot by someone who only wanted to pay a few dollars to feel what it's like to fire a gun.

A very confusing death, leaving a lot of questions unanswered.

As a tribute to my friend, I am going to reprint two articles about him, one by me and one by another good friend of mine.

Metallica

With Skully & the Hypocrites,
Red Hot Lovers
Stars, Friday, July 12, 2002
By Jon Twitch

The first time I interviewed Blair Piggott, over a year ago, he hugged me and then insisted my girlfriend looked like a boy. Since then, his band the Doukobohrs collapsed, and he spent a few weeks in the Remand Centre until some of the city's Mormon leaders vouched and sprung him out.

Returning to free society, he formed his new band Metallica. I was a little apprehensive about another interview.

"He's got speeches prepared for you," warns guitarist Patrick Palardi before Blair comes in.

First things first: these guys are no metal band; they play refreshingly raw punk rock & roll. They named themselves Metallica because Blair's religion won't let him flip you the finger. They know they can't call themselves Metallica, and that's exactly why they did.

But Blair didn't show up for the interview looking to talk about the name; he wanted to dive right into what makes him tick spiritually.

"I play this music because it's spiritually uplifting. I feel a connection with the people at our shows, and I do it because I feel like that life is gonna end really soon," says Blair, who plays bass and sings. He comes close to sounding like a Jack Chick comic. "If I don't do it now then one of these guys might die soon. We may die in the car on the way home."

When he gets this feeling, there's no stopping him, even if there aren't any shows booked. U of A security opened a file on him when his band played a guerilla show inside the Students' Union Building during midterm week. "The time was right--we had to

play during midterm week," he says.

Their drummer, Doc Malcolm, played his first Metallica show behind a 7-11 until the police chased them away. Doc explains the blitzes: "Showing up somewhere, setting up your gear, and playing for people who don't wanna hear you play."

Blair has two reasons for their guerilla rock attacks.

"First, it's a spiritual thing--channeling energy and changing our lives. And second of all it's revenge. It's a means of getting revenge against the people who judge us."

"It's also a huge adrenaline rush," adds Doc.

"Rock and roll used to be exciting and dangerous," says Blair, "but what is it now, it's—"

"It's Bear rock," says Pat.

"It's boring," Blair says.

"Most times when you hear a CD and it's fucking crazy," says Pat, "and you see their show and they're just hanging out on stage."

Doc and Pat may be in it for the fun, but Blair has serious spiritual motivation, even if you may not hear it in songs like "Devil Child" and "The Chris Andrich." Born and raised Mormon, you'd expect him to hand out copies of the Bible rather than handbills, and he comes to all his shows dressed as a missionary.

The rest of Metallica are past these concerns. "At first it was a little awkward because I thought he was trying to recruit me," Pat admits.

"I still think he is," says Doc. "When I met him, he was in his boxer shorts. But he knew I was coming over."

But the only gospel Blair preaches is of rock & roll.

And, with a high energy act which gets the audience involved,

he's won many converts.

"If you can have such intense experience when you play, others can't help but feel it," says Pat, who's coming around to Blair's way of thinking.

"We came together as three," Blair says, "but we're creating more than three people can create."

Their next mission is to get a reaction out of Chris Andrich, a guy who goes to shows all the time, but never reacts to any of them. "We see him at shows, and no one can get a reaction out of him," says Blair.

He made a song and a dance after Andrich, called 'The Chris Andrich' in order to get a reaction from him. "If that can't get a reaction out of Chris Andrich," says Blair, "nothing can."

"We're trying to help him," says Pat.

"Maybe he'll say he doesn't want it," says Blair, "but the true Chris Andrich wants to get out."

The band had a slow start due to poor reception from city promoters, mainly over their lawsuit-fodder name.

They got a chance from Cory at Fox & Hounds, and slowly built their way up. They were recently featured in Sheri Barclay's local "That's What I Call Hits" 'zine, and hopefully the bad times are over.

"I'd rather have bad times than no times at all," Blair says.

Says Doc, "I'd rather have my music shut down rather than never play at all."

"Hopefully our performance can motivate others to live their dreams and goals," says Blair. "The time is right now to go for your dreams, because there's not much time in the grand scheme of things."

If you have a chance, come see Metallica and find out why they need a 50-foot bass cord. Leave your shame at the door.

Jon Twitch versus Nardwuar

Jon Twitch

Years ago, I had the chance to meet Nardwuar the Human Serviette, a Canadian legend who made a name for himself for his flamboyant interview technique. He is also the lead vocalist of the Vancouver punk band the Evaporators, and came to Edmonton a few times on tour. In advance of one of these shows, I interviewed him by phone for a local entertainment weekly, which ended up telling me to keep the article unreasonably short, something like 300 words.

What follows is the transcript of the original interview.

17 August 2001

Punk singer Nardwuar the Human Serviette once asked Mikhail Gorbachev which world leader has the biggest pants. Beck fans still send him hate-mail after Beck said his experience with Nardwuar in an interview in 1994 was unpleasant.

In his quest for interviews for his long-running college radio show on Vancouver's CiTR, he's been roughed up by Quiet Riot, as well as Sebastian Bach from Skid Row, who stole his toque. Now the guerrilla journalist comes to Edmonton with his garage-punk band the Evaporators, and he finds himself on the other end of the microphone.

Me: Who are you?

Nardwuar: I am Nardwuar the Human Serviette, a 33-year-old, teenage zit-rock loser from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and also singer for the rock and roll band the Evaporators who are coming to Edmonton, Alberta to the Spruce Avenue Hall on Friday, August 17, 1999+2.

Me: I bet there are a lot of disgruntled celebrities who'd love to have this opportunity for payback right now, to have you on the phone like this. Who would



Nardwuar surfs the crowd during an Evaporators show at Spruce Ave Hall.

want that opportunity for revenge the most, and who would you least like to speak with again?

Nardwuar: I think everybody has got their revenge on me, who wanted revenge on me. For instance the rock and roll band Quiet Riot. They kind of roughed me up and destroyed a tape I was using to interview them with. The rock and roll band Skid Row: Sebastian Bach, he took my toque. So anybody that kinda gets mad at me kinda gets revenge.

Beck, I upset Beck years ago. He never got revenge physically, but he got revenge through saying how much I upset him, and even to this day, even though I did this interview in 1994 with Beck, to this day, Beck fans e-mail me and say how much they hate me.

Me: Why are you a human serviette?

Nardwuar: Probably just to serve the youth to help mop up the information. In fact, everything I've said probably has been said before.

Me: Now I hear you most often are after these mainstream pop icons like Beck, or Tommy Lee, or Courtney Love, or Iggy Pop or somebody like that. Yet you play in a punk band. Nardwuar, are you a punk?

Nardwuar: I would like to think I am. Although somebody said, 'How can you be in a punk band if you're over the age of 30?' Well um uh, I guess I'm trynna change things.

And as for those kind of commercially, major-labely-

the Human Serviette

type people that I talk to, it's just kind of fun. Like you're at your college radio station where I do a show (CiTR Radio at UBC). And somebody will say "Hey, do you wanna go talk to Ratt" or "Hey, do you wanna go talk to Warrant" or "Do you wanna do an interview with Iggy Pop" -it just seems so ridiculous, it's something fun to jump into. So yes, there's not too much of a correlation between those famous star fuckers and punk rock, but it's fun to be able to do it because I'm totally bored.

Me: What is a Nardwuar?

Nardwuar: I guess it's just a dumb, stupid name like Sting or Sinbad.

Originally when I made up the name, it was with a whole bunch of friends around me, and we used to use the name when we saw old people for some reason. We'd yell at some senior citizens, "You're Nardwuars, you're Nardwuars!"

But then I got to University and I got a radio show, and I needed a name, and what name did I take?

Nardwuar! So I kinda like stole this name. It was like communal, that me and my buddies all shared and put it towards my radio show.

Me: Where is this all taking you, like the interviews and the music and all that, where do you see yourself in five years?

Nardwuar: Well, I'd like to think it's taking me to the top of the rock heap, but I don't think it has been.

I think it's just been taking me on a journey to meet lots of cool and interesting people. And actually it kind of saved my life. 'Cause a few years ago, I ended up in the hospital, and I was pretty scared, and then suddenly all these people that I interviewed over the years and people I knew and friends sent all these cards, and it totally cheered me up. So where is it taking me? Well, I think it's saved my life. Anything else is actually extra gravy. I don't care where I'll



Nardwuar's hairy back gets attention.

be in five years; I'm alive now!

When you're in a hospital, you're usually pretty scared, and I didn't have time to be scared because everyone was sending me cards.

Even like David Lee Roth's manager sent me a card, and a couple days later I got a card from David Lee Roth. I don't even know the guy, but somebody knew that I was a big Van Halen fan. So I just feel happy now. I'm on borrowed time, that's what I feel like.

Me: Nardwuar, a lot of people who have hairy backs are unaware they have hairy backs. Do you have a hairy back?

Nardwuar: Yes I do; I'm sorry about inflicting that on you as well. Somebody did try to light me on fire actually at a in Portland, Oregon, so that's a hazard of having back hair.

Me: As well as fronting the Evaporators, you seem to be affiliated with the Goblins. Are you



An unidentified member of the Goblins opens for the Evaporators at Spruce Ave Hall.

officially in the Goblins?

Nardwuar: Oh, ahum, well, ah, I won't say I really know the Goblins too well, they're ah, well, I think I know the guy called Thee Goblin who plays organ, and they're a very mysterious masked duo, very very simplistic.

Me: And they happen to use the same instruments as you.

Nardwuar: Sorry?

Me: They use the same instruments as you.

Nardwuar: Yes. The same instruments. And sometimes they're even joined by members of the Evaporators, who help out with, I mean, sorry, with other members of another band that happens to be around the venue that night to join the Goblins, and then they turn into the Skablins. There's also been the Gothblins, and the Disgoblins, and hopefully someday we're gonna be able to do Fat Boy Goblins and GobBizkit.

Me: Do you think, Nardwuar, that most of the musicians you interview know of your musical dexterity?

Nardwuar: I don't think so. I think probably they're totally unaware of what is going on. Although I was lucky enough to,

we played a gig last week with the rock and roll band Mudhoney, and they actually asked us to open for them. Actually, Sleater Kinney asked us to open for them on New Year's Eve a few years ago, and Sloan took us on that tour of Alberta a couple years ago. And Sloan was a band that I'd interviewed in 1991, and they walked out on me—they hated me—and yet seven years later, in 1998, they were asking for the Evaporators to open for them. It took seven years to win them over, but I finally did.

Me: Do you think when you interview someone, does your own personality come across, and does it ever drown out the person you're interviewing?

Nardwuar: I don't really know what that really means, exactly. I guess sometimes I try as hard as I can to get the information across, so if nobody's saying anything, I hate dead air, so I just speak more and more and more. So maybe sometimes it might sound like I'm talking a lot, but I'm not trying to put my own personality into it.

However I do try as hard as I can to get little interesting factoids out there. For instance, when I interviewed that band Skid

Row, to the interview I brought a girl that had actually at one time become intimate, became, uh, had, uh, whatever that word is—fucking-um, with, um, Sebastian Bach of Skid Row, and I brought her to the interview as like a prop, like “Hey Sebastian, remember this girl from Saskatoon?” I unfortunately never got to that point in the interview, because he grabbed the video camera and took the tape out, smashed the tape against the wall, threatened to beat me up for fun.

Me: Your interview with Ross Rebagliati, the snowboarder who had his Olympic medal taken away because of a positive drug test was printed in the Seattle Weekly, but it caused a complaint from a publicist about your lack of professionalism. Correct?

Nardwuar: Yes. This is really bizarre, because every interview I do, I try to end with “Doot doodle oot doo.” This Ross interview was pretty much fairly boring. However, at the very end, it took him a little while to go “doot doo.” The publicist phones back to me and says “What were you doing talking to Ross Rebagliati, you made him sing a song!”

One interesting aspect about dealing with “Doot doodle oot doo doot doo” is Rob Zombie. When I interviewed him, I went “Doot doodle oot doo,” and he just left the room, and he left the speaker on, and I just “Doot doodle oot doo... doot doodle oot doo” for about half an hour.

Me: What's your real name?

Nardwuar: Let's perhaps leave that to a mystery. However, if people want to research me, check on the net for an English social critic that lived between years of 1819 and 1900. This social critic, on his wedding night, saw his wife's pubic hair, became disgusted by his wife's pubic hair, became a compulsive masturbator and died a virgin. This is who I am named after.

Me: Doot doodle oot doo.

Nardwuar: Oh! Doot doo.

Antichrist's Cookbook

Jon Twitch
December 2014

Way back in 2011 when Darge came to Korea, I met Annick Giroux who was passing through who had published the book *Helbent for Cooking: The Heavy Metal Cookbook*, documenting the favourite recipes of heavy metal bands from around the world. Obviously that fame will never happen to me, but why not start a food section in this zine? I would like to invite any readers to send in their original food recipes or drink mixes. (2023 editor's note: nobody ever did.)



Dunburgers

Several years ago, at a Korean meat restaurant in Sinchon after a show, I dipped a piece of meat in sauce, wrapped it in lettuce, and ate it, same as usual. But the sauce was a little different, and the meat was a little different: it actually reminded me of the flavours of a hamburger. It made me wonder how far I could modify this food item and still have it identifiably Korean. The trick to this food is probably 90% presentation and eating technique. Otherwise, as Jeff says, you just have Atkins burgers, only smaller than sliders.

Ingredients:

- 300g or so ground beef
- 1 egg
- lettuce (the kind with individual leafs prepared for Korean barbecue)
- good pickles (not sweet)
- sliced cheese
- condiments (ketchup, mustard)

1. Buy all the groceries you need, which can be difficult and expensive in Korea. It's also helpful to have the right plateware, especially dishes for dipping the "sauces." All of these should be readily available in Korea.

2. Make the patties. My preferred method is to mix about 300g of

ground beef with one raw egg. Form regular-sized patties, but then divide them up into smaller pieces like you're cutting a pizza. Mash these into small patties.

3. Once the mixture is combined properly, it's time to cook. A western-style barbecue might have gaps too large for this. Ideally I'd really like to try this cooked on a Korean tabletop grill.

4. If you have that kind of grill you could eat around it just like you do with regular Korean barbecue. Or, put it all on a plate and serve with all the condiments and side dishes. French fries make sense as a side dish, don't they?

5. Pick up a piece of burger with your chopsticks, place it in a piece of lettuce, garnish with pickle and/or cheese, add some ketchup and mustard, and stuff it all in your mouth.

It really actually does mess with your senses. It's a burger, but you're eating Korean food.

Blue Junbars

Back in university, vodka was my drink of choice—before it betrayed me. I came across a bottle of blue curacao and used that new thing called the Internet to research cocktails I could make. I liked the sound of the Blue Lagoon, but

I can haz Dunburgers?

through a lack of cocktailcrafting skill and a lack of measures, I came up with a unique creation.

Ingredients:

- 2 oz vodka
- 2 oz blue curacao
- one tub of Ice Blue Raspberry Lemonade
- Kool-Aid powder
- lemonade or water

Pour vodka and blue curacao into a glass. A collins glass would be right, but anything larger than a hiball and smaller than a pint will do.

Add in the Kool-Aid powder, and add your solvent, either lemonade or water. Fill the fucker, and serve without ice.

It doesn't taste strong, so be sure to have a bucket around just in case.



Proper attire for consuming Blue Junbars

Why '90s ska sucks now

Jon Twitch
August 2015

Don't get me wrong, I discovered my love of all music only after being exposed to ska. In the '90s. But so much of it now hasn't aged that well, to the point where I'm uncomfortable showing off some of the old Moon Ska and Stomp Records releases I still inwardly cherish. Ska in the '90s was often labeled as third-wave ska, the next evolutionary step following first-wave Jamaican ska and second-wave, or 2Tone British ska, but what that means differs from person to person. To some, it's the stuff that came out on Moon Ska Records in the US and Stomp Records in Canada, that had its own sound developed in North America that was a little less bombastic than British 2Tone and a whole lot less popular. To others, it's ska-punk, the musical movement that soared into the mainstream and stayed there until it wore out its welcome. To Toasters lead bucket Rob "Bucket" Hingley, it's not a thing at all. But the term, despite having rightfully lost all its goodwill, still stands for an era when ska was first proliferating in America and there were enough bands that they could influence each other and create a distinctive sound. And a lot of it was really corny. Even a lot of the great bands released some pretty embarrassing stuff that our kids could use against us.

Ska Puns: No, I'm not missing an extra "k" there. Ska puns ruined a lot of band names, some alright, some great. Just a few bad examples: Bim Skala Bim, Skavoovie and the Epitones, Isaac Green and the Skalars, Skanic, Skavenjah, Skarface, Mephiskapheles. Okay, that last one is actually pretty badass. But the others, it barely even makes sense what they are. Though we can give Skatalites a pass because they're grandfathered in. This also frequently extended to album names, especially compilations, but rarely song titles.

Pickitup! The war cry of the ska band geek, this was originally a call to action for the band to play faster or the audience to dance harder. Then, sometime in the '90s, it became something more like ska chuimsae and

really wore out its welcome.

Bad Toasting: Toasting is when a singer makes any kind of vocal sounds over an instrumental song, probably best compared to beatboxing or scatting. Traditionally it can be improvised or rote, but in the '90s it became one of two things: either non-vocal "chk-chk" sounds or "hu-hu-hu" vocalisations often mixed in with calls to pick it up. There are a lot of great classic toasters, and a lot of white kids in the '90s who sounded like they had a stutter or the hiccups.

Rude, Rudy: Two other words that singled you out as inherently lame. "I'm rude! Hey rudies!" It was a coded language that was supposed to create a unifying culture, but just functioned as a huge "kick me" sign on the whole ska scene's back. Originally it came from rude boys, the Jamaican gangsters who terrorised a democratising and urbanising Jamaica, and thus had many ska and reggae singers singing about them. What it has in common with frat boys "skanking" is debatable.

Gangster Imagery: It might be more on the Canadian band Kingpins for this one, but there was a bit more of a fixation with gangsters than necessary in '90s ska. The original ska movement had songs about gangsters because those were the movies they watched, but '90s ska kids just felt powerful wearing their first suits they hadn't been forced into by their parents.

Suits: Suits were one of the big things that defined '90s ska. While they were present in the '60s, that was because all musicians dressed up, even a young, dapper, cleanshaven Robert Marley. And 2Tone, I don't know, British people. In the '90s, wearing a suit became a big shock statement, especially to those of us coming down after grunge. I remember going to my first punk shows and not thinking twice about all the mohawks and spikes, but my first ska show, there were guys in suits, what's happening?! I knew the third wave was dead when ska bands started playing in casual wear.

Frat Boys in Cheap Suits

At ska shows, there'd always be one or two obnoxious frat boys who'd show up with his new oversized Value Village suit, his running shoes, his "ruder than you, whatever that means"

attitude and terrible dancing, and it's probably these guys who ruined suits for everyone.

Skanking: The word "skanking," referring to dancing to ska as "skanking," was never not obnoxious.

All-White Bands: "Reggae is black, ska is white." That was the consensus that mainstream listeners reached in the '90s after overexposure to the worst ska bands America had to offer. Ska bands with black members such as Fishbone and Hepcat fought an uphill battle explaining that, yes, ska comes from Jamaica and predates reggae. Otherwise, there was no shortage of all-white ska bands to convince the idiots they were right.

Checkerboard Patterns: In 2Tone, the checkerboard pattern became a tapestry of racial unity (at least among the palest whites and the darkest blacks), but in the '90s it was more like hobo code for "this band probably has horns."

Horns, Always Horns: Granted, it would probably be cool if this were interpreted the other way, with band members having actual horns (looking hopefully in Mephiskapheles' direction). But for the most part, it was widely accepted that every ska band had to have at least three horns: sax, trumpet, and trombone, and if any one of those was missing, the band was incomplete, never mind the fact that most horn riffs were played in total sync, so you couldn't hear the trombone from the trumpet anyway.

Band Geeks? Ska in the '90s gave band geeks a rare opportunity: the chance to be cool. Knowing how to play the trumpet would've gotten you beat up a few years earlier, but suddenly you could be in a ska band! Being a lifelong nerd myself, I've got no problem with our socially challenged individuals getting on stage in bands, but showmanship wasn't celebrated, resulting in so many bands with so many members all performing at once, and nothing was happening. Maybe the guitarist was radical and the singer suave and there was a cute girl playing bass (drums in Korea), but then you had the A/V club standing on one side of the stage laming up the place. We've moved past that.

The History of Punk (in Korea)

Jon Twitch
June 2017

I had the chance to go on CJSR, my old hometown university radio station, during a visit on July 3. I met with Brittany in the former bank vault DJ booth for an hour-long show. Here's the playlist. Her cohost Rylan was out of the country so she was stuck bantering with me. They both expressed a great deal of interest in gentrification issues and punk-folk crossovers, two things I was able to focus on.



Jon Twitch and Brittany pose in the CJSR lobby, 20170703. Photo by Kim Jong-un

First show 20170703

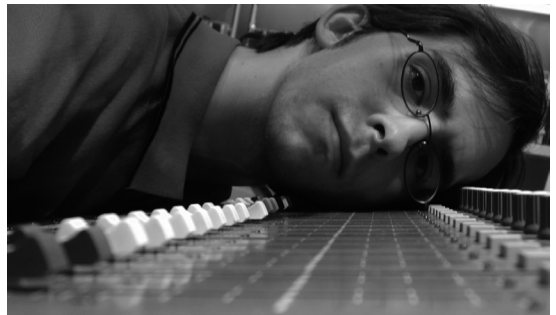
Crying Nut - "Ride a Horse"
Rux - "Our Minds are all the Same"
Suck Stuff - "Go Outside"
Ska Sucks - "Skank in the Suburbia"
Bamseom Pirates - "Long Live Kim Jong Il"
Mukimukimansu - "Andromeda"
Dead Gakkhahs - (unknown due to lack of track listing)
Shorty Cat - "I'm not Gonna Make it"
Green Flame Boys - "L.O.V.E. Banpeikkun"
...Whatever That Means - "68-22" feat. Jong-hee of Rux
Heimlich County Gun Club - "Hongdae Streets"
feat. Jinsuk from Skasucks
Billy Carter - "Time Machine"



By the way, former program director Daryl visited Korea! 20230301

Second show 20220919

Bad Idols - Action of Destruction
...Whatever That Means - I Can't Take It
Gumiho - Destroyed Warranty
Rumkicks - Punk is Nowhere
Drinking Boys and Girls Choir - There is No Spring
Billy Carter - My Body My Choice
Deadbuttons - Witch
Polluter - Endless Laughter
TalkBats - Wake Me Up
NST & the Soul Sauce Meets Kim Yul-hee - Paengdeok
Uheeska - Dukkun
Jambinai - Time of Extinction
49Morphines - Running on Empty
Seoul Dolmangchi - Drunk



DJing late at night, long ago

Visit cjsr.com for more about the show, or go to mixcloud.com/thehistoryofpunk/korean-punk for other shows or download the mp3 from daehanmindecline.com/radio

Acoustic oi! invasion

Jon Twitch
October 2018

When I first started promoting shows in Korea, starting with the Slackers in 2007, there was a need for me. I was able to communicate and get things done. Since then, things have opened up significantly and we have bands coming here multiple times a month. If the Slackers returned, it would be Team New Generation of Ska or Kingston Rudieska handling it, so no need for me.

Some time ago, I told myself there are only a few bands I would bother to bring here.

As it turned out, one of them contacted me. Jenny Woo is a globally based sort of musician, based in Europe and highly mobile as a soloist. But she's actually from Edmonton, same as me. Back in the late 1990s to 2003, we were in the same circles but didn't know each other that well. I moved away and she did, and both of us grew up as people and got better at what we do, but Edmonton is still at the core of both of our identities.

This tour is an experiment in vertical integration, as I've taken control of putting on the show and promoting it, both in this zine and in a daily newspaper. Probably not that ethical, but whatever.

Broke: I know it's considered bad form to ask "What kind of Asian are you?" But when you're touring Asia it's a little more complicated. Woo is a Korean surname, although the Chinese characters are different from the Chinese surnames. However you relate to any kind of Asian identity or roots will be of note to locals here. So...what kind of Asian are you?

Jenny: Wow, actually I had no idea that "Woo" was a Korean



Jenny Woo arrives in Korea, 20181013. surname... now I know why so many people ask me for my best kimchi recipe, haha. Actually, my father immigrated to Canada from China, and my mother from Scotland. I grew up eating dimsum and speaking some Chinese words in the house, but to be honest I don't feel extremely "Chinese." I think I identify much more with being Canadian, being into punk rock, and just being as opposed to any particular ethnicity. skinhead are you? Everyone in the scene here will be totally savvy about all this, but I still hope to reach a wider audience who won't know. In my day, every skinhead had their own "spirit of '69" speech always ready, so I'm curious to hear yours. Do you still even have to deal with questions like this, or has everyone moved on from the whole "skinheads are racist"?

Broke: Another question you're probably used to, what kind of

Jenny: I think we are far from the narrative of "All skinheads are racist." Skinhead is still a relatively esoteric subculture,

and it unfortunately is very much associated in the press (and therefore in peoples' minds) that skinhead is synonymous with racism. Truthfully, skinhead was born out of multicultural neighborhoods in England during the 60s, and it was about class unity despite race. I believe skinhead subculture has done more to bring people together than it has to tear them apart on the basis of racial prejudice. I am against racism not because I'm a skinhead or despite of the fact that I'm not a skinhead... but just because I am not a horrible person. Racism is an effect of ignorance and hatred, and I don't think it should be tolerated either inside or outside of the scene. That being said, I don't think being skinhead is synonymous with a political fight against racism either — it's much more than that. Being not a racist should be the norm, not something that we have to adhere to just because we identify with a certain subculture.

Broke: A year or two ago, Walter Dunn of the Texas ska band the Stingers told me he ran into you somewhere, I think in Europe. According to him, you credited me with getting you into ska, but I have no specific memories of this. What was he talking about? And, what do you remember of me from back in Edmonton? It's been almost 15 years and to me Canada almost seems like a foreign country.

Jenny: Haha, I do remember running into Walter Dunn, but I can't remember sharing that exact story with him. I got into the subculture between 1997-2000, and I'm not sure if you were still living in Edmonton at the time. However, I did have a very good friend named Megan who knew you through her boyfriend (also Jon) at the time. I started my adolescent rebellion as a punk rocker, but moved more into



Jenny Woo poses in a Korean Hanbok dress on a rooftop in Seoul, 20181015.

skinhead subculture because of the values and the music. I looked up to all the older, wiser, and more experienced people in the local skinhead scene. We didn't have internet or a lot of local record shops (as you know), so most of what we received was hand-me-downs or copied tapes of the people who came before us.

Broke: The whole concept of acoustic oi sounds very contradictory, at least to outsiders. Then again, those same people would probably struggle even more with the concepts of skinhead girls and Asian skinheads. Do you ever find people demanding you justify yourself, either in person or online? If so, how do you deal with it?

Jenny: Story of my life — day in, day out. A lot of people think acoustic music and oi! are contradictory because they believe skinhead music is inherently aggressive, violent, loud and distorted. However, I don't see the

contradiction. I think folk music is simple, honest music that was written by the people and for the people, and skinhead music is music about working-class life and the struggle to survive. They are both anti-commercial genres that are focused on daily life, frustration and community. Many people cannot accept "Acoustic Oi!" as a genre, but I don't play it for them. I play music for myself mostly — it's a great way of self-expression, and it's my greater purpose. If people like it, I am humbled and honored. If they don't, then they just don't have to listen. I mostly ignore the demands for justification online and in person — I've got nothing to prove and life is too short.

Broke: Your music also draws heavily from alternative country and Canadian folk. Coming from Canada, I have so many memories of this kind of music, not just Corb Lund, but over here in Korea everyone just knows Dropkick

Murphys and Flogging Molly (and even then we're talking about a decade ago). So, how do punk/oi and country/folk intersect in your head?

Jenny: As I mentioned in the previous response, I do think that folk and oi! music naturally intersect because they are both genres of music written by the working class for the working class. I thought if I wrote oi! music stripped down to just one voice and one guitar, the lyrics and the skinhead values would come through even more clearly. Moreover, I wanted to demonstrate courage and tenacity (i.e. live the values I speak about) by not hiding behind distortion, and simply not giving up. I was deeply inspired by the strength and power of the music of Johnny Cash, Leonard Cohen, Corb Lund, and even some oi! bands that played acoustic such as Badlands.

Broke: For me, quite a lot about your music is a rare reminder of my homeland. But for many others, even references to wild roses will seem a little odd. For someone as well-travelled as you, why bother with references to where you're from, especially when you seem to be based in Ottawa, your record company is German, and you live in (which country)? How important is cultivating an identity based on region, especially when that region is as obscure as Alberta? What does Alberta mean to you?

Jenny: I wrote the song "Alberta Rose" when I was still living in Alberta. I wrote it because Alberta is the foundation for my roots, and because the lyrics and feeling of that land were authentic to me at the time I wrote the song. I do identify with being Albertan because Albertan landscape and culture are the reference points of my childhood. Of course, the more I see of the world the greater my perspective grows, and therefore



Jenny Woo performs at the Look Beyond Urban Rock Festival in Cheonan, 20181014.

who I am cannot be defined completely by where I'm from . However, I will always have a longing for "Wild Rose Country" because for me now, it symbolizes my own youth, my innocence, and my glory days.

Broke: You're obviously very well-travelled, having spent a great deal of time living and touring abroad. Do you consider yourself an expat, or how do you see it? What effect has so much life on the road had on you?

Jenny: I do consider myself an expat, but even more than that I consider myself a nomad. I have been traveling around this Earth for more than a decade, and I try to learn as much from life on the road as possible. As opposed to feeling weary from my travels, I find I have an increased sense of curiosity and wonder about how the world works, and how I fit into the big picture. I have become more humble, and I have become a lot wiser. I'm less quick to judge others, and I tend to ask a lot more questions now before jumping to conclusions. I am able to sleep on pretty much any surface and under any conditions. The downside is

that I have friends all over the world, but rarely do I see everyone I love in the same room. I find it hard to "belong" in places because my identity is spread out and it's not anchored anywhere. I'm free, but freedom often is accompanied by solitude. I wouldn't have it any other way, but the path less traveled is often a lonely road.

Broke: I used to have a friend who joked "There's no such thing as a skinhead girl, only a skinhead's girl." What is the place of women in punk, what should it be, and what do you think could fix it? In Korea we've been grappling with this, as women have been disappearing from the scene, and we have had a few #MeToo-style scandals among our ranks.

Jenny: I honestly think that skinhead is a great scene for women to be a part of. Whereas mainstream culture tends to value women on the basis of what they look like and their sexuality, skinhead subculture is based on loyalty, community, and pride in one's accomplishments. Skinhead values have made me a stronger version of the person I used to be. That being said, it is often the

case that the misogyny of mainstream culture leaks into the skinhead scene, and the skinhead scene itself can be quite misogynistic. I always found it strange that being anti-racist or anti-fascist is an absolute requirement for most in the scene, and yet sexism is still the norm. I find it discouraging that there are far fewer women on stage than men in most festivals and concerts, however I am optimistic that this will change. Punk and oi! should be a place where women can tear down walls and break through the barriers that mainstream society creates. By calling people out on their sexist attitudes, by supporting our sisters, daughters, partners, and friends, we can change this scene for the better. By supporting women in the scene and by taking a stand against sexism we can make it a truly alternative culture, and a true representation of its own values.

Broke: Korea when I arrived had a very unified punk scene with about half a dozen very good oi bands, but nowadays we have zero. You've travelled so much, you're probably a good judge of that: is oi dying out? Are skinheads everywhere aging with no more new blood coming in? Or is it just us?

Jenny: I think globally it's the contrary of what you're describing. The internet and social media has given the subculture a huge boost in exposure (for better or for worse) and a lot more people are listening to oi! as a result of increased access. It's also getting easier to travel and to connect people through festivals and concerts. I believe there are now more festivals in Europe and North America focused on punk and oi! than ever before. I even just got a message from a person in Qatar, stating that they were organizing a small festival there. I have had the pleasure of meeting skinheads even in the most northern regions of Siberia all the way to Argentina's Patagonia, and so it seems that oi! is reaching even the farthest corners of the world. In my experience, every subculture has its peaks and valleys depending on who is in a certain city or country to organize gigs or play in bands or put out records. The people may come and go, but somehow the spirit never dies.

JENNY WOO



TEAR DOWN WALLS

벽을 허물자

Jenny Woo Korea Tour 2018

1. DIP 1ST ANNIVERSARY PARTY at Club DIP, Seoul (Saturday 20181013)
20,000 won (unlimited VODKA & TEQUILA)
Jenny Woo with Dead Buttons, ...Whatever That Means, Full Garage, Octopoulpe, Pilsong, Hi Teen Pops, The Punk Drunk Love, Flush, The Apop, Mantilla, Flug, Jahero, DJ YouTube, and more
2. Look Beyond Urban Rock Festival Day 3 in Cheonan (Sunday 20181014)
10,000 won (limited free food and drinks)
Jenny Woo with Kitsches, Turn For Our, Arryam, Smiles of a Summers Night, Slant, Cutt Deep, Octopoulpe
3. Jenny Woo at Club SHARP, Seoul (Sunday 20181014)
10,000 won (free entry for minors)
Jenny Woo with ...Whatever That Means, Talkbats, Billy Carter, Seoul Dolmangchi

Sharpest knife in the drawer

Jon Twitch
Christmas 2022

I lucked out with my return visit to Edmonton, when I saw a poster for the first show of Sharp Sharp Knives, the latest band of Luke, a former resident of Cheongju who had been in the bands Team Dread and Bedlam Heights in the 2000s, right when Cheongju was the best scene in the country outside Seoul. Seeing Luke for the first time since that decade brought back a lot of memories for both of us. So I decided I had to interview him.

Broke: First, can you introduce yourself by talking about your time in Korea?

Luke: I came to Korea in the summer of 2005 because I was trying to escape from the bad end of a bad marriage and needed to make a new start. I had a good friend teaching in Cheongju and he offered me a chance to come and join him. I had no idea what I was getting into at the time, but it was one of the best decisions I ever made.

Soon I was living that hagwon teacher life, working a few hours a day and spending the rest eating, drinking, and travelling. Cheongju became my new home and it's where I started Team Dread with fellow Canadians, and Bedlam Heights with some Korean friends. Korea was the best place to play in a punk rock band. There were cheap rehearsal spaces, every club had drums and amps, and (at least by Canadian standards) all the towns were close together. Team Dread managed to record a CD and played some shows around the country. I think we were kind of a novelty at the time as we were usually the only non-Korean band on the bill. When that band ended I started Bedlam Heights with some friends from the Cheongju scene



Sharp Sharp Knives' first show at Blakbar, 20220806 that I'd met and had fun hanging out and playing with them.

In 2010 I decided to head back to Canada to get my education degree and become a classroom teacher. When I got back I felt really out of place and really homesick for Korea. Since then, I dream about being in Cheongju all the time. I'd love to come back some day and bring my kids to see all of the places I've told them about in my stories.

Broke: What was the scene like in Cheongju in those days?

Luke: I was really lucky to move to Cheongju when I did. The MF (Mooshimchun Fuckers) Crew were going strong at the time, and Cheongju had a lot of great bands for a city of its size. I had no idea at the time, but I'd landed in Korea's #2 punk rock city. My first show was an afternoon classic at Club Pearl Jam in Cheongju with 13 Steps, Nahu, and Attacking Forces. All of the bands were totally different in musical

approach and style, but they were all amazing. The punk rock kids were super cool to me and were happy to include a dumb Canadian in their scene. I spent some great late and loud nights with guys like Dokyo from 13 Steps and Youngsoon from Attacking Forces, and when our local bands would play in Seoul, or other cities, we often came along to the shows. When Team Dread came along they accepted us and let us share the stage with them. There were also other less established crews like the JSA crew that I hooked up with in Bedlam Heights. It was a cool thing to rep for Cheongju in those days.

Broke: I was pretty surprised you had a Same Shit towel with you when we met this summer. Do you still have any other merch left over from those days?

Luke: I still have a lot of junk from my own bands, like T-shirts, buttons and CDs. I have a 13 Steps T-shirt that doesn't fit anymore,

and an MF Crew shirt that still does. I also have a bunch of band buttons and random things like my SAMESHIT towel.

Broke: I previously saw you play in Team Dread and Bedlam Heights, and most recently I've seen you in Sharp Sharp Knives. Could you name any other bands you've been in?

Luke: I've played in a couple of bands since my time in Korea. The most prolific of the bunch was Gorogon Horde. That was a three-piece punk rock band originally inspired by things like SNFU, Bad Religion, and the Ramones. We got to play around Western Canada and recorded a couple of CDs and comps. After that I was the singer for a band called Toe Cutter Cult, where we played a lot of strange gigs like a Hell's Angels family barbecue (complete with kids' playground and a wet T-shirt contest). The Sharp Sharp Knives has been going since the spring of 2022 and it's one of the coolest, and best-looking, bands I've ever been in.

Broke: How did you end up with the name Sharp Sharp Knives?

Luke: I collect band names and ideas and had this one around for a while before I was able to make it happen. It has something to do with the multiple meanings of "Sharp." On the one hand it's something that's cutting and deadly, on the other hand it refers to being clever. In the case of our band it can also mean well-dressed.

Broke: I've noticed in all the bands I've seen you in, you seem to like dressing up, like wearing a wrestling mask or in the latest band putting on a flashy suit. How does putting on a costume help you perform?

Luke: Team Dread wore matching workshirts with our names on them, and in Korea I

usually went for Mexican Lucha masks. I even had one made for me by a lovely old ajumma in Cheongju. They look great, but are super hot and awful to play in. In Toe Cutter Cult I had a purple octopus mask that I liked to wear. The Sharp Sharp Knives are all about being snappy dressers and we have matching suits in purple, pink, and blue. I was always into bands that had a strong gimmick or a unique look, and have tried to do that with my own groups. It's part of the theatrical performance part of rock 'n' roll that I love. I'm kind of a shy introverted person, but when I put on the costume and step on the stage it all goes away.

Broke: Something that stands out to me whenever I see you play, and usually I would mean this as an insult but I genuinely don't with you, is that you have a pretty strong teacher vibe on stage.

Luke: It's funny you say that, because the Sharp Sharp Knives is fronted by double teachers! I really like telling stories and being the center of attention, which I guess applies to music and teaching. Teaching kids is also a kind of performance where you have to keep your audience entertained and engaged. I'm also the teacher who walks around the classroom strumming Misfits and Ramones songs while the kids do their work.

Broke: Can you tell me a bit more about the Rockenrolleum?

Luke: The Rockenrolleum is my weekly radio show on CJSR FM88 here in Edmonton. I've been doing it for about 10 years and I've been doing local radio for 25 years. I got started on CKUL radio at the University of Lethbridge and later did some time with CFR in Saskatoon. When I got back to Canada in 2010 I joined some friends on a radio show called Rise Up: Radio Free Edmonton, and a couple of years later I started my own program. My show is



Luke models his Same Shit towel, which he happened to bring to Sharp Sharp Knives' first show at Blakbar, 20220806 based around rock 'n' roll history and features a lot of stories about the music we play. We play just about everything, but I really love rockabilly, garage rock, surf, psych, and punk rock. I like to say to our listeners that they get to hang out listening to the radio and "get to leave here a little bit smarter and a little bit cooler than when you came in."

Broke: Since returning to Canada, what have you been up to?

Luke: Life back in Canada has been full of a lot of adventures, good and bad. I finished my degree at University of Alberta, started teaching elementary school, and got married in 2013. My wife and I had two amazing little girls before she passed away from cancer in 2019. Since then I've been trying to figure out how to rebuild my life and how to balance being a dad, a musician, and a human being. Somedays, it feels like I almost have it figured out.



Listen to his CJSR show at mixcloud.com/Rockenrolleum or visit rockenrolleum.com

The Guy with Seven Names

Racetractor: For most of the 2000s, my online handle was Racetractor, sometimes all-caps for emphasis. I used it on message boards, and it's the address for my Facebook page, which probably bothers the band Racetractor (who had to settle for fb.com/racetractor.he). It was given to me by a skinhead friend back home, right when I was moving to Korea, although I probably shouldn't say who because he later entered politics. The name suited me well and I consider it an honorable calling. It also had the tendency to needle just the right kind of people. Some online users would use it as an insult against me. One time when I was in front of DGBD, a white guy passing down the street hollered it at me, and I gave him the finger. When you use "RACETRAITOR" against someone, how does it make you look? Once someone asked me why I called myself something so horrible, and I said "Because I'm here." Someone else explained perfectly why it was such a good username, better than I could: because it's only a horrible word name in the minds of racists, or something like that. I stopped using the name after my divorce, deciding I shouldn't risk politicizing any future sex partners, and also letting white women know they're back on the menu. Although my life has certainly not become any more palatable for white supremacists.

Spook

In grade 8, I was best friends with this amazing guy named Chris. He was big and all standardised testing indicated he was dumb. He was also amazingly naive. Once when he was angry at me, I offered to do his homework, and then I answered every question wrong. He was furious, so I offered to do the next one right, and once again answered every question wrong. The third time, he was away the day we marked it in class, so the cycle was broken.

But I don't think he was dumb. He was strong in imagination, and could maintain elaborate fantasies for long periods of time. He would always have a persona to feed his fantasies, and one month we would be calling him the Nature Boy, and the next he'd be the Narcissist (not sure where the extra T comes from), both after pro wrestlers. Then he became James T. Kirk, captain of the Enterprise. We read in "The Making of Star Trek" that several names were considered for Spook, so he dubbed me after one of them,

"Spook," and I was his science officer. He started transitioning to Lord Vader next, but dragged along a couple Star Trek things, such as his trusty Vulcan science officer and a love of Klingons. He asked me to teach him a Klingon phrase, so I told him "ти дурний" (pronounced "tih durnnay") means "Hail the lord" (referring to him as Lord Vader). He loved it, so he had half our grade saying "tih durnnay, Lord Vader" to him for months.

Eventually, one of our other friends was mad at me about something, so he told Chris that "tih durnnay" is really Ukrainian for "you stupid." Chris was furious, and it looked like it would end our friendship if not get me beaten up. Thinking fast, I told him I'd let him in on the next prank. So I took the Ukrainian word for garlic, "часник" (which I had been taught to pronounce "shusnak"), and told Chris it was really a dirty word in Ukrainian. But, I was going to tell our other friend Greg that shusnak was Klingon for "nice hair." I then secretly told Greg everything, and said "Whenever Chris says 'shusnak' to you, thank him and run your hand through your hair." After that, Chris would shout "shusnak!" at Greg, who would say "Thanks" and run his hand through his hair, causing Chris to laugh heavily. Greg started to doubt I'd been truthful with him about this, but Chris was only ever saying "garlic" to him.

It got me through grade 8.

Unnamed Halloween punk

Back in Edmonton, sometime between 2001 and 2003, I went to a large Value Village (Savers in some places) second-hand store to see the local punk band Lord Anus play a show there. It was as weird as it sounds, and I remember them covering "Where Eagles Dare" singing "I ain't no gosh darn son of a witch" because of kids there.

While at the store, I found a wig that can best be understood as a bald cap with hair plugs in the shape of a mohawk. So of course I bought it, and wore it for Halloween that year.

I put together a pretty good costume, borrowing a ton of crust punk patches from a friend to pin to my jean jacket, and pairing that with red plaid pyjama pants and a black T-shirt someone had bought for me as a souvenir in New York.

There was a punk house party, I think at the House of Absoludicrous. These parties always had a "Most Offensive

Costume" contest, and people would show up dressed as abortion doctors or murder victims, with one guy winning one year for dressing as Punky Gustavson, a girl who had been raped and murdered at age 6 in our city, a crime that was finally solved in 2003 (I think a few months after this story took place). I had no chance of competing with this kind of costume, so I showed up in costume, staying in character, although most people there probably knew who I was. While a band was setting up in the living room, I tried to start a mosh pit. When I was out of beer, I went to the fridge and tried stealing a beer belonging to a random partygoer. Turns out, said random partygoer was a large skinhead I'd never met before, who was standing right behind me while I stole one of his beers. Later, when I was walking home in costume, I noticed quite a lot of people yelling at me, calling me Sid Vicious (who didn't look anything like me) and getting a little aggressive. Not something I'd like to live with every day.

Loar Avaion

When I was in university, and after, I always found it impossible to get a job. I looked everywhere I could and applied for every job I could do. One day, I saw a job ad looking for writers for a new magazine. They gave a website address, and when I visited I saw it was an escort service. Still, I wasn't having any luck anywhere else, so I emailed them.

I was invited down to their office, which was on a nondescript floor of an office building. I came out, went to the end of the hall, and rang the bell. Some guy answered, and I told him I was there about the writing job. Another door up the hall opened, revealing that I was apparently standing at a decoy door, and out came this guy who was like seven feet tall and looked like he was probably carrying a concealed baseball bat or two somewhere on his body. He invited me in, and I spoke to a woman who was in charge. She was at a desk on a headset, and while we were starting to talk, she answered a call. I remember two things she said "No, we're not active in Calgary," and "We'll have a girl to you in 15 minutes." After the call, she told me the magazine was run by an escort service. I told her I knew, and I figured they could use a horoscope. She loved it.

We settled on calling it the very nonerotic "Amatory Horoscopes," and

I submitted the first one for publication in their first issue, under the alias Loar Avaion. When it came out, the woman was as proud as I was. She told me they had a guy driving around and he could drop an issue off at my home. I imagined my mom opening the door to a seven-foot-tall enforcer handing her a magazine full of sex ads, and I told her I'd stop by to get a copy. I did see them on stands here and there though. Finally, the woman called my home number to arrange payment, and told my mom everything.

My system for astrology was actually pretty good, at least for a certain target audience. I wrote down all the birthdays of my friends and family members, and then for the horoscope I just made up cryptic messages that would be relevant for them, adding in other vague details. My mom told me hers was very accurate, and I had even predicted she would uncover a missing piece of jewelry, being as specific as mentioning jade or something like that.

I did three horoscopes in total, and one other article about a guy who was selling property on the moon which seemed ideal for an escort service's target audience. That article was under another alias I might reveal next issue.

After the third issue, they disappeared. I went to their office and they'd moved out. I emailed them, and someone different replied, telling me they were gone.

Edmonton's greatest urban explorer

More of a persona made under my real name, really. During my first year in Korea in 2004, I spent a lot of time chatting with friends on MSN Messenger, both new friends in Korea and friends back home, many of whom were new people I was meeting through our local punk message board, Indecline. One guy I talked to a lot was Kyle. Some of his friends brought him urban exploring, and he shared with me some pictures they'd taken of him. It got me interested in urban exploration, and the following year when the opportunity presented itself, I started exploring and I've been at it ever since.

Back in these days, while we were still talking, I still had not yet ever gone urban exploring, but I was trying to learn everything I could about it.

Kyle told me about something that was bothering him: a suspicious stranger had added him on MSN and was asking a lot of nosy questions about urban exploration. Apparently the guy said they had just met on a particular day the previous week, but when Kyle said he didn't remember that, the guy told him he seemed pretty drunk and maybe had forgotten. But

Kyle knew he hadn't been drunk that night. So this guy kept grilling him on abandoned sites to explore, and asking for more contacts within the local community. We had two theories: cop or journalist.

I was safely over here in Korea and had an alibi if ever accused of any crime. So with my permission Kyle introduced me as a leader of the local exploring community and this suspicious guy added me too, starting the exact same conversation: pumping me for sites and for names, while also being receptive to whatever bullshit I wanted to tell him. No alias, just me being a fraud.

I told him I was working on accessing a drainage tunnel under the provincial legislature, feeding him a bit of information each day, about how I was going farther and farther in each attempt, and there was something mysterious about the tunnel. For the next chapter in this story, I was going to tell him I found a dead body, which I expected would get a suitable reaction out of him revealing if he was a reporter or a cop. But the day I logged in to continue my tale, I found that his screen name had been changed: "THIS ACCOUNT HAS NOW BEEN HACKED."

I found out through Kyle that some of the real explorers had, somehow, figured out this guy's identity, I'm assuming/remembering imperfectly by finding him in real life and accessing his account non-remotely. Turns out he was a private detective, hired by a property owner who was sick of urban explorers trespassing in an abandoned building on his property, so he wanted to get them all punished in whatever way Canadian law calls for.

Almost a decade later, in 2013, I visited my hometown and met up with some of the local urban explorers, and I explained to them how I was a former fake leader of the local UE community. Nobody from those earlier days was still active there, and nobody I met remembered anything about that incident. They didn't have that many sites to explore, especially compared to all I've been able to see in Korea, but they were all very experienced at counter-security and identity discipline, which was necessary considering how seriously the hobby was policed over there.

Chuck Norris

When I was in first-year university, I realised I could be whoever I wanted on the internet. I also found online lists of celebrity email addresses. A lot of celebrities would have "the_real_" before their name. So I registered

the_real_chucknorris@yahoo.com and submitted it to a lot of those sites as Chuck Norris' real email address. Never received any fanmail, but I still have access to the account.

Brian L.

In those days I figured anything said on the internet didn't count in real life, so I would swear at strangers, impersonate my friends online, whatever I could think of. I made up the fake persona Brian, but I won't share the last name because it could expose someone real who would not like this. Let's just say a Canadian religious conservative pundit whose smug rants have transitioned from AM radio to nationwide TV. I went to school with his daughter and learned a little more about their family life. For instance, whenever he complained about a neighbour's daughter in his rants, that was apparently code for her as she was a little rebellious.

When she was turning 18, I had the idea to get celebrities to email her, the weirder and more ironic the better (but real celebrities, not the real ChuckNorris). So I got Brian to send out emails to celebrities asking them to wish my daughter a happy 12th birthday. The ONLY celebrity who I know replied was Rush Limbaugh, and he replied instantly, like within 20 minutes. Rush BCCed me on his reply to "my daughter," in which he spoke down to her like she was a preteen and referred to her as a "young American." I think praising her for being a fan of his.

A long time later, like probably at least a year, I was talking on the phone to her, and she asked me out of the blue "Did you pretend to be Rush Limbaugh and email me a birthday greeting?" I guess my modus operandi was really that obvious to everyone around me. But I had not impersonated Rush Limbaugh, so I asked her to elaborate. Her response was something like: "Someone claiming to be Rush Limbaugh emailed me saying my dad asked him to wish me a happy birthday. I emailed back saying I didn't think it was really him, because my dad thinks he's an idiot. He replied 'If I knew you were such a bitch, I wouldn't have bothered at all!'" I had to really, really control myself listening to her describe how (the_real_) Rush Limbaugh had called her a bitch. I had so many questions, but was afraid of her catching me. I believe I asked if she kept the email but she hadn't. Had she explained that she was really 18, or did he think he was calling a preteen girl a bitch?

Welcome to the 20th Century

A few years ago while going through some old folders looking at my old writing, I came across an old project I started back in the days of Indecline. I wanted to collaborate with an amateur filmmaker and make a TV series about a punk house. Back in Edmonton we had a lot of these from the Royal Palace to the House of Poor Choices, from the Skin Bin to the Sandbar, and reading through my old work brought back a lot of memories. I wrote a half dozen scripts and plot outlines, but moving to Korea ended any hope of this going farther. Also, my filmmaker collaborator didn't know what a rapsSCALLION was. The main character is not me.

This short story, the ninth in the 15-plus I made, was conceived and written in 2020, providing a hindsight view of earlier days of the internet, before social media. I look back on those days as a sort of proto-internet period, and despite some mistakes I think we did many things right. The punk scene was an early adopter and beneficiary of the internet, and in Edmonton we had a message board named Indecline.net which changed our lives fundamentally, as seen in this story. It served to bring us together and acted as a platform amplifying our bands, shows, photography, whatever. (Indecline is the second half in the portmanteau name of my own website Daehanmindecline which was hosted originally on Indecline's server. It was also where the original RapsCALLION's Den project was conceived. DIY sites and message boards like this were the norm back then and focused on building local communities.) Suddenly at shows we knew everyone's name, and there were no more strangers. Yet we all still thought the internet was temporary, and in a few months life would return to normal. Indecline is gone and we have migrated from site to site over the years, from MySpace to Facebook

to wherever. But we're still online, sharing all our data with shadowy tech companies. The internet has become a huge, globe-sized trap, and it looks like the only way to escape is to throw all our devices off a cliff.

Most of the furniture found in the RapsCALLION's Den comes from either thrift stores or dumpster diving. Well, we call it dumpster diving but most of our trash treasures were recovered from the curb.

You'd be surprised what you can find if you just keep an eye out while travelling through most residential neighbourhoods. Our family room, which has become a sort of graveyard of abandoned couches, is 90 percent supplied by curbside finds. We've also recovered kitchen chairs, a grandfather clock, porn both commercially and homemade, and one television that ended up at the bottom of a ravine.

But our greatest find was a full desktop computer, complete with monitor, keyboard, mouse, speakers, printer, even a grungy old mousepad. It was a Dell and it had an Intel Pentium 4 CPU, which was all pretty impressive at the time I think.

I still remember the night Charlie and Darwin brought it home, Charlie carrying the monitor and printer, and Darwin with all the rest.

"Who did you rob?" I asked while holding the front door open for them.

"We found this just sitting out on the curb over by Old Scona," Charlie said.

"We should throw it off the bridge, like we did with the TV," I suggested.

"Wait, does it work?" Vas asked. "We couldn't exactly plug it in outside," Darwin retorted.

The house had no desks so we hooked it up on the floor in the space between the family room

and kitchen, near an electric socket and a phone jack. We called in Morgan, the youngest resident of the RapsCALLION's Den, to help us set it up. Back in those days, the younger you were, the more you knew about computers. That concept doesn't seem to have survived two decades later.

Finally all the wires were connected, and Morgan flipped the on switch.

"Welcome to the 20th century," Darwin said as the Windows 2000 logo appeared.

It took five minutes to boot up, but there were no logins or passwords to get in the way.

After a few minutes of clicking around, Morgan found that the hard drive was almost completely filled with porn downloaded from the internet, all JPGs, all unsorted in one huge directory, to the point where the remaining data space was measured in kilobytes. We figured the porn was why it was abandoned in the first place, but there were two competing theories on this: either the user's wife found it, or the user just threw it out when the hard drive filled up, not knowing how to delete files.

It was agreed the porn was a fundamental part of the computer as recovered at the curb and thus worthy of preservation, so we couldn't just delete it.

Morgan moved most of the porn to a partition drive, and then the computer ran smoothly, as good as new.

I still wanted to throw it off a bridge, but now less because I wanted to hear the cathode ray tube explode, more because I feared this computer wouldn't be worth the trouble. I didn't need another computer, mainly because I had my own in my room, even if it wasn't internet-ready. If I ever needed the internet, I could just go to the university where my student login still worked.

It didn't take long before our resident porn addicts — the

three Dans — made the move to digital. They abandoned the stack of porn magazines over by the couches and began rooting through the computer's collection instead. The times I walked past them, it appeared the internet porn was indeed more hardcore than what they had been seeing in the magazines. Quite a lot of the images showed full penetrative sex, facials, gangbangs, things I don't think any of our magazines had.

Someone tried opening Internet Explorer, and while there was no internet connection, the list of porn sites the previous owner had used was revealed. Morgan showed us how to log in to a Freenet server, from which we could visit a text-only version of the porn sites. The only suitable link that was worth visiting among all the bookmarked sites was Literotica, a sex story website.

It wasn't long after that that it was determined we should get a proper internet hookup for the house. One day a cable guy showed up, did a bunch of stuff with the computer, and from then on we had internet piped into our main communal room.

At that point, not only was the computer occupied at all times of day, but there was a lineup formed to use it next. A 30-minute time limit was put on computer usage, but that wasn't enough time for anybody, whether you were surfing for porn, sending an email, or getting in internet fights on Indecline. Even I ended up using the internet sometimes, as it was just easier than going all the way to the university to use one of the computer labs there. But usually I just wasted my time on Indecline.

Indecline was a message board for the local punk scene. Everybody was on there, and very quickly we began to put names to faces, even if most of those names were aliases like Powermann, AbdullahOblongata, and theverv. It got to the point where you'd go to a show and you'd know everybody there. People developed friendships, rivalries, crushes, even

relationships. It was good, but felt like it could turn bad.

I made the mistake of signing up with my real name, OwenForbirggh, intending to make a statement about how I had nothing to hide, which was a mistake. I caught the ire of a particular member I knew only as Snout_Spout. I'm not sure what originally put me in his crosshairs, but he followed me relentlessly around the site and its many subforums. It got to the point where he would reply to every comment I made, derailing threads. The moderators were no help, because they thought we were equally at fault, since I'd used insults when trying to get Snout_Spout to leave me alone.

Then one day I changed everything. It was a normal day, just like any other. I went out to the yard and found the stray cat sleeping inside our barbecue, right on the grill like it was no big deal. I had a digital camera with me so I took a picture.

When I posted it on Indecline later that day with the caption "Catburger," it got quite the response.

"Aww<3," wrote Bullinda.

"So cute, I want to eat fur burgers with you," Miss Adventure wrote.

"What's his name? Can I come over?" asked delinquent.girl.detective, who I knew to be Tanya.

Of course I immediately went out hunting for that cat to take more pictures, but it was nowhere to be found. So I bought a can of cat food to leave out and lure it in.

I did this for a few days, until one day Darwin, who was allergic to cats, brought in the plate with drying cat food on it. "What did we agree about feeding the stray cat?" he said.

"Dude, haven't you been checking the photo forum on Indecline?" asked Charlie, who was sitting among the couches with a few other people who were over. "Owen's cat pictures are blowing up."

"Yeah, so?" Darwin asked.

Charlie used his chin to motion

to Bull sitting on one side of him, and Miss Adventure sitting on his other side. It was good to see more punk girls in the Den, after most of them had abandoned us during Darwin's exhibitionist phase.

Darwin looked around the room, noted the high female ratio — at least 75 percent that night — and never complained again.

One evening, I heard a knock at the door. It was soft, kind of scratchy, but someone was definitely there. When I went to answer, I didn't see anyone outside, until I looked down and saw the cat staring back at me, waiting for food. This became an everyday occurrence.

We had a touring band staying over, the Tigers of Yuinmak, from Asia, one of the Koreas I think. They found Indecline when searching for places in North America to add to their tour. They crashed at our place for a couple weeks, and during that time it came out that marijuana was incredibly illegal in their home country and they'd never tried it before. So of course we decided to smoke them up.

Vas supplied the weed, and Charlie had the rolling paper. We were seated around the couches in the family room, probably the most comfortable place in the world to get high.

Darwin was at the computer nearby, not officially part of it but accepting the joint whenever it was passed to him.

Aggie, their tomboyish blue-haired drummer we all had a crush on, seemed to enjoy it very much, giggling and rolling around the couches. Her bandmates were less fun. Their frontman, who introduced himself simply as You, didn't seem capable of enjoying himself, always scowling at Aggie whenever she acted out. It was clear he was shouldering all the burden of bringing them on tour, so I sympathised. Their bassist, Mok, just kind of sat there in a trance, although he looked perfectly happy.

While we were smoking, the cat knocked on the door for food. I

got up, grabbed a can of cat food, and went to feed the cat to stop it from scraping on the door with its claws.

Aggie came over and squatted on the floor, coaxing it over. "Nabiya," she called, holding out her hand.

The cat strolled inside past me, rubbing against my leg, and went straight to Aggie, coming right over to her hand and booping itself on her outstretched fingers.

"What did you say to it?" I asked her.

"I call to cat, 'nabiya,'" she answered. "It's mean is butterfly in Korean. Too cute."

I didn't fully understand what she said, or what butterflies had to do with it, but Nabiya sounded like a pretty good cat name, and if this Korean drummer girl thought the name was cute, I was willing to trust her instincts. So the cat name became Nabiya.

Before you knew it, Nabiya was on the couches with us rolling around and purring like he lived there. Aggie was also climbing around from couch to couch, imitating Nabiya's purring and meowing. Her two bandmates were catatonic, not handling the weed as well as she was.

Finally, You snapped at her. "Hajimal!" he shouted.

Aggie then curled up next to me, her head on my thigh, imitating Nabiya's posture on my other thigh. It seemed like she was doing this to piss off her brother, but I wasn't complaining. None of us ever did make a move on her; the more you got to know her, the more she felt like your younger sister. It didn't help that she was having trouble with the weather here, and her nose was always completely plugged. Once while she was talking to her bandmates in their language, I saw a snot bubble blow from her nose and pop.

Anyway, from that day on, the cat lived with us. We still let him outside every day, but he always came back.

Once, I used the computer after Darwin, and when I went to

Indecline I found it already logged in, to Snout_Spout's account. So it was Darwin who was giving me grief! I decided to fuck with him by posting a weepy apology from his account, adding that I was going to go kill myself, then I changed the password and logged out.

That was the end of it, or so I thought. One evening later that week, I was working on my own standalone computer when the doorbell rang. It wasn't a party night, so I came out to see who it was. Darwin beat me to the door, and when he opened it he found two cops standing on our front step. I watched from the kitchen.

"Hi, we received a report that somebody at this address was exhibiting suicidal symptoms," one of the cops said.

"What, at this place?" Darwin said groggily, like he'd just woken up from a nap. "Where'd you hear that?"

"It came from the internet," the other cop said.

"Well that's stupid," Darwin said. "We all love life."

Around then, Abdullah came out of his room. "Who's at the door?" he asked.

The cops both reached instinctively for their guns.

"How many people are in this house?" the first one asked.

"I dunno, five?" Darwin said.

He was technically correct so long as he was counting only residents, and considering both Charlie and Morgan to be one person. Of course, we also had three Korean punks sitting around our kitchen table having a quite loud conversation in a foreign language at that exact moment, so Darwin probably looked like he couldn't count at best, and like a human trafficker at worst.

"Can we come in, sir?" the second cop asked.

"Hell no," Darwin said, closing but not quite slamming the door in their faces.

The cops stayed out there a few more minutes — we could hear their radios — and finally left us alone to kill ourselves.

Only after they left did I put it together, and realise they were here because of my suicide note from Snout_Spout's account.

One day, Aggie was using the computer to write an email to her parents back in Korea, but it was difficult for her because we didn't have the right kind of keyboard for her language. She ended up writing in English to her parents, which required my proofreading.

Mom. Dad!

Here is the your daughter.

Canada is so big country.

I'm go to the McDonald's every day.

We meet many friends and have many sex together. Brother hate~

I'm bring back Canada baby.

Kk just kidding~

Yours truly,

A66ie

I could tell she had a very different relationship with her parents than I had with mine. I did edit the sex joke trying to make it sound as clean and innocent as possible.

"So, your parents know how to use email?" I said, making small talk as she breathed down my neck. "That's cool."

"Not cool," she corrected me.

"Good point," I agreed, thinking about my mom joining Indecline just to track me down.

When I was done fixing her writing, I saw there was another program running, so I alt-tabbed over to see what it was. It turned out it was the picture viewer, and it was open right on a picture of a girl taking a facial off a huge dick.

Aggie laughed out loud and covered her mouth with her hand as she did so. "You?" she asked me, pointing at the dick on screen.

"What? N-no," I stammered, feeling my face go flush. It wasn't even the same skin colour.

She took over the computer from me, but instead of sending the email to her parents, she started looking through the porn. So not only did we corrupt her with weed, but now also porn.

The collection had everything: softcore, hardcore, vibrators, lesbians, Asian, bondage, gangbangs, interracial, and more. Aggie clicked through them, laughing at everything she saw. She stopped on one image and grabbed me, pointing at the screen wordlessly.

It showed a girl who couldn't have been older than 14, totally naked and covered in bruises, including a black eye.

"What the hell is that?" I said.

She clicked through to the next one, and it showed her with an older man, face not visible. The next few showed her performing sex acts on him, and she did not look like a willing participant.

"In my country, bad," Aggie told me, pointing at the screen.

"Yes, it's bad here too," I said, trying not to look at the images any more than I had to. "Very bad."

I left her for a minute and ran to get Charlie and Darwin.

"Family meeting," I shouted, loud enough for them to hear in their rooms. "We found kiddy porn on the computer."

I waited for them at the kitchen table, gun in hand, while the computer glowed evilly a few meters away. The offending images were minimised, but I still knew they were there.

Charlie and Vas came out first and I showed them a couple of the images.

Darwin was the last one to join us. "Kitty porn?" he said. "What have you guys been doing with Nabiya?"

When he saw our faces, he assumed we didn't like his quip. "What?" he exclaimed.

"This is serious," Vas said.

"It's the internet," Darwin pointed out. "How serious can it be?"

"I know I'm always saying fuck the police," Charlie said, "but maybe we should contact them about this."

"That could get us in a lot of trouble," I pointed out. "Possession of child porn is a serious crime. And how do we explain getting our hands on the computer?"

"First, what do we know about these images?" Charlie asked. "Could that girl be somebody's prisoner? Maybe even here in our neighbourhood?"

"Do you guys remember where you found the computer?" I asked them. "Could you bring us back to that house?"

"Probably, but what for?" Darwin asked. "If we're not gonna go to the police, then what are we going to do about it?"

"We call up a bunch of skinheads and pay a visit," Vas suggested.

"Know any, Charlie?" Darwin asked.

Charlie scowled. After his failed attempt to ingratiate himself into the local skinhead scene, he hadn't been particularly close to them, but his hair couldn't grow out fast enough to distance himself totally.

"First, let's make sure we get the right house," I interjected.

As we were lacing up our shoes and boots, the Koreans followed our lead.

"Should we be bringing the Koreans?" Darwin asked. "How useful can they be if we end up in a sex dungeon?"

"We know what a sex dungeon is," You told him.

"You know what we're planning, right?" I asked.

"Breaking into a sex criminal's house," You answered.

"Good enough," I said. Besides, I thought, maybe they knew karate or something that would help us if we were to find ourselves up against a pedophile human trafficking ring.

It was close to sunset, but this being May it was already around 9pm. Streetlights were not quite on yet, but that didn't stop Charlie and Darwin from leading us through the streets back to where they found the computer.

We moved in silence.

We circled a couple blocks, until stopping eventually in front of one house.

"I know it was on a corner," Darwin said.

"It's this one, I swear," Charlie said. "I remember the tree."

"That's because you took a piss on it," Darwin said, pointing to a section of the bark near the ground.

Aggie sniffled deeply as if she was a bloodhound picking up a scent. Though it was probably just her allergies.

The house itself was two storeys tall, with a nice porch out front. It was old, possibly one of the oldest around. Currently there were no lights on inside or outside, and it was dark enough they would definitely be needed.

"So...what do we do?" Charlie asked.

"Let's just go ring the doorbell," I suggested.

I walked up the front path to the porch. There were a couple chairs out here, with a table between them. On the table was a coffee tin that had been used as an ashtray; it smelled like it hadn't been used recently.

I looked back at my friends cowering down at the end of the walk. Then I rang the doorbell and ran back to them. We all hid over by the tree Charlie had pissed on, waiting.

But no lights turned on, and nobody came to the door.

"It isn't conclusive that nobody's home," Vas said. "They could be bedridden or deaf."

"Or locked in the basement," Charlie added.

I pulled a Tigers of Yuinmak sticker out of my pocket. It came free with their CD, but honestly I had no use for stickers, having nothing worth sticking them on, like a binder or a skateboard. I tore it into a couple strips.

"Ya!" their bassist yelled, as if I'd torn his heart in two.

I then approached the house again, and placed one of the strips on the door and doorframe, so that if anyone opened it, they would tear it off.

The others saw what I was doing, so they followed after me.

"Come on, let's find the backdoor too," I said.

We found a wooden gate at the side of the house, and entered into the backyard.

"What the hell, they have a hot

tub!” Darwin remarked under his breath.

“Is that what this is?” Vas asked, coming over to a big wooden receptacle with a tarp pulled over top.

“Let’s just stick this to the door and get out of here,” I told them.

I went over to the backdoor, which had both a screen door and a more solid door behind it. I decided it would be better to stick it on the inner door, as it would be better protected if it rains. The screen door creaked open in my hands, and the inner door swayed a bit, like a drunk leaning against something that fell over.

“Hey guys,” I hissed to my friends, “this door’s unlocked!”

They came over.

“We should call the police,” Charlie said.

“Seriously, what is it with you and them?” Darwin snapped at him.

“We should go inside and search for the girl,” Vas said.

I was hoping to avoid breaking and entering, but Vas was right. We came here to potentially rescue a girl, and there was no turning back. Anyway, was it still technically B&E if the door was unlocked?

So I pushed the door open. The air inside felt warm and smelled like old blankets. It reminded me of visiting my grandparents.

“Hello, anyone in there?” I called.

As I entered, I stooped to take my shoes off, then thought better of it. This guy was maybe a pedophile, so I was going to track whatever from outside into his house.

The back entrance led right into the kitchen.

Charlie opened the fridge and started fiddling around with the contents inside. “Score! Look at all the microwave burritos!” he said.

Mok came over and triumphantly grabbed a one-liter carton of milk. Rather than look for a glass, he started drinking straight out of the carton.

The thought of eating a pedophile’s food turned my stomach, so I moved into the

next room. I came to a stop at the bookshelf. No magazines, all actual books.

“Hey, look at this,” I said to Aggie, picking up a paperback book. “Agatha Christie.”

Aggie just looked at me blankly.

“You know, Aggie, Agatha,” I said.

“She’s the name I don’t know,” Aggie said.

I showed her the cover of the book. “Murder on the Orient Express.” “Okay, I guess that word is no longer used now,” I admitted. “Kinda funny that a criminal would be reading detective fiction.”

“Dude, you watch ‘To Serve and Protect,’” Charlie pointed out, his head still stuck in the fridge.

“Only to see if I know anyone on it,” I argued. “Also, we’re not criminals — we’re, uh...”

“We’re rapsallions,” Darwin answered.

“I’ve been meaning to look up what exactly that means,” Vas said.

“Well, we’re vigilantes right now,” I argued. “Time to start vigilanteing.”

I looked around at my friends, who all seemed a little too comfortable with being here.

Charlie popped open the microwave. “I’ll check in here,” he said, stuffing a couple frozen burritos inside.

“If I were keeping sex slaves,” I said, “I’d have a dungeon in the basement.”

Vas opened a door, revealing stairs leading down to the basement. “Knock yourself out,” he said.

I was prepared to sneak down into the dark basement, but Vas flipped a light switch and the whole basement lit up. It was actually pretty nicely finished, with carpeting, a nicely stocked bar, a widescreen TV, and a billiards table. No sex dungeons, no locked rooms.

“Pocket ball!” Aggie exclaimed.

She started racking up the table. Nobody else was making a move, so I grabbed a cue.

Vas helped himself to a generous glass of Crown Royal, and he poured drinks for the Koreans too.

I turned it down, worried it might be drugged.

I consider myself pretty good at pool, or at least I did before I played against Aggie. It took her all of two minutes to run the table. I got one shot off, sinking nothing.

After, I passed the cue to her brother. “Do you want to play?” I asked.

“No thanks,” he said. “It’s a girls’ game.”

I slipped away and looked for the stairs up to the second floor. The porn looked like it had been shot in a bedroom, so I intended to look in all the bedrooms of the house.

The second floor had four doors: three bedrooms and a bathroom. The first door led to a bedroom that had been converted into a home office. There was even a space on the desk where the computer had been, leaving behind a dust shadow.

I went on to the next room, only to find it filled with boxes. In the boxes, mostly newspapers.

The third door led to the master bedroom, which reeked of old person smell. There was an old bed here, sheets folded carefully. Next to it was some sort of stretcher. Whoever lived here must have been in bad health.

I went to the bedroom window, and saw a police car parked in front of the house. Two cops got out and started walking up to the front door. Maybe they were here to arrest the pedophile. Or they could be here for us!

I scrambled down the stairs. “Cops!” I barked. “Cheese it!”

Charlie opened the microwave and grabbed his burritos. “Ow! Hot!” he yelped as he followed me out the backdoor.

We hightailed it out of there, racing through the backyard. By the time we got to the back alley, I realised we’d forgotten the Koreans.

If they were still inside they’d be caught for sure.

I prowled to the side of the house and found a basement window. Looking down, I could see our Korean guests still inside.

You was taking a shot on the table, while Aggie was leaning against the bar picking her nose and Mok was flipping through TV channels, still drinking directly from the milk carton.

I crouched down and knocked on the window, gesturing frantically at them to get out.

While I was doing this, one of the cops came down the basement stairs and pointed right at me. All I could do was run back to my housemates, and we took off down the alley.

We felt bad for our guests, but there was nothing we could do for them. It was only a matter of time before they led the cops back to the Rapscaillon's Den, and we had a hard drive of evidence to get rid of before the cops came knocking.

We took evasive maneuvers, sticking to the alleys and doubling back frequently, in case the police were patrolling the neighbourhood for us. After 30 minutes of this we made it the short distance back to the Rapscaillon's Den, only to find that the Koreans had beaten us there. They looked totally fine, completely unfazed, and Mok still had his carton of milk. The cops were nowhere in sight.

"How did you escape?" I exclaimed.

"One of the cops was Korean," You explained.

"What's going on?" asked Morgan, sitting at the computer.

"Get away from there," Charlie told him. "That computer's now a crime scene."

"What?" Morgan said.

"We found kiddie porn on that computer," Vas explained.

"It looked like someone had kidnapped a girl and photographed her being sexually assaulted," Charlie added.

"Did you find any traces in the house of the girl or where they could have photographed her?" Darwin asked me.

"Not in the basement or the top floor," I said. "Whoever lived there was elderly and possibly sick, maybe dead now."

"So probably he wasn't making

the pictures, just downloading them," Vas added.

"Is this what you're talking about?" Morgan asked, opening one of the pictures on the computer.

"Yes! Close that shit!" Vas exclaimed.

Morgan laughed.

"What's so fucking funny?" Darwin asked.

"I downloaded that myself," Morgan said. "I know this girl from school. She's one of the popular girls. The porn is totally staged."

We all breathed a little more easily. At least there wasn't a violent pedophile dungeon somewhere nearby. But we still had this material in our possession.

"Wait though," Vas said. "How old is she?"

"Grade 10, same as me," Morgan said.

"When you want to know if someone's of legal age, the answer should not come in the form of a grade," I pointed out.

"It may not be forceful, but it's still technically child pornography," Vas pointed out. "We could be arrested just for having it, and added to the sex

offender registry."

"What?" Morgan scoffed. "But she's a couple months older than me."

"Remember what I was telling you guys we should do with it?" I said. "We throw everything in the ravine."

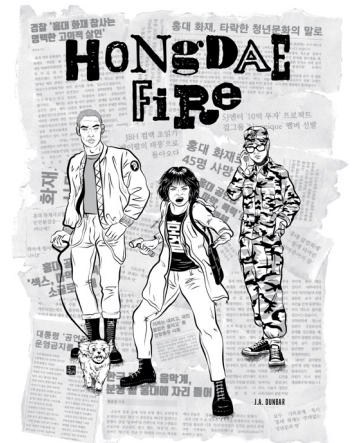
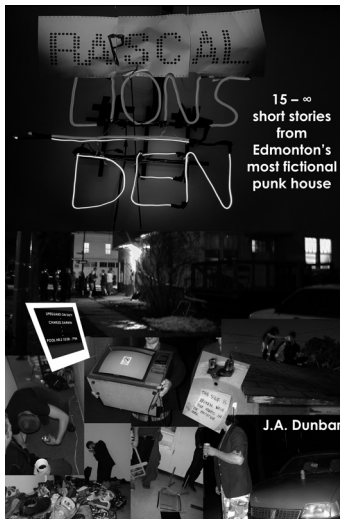
We pulled the computer apart, cable by cable. Then everyone each scooped up a piece of it and carried it all out the front door.

The ravine was a 10-minute walk away. There was one part of it where there's a bridge over a particularly deep part, with at least a 10-meter fall. It was over the side here that we dumped everything. The hard drive crashed to the ground and shattered into smaller components. Then Charlie dropped the monitor, which exploded with the force of a gunshot when the vacuum tube burst. I threw the keyboard and mouse down after it, and they clattered satisfyingly to a rest on the dusty hillside below.

"Good riddance!" I said. "Now let's forget this whole internet thing and go back to living our lives in the real world."

And with that scavenged computer equipment hitting the ravine floor, our adventure online had ended.

...Or had it?



Both the Edmontonian and Korean characters in this story are extended much more in the two books Rapscaillon's Den and Hongdae Fire, available through Broke Publishing.

Visit fb.com/brokeinkorea or daehanmindecline.com to order books.



Remember that time back in the early 2000s when you passed out at a show, and I got a picture of you? No? Well you're about to. I've decided to resurrect my archive of Edmonton photos and post what I find to the internet.

These pictures were taken in Edmonton between 2000 when I bought my first camera, and December 2003 when I moved away to Korea.

I've had the idea to do this for a few years, but two people in particular drove me to finally do this. The first is Sheri (KPISS.FM) who told me during my August 2022 visit to Edmonton that she would pay money for old

pictures of herself. The second is someone I may have never met: @780punkflyers on IG, who has been sharing show posters from much the same era and showing the level of interest in reliving this era. Many of the show posters on there are likely for many of the shows I'll be posting pictures from.

Will I piss anyone off? Will I embarrass anyone in front of their kids? Probably, although I'll try not to be too merciless. I'm trying to avoid photos of couples, for instance.

All were taken on a Nikon Coolpix 950. Most of the photos are undated.

Follow @broke_in_edmonton on IG for more of this shit