

brooke

IN KOREA





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Christmas 2023

This zine
is published
whenever I feel
like it, which
isn't often.

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Welcome to issue 35 of Broke in Korea. You may have noticed that I skipped issue 34, but that became the first issue of Broke in Edmonton, a zine full of mostly nonoriginal content that was intended more for my hometown, which I distributed on my last trip home. I had planned to release this one around Halloween, but just couldn't be bothered, and didn't really want to create more commentary on the disaster. It's being put out now, in time for Christmas, but also for a book fair run by Liquid Arts Network down in Busan. Sorry though, on Busan content in this issue – maybe next.

This issue feels a bit more foreignness than usual, with only one interview done bilingually in Korean. A lot of the interviews are dragged from my day job at the newspaper, covering notable Broke-worthy things such as interesting touring bands, and various other characters in the scene. Some are a little less fresh, such as my Geeks interview about their reunion.

I had originally planned to include an interview with Victor of Things We Say/Look Beyond, who had been requesting crowdfunding support for his daughter Eileen, who required a liver transplant. However, in light of her improved condition, I decided all that's necessary would be an update, seen at the bottom of the next page.

I have continued to use BrokeGPT, but only in minor ways. It was used in translating the Tom Tom Tom interview, and you'll note that I left in one critical error in its translation, in which it claims Sharon had been drummer for Jaurim, when the actual band name wasn't that similar (and has no official translation). Bad AI! Now whenever I see Star Wars characters being dismissive of droids, I no longer feel bad for the robots.

This issue has a couple additional contributors, one on 18Fevres' UK tour courtesy of Matt Feves (which means beans in French), and another from Tim, who lived in Busan in the mid-1990s and was in a couple bands. In a way, I sort of don't see a large difference in the contribution between someone writing something for me, and someone answering interview questions from me. But sometimes a distinction has to be made.

I decided to bite my tongue and include a statement from a Russian seeking asylum in Korea. This is despite the fact he's in an RAC band, and his Instagram account is littered with messages like "White Lives Matter" and a cartoon in 2020 depicting

violence against a SHARP. In my interview with him, he makes a few statements I strongly disagree with. He claims racism isn't hatred of difference but rather love of similarity – which still isn't admirable, and inevitably leads to hatred and violence.

We also disagree on the meaning of RAC, which stands for "Rock Against Communism" but has a lot more going on in that name. I have addressed this in this zine before (Broke 2, way back in 2005), but there are those who think (or perpetuate the lie) that RAC is an anti-communist movement. That is such a deep lie that it is hard to determine if a person claiming it is being dishonest, or genuinely believes it, especially after it has passed through so many cultural, linguistic, and geographic filters. The "communism" it is against can have a floating definition, a common red-scare tactic, and whenever an RAC person throws around accusations of communism, it's necessary to verify whether it really is communist. It may mean multiculturalism, immigration, or refugees, or supportive policies or advocates. RAC was started in the late 1970s by white nationalists with close ties with the National Front, in response to the Rock Against Racism movement. So it might be most easily expressed that RAC is "Rock Against Rock Against Racism."

"Those who use the term RAC often do so as a way to camouflage the true nature of the racist music, because the term does not make explicit the music's racist nature," the ADL says on its website.

As I mentioned in Broke 33, I've decided I'm more pro-refugee than anti-neo-Nazi. So we should be accommodating for him, when the alternative supports sending him to his possible death.

At the same time, we should also think of that incident in which the Canadian Parliament gave a standing ovation to a Ukrainian who fought against Russian Soviets in World War II, only for everyone to take a moment and go, "Oh right...he was a Nazi." So, for the sake of everyone else appearing in or associated with this zine, I can't endorse his beliefs or music, even as I call for compassion, and show you his words for you to see for yourself, and include a related crossword clue or two.

So there you have it. Broke 35 looks like it's shaping up to be one for the ages.

Jon Twitch

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Live music venue blues



People, including one passed-out old dude, hang out in front of Skunk Sindang as well as an active restaurant plus whatever's upstairs, during the wedding show, 20230603.

Jon Twitch

Venues come and go. We shouldn't get our hopes up too high when a new one opens, and we shouldn't get too attached to them. But we do anyway.

Skunk Sindang

Last issue, I reported on the opening of Skunk Sindang, the fourth Skunk venue to exist over the past 25 or so years.

...And it's done.

It hasn't closed, but it's no longer allowed to have live music.

What happened? I've heard a few stories that all point to possible factors, but the cause is obvious.

Apparently other tenants in the building, which may have included the building owner, didn't like sharing the space with a live music venue. There are a few likely contributing reasons why:

- they could hear the sound of live music
- they could feel vibrations through the building itself
- during shows, too many unseemly-looking people out front.

Apparently Skunk Sindang is no longer allowed to have shows, but it's staying open as just a bar.

Ask yourself why it's not okay for there to be a cultural event such as live music, but it's okay for people to go there and get shitfaced.

Speaking of shit, a contributing factor may have been a show on 20230603, in which an ajeosshi partied too hard and shit himself,

and apparently left a trail on the way outside to where he passed out on the curb.

You Kill Bong

This place was a pretty cool venue, basically a comfortably retro house perched atop a run-down old Euljiro building. You go to the top of the stairs, a door slides open, and suddenly you find yourself in what appears to be a living room. It's a good event space, with multiple interior rooms, some of which open onto an outside area – plus you can take another narrow staircase up to the very top, where they sometimes held rooftop shows.

It's in a fairly industrial area that's pretty quiet at night, so why not have live music on the roof? Who would it hurt?

All I know is what was published in Platform Magazine's website, that apparently a "pair of disgruntled cops" responded to a noise complaint, despite the venue "being located fairly far from any residential areas."

Platform concluded, "a space set up for people to detach from the harsh realities of the world was tainted."

I don't know if the venue will see fit to continue having any kind of live performances, but if they got this noise complaint, I don't see what other precautions they could take in the future.

Club Victim

Yes, there's a new live music venue, and it's owned by a well-known, long-term member of the scene, behind the label Victim

Records. And it's in Hongdae, and they have a liquor licence, and I've heard the washrooms are clean.

I haven't been yet, but I'm hoping to go there soon. I'm worried the other shoe will drop, and they will get one noise complaint by someone else in the building or somewhere else around the alley. It's in a fairly small, quiet alley, and this is a distinct possibility. Yes I know it's Hongdae and it's become a zoo, but the slight throb of live music coming up from a basement does seem to disturb residents far more than speakers set up outside blaring canned music.

So good luck, Victim, and I hope you don't fall victim to some of the other fates claiming live music venues.

Space The Beatles

There's another decent club in Itaewon now, with the rather generic name Space The Beatles. It's located technically in



VideoRose performs on the roof of You Kill Bong, 20230624.

Hannam-dong, on the north side of Itaewon-no near Hangangjin Station.

Unfortunately it got off on the wrong foot, opening during Halloween weekend 2022. It's a nice basement venue, and it's spacious with a nice bar and a good stage with proper equipment. I went to one show featuring tribute band Jabroni, and found there was no cover, but the cheapest drink at the bar was 10,000 won. It would be nice if this place could turn into a good place for shows, but at that kind of price I can't see it happening.

Bedrock/Togul

Earlier in the summer, there was a lot of speculation on the space formerly known as Bedrock, which had once been a live music venue along HBC's main road Sinheung-ro. I heard all sorts of stuff, like that all the stage stuff and equipment was removed when Bedrock closed.

Then one night I found the door leading to the entrance unlocked, and I was able to get in and learn from posters displayed inside the place was now called Togul. Sometimes, it held live music events. It turned out to be in the hands of Jun Bum-sun, frontman of the Yangbans, and was used as a private space for them for practice? Private shows? Not sure.

A few of us were racing to learn more about this new Togul space, but Jamie at Platform got there first, managing to get it included as one of the venues for Block Party 2023. And it was certainly a very nice place.

But from what I hear, the building owner doesn't want it



The secret entrance to Togul is opened temporarily for Block Party, 20231007.

turning into a live music venue, so it is unable to be registered as a business that can hold shows and sell alcohol. Might I remind everyone that the Korean punk scene knows how to survive at shows held in venues where alcohol is unavailable – we just buy from the nearest convenience store. But yeah, that's not at all a sustainable business model and I already know how that ends.

It does sound like Togul might be able to host special events and participate in festivals like Block Party or, if it ever resumes, HBC Fest. So I hope we can continue pushing it down the slippery slope toward eventually someday again becoming a live music venue. I also am aware that that will probably result in a pretty big sacrifice to all related stakeholders, ie the people who currently control the space and building and those getting money from those who do.

The Studio HBC

I've heard that HBC's last remaining proper venue will go through some reorganising in the hope of revitalising itself and following through with the mission of turning HBC into the next Hongdae. I'm not really allowed to talk about any of it yet, but further details are expected to be hammered out in January.

What I think the area needs most is an ecosystem of venues. Two would be nice, as it was back when Phillies Basement was still open. Three could work, but four would definitely be too much.

Update on Eileen

From Victor:

Eileen's surgery went successful and she's recovering well. Thanks so much to everyone who helped.

However she's not able to go to school because she's on the early stage of her liver transplant.

She has to take immunosuppressants

every day and she needs to be monitored.

She attends online school classes instead and spends most of the time with her mom. Eileen's mom quit her job to take care of Eileen fulltime.

We don't need any further fundraising. We're slowly getting back to our normal life.



Victor poses with his wife Tamiko, and their daughter Eileen, who underwent a liver transplant with tissue from her mother. Courtesy of Victor Ha



Support Victor's family by visiting linktr.ee/lookbynd

Tom Tom n Tom

Jon Twitch

When I heard Sharon was going to be in a new band, I was interested. When I heard Boo-il was also coming back in out of the cold, that got my attention further. They probably wanted to talk more about their new band, Tom Tom Tom, and hear more from the lead member, Hyun who's a relative newcomer, but I was initially more interested in asking the two older members about stuff from the past. In the end, I learned more about the band, including that its previous lineup included Ahn Decay (Bad Idols, Fuckers Everywhere).

I'll be looking forward to their first show, scheduled for 20231229 as part of the ...Whatever That Means split album release.

Broke: 밴드 이름이 Tom Tom Tom인 이유는 무엇인가요? First, an easy question: why is the band named Tom Tom Tom?

Hyun: 고르던 이름중에 가장 심플했고 한명씩 tom을 말으면 원가 될 것 같았다

Hyun: Among the names we were considering, the simplest one seemed like if each of us took on the "Tom" part, it could become something.

Sharon: 큰 의미는 없다. 공연 포스터에 써야 할 이름이 필요했기 때문에 여러가지 제안 중 세 명 모두가 딱히 반대하지 않는 이름으로 했다.

Sharon: It doesn't have much meaning. We needed a name to put on the gig poster, so we went with one that none of us particularly objected to among several suggestions.

Broke: 이 밴드는 어떻게 시작되었나요? How did this band get started?

Hyun: 내가 밴드를 하고싶어 공연장을 굴러먹던 중

잘 곳이 없어 샤론 누나와 남편이 대용이형 집에서 잔 적이 있는데 그 때 친해졌고 샤론 누나도 밴드를 하고싶어 하는 상황이어서 나에게 제안을 해주었다.

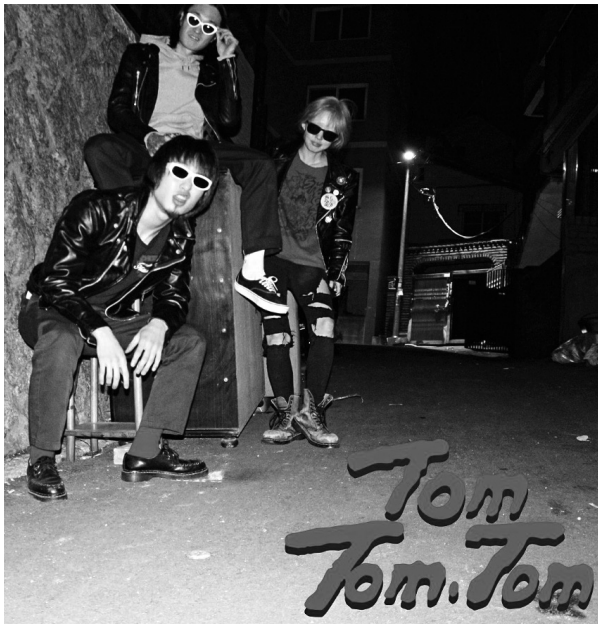
그렇게 샤론 누나와 같이 하게 되었고 원래 보컬을 하고 있던 안도국 형의 소개로 부일이 형과도 같이 하게 되었다.

Hyun: While I was eager to start a band and searching for venues, I ended up crashing at Sharon's place along with her husband, Daewoong (Edaeng). We became friends during those times, and since Sharon also wanted to start a band, she proposed the idea to me. That's how I ended up joining forces with Sharon. Through an introduction by Ahn Decay, who was the original vocalist, I also joined forces with Boo-il.

Broke: 밴드가 연주할 음악의 유형을 설명해주실 수 있나요? Can you describe the type of music the band will be playing?

Sharon: 음악 스타일에 대해서는 임현이 설명해 줄 것이다. 그의 인간성, 음악성, 예술성을 100% 좋아하고 따라가고 있기 때문이다.

부일 역시 열정이 넘치기 때문에 세 명이 계속해 나가면서 어떤 것들이 나올지 멤버로



Here's a group photo borrowed from their IG page.

서도 기대가 되고 설레인다. 그러던 듣는 사람들이 듣고 싶은 방식으로 장르를 결정하지 않을까?

Sharon: I think Hyun will explain the musical style. I admire and follow his personality, musicality, and artistry 100 percent. Because Boo-il is also full of passion, I, as a member, am excited and looking forward to what will come out as the three of us continue. So, wouldn't listeners naturally determine the genre they want to hear?

Hyun: 약간의 개러지화 약간의 로큰롤의 뉘앙스가 있는 펑크라고 하고싶다.

Hyun: I want to call it punk with a hint of garage and a touch of rock 'n' roll vibes.

Broke: 샤론과 부일은 은퇴에서 되돌아오도록 설득한 과정이 어땠나요? 그들이 이전에 속해 있었던 밴드에 대해 많이 아시나요? How did you convince Sharon and Boo-il to come out of retirement? Do you know much about the bands they used to be in?

Hyun: 은퇴에서 돌아오도록 설득한 적이 없다! 같이 밴드를 하게 된 이후에 어떤 밴드들에 있었는지 알게 되었고 요즘도 그 밴드들의 노래를 간혹 듣는다.

Hyun: I've never persuaded anyone to come out of retirement! After we started the band together, I got to know about the bands they were in before. Occasionally, I still listen to songs from those bands even now.

Broke: 왜 이렇게 오랫동안 펑크 씬에서 멀어져 있었나요? Why have you been away from the punk scene for so long?

Boo-il: 저는 오랫동안 여러 펑크밴드에서 연주를 해 왔었고 어느 순간 제가 하는일에 대해 회의감이 들었습니다.

그랬다 떠나기로 마음 먹었고 그 당시에는 두 번 다시 돌아오지 않겠다는 마음이었습니

다. Boo-il: I had been playing in various punk bands for a long

time, and at some point, I started feeling disillusioned about what I was doing. So, I decided to leave, and at that time, I was determined not to come back again.

Sharon: 인간관계가 원래 워낙 좁아서 딱히 씬에서 빠져있다고 표시가 나는 입장도 아니었다고 생각한다.

한국에 왔다갔다 하긴 했지만 2008년부터 2021년말까지 일본과 호주에 있었기 때문에 마포구에 올 일도 없었다.

외국에서 외노자의 삶을 살아가고 있다가 코로나로 인한 강제 귀국 후에는 약 2년 반동안 우울증에 빠져서 가족들에게 민폐를 끼쳤다.

밴드를 하고 싶다는 생각도 별로 들지 않았었다.

Sharon: I don't think I was really marked as being out of the scene because human connections were always limited. Although I traveled back and forth to Korea, I wasn't in Mapo-gu since 2008 until the end of 2021 because I was in Japan and Australia. Living the life of a foreign worker abroad, after being forcibly repatriated due to COVID, I fell into depression for about two and a half years and caused trouble for my family. I hadn't really thought about wanting to be in a band either.

Broke: 지금 왜 컴백을 하고 새 밴드에 합류하려고 하나요? Why are you having this comeback and starting a new band now?

Sharon: 신당동에 와인바를 차리고 근처에 우연히 스킵크가 오픈하게 되면서 밴드 친구들을 만날 기회가 많이 생겼다.

럼킵스 예원이랑 갤럭시 친구들, 스틸페이스 친구들 등등이 고맙게도 일부러 찾아와 주었고

특히 포고어택 병선이가 열정적으로 밴드를 하고 있는 것을 보고 나도 두근두근 거린 것 같다.

같이 밴드 하고 싶은 사람도 찾았고 안 할 이유가 없었다.

23년 6월 현이와 나만 있었던 밴드에 이매이 베이스를 도와주다가 미국에서 귀

국한 안도국(bad idols, fuckers everywhere)을 보컬로 불렀는데

여러가지 사정으로 함께 못하게 되었다. 도국이 덕분에 이 밴드의 존재를 알게 된 부일이 후에 베이스 멤버로 합류하게 되었다.

Sharon: I set up a wine bar in Sindang-dong, and when Skunk opened nearby by chance, I had a lot of opportunities to meet my bandmates. Thanks to Yeawon of Rumkicks, Galaxy friends, Steel Face friends, and others who intentionally came to see me. Especially, watching Byungsun playing in Pogo Attack made my heart race. I found people I wanted to be in a band with, and there was no reason not to.

On June 23, Hyun and I were the only ones in the band, and Edaeng helped out on bass, with vocals by Ahn Decay (Bad Idols, Fuckers Everywhere) before returning to the U.S. Due to various circumstances, we couldn't continue together. Thanks to Decay, Boo-il got to know about this band through him, and later joined as the bassist.

Boo-il: 제가 은퇴나 컴백을 이야기 할 정도의 사람은 아니라고 생각합니다.

어쨌든 이것은 조금 긴 이야기인데 사실 저는 펑크락을 비롯한 락 음악이 더 이상 설 자리가 없다고 생각 했었습니다.

몇해 전 '인도네시아'로 여행을 가게 되었고 그곳엔 엄청난 음악 시장이 있다는 것을 알게 되었습니다.

또한 여전히 락 음악이 주류를 이루고 있었고 펑크락 밴드나 메탈 밴드가 아침 방송에 출연 해 소리를 지르며 라이브를 하는 모습을 보고 큰 충격을 받았습니다.

그 때 펑크를 비롯한 락음악이 다시 피어날 수 있다는 것을 직감했고 나에게 다시 한번 기회가 온다면 제대로 해 보고 싶다는 생각이 들었습니다.

그리고 여행방으로 시도를 해 봤지만 제대로 되지 않던 중 23년 8월경 '중국 광저우'로 여행을 가게 되었는데 그곳의 호텔에서 불의의 사고로 제법 크게 다치게 되는 일이 있었습니다.

병원에서 수술을 받게 된 후 모든 일정이 꼬여 호텔에서만 생활 하고 있던 중 '안도국(Bad Idols)'으로부터 어떤 밴드의 데모 음원을 받게 되었습니다.

그리고 그 음원을 듣는 순간 제가 담을 쌓아왔던 모든 것의 경계가 허물어지며 다시 한번 도전 해 보고 싶다는 생각이 강렬하게 들었습니다.

Boo-il: I don't consider myself someone who discusses retirement or comebacks. Anyway, it's a bit of a long story, but truthfully, I once thought that rock music, including punk rock, had no more place to thrive. A few years ago, I traveled to Indonesia and discovered a tremendous music market there. I witnessed rock music still dominating, with punk rock and metal bands appearing on morning broadcasts, performing live and shouting loudly – a sight that shocked me. At that

moment, I had a gut feeling that rock music, including punk, could have a resurgence, and if I were given another chance, I wanted to give it a proper shot. I tried various avenues, but things didn't quite work out. Then, around August, I traveled to Guangzhou, China, and had a significant accident at the hotel due to an unexpected incident. After undergoing surgery at the hospital, my plans were disrupted, and I found myself confined to the hotel. During that time, while living in seclusion, I received a demo recording of a band from Ahn Decay (Bad Idols). As soon as I listened to that recording, all the barriers I had built up broke down, and I felt a strong desire to challenge myself once again.

Broke: How did you get into punk music? What was your first show? 펑크 음악에 어떻게 관심을 갖게 되셨나요? 첫 공연은 어떤 곳에서였나요?

Hyun: 원래 혼자 듣고만 있다가 코로나 집합 금지때에 락스의 공연을 처음 보러 갔었다. 공연은 없는 roller's bar라는 곳이었다. 첫 공연을 보고 난 이후에 그 라이브의 분위기와 매력에 빠졌고 다른 밴드들에 대해서도 알게되고 듣기 시작했고 나도 하고싶다는 생각이 들어 기타를 배웠다

Hyun: Originally I would just listen alone, but during the COVID gathering restrictions, I went to see Rux's performance for the first time. It was at a place called Roller's Bar, which no longer exists. After that first show, I was hooked by the madness and charm of live music. I started learning about other bands, began listening to them, and felt the urge to learn the guitar myself.

Boo-il: 저는 지방의 중소도시 출신으로 당시 이런 도시의 가장 큰 문제점은 문화적으로 굉장히 낙후 되어있다는 점입니다.

10대 시절 주류 문화에는 전혀 관심이 없던 저에게 동네에 친한 친구가 'RANCID'의 '...And Out Come The Wolves' 앨범을 빌려 주었습니다.

첫 트랙부터 엄청난 감명을 받아 그 뒤로 펑크 음악에 굉장히 심취하게 되었습니다.

후에 악기를 연습하여 친구들과 펑크 밴드를 결성하였고 데모 테이프를 만들어 보냈는데 운이 좋게 레이블에 합류하게 되어 이대의 'Queen'이라는 클럽에서 첫 공연을 하게 되었습니다.

Boo-il: I come from a small city in the provinces, and at that time, the biggest issue with cities like mine was the cultural backwardness. As a teenager, I had no interest in mainstream culture until a close friend lent me Rancid's album "...And Out Come The Wolves." I was deeply impressed from the first track and became heavily immersed in punk music afterward. I later practiced instruments and formed a punk band with friends. We created a demo tape and fortunately joined a label, leading to our first performance at a club called Queen in Itaewon.

Sharon: I got into punk when I

Follow @tomtomtom_band on IG

was high school. I was practicing the drums by myself and got into school orchestra. Jonghyun from Galaxy express invited me to play the drums for his band. We were living at the same region called Chun-cheon. He introduced me offsprings, greendays, nirvana, etc.

Every weekend we went to see drug geeks. And after graduate from highschool, we came to Seoul.

Broke: did that band have a name?

Sharon: I remember as Button, or drain... I forgot.

Broke: Hyun, is this your first band? 이 밴드가 여러분의 첫 번째 밴드인가요?

Hyun: 친구들과도 했었지만 이렇게 곡을 만들어 공연장에서 공연하는 제대로 된 밴드는 처음이다

Hyun: I've made music with friends before, but this is the first time I've been part of a proper band creating songs and performing on stage.

Broke: Sharon, what does your daughter think of punk?

Sharon: 어떤 장르를 특히 좋아하지 않거나 좋아한다고 보다 개인적 취향에 맞는 노래는 좋아하는 것 같다.

It's a fest에서 크라잉넛을 가장 좋아했다.

자기 취향에 맞는 밴드가 있으면 공연을 즐겁게 보기도 하지만 아저씨 아줌마 노는 데 뭐가 재있을까. 어린이 컨텐츠도 없는데.

Sharon: She doesn't particularly favor or dislike any specific genre; rather, she seems to enjoy songs that align with her personal taste. She especially enjoyed Crying Nut at It's A Fest. While she does enjoy watching performances by bands that match her preferences, she wonders what's enjoyable about the older folks dancing there. There's no content for kids either.



Sharon and her daughter watch Edaeng playing a Pogo Attack set at the last Rollers Bar show, 20230225.

Broke: When did Couch end? Are you still in contact with your former bandmates from Couch?

Sharon: 기억력이 매우 안 좋은 편인데 특히 날짜는 취약이다. 그런데 끝났나?나는 모르겠는데. 멤버들과는 언제나 그랬던 것처럼 연락은 아주 가끔한다.

Sharon: I have a really poor memory, especially when it comes to dates – they just slip my mind. But is it over? I'm not sure. Contact with the band members is very occasional, just like it has always been.

Broke: Looking back, what do you think of Couch? What kind of legacy did Couch leave?

Sharon: 나는 음악을 들을 때 편식하는데 카우치를 할 때 카우치만 들었다. 제일 좋아하는 밴드.

지금도 그 습관이 남아 톱툰툰의 노래만 듣고 있다. 제일 좋아하는 밴드가 될 예정.

Sharon: When I listen to music, I tend to be picky. When I was in Couch, I only listened to Couch. They're my favorite band. Even now, that habit remains, and

I'm only listening to Tom Tom Tom's songs. They're on track to becoming my favorite band.

Broke: Sharon, can you remind me, were you in any other bands? Please mention 무념무상아가리 걸레쌍판개판.

Sharon: 멤버라고 생각했던 펑크밴드는 자립소녀단, 카우치 정도인것 같다.

드럼을 도왔던 밴드는 제로스쿼드(일본),캣탄 풋보이즈, 초크슬래머,마스터베이션 등등이 기억난다. 이름들이 어마어마하다.

무념무상아가리걸레쌍판개판 이 밴드는 내가 했었다는 걸 오래할한테 듣고 깜짝 놀랐다. 나는 깜짝 놀랄 정도로 기억력이 나쁘다.

Sharon: I think the punk bands I would be considered a "member" would be Jaurim (bad BrokeGPT! she did not say Jaurim) and Couch to some extent. Bands I helped with drums that I remember include 00 Squad (Japan), Captain Bootbois, Choke Slammer, Masturbation, and more. The names are many. I was surprised when

Oh Laewal mentioned a band called "Mumyeonmusangagari Ggeollesangpan Gaepan." My memory is so bad that I was surprised to hear that I was part of that band.

Broke: Boo-il, I know you were in Rux, Suck Stuff, and Skasucks. Were there any others? Rux, Suck Stuff, Skasucks 이외에 다른 밴드도 있었나요?

Boo-il: 'South Park' 라는 밴드와 'TA-rocks' 라는 밴드가 있었으며 '버닝해븐(Burning Hepburn)'과 '왓에버댓민즈(...Whatever That Means)'에서 연주를 도와 준 적이 있습니다.

Boo-il: There were bands named South Park and TA-rocks, and I've assisted in performances with Burning Hepburn and ...Whatever That Means.

Broke: I've always been curious about South Park. I've heard the songs on the Christmas Punk compilations. Who was in South Park? And what do you remember about those Christmas Punk albums? 부일씨, 항상 궁금했는데 사우스 파크 밴드에 대해서 말이죠. 크리스마스 펑크 컴필레이션에서 그들의 노래를 들어봤어요. 사우스 파크에 누가 있었나요? 그리고 그 크리스마스 펑크 앨범들에 대해 어떤 기억이 있나요?

Boo-il: 사우스 파크 밴드는 문화 사기단 컴필레이션 음반에 내 인생 중치지 않았다 라는 노래로 참여 했습니다.

이화음(기타,보컬),이기범(드럼)과 함께 했습니다.

그리 길게 활동 하진 않았으며 모두 제가 살던 지방 도시의 선후배 관계였습니다.

원래 베이스 멤버가 탈퇴하면서 제가 합류 하게 되었습니다.

문사단 밴드로써 몇번의 공연 후 쿠조 레코드가 사라지게 되면서 사우스 파크도 해체 하게 되었습니다.

이기범(드럼)과는 그 이후 연

락이 끊어져 소식을 알 수 없으며 이화음(기타,보컬)과는 현재까지 관계를 이어 오고 있습니다.

그는 밴드 해체 후에 기타 공부를 위해 네덜란드로 유학을 떠났었으며 그곳에서 재즈 기타로 석사 학위를 취득 했습니다.

Boo-il: South Park participated in the Munsadan compilation album with the song "Did Not End My Life." I was with Lee Hwa-eum (guitar, vocals) and Lee Gi-beom (drums). Our activities didn't last long, and all of us were in a senior-junior relationship in the provincial city where I lived. I joined when the original bassist left the band. After a few performances as a Munsadan band, when Cujo Records disappeared, South Park disbanded. I lost contact with Lee Gi-beom afterward, and I haven't heard from him since. However, I've maintained my relationship with Lee Hwa-eum up to the present. After the band disbanded, he went to the Netherlands to study guitar and obtained a master's degree in jazz guitar there.

Broke: What do you think of how Hongdae has changed over the years? 지난 몇 년 동안 홍대가 어떻게 변했다고 생각하시나요?

Sharon: 잘 기억가고 있다고 생각. 다들 각자의 방식으로 멋있다고 생각한다.

Sharon: I think it's maturing well. I believe everyone is cool in their own way.

Boo-il: 제가 알고 있던 홍대의 모습에서 많이 멀어진 것지만 계속 발전 해 나가는 중이라고 생각합니다.

여전히 젊은 에너지가 넘치며 여전히 창의적인 장소라는 것에는 변함이 없습니다.

Boo-il: I think it's deviating quite a bit from the Hongdae I knew, but I believe it's still evolving. It's still filled with youthful energy and remains a place of creativity.

서울에서 제일 좋아하는 동네가 어디입니까? What's your favourite neighbourhood of Seoul?

I have a soft spot for the areas around 건대입구 (Konkuk University) because it was my first neighborhood in Korea and I still have a lot of my favorite restaurants there. I've been going to the same 양꼬치 place for 10 years. Coincidentally it's also where the studio is we record at and we love that place and the engineer that runs it. Just good vibes all around.

Malli-dong/old undeveloped Ahyeon.

그걸 못 찾아서 아주 고민중이다. '제일'이라는 말이 붙으면 모든게 어려워진다.

I'm really struggling to find that. Once you add the word "best," everything becomes harder.

Hapjeong's cool. It's close to where I live and has lots of rehearsal studios and places to hang out.

서울에서 가장 좋아하는 동네는 요즘은 신당이 좋다. 그쪽에 살고있는 친구들도 많고 그 주변 동네도 재밌는게 많다.

These days, my favourite neighborhood in Seoul is Sindang. I have a lot of friends living there, and the surrounding areas are also quite enjoyable.

Used to really like Mullae for photos and the venue formerly known as Alternate [Mun]/Space Moon/GBN. Since GBN shut there's not been any reason to visit unfortunately. Shout out to the film joints near Chungmuro, still a nice area for a stroll too.

Mangwon

favorite Mexican restaurant is Crispy Pork Town and it's in Itaewon, so I would have to say Itaewon!

서림동 or 도곡동.

Seorim-dong or Dogok-dong. I like Hapjeong. Lots of cool bars and places to listen to music.

지금 제가 거주하고 있는 '용산구 후암동'을 가장 좋아합니다. 서울의 이곳저곳에서 거주 해 봤지만 지금 살고 있는 '후암동'이 위치, 교통, 서비스 적인 측면 뿐만 아니라 월세도 합리적입니다. 또한 남산 공원도 걸어서 5분 이내이기 때문에 저같이 반려동물과 함께 생활 하시는 분들이라면 엄청난 혜택을 누릴 수 있습니다. 다만 주차 공간이 협소하다는 단점이 있는데 저는 전용 주차장이 있는 건물에 거주하기 때문에 상관 없습니다.

I love Huam-dong in Yongsan-gu, where I currently reside. Although I've lived in various parts of Seoul, Huam-dong stands out due to its location, transportation convenience, service facilities, and reasonable rent. Additionally, being within a 5-minute walk of Namsan Park is a significant benefit for pet owners like me. The only downside is the limited parking spaces, but it doesn't bother me as I live in a building with a dedicated parking lot.

종로. 서울의 심장.
Jongno. Seoul's heart.

I don't live in Seoul, but I'd like to go to 연남동 (Yeonnam), 성수동 (Seongsu), 압구정 (Apgujeong), 이태원 (Itaewon) and these days 신당 (Sindang) is my new add on my list.

There are so many amazing parts of Seoul, but if I had to pick a favorite, it might be the bustling neighborhood of Hongdae. It's vibrant, filled with creativity, and has an energetic atmosphere thanks to the street performances, live music, trendy shops, and the youthful vibe from the nearby universities. Plus, the street food scene there is absolutely incredible! Have you been to Seoul before?

What's that supposed to mean?

Jon Twitch

...Whatever That Means has released a split album with Japanese skate-punk band the Skippers, who titled their contributions "Bulgogi" and "Kimuchi" (the Japanese attempt at pronunciation of kimchi). While we wait excitedly for an interview with that band about whatever that means, we have Jeff from ...Whatever That Means to answer some other questions about this collaboration, as well as about touring Japan.

Broke: What's the concept behind this album?

Jeff: We went to Japan back in April. We played 3 shows in 3 days in Kobe and Osaka. Soon after getting back to Korea, we decided to go back to Japan one more time this year, and we wanted to visit the same area again. It's fun going to new spots on tour, but we figured it'd be more beneficial to go back to the same cities just so people would actually remember us from our last tour. It was a chance to start building a bit of a fan base and grow out from there. When we decided to go back, I wanted to have some new music to release. We knew we wouldn't have time to do a full album on our own, so we thought it would be fun to do a split with a band from Osaka or Kobe. Split albums are always fun, and this would give us even more of a connection with the area we were going back to.

Broke: How did you get Skippers involved? Can you introduce them a little?

Jeff: At our first show in Kobe, Jagger, the lead singer of The Skippers, was one of the openers. He was doing a solo acoustic tour, and just as a solo artist in the middle of a punk show, he had so much energy, and it was obvious that the audience loved him. We talked a bunch and found out his main band, The Skippers, were from Osaka and had been playing there for over 20 years. They are a real OG skatepunk band from the area, so when we decided to do a split, they were the first band we called. I mean, why not swing for the fences and ask one of the biggest local bands? We were super happy, and kinda surprised, when they immediately said yes.

Broke: How was your latest Japan tour? Feel free to say as much as you want.

Jeff: It was awesome. Going back to the same cities and releasing with a beloved local band was definitely the right move. The crowds were obviously bigger this time. A lot of that was because of The Skippers and the fact that they and our other promoter were able to put together great lineups for each show. But there was obviously more love for ...Whatever That Means this time around. There were people at each show up front singing along with our songs. It's always wild when you're so far from home



...Whatever That Means play at The Studio HBC for Block Party, 20231008.

and people you've never met have not only heard your music but know the words well enough to sing along.

Playing with The Skippers was also really inspiring and motivating for us. Those guys have great stage presence and really know how to work the crowd. Everyone knows their songs in Kobe and Osaka, so going on stage after that, you really have to bring your A-game.

It was also really fun to connect with some friends we made on the last tour. We played with The Dahlia on the last tour and they were on the Saturday show for this tour. And there's a Japanese band called The Means. We didn't get to play with them last time, but they came to hang out at the show back in April and ended up on the bill this time. So it was fun going out with them and hanging out again after the shows. That's really the best part of hitting up the same spots on multiple tours. It's like a family reunion with all the punk rockers you've met over the years.

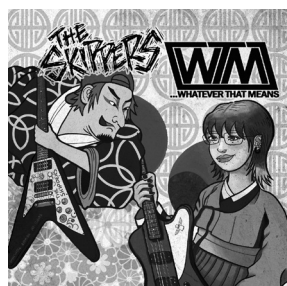
Broke: What are the best and worst things about touring Japan?

Jeff: Touring in Japan is so much fun. The scene is just so much bigger over there. There

are so many bands and so many fans. There are shows every day of the week. Our promoters have treated us so well and taken such good care of us when we're there. We really couldn't ask for anything more.

The only difficult part about touring in Japan is the language barrier. The use of English is a lot less widespread in Japan than it is in Korea. Bialy is completely fluent in Korean. My Korean isn't where it should be after living here for so long, but I'm definitely conversational. So after working hard to be able to get by here in Korea, it can be kinda frustrating not being able to talk to people as easily as we can in Korea. It reminds me of my first days in Korea when I couldn't even read a menu. Trash is the only one in the band who is able to converse in Japanese on her own, so we rely on her a lot. Last time we were there, we used a wifi egg, but it was too unreliable, so this time Bialy and I decided to just pay for roaming so that we could have access to translation apps all the time. It made a huge difference.

Broke: Can you tell me what "Her n I" is about?



The cover of the Skippers/...Whatever That Means split

Jeff: When you read the lyrics of "Her n I" the meaning seems pretty obvious. We've all had those friends who just completely disappear and make their whole life about whoever the new person is they're dating. Relationships like that tend to end up in a really negative co-dependent kind of place. So maybe that's what it's about. Or maybe our lead guitarist had a hernia earlier this year, and we thought it'd be funny to see people singing along with a song they thought was about a bad relationship but was really about part of his intestine popping through a tear in his abdomen. Who really knows?

...Whatever That Means Discography

Albums and Singles

- The Newest Hope (2010)
- Sounds from the Explosion (2011)
- Honggu Goes To Prison – cover song EP (2013)
- Sixty-Eight, Twenty-Two (2014)
- Asian Prodigy single – Chinkees cover (2014)
- Revolving Doors (2020)
- Singles 2009-2023 (2023)

Splits

- Blowing Minds & Melting Faces – split with Burn Burn Burn (2016)
- Split EP with The Skippers (Japan) (2023)

Compilations

- Them and Us: Korea's Punks at Club Spot (2011)
- Them and Us 2: Korea's Punks at Thunderhorse Studios (2016)
- Them and Us 3: Korea's Punks at Binary Studios (2022)

Here are four questions Skippers guitarist/vocalist Jagger answered.

Broke: Why did you agree to team up with ...Whatever That Means on this album?

JAGGER: Last time ...Whatever That Means came to Japan, I performed with them as a solo act. We became close, and when I was thinking about wanting to go to Korea, Gomi-chan invited me. Let's release a split and do a tour in Japan and Korea, they said. There's no reason to refuse this opportunity at this timing, and I felt excited about it.

Broke: Why did you decide to contribute songs about Korean food? Is it just about food, or is it teasing ...Whatever That Means?

JAGGER: Both songs were made when I was young. Although I hadn't performed them for years, there had been requests from the audience, so I got the chance to re-record and release them. There isn't a deep meaning in the content. I just want people to listen and enjoy it with an empty mind.

Broke: I think both of ...Whatever That Means' songs on the album are at least partially about getting older. Do you feel like you're getting too old, running out of energy, too old for the scene? Or would you rather say fuck that and be punks until you're in your old age?

JAGGER: I try not to feel like I'm getting old. Looks and body might deteriorate, but I want to continue with a fresh mindset without forgetting my initial enthusiasm. I think age doesn't matter when it comes to pushing forward.

Broke: Have you been to Korea before? What are you looking forward to?

JAGGER: It's the first time for all the band members, so we're excited. Of course, we're looking forward to experiencing the food and culture, but the biggest excitement is reuniting with everyone from ...Whatever That Means whom we love. I'm full of gratitude and anticipation for the chance they've given us to dive into the scene they've built.



A banana goes crowdsurfing during ...Whatever That Means at IT'S A FEST! 20230617.

Listen to the new album at whateverthatmeans.bandcamp.com

Geeking out

Jon Twitch

Way back in June, I did an interview with Kiseok of the Geeks about the band resuming shows. Junsung had been headhunted by a Chinese company that probably wanted to steal trade secrets from Korea, and was stuck there during the pandemic. Anyway, it sounds like he returned. They say for good, so hopefully that holds up.

Broke: How are the Geeks able to reunite now?

Kiseok: Just to clarify we never broke up. I think the word "comeback" insinuated that we all went our separate ways. It was just an unique situation associated with Covid-19. One of our guitarists Jun had been living in China until recently so he had not been able to travel outside China.

Last show we played was in Tokyo, back in February 2020. Right at the beginning of the covid. Jun had to cancel our japan tour last minute due to covid.... Our last show with him was in 2019 and london with Shelter. We just expect the covid situation to last this long... We have been just waiting and waiting and now he is back here. Now we can play again.

Broke: Are the Geeks back for good?

Kiseok: Yeap. We will continue find opportunities to play. Prior to Covid, we had such an amazing plan to tour overseas such as south east asia and the US and more. Now is the time to put it back on track! We will be releasing a tour video from our European/UK tour back in 2019 and are scheduled to play again on July 19th with an american punk band called Anxious. After that, we will be focused on touring internationally again!

Broke: Why is it called the Geeks? Do you, or did you then, identify yourself as a geek?

Kiseok: Yes. We truly believed we were geeks when growing up. We were punks and hc kids but we also knew that we weren't typical punks... In that sense, we identified us as outcasts such as misfits, geeks and nerds. Jun was the creator of the name!

Broke: The Geeks started in 1999, so needless to say, you've seen some shit. When did you get into punk/hardcore?

Kiseok: We all naturally went into punk & HC through grunge bands and "neo-punk" era. They were huge when we were growing up. After being exposed to bigger bands, we all went into the rabbit hole. My first punk show was at the club Drug. I think it was no brain, crying nut and weeper. I don't remember it clearly though. It was just life-changing experience,

Broke: From what I understand, live shows weren't quite legal until sometime in 1999, and then regulations were changed to give them legal status. What changed from before to after? Were you part of any shows?



Junsung and Kiseok have a moment during a show at Yogiga, 20140604.

Kiseok: Oh really? I had no idea. First time hearing about it... Interesting. We just played! It was an era where "indie" music exploded... Every show was full of passionate young kids. I think it was one of those incidents where things happen first and legal stuff comes later on.

Broke: Please list all bands you've been in over the years.

Kiseok: The Geeks. Things We Say. Cross-geeks. DFTS. My Ki-mical romance. Kiseok Seo. Positive knockout

Broke: Over the last 20+ years, what have been your favourite venues to play?

Kiseok: Emm... honest I don't have any favorite venues. I think it is just me :) I only have favorite shows. For the past few years, GBN and SHARP have been our favorite spots to play.

Broke: Have the Geeks had any lineup changes over the years, or has it always been pretty well the same people? How has it been so stable?

Kiseok: This current line-up is about more than 15 years. Gene was our latest edition. Before Young our drummer. Me, Jun and Bong we have been together the whole time. But the fact that we've been together with the same line-up for such a long time makes me feel super proud. We just believe in us and what it means to us. The collective vision and mission. The older we've gotten, More important/significant this has been. It was tough many times to find time to do stuff but we always found ways. It was one of few constants in our life, which was reflected as the title of our latest album.

Broke: I found an early demo of 13Steps, and was amazed how Dokyo13 sounded almost like you, before his voice got hoarse. Your own voice is very screechy, and kind of not too far off from your regular voice. Tell me more about your vocal style. Has it changed over the decades?

Kiseok: Yes. I would say it's changed dramatically. It has been also with the progression of our sound.

When I was super young, it was higher pitch and as you said screechy. During a recording session, the engineer even said I sound like AC/DC., which shows how unique my voice was back then. But I wanted to change a direction while I was doing a military serviced. More of clean voice. More youth crew sound :)

I think my first real attempt was "Live Free" we recorded for the compilation "We are the Punx in Korea" (Skunk Label 2003).

With "still not in this alone," it's been a bit more stronger, heavier and aggressive than before.

Broke: Can you tell me about being straight-edge? Have you ever tried drinking alcohol or experienced being drunk? Do dumb questions about not drinking bother you?

Kiseok: I think it was 2nd grade of high school when I learned about straight edge and decided to live this lifestyle. No, no alcohol or tobacco in my life. No urge or desire. On personal level, it was a true victory of me trying to live my life the way I wanted to live. No compromise! No it doesn't bother me at all. It is just my personal choice. In a lot of occasions, they are just jokes. I love silly jokes :) No need to take them personally.

Broke: What's the state of straight-edge hardcore in Korea these days?

Kiseok: I don't think there's any specific straight edge hc scene. One beautiful hc scene straight edge or not.

Broke: I understand you were one of the first Korean underground bands, if not the first, to tour the US.

Kiseok: I believe we were the first hardcore/punk band that ever toured places like Japan, US & Canada and a lot of south east asian countries, dating back to 2000~2005. All of them were done in a way where we toured with local bands. No Korean crowd, no other Korean bands. Just random 5 Korean dudes along on those tours,

representing Korea.. This means that we were the only Korean band/people on the bills and we were the first "Korean band" they saw live to a lot of kids in those shows.

Broke: How did your 2001 split with In My Pain come into being? Were the Korean and Japanese scenes close back then?

Kiseok: We were just building relationships back then. GMC record back then really helped us out with Japanese hardcore scene. The split was byproduct of that. Most importantly, our first internal tour was in Tokyo in 2000. It was mind blowing experience. We made so many friends.... We really looked up to those bands and have built strong friendships with the Japanese hardcore scene.

Broke: The Geeks are likely responsible for -- or involved with or witnessed -- a lot of historic firsts for the local scene. Can you mention some of them?

Kiseok: To name a few... first straight edge, first youthcrew, first band that started touring internationally. First band that signed with us record label when no one was doing that... We also brought a lot of big international hardcore bands for the first time as well. The biggest achievements are A) We were the first Korean hardcore / punk bands to a lot of international kids B) A lot of kids in Asia have told us that they felt proud of us going out to the world and representing Asia. I feel super humble and proud at the same time!

Broke: In the old days, you were on GMC Records, a name that hasn't aged well among younger punks these days. What are your thoughts on GMC's controversial legacy? How do you feel about this big ugly schism that's existed for so long?

Kiseok: Early GMC Records really helped pave the way. It was super awesome moment. Diverse movement. Then we met up with people who were more passionate about similar things we were doing. Although I am aware of all the controversy but, with Kyuseok from Townhall Records and a lot of great bands such as Things We Say, we were just focused on building our own scene.

Broke: You were also closely associated with Townhall Records. What did they do differently from labels before?

Kiseok: As mentioned, it was much more closer relationship. Much tighter. So much so, it reached the level of brotherhood. The music wise, it was more of old school & modern hardcore focused. From there, we started to build our scene. A lot of new bands and new kids that truly believed in the music and the message of the hardcore. Most importantly though, the culture we built was just unique... Value-driven scene that takes care of each other.

Broke: You played "K-Pop

Night Out" at SXSW 2013, headlined by f(x) (also featuring 3rd Line Butterfly, Galaxy Express, Guckkasten Jung Cha-shik, Lowdown 30, Yi Sung Yol, No Brain, Goonam, and Windy City). I remember hearing at the time that KOCCA et al were flabbergasted that you guys, as well as Galaxy Express, generated a handsome amount of local buzz, compared to the K-pop groups that they'd been pushing hard. What are your memories of participating in SXSW and being part of the hallyu machine? What's your own relationship to K-pop and hallyu? Do you think it's well-meaning, wrong-headed, etc?

Kiseok: Yes. We are the Geeks, a K-pop band! It was a unique experience. The whole story was that there was a process for us to be selected as a "cast." There was a big music conference full of international people and the part of the deal was that we played a free show during it and then we pitched "our own band" to heads of big festivals in a meeting room. Yes I did put together a 30 mins presentation to representatives of SXSW and glastonbury and told an authentic story of who we were and how we wanted to play at those festivals. SXSW choose us. Looking back I just couldn't believe it.

It was super unique experience. 1) f(x) was huge. Not only we saw them in person but also we shared the stage with them in a super small venue. They were amazing 2) limousine & VIP experience. And kids loved us at a pop-show! 3) The whole SXSW experience was mind blowing. Set-up... 100% music immersion... 4) We got to play a lot of local hardcore shows before and during SXSW. We got to play boston, philly, texas and san Antonio with amazing bands. We played with Power Trip in their home town. Surreal. Every thing about it was just awesome.

I personally love K-pop and what it did to promote "Korea." It may sound strange... When we were the one pushing for Korean representation, no one knew and cared. We had to fight for awareness and win the audience. We somehow felt like we made a small contribution :) To a lot of hardcore kids back then, we believed we were equivalent of BTS and Blackpink or jising park.

Now it is totally different. Surreal. When we were touring, people didn't even know what Korea was. Now everyone knows and wants to learn more about Korea.

Musically it is a combination of every genre you can think of. Performance wise, it is even something unheard of. Dance, singing and visual. Some songs are super good. They get me pumped. I listen to them frequently. Now, we can't wait to tour again to ride this K-movement again! :)

Follow @thegeekshc on IG and buy their music at orcd.co/thegeeks-theconstant

Go tell it on the Mountain

Jon Twitch

I decided at somewhat the last minute to include Seth Mountain in this zine, after previously excluding him due to him being folk, not punk. But he's certainly played his fair share of punk shows, including Tom's farewell show (see opposite page). And since he joined me in the Host Tunnel and ended up being this issue's cover model, it seemed like he deserved a place in this issue of *Broke*.

He just released a seven-song album for Christmas, so this interview touches mainly on that.

Broke: Why did you decide to make a Christmas album?

Seth: I've always been pretty into Christmas music, especially the older, sacred and somber songs. But I also love and have been influenced a lot by folk and punk Christmas-related music, such as "Fairytale of New York" (rip Shane MacGowan), "The Sky" by Derroll Adams, Sufjan Stevens' collection, the Christmas catalogue of Bill Mallonee, and older Christmas recordings by heroes like Pete Seeger, Paul Robeson and John Jacob Niles. And I've made and shared a handful of Christmas or Christmas-related songs of my own – original and traditional – over the years and included them on albums.

Actually, this is not my first Christmas album. About 15 years ago, another musician friend and I were broke and living on our buddy's farm. We made a wild, lo-fi, somber but also silly album, mostly meant to be a sort of gift for friends and family. To my joy, it actually was pretty well-loved, but a few years later for personal reasons we agreed not to share it publicly anymore. Since then I have wanted to make another Christmas album, but time and circumstances never allowed it.

As a folk musician, it feels a bit like a rite of passage to make a collection of personalized takes on Christmas songs, and whether you are religious or not, having a Christmas repertoire almost comes with the territory. Of course, Christmas as a holiday – Christmas music especially – is a huge and living culture or folk tradition in and of itself, wide and diverse enough these days that artists can pull from it to reflect just about anything they (or their agencies) want, which makes for both profound and challenging art as well as lots and lots of trash. I'm glad it's thriving, either way. It's one of the few still-living traditions that artists around the world can experience and share as their own, while connecting to a massive collective heritage.

Broke: What was going through your head when you put it together?

Seth: In some ways this album is a continuation of the "songs that sing me" personal anthology of folk songs that I started recording a year or so ago with Joe Kim, before he opened



Seth Mountain performs in Phillies during Block Party, 20231007.

Baekusaeng.

The songs are intentionally raw-sounding, and minimalist in style, like the anthology recordings, but a little more mixed and arranged. And like the recordings in the first two volumes of that project, these are all songs that speak deeply to me personally. Actually, I consider "Hush" to be more of a regular album about or inspired by Christmas, than a proper Christmas album.

The songs I selected, and the way I decided to record them, had a lot to do with themes that have been especially important to me the past couple of years but I haven't found a way to express deeply – especially about the relationships between pain and love, silence and wisdom, hope, and the reality or absence of the sacred in most of our modern techno-consumerist dystopia. I wanted to let the songs and their history speak through me, not just for those listening but because I think I really needed the encouragement of their messages and historical spirits too.

I've also been processing a lot about the way that mothers, children, animals and the Earth have all become, as I see it, increasingly objectified, disregarded, or even hated as inconvenient or dirty in popular tech-driven development culture these days (yes, I mean leftist and progressive circles too). When I read the responses to the Itaewon Tragedy and watch one town or market after another get bulldozed around me to make way for shiny new (and "green") high-rises, as people increasingly move their waking life and various identities out of the physical world and into the "untact" virtual frontier, where activism and art remain hot so long as they work well for algorithms, I feel more and more

that the world I find myself in is barely human, and we are mostly united not in culture, but in our alienation, addiction to tech mediums, and collective hatred of Earth (Mother Nature), non-tech tradition, mothers, children, and many other "types" that slow down efficiency and progress. These feelings over the past year definitely played a big part in the decision to make this album too.

Broke: A lot of these are pretty obscure Christmas songs. I think "Good King Wenceslas" is the best-known, and it's more for St. Stephen's Day, not Christmas. How did you choose these?

Seth: Yes, all but one are traditionals, but from fairly scattered times and places. "Mary Had a Baby" and "Poor Little Jesus" were originally Black spirituals, and they have definite messages of liberation and freedom that are heavy, painful and hopeful. "Cradle Song" uses a Sacred Harp melody and

lyrics from Isaac Watts, the 18th-century "Father of English Hymnody." "Friendly Beasts" has roots that go back all the way to 12th-century France. "I Heard The Bells" is a poem by Longfellow written as a lament over the US Civil War, shortly after his wife had died and his son gone missing in battle. "Good King Wenceslas" pulls from a legend about a 10th-century Bohemian king and uses a 13th-century Easter melody first published in a Finnish songbook in the 1500s. And "Hush" is a mix of two poems from an Irish missionary in India named Amy Carmichael (similar in some ways to Mother Theresa, but focused on rescuing young girls from religious control and sexual slavery) that I put to music almost two decades ago.

I chose this batch mainly because they are what I was loving most this fall and winter. And taken together, they make a very brooding, diverse bundle

that I think underscores the pain, hope, longing, and radical, revolutionary, anti-authoritarian, peace message that used to be central to Christmas but is now mostly drowned out by jingly commercialism.

Nothing against Santa, to clarify! I love the old fellow, and it can't be easy for him, these days, dealing with such a massive and prolonged character assassination, any more than it is for revolutionary peasant baby Jesus.

I mean, things have gotten pretty out of control, haven't they?

Broke: Can you tell me why you chose "Hush" as the album name, and where the cover photo comes from?

Seth: Yeah, that picture is now 40 years old! And it's my mom and me. I don't know who took it, but it's one of my most precious possessions. And it seemed fitting. I was originally going to name the album "Mother and Child" but decided on "Hush" instead.

The title holds a lot of layers, especially with that picture and in relation to the bundle of songs.

Hush can be a gentle and warm or caustic and cold word for "be quiet." It can be about silence that comes with a sense of awe and suspense, as in "a hush fell over the crowd." You have to hush first if you want to hear something carefully, but we are surrounded by noise. It's the first line of track 1, the title track's name, and it connects with the refrains of "Silent Night," and not being able to hear "peace on Earth" because of the cannons of war (track 2), as well as the hushed and lovely scene in "The Friendly Beasts" of the doves cooing in the rafters above baby Jesus. It's a word that makes me feel warm and reminds me of motherly love, but also it signals a time to be silent and serious.

Broke: How do you feel about the state of Christmas as such a



Seth Mountain plucks the banjo in the underground bowels of Seoul, 20231209.

Listen at sethmartinandthemenders.bandcamp.com or @sethmountain on YouTube

hyper-commercialised holiday? For that matter, how do you feel about organised Christianity these days?

Seth: It is what it is. Anything today's consumer culture touches it perverts and distorts. But like I was saying, Christmas is still a living, folk tradition, so the anarchist in me loves when mass un-culture tries to consume and appropriate the Christmas season. It's swallowing a Trojan horse with a belly full of revolutionary messages and beautiful, profound art that can charge some human dirt and love and hope back into an un-culture of death!

You don't have to be religious. I love voluntary religion, and believe in "God" – because I love freedom and culture and hold life to be sacred – but I have been fighting organized religion, especially organized Christianity, for most of my adult life. I still am opposed to any organized religion to the extent that it violently dictates what others can and can't do or believe, against their will. And that includes the biggest and scariest Organized Religion of them all these days: The Cult of Technological Progress, with its faith in certainty, its intolerance of all "undeveloped" or still-too-human peoples and cultures, and its worship of AI, comfort, infantilization, and tech-surveillance-enforced morality as the answer to all our problems.

Here's what I sent out with the online release: "These are not exactly easy listening, feel-good jingles. But neither is the Christmas story. It is a wonderful but also scary, awe-inspiring tale – a story that 'comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable' – and that is one reason it continues to change the world."

This little album attempts to honor the darker, heavier, and deeper substance of Christmas: the somber but liberating message the carols hold of the God of Love incarnate, born as a poor boy to refugee parents under brutal colonization; ignored or sought out for destruction by the powers that were; hailed, embraced, adored, and comforted by Angel troops, lowly shepherds, barnyard animals and wise "foreigners" – not to mention Nature herself.

Joy to the World!

Thanks to all mothers!

Whew, moving on....

Broke: Oh yeah, I should ask you about Baekusaeng Makgeolli Brewhouse, and why you put on so many events there.

Seth: It's small. It's in a traditional market in my neighborhood of 6 years. It's Korean homebrew, made to perfection by a dear friend throwing his whole life into the work with a passion. The cultural roots, the market, the craft – all joyous things to me, signs of life and healthy culture breaking through the concrete. And Joe Kim, well, he's one of my best friends in Korea, and a damn fine music production man as well as a maker of the most delicious brews I've tasted in Korea.

Folk music and homemade makgeolli, in a traditional market – can you find a better mix than that?

Rage Against the Smith

Jon Twitch

The guy we probably all know as Tom Raging Smith was about to leave the country with his family in August, but he decided to put together a show at Skunk Sindang before moving away. I interviewed him for an article in the paper.

Broke: When did you come to Korea? What brought you here?

Tom: I first came to South Korea in 2006. I'd developed an interest in the democratization struggle while studying as an undergrad back home. Learning about the people's resistance movements and in particular the Gwangju Uprising really interested me. As it so happened, a few people I knew at the time had done teaching gigs here and they had also had great experiences. So I tried to come here straight after graduating uni, but as I couldn't land a job in Seoul I ended up moving to London for a couple of years instead, and then came here after that.

Broke: It seems like an obvious choice to put on a farewell show. But for the hell of it, why did you decide to?

Tom: A couple of friends put the idea in my head to put on a show. A mutual friend of ours had an awesome send off at a rock show at Club FF in Hongdae a couple of years ago, so the idea came up. But instead of putting the emphasis on the farewell part, we decided to do it for a good cause.

I haven't organized a show since 2013 or 2014 when I put on fundraisers for the anti-base community in Gangjeong and for Palestine Peace and Solidarity, so I'm rusty. But Jonghee of Skunk has been really helpful.

There will be a small after party at the venue for friends who stick around after the bands and I've prepared a little homebrew.

Broke: Do you have any comments about the lineup of bands you ended up with?

Tom: We wanted to ask bands that were behind the cause. Drinking Girls and Boys Choir – who are awesome – just finished a Pride tour, so it was natural to ask them. Deadbuttons have just reformed, so very excited to see what they have prepared. But I've definitely taken some license to invite bands that play the style of music I love like Smoking Goose and Dead Chant. It's a pretty punk line up, but hopefully a bit of something for everyone.

I first approached Jonghee (Jonny Ruckus) to see if Rux could play, but as they are on hiatus I suggested he play a few acoustic songs and he agreed. He's really behind the cause and it should be a unique chance to see some Rux songs stripped down bare.

Seth Mountain is a really talented folk performer who I've known for a long time. He's a really good friend, and we in fact



Tom Raging Smith and his two kids pose at IT'S A FEST! on Hanagae, 20230618.

met at a protest in Seoul circa 2008. We've marched across Jeju singing anti-war songs together. He did charity show for survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery that I helped put on over a decade ago. So he was always going to be on the list. He has said he is preparing something a bit rockier for the evening, so let's see!

Broke: Are you a musician yourself?

Tom: I've jammed a bit here with friends, but nothing serious. Most of my band work now is at home with my two children on plastic instruments.

In high school I played guitar in a pop punk band and then got a little serious about it on vocals with a hardcore band called Discenter that lasted into early uni days. A few experimental metal bands somewhere in between.

In any case, underground music and punk in particular has been a big part of my life since I was 14 or 15 and started going to shows regularly.

Broke: Can you tell me a bit more about the charity aspect of this show? The recipient is an organisation called Marriage for All, right? Why would you, in particular, a man in a perfectly legal marriage, support causes like marriage equality and gender equality that don't affect you directly?

Tom: This is actually a natural extension of the work I had been doing professionally with Amnesty International Korea, where I worked for more than seven years. I've been campaigning for LGBTI rights as an ally as part of my campaign brief since 2017, but outside of this much longer. The LGBTI movement here has been fighting for two decades to improve their situation and has some of the most courageous and

skilled activists out of any social movement here. It has been an absolute privilege to be able to fight alongside with them.

Marriage for All Korea, the organization we are raising money for is doing really important work. They are a coalition of groups fighting for recognition of same-sex marriage as part of the larger struggle for LGBTI rights. With a victory in the High Court in February in which the court recognized a gay man's right to national health insurance through his relationship with his partner and with a bill proposed at the National Assembly to legally recognize same-sex marriage in late May, there is really positive momentum. Realistically, won't be able to raise much, but we want to do what we can.

Broke: You've always been fairly politically active in Korea, from ATEK to Amnesty International. Can you outline a bit more of your political involvement in Korea, and any of the things people should especially know about?

Tom: I wouldn't characterise the majority of the work I've done in South Korea as political, professionally or in a personal capacity. It's been about trying to improve the situation by challenging social and economic inequities and oppression where you see it.

I've worked at Palestine Peace and Solidarity (now BDS Korea) and a number of other social movement organizations like anti-war groups in some capacity over the years.

The most inspiring struggle community I've had the privilege of living in briefly was Gangjeong on Jeju Island before the naval base was completed. It was a vibrant peace community with communal dining space and our daily routine was dedicated to

opposing the base construction.

Broke: Have you ever gotten in trouble for any of your political activities in Korea? It is supposedly illegal for foreigners according to immigration law.

Tom: I'm going to plead the fifth on that.

There is no definition of what constitutes a "political act" under the Immigration Act, so the supposed ban is very unclear. As a permanent resident, I can vote in local elections. I've organized many protests and would usually notify the police as the main organizer and not had any real issues. The way the law is written has a real silencing effect, though. I've had many friends who were not citizens who were terrified to exercise their basic rights to freedom of assembly.

Broke: As I'm sure some internet commenters will inevitably suggest, do you do all these political activities because you hate Korea? Are you some kind of racist colonialist trying to fix Korea?

Tom: I love South Korea. It's my second home, my partner's country, and also the country our children were born in. When you love somewhere, you want to make it better. I think it's as simple as that. This country has one of the most militant labour movements in the world. It has a thriving civil society where disparate groups often rally together for a common cause. I remember marching down the street with a million people in downtown Seoul during the candlelight demonstrations of 2016 and 2017. There was no violence. Everyone looked out for one another. People cleaned up afterwards. It was breathtaking. And that is the South Korea I came to find.

Broke: How would you describe your political outlook?

Tom: It's unhelpful to have a political identity in my line of work. But I can say that I try to live by what I would describe as anarchist tendencies. By that I mean I think it is important to challenge all unjust political, social and economic hierarchies and power structures whenever we can. It also means trying to create the future world we want in the present. To me that is synonymous with the basic concept of human rights.

Broke: Last, why are you planning to leave? Will you ever come back to Korea?

Tom: We're leaving the week after the show! In fact, we have to leave our house the morning after the show, so I'll have to try not to party too hard.

We've planned our move around a school for our eldest child which is located near the beach in a village north of the capital, Wellington. The rest we still have to work out!

We'll be back every couple of years I would imagine to see family and friends.

Between Korea and Denmark

Jon Twitch

Meejah is a Danish post-rock band with Korean adoptee frontwoman, and they came here during the International Korean Adoptee Associations (IKAA) Gathering in July. Mai wanted to distance the tour somewhat from that event, although I found it hard to ignore, and did what I could to walk the right line.

We had a pretty interesting interview, and I saw them play one show, but heard the others went well too.

Broke: Can you explain the band name Meejah? Initially I figured it was just a Korean woman's name.

Mai: Meejah is an alternative spelling of the English word Media. It refers to the artist being a medium – like in the romantic period, where an artist was seen as a channel for the divine inspiration. I like how that meaning connects to the Korean tradition of shamanism. I saw the word in a dictionary once and I liked the visual impression straight away. Later on Korean bands contacted me and told me, that it was a Korean girl name. Like my subconsciousness had lead me to choosing that name – without it being intentional.

Broke: What is cross-generational trauma, and how is it embodied in your music?

Mai: The trauma of identity shift is transformed into a new narrative in the work “Queen of spring”, which is a reconnection to everything I was separated from at birth. It is a cycle of change written over the 8 trigrams in Korean taoism combined with Nordic cultural heritage.

The adoption system is a consequence of the history of Korea in many ways. So when the people who were sent abroad – out of Korea, starts to talk, sing, write loudly about that experience, it points back at things in the Korean society. And then it awakes unprocessed themes, that may have been sought to be forgotten, because they hurt too much to remember for the people involved.

Through Korean adoptees – who bring resources and a different view to the table from outside of the Korean society, it can help articulate things, that are taboo or too painful, because we don't carry the weight of those historical blockages, since we were raised in a different society. Our separation, loss and reflections leads us to the need to rediscover and reassess origin, roots, the loss of language and family attachment and the system we were adopted under. In this meeting, where our inner needs meet the Korean society, the system and our parents generation – new things might form and reappear – that lifts an initial trauma into light. It might create higher levels of confusion, but hopefully also



Meejah performs at ACS, 20230708.

new understandings.

Broke: Could you tell me about your adoptee background? Have you been back since your adoption?

Mai: I have been to Korea two times before. Once on a Summer School at Geumgang University, on a sort of motherland trip. Song Kwon Hee (Leenalchi) and a group of other traditional musicians were teaching us Korean culture classes. I heard the Korean singing style through her voice for the very first time. And it changed my self view as a singer. In the west we learn that East Asian singing is high pitched – and I have a deep mid tone voice.

So when I discovered the singing style through the tone of her voice – I suddenly understood how Korean sounding my voice really is. It was a profound understanding to learn, that the Korean folk song is a song of han pain, struggle, nature, beauty and dignity. Because this is the spectrum of the music of Meejah.

When you travel to Korea as an Adoptee everything feels different to what you are used to, and you are searching all the time for something to grasp onto as “your own.” You hope to find something that resonates with a part of you. This was my first time in Korea – and I was confused and emotionally on edge. It is overwhelming to all of a sudden look like everybody else, since you are not used to that feeling in the West or in Scandinavia but it feels astranging not knowing the language. But as soon as I played

with the Korean musicians I instantly felt at home. Because the language of music is universal.

Broke: Can you tell me about the decision to visit during the International Korean Adoptee Associations Gathering?

Mai: I have been a part of the international community of Korean Adoptees for many years – and the album could not have been formed like this, had I not had a huge community to lean into.

You are a person living your normal life in Denmark – but if you want to explore the Korean and adoptee part of your personality, it really creates a lot of resources, bank of experiences and emotional support to be a part of a bigger community. So yes, I am looking forward to be gathered with many Korean adoptees in Seoul and seeing the Americans, French, Swedes, Australians, Italiens, Dutch, Norwegians and so forth. Some are politically involved, some are artists, some are community holders, some help with family search, and some are journalists, lawyers, film makers, academic researchers ect. Since we are 200.000 people sent out of Korea, it is a great comfort to have people with similar starting points of their lives as yourself.

We are playing five concerts in Seoul and two of them are for the Adoptee community, one with Kaomi Lees podcasts Adapted, that uplifts human rights and adoptee voices, and one at Nodeul Live House during the IKAA Gathering.

Broke: In the last few years, Koreanness has gone from being nearly invisible or othered in pop culture to highly valued. Has this affected how the band is treated/ welcomed anywhere at all?

Mai: We haven't really felt that, since we are not from Korea. In the West we have felt more openness to so called minority stories, rights and experiences in the last couple of years, which includes giving voices to people with other ethnicities and backgrounds, and thereby more curiosity towards what we do.

We have felt though, that since this is our first trip to Korea as a band – it is more easy to get advice, travel tips, language help and general knowledge about Korea, and we have Danish family members and friends who have already been to the country. Just 10 years ago – it was almost only Korean adoptees and business people who had knowledge about Korea. It has been overwhelming to see Korean culture expand all over the world. We have K-pop stores in Copenhagen now and Danish girls have Korean idols hanging on their bedroom walls. So especially for the new generation it is more popular to be Korean looking. Our trip is partly funded by MXD (Music Export Denmark) and I think our hook into the Korean music scene was interesting for them. Since we are not exchanging with the K-pop industry but with the Korean alternative, metal, traditional and indie music scene.

Broke: A lot of people from

Nordic countries have worked in K-pop behind the scenes. But you seem to have been praised by the webzine Korean Indie, and I'm curious how that connection happened. Have you had much contact with Korea's indie/mainstream music scene/ industry?

Mai: We reached out to Korean Indie, since they change their purpose some years ago – so that they also included highlighting bands from the Korean diaspora. And they have been very supportive of our music from the very start. Huge thanks to editor Chris P and his team in San Francisco! They really were some of the first that helped us to believe in the potential of our music.

We have been in contact with Platform Magazine for a while – and they invited us last fall to their Block Party Festival – but our trip needed more planning. We are excited to finally play at their concert evening in Euljiro with Beacon, Tierpark and OHCHILL.

Our second concert ever was a warning up gig for Jambinai in Copenhagen, and we are releasing through Poclanos.

We really like Jambinai because they mix postrock/post-metal and their hardcore background with ethereal, explosive, emotional sounds – and their take on Korean traditional music is groundbreaking. They are like a mirror to us – just like Alex. We have a musical base in genres invented in the North and West – but explore and redefine traditions and inspirations from Eastern music roots. And they do the same but from the opposite movement, from Korean roots – to Western post-genres.

My biggest impression of the Korean underground scene is that it seems like it's buzzing with bands with similar musical references as us. Post-rock, grunge, hardcore/punk, metal and alternative rock. And it feels like – a home outside of your home, everytime you can travel to another part of the world and find musical soulmates. The Korean scene is especially emotional for me to visit, since I can't help thinking – would these people have been my friends and musical colleagues had I not been adopted out of Seoul? So this tour has the potential to – create a kind of circle in my life – and then I even get to bring my Danish bandmembers with me to meet them all. That feels quite wholesome.

Broke: In sort of the inverse from the last question, Koreans' attitudes toward people with Korean blood can be a bit two-faced. Babies continue to be sent overseas at fairly high rates, and within the country there are mixed-race kids who are made to feel unwanted. But sometimes when an ethnic Korean living overseas returns, everyone gets excited (the two main examples

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are French minister Fleur Pellerin and US football star Hines Ward, but we could also add Karen O of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and a few other ethnic Korean musicians). I'm curious what you think about this.

Mai: First of all, I am very excited that new artists from the Korean diaspora are appearing on the international stage, like Yaegi, SASAMI, Japanese Breakfast and Peggy Gou – and we try to extract as much inspiration from their artistic paths as possible. In a Western context I consider it one huge celebration, since Asian representation in music has been very limited. So I am glad to hear, that people from the Korean diaspora are welcomed back to Korea and celebrated for their work.

Regarding Korean nationality, its concept of bloodline and its consequences: As a Korean adoptee you are highly aware, that the whole international adoption system began because mixed children were sent away after the Korean war. That human view, especially to us Korean Adoptees, whose own children most likely will be mixed since we live in American and European nations, is very hard to understand. That is an overwhelmingly grievous fact.

In my family – we are three generations of Caucasians, Koreans and Eurasians – if you look at us from the outside. But to us, who see with our hearts – everybody are just family members. Real persons, with real names and real loving relations. I really hope Korea will grow into a new modernization and integration of human rights where people are treated equally as full members of their own society, regardless of high or low status. Because people bear the emotional consequences as if something is wrong with them – when it's really the human view of the system that needs to change.

Broke: Can you tell me how you linked up with Alex Bosserman?

Mai: I found the work of Alex Bosserman, an American digital artist living in Seoul – and was instantly intrigued. Since it feels like his work is interpreting his Korean experience through art – in an active way. Like a need. That he needs to do so, in order to be – to exist in the Korean context.

The entire Meejah album is trying to integrate the Korean and the Nordic – as a conscious or spiritual way as well. As a need to grasp and be intimate with the concept of – what it means, to have transnational roots. And try to translate and revisit over and over again, what my relationship to Korea and “my koreaness” means to me.

We found it funny, that I also write about the experience of being Korean/Asian looking in Europe – and he tries to grasp what it means to be American/foreign in Korea. So we have the same experience but in opposite worlds. That is why we are collaborating with him on our track “Jing (Thunder 雷).”

Clearing the air



The members of Black Air pose with Katrin holding a clear vinyl copy of "Impending Bloom" plus Ian photobombing outside Mudaeruk, 20230927.

Jon Twitch

Apparently all Austrians know each other. Years ago, Tass lived in Korea. In 2018, he contacted me to say that his friend Apollonya was visiting, and we met a couple times. Then earlier this year, Apollonya contacted me to say her friend Sue was visiting, so I met Sue. (Yes, all these are apparently Austrian names.) After she left, Sue told me her friend in the band Black Air was touring Korea.

So I contacted Black Air and did an email interview for an article about their one show, also mentioning an art project they were involved in here. Turns out their connection to Korea was Katrin, who used to live here and had been one of the people running Space Moon, the predecessor to GBN (she's lucky she got out in time).

Black Air is an entirely instrumental band, inspired by doom, jazz, and post-rock. All answers below were provided by by Marian Waibl, with additions by Stephan Leeb, Florian Karg, and Philipp Seiler.

Broke: Can you explain how this trip to Korea came about? Have you been here before?

BA: Florian Karg (guitar & keyboard) and his girlfriend Katrin have been to Korea before - Katrin lived in Seoul for many years and was well involved in the local music and art scene. This way, we got the very special opportunity to get invited to the art project “Hongcheon Crossing”, where the members of Black Air are working on individual art projects - together with a group of other artists from Europe and Korea. Half of the band have been here before, but for Marian and Philipp Korea is a new and very exciting experience!

Broke: I also would like to know how you got connected with Pakk, and what you think of their music.

BA: Again, it was Florian and Kat who have known Daein and Pakk, former Apollo 18, for a long time. And since we are all here we might as well play a show together! We absolutely love what Pakk do, we think their style is very unique, and we are very much looking forward to sharing the stage with them!

Broke: Can you also talk about this Pink Factory event?

BA: “Hongcheon Crossing” is an art project by Pink Factory, based in Hongcheon. The director is Yong Hae Sook, and the curator is Kim Min-kwan. A group of European and Korean artists has been invited to turn their experience of Hongcheon into individual art projects. The artists are Florian Karg, Jan Gartner, Jeon Suhyun, Johannes Klemen, Kang Youngmean, Katrin Baumgärtner-Middlemis, Lee Eun Kyong, Maksymilian Suwiczak, Marian Waibl, Bae MiJung, Name, and Philipp Seiler. The Exhibition will be held at the Hongcheon art gallery from September 23 to October 22.

Broke: What are you hoping to do while in Korea?

BA: Right, we have quite a lot to do with the art project and the music, but fortunately, we have enough time in between to get to enjoy the beautiful nature sights, the rich culture, and the great food! We are very happy to enjoy the intense experience that Korea provides, and the people here have been very good to us – they have welcomed us with open arms.

Broke: Are you guys unique, or is Austria crawling with doom-

jazz-post-rock bands?

BA: Haha, great question! Actually, the music we play is not very common in Austria. There are some very cool bands that play doom, post-rock, sludge and similar genres. But so far, our style seems to be rather unique – we tried to take our influences of harsh distorted guitar music, and turn it into something lighter and more atmospheric.

Broke: Can you explain the meaning of the band name, Black Air?

BA: Of course, everybody is welcome to make their own interpretations, but for us, the name is special because it is very simple. Black is a pure and quiet non-color, the absence of light, and Air is the element that constantly surrounds us, invisible, this life-giving fuel we constantly breathe.

But there is also a connection to an old Austrian saying, where “Black Air”, translated literally, simply means “night” – the time of quiet, of sleep, and of dreams.

Broke: What does “doom” mean in the context of Black Air?

BA: Doom is, of course, a genre of music that can be traced back to Black Sabbath, a kind of rock music which gives space to the feeling of being crushed by an overwhelming world. So not the typical rock attitude of “I’m riding my motorbike down the highway, and I’m so cool, yeah!”, but rather “The world is really heavy on my shoulders, and all this is an ordeal”.

Within Black Air, we take this feeling of heaviness, but try to turn it into something different, maybe even positive. There can be deliverance in accepting life as it is – not always easy, but still often strangely beautiful.

Broke: Why are you instrumental, no vocals?

*BLACK AIR is
Philipp Seiler - Guitars
Florian Karg - Guitars, Keyboards
Stephan Leeb - Electric Standup Bass
Marian Waibl - Drums*

Album 'Impending Bloom' released in February 2023, on limited transparent vinyl

Recorded and mixed by Werner Thenmayer, Elephant West Studios, Vienna

Mastered by Kassian Troyer, Dubplates & Mastering, Berlin

Cover photo by Laura Pleasants. Backside photo by Julia Weithaler.

BA: Our intention was to let the instruments speak. Vocals and lyrics are a great medium of expression, of course – but they tend to take the spotlight, if you will. When you work without vocals, the sounds and frequencies of the different instruments, the harmonies and disharmonies become the focus of attention. They invite the listener to imagine their own dreamscapes – the songs can be about whatever you wish them to be.

Broke: Do you think your music is influenced by the localities you've experienced, and if so, will visiting a very different place like Korea have an effect on your music?

BA: Liminality is a fascinating concept: There are different explanations and approaches to the phenomenon, but in general, it comes down to the strangeness of emptiness. Without human presence, some places get a ghostly quality, and seem to become passages to another world.

Our music is certainly influenced by some of these strange places that we might have seen in real life, or maybe also in dreams. And of course, the experiences made in Korea will hold a place in our mind, and find their way into our dreams – they will surely turn up in our music in one way or another.

Broke: Can you tell me a bit about the band members' backgrounds, including any notable bands they've been in?

BA: Philipp and Marian are active in the sludge / doom band TarLung, and Marian also plays drums in the heavy psych band Torpedo Torpedo. Stephan played in the sludge band Throes, Florian in the postrock band Pitpony.

Generally, our background is mostly in heavier, louder and more aggressive music, but with Black Air, we wanted to take this background and transform it into something different, more introspective and experimental. It has been a fascinating journey so far, and we are looking forward to going on, to delving even deeper into the mysterious dark night that surrounds us all.

Listen at thisisblackair.bandcamp.com and follow @thisisblackair on IG

Seoul, my northern soul

Jon Twitch

After about three or five times running into each other, Paul AKA DJ Pablo Winchester kept having trouble remembering who I was. Interviewing him probably changed that. He's a DJ specialising in northern soul, a type of music I can appreciate but have always found a little elusive. This interview touched on that sort of issue, and the unique ways how northern soul is consumed.

I've known northern soul DJs in Korea who were around earlier than him, but unlike them he spins vinyl exclusively.

Broke: Sell me on northern soul.

Pablo: Northern soul is amazing music, and is mostly thousands of 1960s uptempo dancey soul records that didn't make the grade with sales/charts, mostly due to market saturation, that were dug up and rediscovered in the 1970s and 1980s by UK DJs. A nationwide scene and network developed in the UK, generally in unglamorous venues such as old dance halls, and is still very active today, with dozens of events all over the country every week. It's not a nostalgia scene though, unlike many vintage music scenes. Because the music was largely unheard at its time of release, it's just considered as a contemporary dance movement, but with older songs, many of which are still being heard for the first time.

The scene was also one of the first times that people would go out and dance to the music and the DJ, and dance alone, rather than just going to a club to try and hook up with a partner - the music is everything. In that sense it was groundbreaking. Dance music scenes today follow the same model, but northern soul was arguably the first. It's called northern soul as these clubs and the scene, despite being almost exclusively American music, developed in the north of England, long after the USA had turned its back on these discs.

Not all northern soul records are from the 60s though. You can still hear that soul vibe threaded through songs made well into the 1970s and 1980s, even the 1990s, which we call 'modern soul', despite those records now being 30 to 40 years old too, and I play quite a lot of the more modern soul songs too, which often go down better in Korea as audiences here find the more modern productions easier on the ear.

An important point about northern soul is that it isn't about any particular artist - the song just has to have the 'right sound'.



Pablo Winchester DJs northern soul at Nude Restaurant in Kobe, Japan, while dressed from at least the waist up. Courtesy of Pablo Winchester

Take a famous singer like Little Richard, who everyone knows as a rock 'n' roll singer from the 1950s. He cut a few soul tracks in the mid-1960s, and some of those songs are very popular on the soul scene, but you wouldn't really associate Little Richard with soul music. Some artists may just have one or two songs that fit the genre, but all of their other songs are something else. More often though, it's obscure labels out of Detroit, Chicago, and all over the States really, who released discs in small numbers, and are largely forgotten about other than by us.

Northern soul attracts lifelong devotees, of which I am one. I don't know what it is about this music, but it just reaches deeper than anything else I've ever heard. I have songs I've known for thirty years that still give me goosebumps when I listen to them again. The songs have an almost magical quality that I never tire of hearing.

Anyone who wants to get into northern soul should come check out our night at The Living Room in HBC, which we do regularly.

The best archive though is actually YouTube, rather than Spotify or whatever. A lot of these discs have never been reissued onto contemporary releases or CDs and have never made into the digital world other than people uploading their old discs onto YouTube. There are thousands of obscure and rare soul songs on there. Check out Brico Maligno's page at [youtube.com/@bricomaligno](https://www.youtube.com/@bricomaligno), or if you want to listen to a DJ set, I recommend Chris Frost at [youtube.com/@georgeblackwell1](https://www.youtube.com/@georgeblackwell1).

Broke: How would you characterise the following for, or at least reactions to, northern soul when you DJ it in Korea?

Pablo: It's usually well liked, and we get a great deal of positive feedback, but it's the same problem when DJing any type of music where you know the people in the room are largely not going to know the songs, or even the genre, you play - you have to choose songs carefully, that have some kind of instant appeal such as a catchy bass-line or hook, and then play them in a coherent order, read the room, see what's working, and carry on. It can be difficult. As with anything, people want something they already know, so breaking down those boundaries can be challenging.

Broke: Where/how do you procure the music you DJ?

Pablo: It has to be vinyl. Northern Soul DJs only DJ on vinyl, and in most cases, price permitting, you should buy the original vinyl, not reissues, but the originals can be very expensive. Northern soul is probably the most expensive vinyl in the world to buy. I've never seen any northern soul for sale in Korea, other than between a couple of DJs I know, so I have to buy it online, which pushes the price up even further, as a \$20 disc can become \$40 or \$50 with postage charges. It's not uncommon for me to spend several hundred dollars on a single disc. Any DJ set of mine, or any decent northern soul DJ set, probably cost several thousand dollars to put together. This means that when I'm buying records, I listen very carefully - as a disc could easily cost me \$300 or more. If you are going to spend that much money on a single song, you had better be sure that you like it, and that you're going to use that song in future sets. Mistakes can be expensive.

Broke: Possibly tied in with

the previous question, are you a vinyl snob? Or does it not matter what format a song is in when you're DJing?

Pablo: As above, it has to be vinyl. It's an unwritten rule in soul circles - original vinyl only. It's not about the medium as such, it's more about the fact the there are some serious DJ-collectors out there who have been DJing and collecting for years. You can't just turn up with a bunch of MP3s on a USB stick you've gathered over the last week and say 'my turn'. It's a vinyl scene, and it always has been.

Broke: How did you take on the name Pablo Winchester? How should I refer to you in the article? I'm totally fine with referring to you only as Pablo Winchester if you like, but you're welcome to explain your alter ego and how your two names are sort of variants of each other.

Pablo: About 2012, I had finished my MA in English teaching, and was beginning to apply for university jobs in Korea. I didn't want my social media names to be the same as my real name because I didn't want prospective employers seeing me drinking in a bar or whatever, so I changed my names on social media to Pablo Winchester. Pablo because it sounds a bit like my real name 'Paul', and Winchester because it sounds a little like my real last name, and some friends called me Winchester as a nickname. Then later I needed a DJ name, and as I already had a ready-made pseudonym, I chose that. And it kinda sounds cool!

Broke: What can you tell me about your background?

Pablo: I'm from Yorkshire in the north of England, and the northern soul scene is from the north of England too, so it feels natural to me to be playing this amazing music, even all the way out here. I came here to teach English, for a year, in 2009. Still here! I started teaching at public schools, which I did for seven years, and now I have been teaching at university for around 8 years.

Broke: Can you give me some history of your DJ experience?

Pablo: In about 2012, I was sitting in a bar with an old friend, bemoaning the quality of music you often heard around Korean bars. My fed-up friend, tired of me complaining, said 'do something about it then!' So I did. He and I went around Hongdae with some flyers and posters we'd made up for the type of night we wanted to do - soul, funk, dancefloor jazz - and got a gig at a place called 'The Lounge', which is no longer

there. We called that night 'Get Funked'. It wasn't exclusively soul. We did that for a year with another guy called Matt Nunez, and the we relocated to a bar in HBC called 'Fix Bar', again, no longer there (maybe I'm a jinx?), and played there every Friday for a year until 2014. Then I took a break from DJing as every Friday for two years takes its toll. Then some friends opened a bar in HBC called Hair of the Dog (still going!) and we did a couple of small gigs there, and then some guys who I didn't know at the time, started an event called 'Seoul City Stomp', a northern soul and reggae event. I knew that I had to be involved in this so I sent them a message, got involved, and have been playing at that event since 2016, at the amazing Living Room in HBC, which is an absolutely brilliant venue, with the most accommodating hosts. They never interfere with what music we play, and have always supported us and also plenty of other local or underground DJs, and artists too - I wish more people would support them at the Living Room. Get yourselves into the Living Room and buy a drink or two!

Broke: While you're at it, do you have any comments on your participation in Block Party?

Pablo: I think, though I'm not sure, that I'll be the only person playing northern soul - so it will be nice to play some of that music to an unsuspecting crowd. Everyone knows what soul music is, but I expect that many won't have heard the discs I will be spinning. New music isn't necessarily new music. Block Party seems like a great idea, and I'm flattered to be asked to play at it, as it's mostly bands and musicians.

Broke: Other than Block Party, where are you DJing these days, and do you have anything else coming up?

Pablo: I still play at Living Room regularly with Seoul City Stomp. I have also recently played three gigs in Thailand which were amazing, and also Japan at the world famous 'Nude Restaurant' northern soul night. They just celebrated their 29th anniversary last month, which I attended, and it was a brilliant night. I've also played at the Shanghai Soul Club in China, the Formosa Soul Club in Taiwan. After Block Party we are doing a Seoul City Stomp at the Living Room with a DJ from Switzerland (Thomas Schlatter) and a DJ from Norway (Joao Luis). It's gonna be great - these two are some of the grooviest collectors and spinners out there.

Visit fb.com/seoulcitystomp or [@seoulcitystomp](https://t.me/seoulcitystomp) on IG

Prepare to die or...

Jon Twitch

I was contacted by Chris, a member of Varim, who was interested in having an article written about the band. They're more of a metal band, and while this is a punk zine, I don't consider metal too distant a musical relative to exclude.

Broke: First of all, what does "Varim" mean?

Chris: It is a word many of my Korean friends don't know either. It is an art term for color gradation and shading.

Like a vignette, the colors fade to black. The name seemed to match the darker elements of the band and the genre.

Broke: How did the band get its start? Especially considering it's said to have formed in 2020, during the pandemic.

Chris: The band was founded by Juhyun Yoon, our band leader, and had a revolving door of members during the pandemic. We have stayed close with most former members and their new bands. It was nice to build a social circle and do something meaningful during the pandemic that the government restrictions could not destroy.

We decided to stay humble, not have a lead singer, and share the vocal duties. All members are encouraged and write or contribute parts. This actually gives the songs a lot of variety. We have slow dirges, groovy and swinging numbers, and a few uptempo numbers.

Also, there were very few bands in Korea with a similar style and mindset so we saw an opening for something different.

Broke: "Die or"...what? What is the song about?

Juhyun: I'd rather die than be with people who are selfish and have filthy desires.

Chris: It is about choosing to distance yourself from degenerates and toxic people.

Broke: Also the song was recorded before in 2020 so



The four members of Varim / Courtesy of Lee Hyun-woo @boiledpic

what's the difference now?

Chris: That's not exactly right. It was first written in 2020 and the song structure has evolved since.

It was recorded in the first half of 2023 in the band's rehearsal space/recording studio.

Broke: What can you tell me about the recording of this album? Taylor says it was "completely self-recorded." Is that true?

Chris: The band recorded all parts, edited, and mixed it by ourselves. We used only our own equipment. All of us are learning the recording process while recording songs. We used zero samples, only real drums and guitar amplifiers. Even the artwork was designed by our drummer, Barend.

Doom Saloon is the name of Juhyun's rehearsal space and recording studio. It is a fully functioning demo studio. Our other bands and friends record and rehearse there as well.

Doom Saloon Records has also released music by Pigeon Grinder and GetBetter.

The only outside contribution was the mastering. We were

able to get Seunghee Kang who has worked with some well-known artists in Korea.

Broke: Korean pop culture has never had more recognition around the world. Has that extended to doom metal, sludge, stoner rock, etc? Has K-pop raised the tide for all of Korea, including Varim?

Chris: No. Zero effect on us. Speaking just for myself, I just want to have fun with Varim. Being able to play on stage in Itaewon or Hongdae kept us motivated to write better songs and improve.

Most Korean rock, metal, and punk rock bands I know receive more recognition internationally than in Korea. Through the internet, they can be more successful abroad than here.

For example, look at our friends in the band 18 Fevers. They don't get any love from large festivals in Korea, yet they just completed a short tour in England including the Rebellion Festival.

Europe and Japan have loads of fans of our genre even

though there are relatively few in Korea. Eventually playing a club in Japan would be a long-term goal for us.

There are some other bands with foreigners in Korea who have a related sound: Peju, Reasco, Insestrul Lust, Radio Stone Age, etc. I hope they also start to get some recognition here, too.

Broke: What does "doom" mean to you?

Chris: This genre is very broad and with several variations: Doom, Stoner Rock, Desert Rock, Road Rock, Fuzz Rock, Sludge

In general, it means going back to the source, Black Sabbath and 70's rock, and not trying to catch current trends. Thanks to the band Kyuss, from which Queens of the Stone Age sprang, this style was re-introduced to the world in a more fun and energetic way.

It is a genre that embraces a Lo-fi sound. The fuzzy guitars play big, caveman riffs. It is often slow or groovy music.

Visit linktr.ee/varim

Other bands of Varim members

Juhyun-

Currently: Pigeon Grinder, Green Frog

Formerly: Lustrouble

Jose - Teardrop (leader and songwriter)

Barend - Green Frog

Chris-

Currently: The Rogue Warriors

Formerly: Foreign Object

Compared to other forms of hard rock or metal it has more of a punk rock-like attitude and DIY aesthetic. And of course, the lyrics often focus on dark subject matter.

Broke: How well is metal music received in Korea?

Chris: There are a lot of people who love punk, metal, and rock music in Korea. However, there are zero expectations of being accepted by large numbers of people here. Unless a K-pop production company decides to try and manufacture some hard rock groups, it will just stay underground.

About Jose Kim: He really is a veteran of the Korean metal scene. He is really well connected due to his band history, his friendships, and through his music instrument shop, SOUNDGEN. He leads his own band TEARDROP.

When Jose came on as lead guitarist in Varim, he was able to come to the arrangement of Die Or and make it feel like a completed song.

He is the one that connects us to the Korean scene since many "foreigner bands" don't get many of the opportunities Korean bands do.

Broke: What are the future plans for Varim?

Chris: In honor of the release of the song, we have a special show planned at Club Bender in Hongdae on August 19th with the band Vampire Hotel. We would like to welcome more foreigners living in Korea to the show. From there, we will continue recording and writing songs. We expect to release more singles or an EP before the end of the year.



Report from the Rebellion

Matt Feves

18Fevers spent almost two weeks in the UK on a short tour that culminated in 4 days partying in the luxurious (for the 1960s) resort city of Blackpool at the largest punk festival in the UK: Rebellion Festival. Before that we criss-crossed England and played in four other cities, getting our feet wet in this whole international touring thing all the cool bands are doing. Here is our report with incriminating stories removed to protect the guilty.

London

The band members trickled into Europe over the course of a week, with Christmas arriving a week earlier, YuHee and Matt a few days later, and Garik the day before the tour was to kick off.

The first night YuHee and Matt met up with Christmas they witnessed a SWAT team SUV drive onto the sidewalk as they were walking into a pub. The police had assault weapons drawn and jumped on a guy, wrestling him to the ground. Apparently he had two guns in his waistband. Nice! Sounds like the tour is starting!

The first show was in a seedy pub in South London called the Bird's Nest full of character and characters. With Jamaican food being cooked outside, the band got to start mingling and putting down pints with fans that actually knew who they were, a nice change from Korea where virtually nobody knows 18Fevers.

Fellow Korean band Rumkicks were joining from their thunder run through Europe but somehow got stuck coming through customs. Luckily they made it to the show to much fanfare and a densely packed pub with no room for Matt to do his ridiculous antics. We would meet fans that night that we would see throughout the tour, so it was a fantastic start.

Notable point: This was when the "Rumkicks Effect" became evident. People fucking LOVE Rumkicks in the UK.

Brighton

While the weather in London had been excellent and frankly beautiful most of the time, pulling into Brighton was a different story. The colorful pub/venue The Prince Albert popped from the gray rainy Brighton weather. They even had a real Banksy! Wow, fancy! Brighton itself was a pretty cool seaside town and The Prince Albert was an excellent venue with kick-ass sound. Charlie Harper from the UK Subs was even in attendance and chatted with the bands. The show was another sellout like London and they even opened up a few more tickets to cram more asses into seats (there was no seating) thus continuing the "Rumkicks Effect." 18Fevers crushed it, jumped around like idiots, were tight as fuck, and downed copious amounts of alcohol and fish and chips.

Notable point: At 7am the



Garik, Matt, Christmas, and YuHee of 18Fevers pose in front of a Rebellion Festival display at the festival in Blackpool. Courtesy of 18Fevers

following morning, YuHee was drying her socks with a hairdryer and set off the hotel fire alarm much to the delight of everyone else.

Birmingham

As soon as we got the fuck out of Brighton the weather was nice again, quite mad innit? We were heading to Birmingham, home of Black Sabbath, and lucky enough for Garik our hotel was across from a large grocery store so he could stock up on chips and dip which he was apparently subsisting on throughout the tour.

The Birmingham show was fucking SICK! It was a Monday and the place was packed, sold the FUCK out! Another one! Once again it was a rad pub/venue combo. 18Fevers went on after a cool trans hardcore band called Transistr that fucking slayed and then ruled the pit when 18Fevers were dominating. The energy at this show was ridiculous and 18Fevers had multiple circle pits going. Fuck yes Birmingham! Such a great show.

Notable point: Garik hoarding many pizzas that were given to the two touring bands. Like, way too much for us to eat but he hoarded them in his room like a dragon.

Liverpool

It's Livahpewl, love! Pretty rad city with another sell-out crowd. We met a lot of rad people here like Cantina Turner and The Pawns from LA that would also be playing at Rebellion and become fixtures in our hangout sessions. The sound sucked in Liverpool but 18Fevers didn't care, we blasted through our set, climbed stuff, disassembled the drumset, and played one of the tightest, craziest sets of our life. That night we all drank our faces off and would need the day off in Liverpool to harness our Qi for Rebellion Festival that was looming ahead. But yeah we also partied pretty late on our day off too. Only one person talked about the Beatles when we were there.

Notable point: The seagulls in Liverpool are big, beefy birds. Like they have biceps and everything.



YuHee and Garik of 18Fevers pose with the Dummy Toys from China at Rebellion Festival in Blackpool. Courtesy of 18Fevers

Rebellion Festival 2023 Blackpool Day 1

We rolled into Blackpool and ran into soon-to-be new besties Dummy Toys from Qingdao, China. Amazing band, go listen to them right now. We got our cool all-access bracelets, stood in line next to Dick from Subhumans, and started taking in the Rebellion Vibes. Our first day was all about press so we had to do interviews and photoshoots and then get our bearings on the festival. That day we got to see Teenage Bottlerocket, UK Subs, Cock Sparrer, The Meffs, and many others. We had to play the next night so we were antsy, nervous, tired, excited, and sore so we didn't party that much.

Day 2

This was the big day: 18Fevers

were going on at 7:15pm. Don't fuck this up! The day itself was kind of a blur and as the countdown began our nervousness started to fade. We wouldn't have been invited to play if we couldn't do this. We hit the stage and looked out at a mass of people; the room was almost full just at our soundcheck. We hit all of our cues, we were tight, active, and working the crowd. The Arena room kept filling up throughout our set which gave us more energy. A bass was thrown into the air, YuHee made a human-sized heart to the crowd, Christmas's voice was powerful and pristine, Garik was an angry octopus pounding out technical beats. We fucking KILLED it. During the last song "Just A Nipple," Christmas tore off her shirt to prove that male nipples

and female nipples shouldn't be treated differently. We took photos with fans, sold merch, and rode a marvelous high until 7am the next day. Oh and we got to watch Henry Rollins talk about punk rock for two hours.

Day 3

This was Rumkicks' big day. They were booked to play the biggest stage at 2pm so 18Fevers got up and got our hungover asses to the ballroom to support our friends.

The Rumkicks Effect was amplified to ridiculous levels as the Empress Ballroom was flooded with people as they were soundchecking. Looking around you could see people singing along to the soundcheck songs. By the time they started the room had 3,000 or more people packed in watching. It was an incredible sight to see and we were pretty stoked for them. Yeawon stopped in the middle of "Drinking Everyday" to serve soju to the front row. Rumkicks smashed it.

We would spend the rest of the day and night watching friends' bands like Chub from Brighton and partying backstage with whoever we could find. This was one of the highlights of Rebellion, rubbing elbows backstage with legends and talking shop with all the musicians.

Day 4

Our odyssey was coming to an end and we were both sad and worn out so we made the most of the last day watching the Pawns, Knuckleheadz, DRI, Voodoo Glow Skulls, and the highlight of the festival BOB VYLAN who was amazing and wound up the old conservative punks a bit. The last day was all about relationships and making connections backstage with bands from all over the world. Every band treated us as equals and we ended up making so many great connections on the final day.

The big takeaway of the tour for us was that Korean bands need to get out to places in Europe and America where this subculture exists as an actual culture and a way of life. Go show off your talent and ability to people that appreciate it. The Korean music industry is not built to appreciate what we do and what we stand for so tell them to fuck off and go overseas.



The average age of the crowd watching 18Fevers at Rebellion Festival was a little high. Courtesy of 18Fevers

Underground international rock 부산 1996-98

Tim
Tacoma, Washington
November 24, 2023
Sent from my iPhone

My name is Tim, I moved to 부산 in July 1995 to teach English at 새암학원 in 해운대구, and later at 안락중학교. I am from the Seattle, Washington area, and after graduating college I built Lib Tech and Gnu snowboards at the factory in Seattle, and played bass trombone in a community jazz band.

In 1996 I joined a blues band as a drummer with two American guitarists/singers, and a Korean bass player. I was their third or fourth drummer, and we called this version of the band Whiskey Belly. The only live music clubs were near 부산대학교, notably a jazz club called Monk. There was also a smaller Wild West theme bar whose name I can't remember that hosted bands, but did not have a stage. Later an underground rock club called Shiva also hosted live bands. Whiskey Belly's leaders were two American friends, one from California and one from Oregon, who met at a private school in Switzerland. The three members I played with were exceptional musicians, and I was replaced after quite a number of gigs with the group.

Another local international band that everyone admired was Cricket Power led by a guitarist/singer from Oregon/Washington, with a popular Korean bass player U-J, and a Canadian drummer whose home band became quite popular after he left 부산 and returned to Toronto?

That band's drummer and bassist became the first rhythm section for a new group I co-formed called Mondo Pepper. My partner was Marc Beland from Montreal, Canada, an extremely talented singer, guitarist, composer, and arranger. Mondo Pepper also consisted of an American violinist/fiddle player from the East Coast, a female Korean singer who moved the crowd every show with our cover of Cranberries "Zombie." Mondo Pepper played World Music, including funk, rock, Latin, Soukous music from Africa, rap, and Celtic and other fusions of sound. We were joined by rapper/singer/percussionist/bassist Garry Imes from Maryland. In Mondo Pepper I sang, and played rhythm guitar, bass, trombone, percussion, and drums. We played the three clubs in 부산, and travelled to 대구, 울산, and 거제도 for gigs. For the latter, Samsung flew us to the island home of their shipbuilding factory by corporate helicopter to play in their community performance hall. Our warm-up act was a Korean engineer pianist accompanying an Italian engineer flutist. Mondo Pepper played at the PNU music festival on the big stage in front of the university.

An awesome heavy metal group played at PNU that day, Almighty Natas. They were legitimately death metal style, heavier than the well-known Crash from 서울. Almighty Natas, Mondo Pepper, and the following band

all practiced at a place called Dragonball Z, a type of music 학원 with a rehearsal room with PA, drums, and amps in a type of shed on the roof near 동네로타리.

Garry and I met a ripping guitar player whom we played basketball with first, 류홍규, one of the coolest guys I met in three years in Korea. We recruited him, and were joined by a female American singer and a US Army drummer from Camp Hialeah. Our band was called Drunk Mob, and we played rock, funk, rap, and metal/punk original songs. DrunkMob performed at the Wild West theme club and Shiva in 부산, and at the two clubs in 대구 and 울산. We got together enough money for a last-minute recording prior to my permanent return to the US in June 1999. We recorded 20 tracks at a studio near my apartment in 망미동, 수영구 at ArtMusic with 김인호 and 최한수 who graciously played a tenor sax solo on the opening track, Cough Medicine.

Q&A

Broke: Can you remember anything more about this U-J? Or the Canadian drummer who found more popularity after returning to Toronto?

Tim: I want to say his name was 이우재? He was super quiet and shy mannered but really a fan and scene favorite. He quit Mondo Pepper because he was moving to 서울, then Garry and I formed DrunkMob because the others didn't want him to be the bassist. Marc Beland was on Facebook when last I was active, he plays live music in Montreal, he will know the drummer's name and a lot more.

Broke: Were you at the Cricket Power show that was interrupted by some Korean guy taking the mic to warn everyone about the threats of foreign music?

Tim: I don't recall that lol.

However, the Monk owner, who was a great, generous, and humble man, and who had travelled abroad, was driven to suicide due to pressure from authorities regarding running a live music venue, truly a sad story and shameful.

Broke: What was the attitude in those days to "foreign" genres of music that you were playing? I have to say, these days, there's not really any more notion of any genre being strictly "foreign."

Tim: All the groups provided unique types or collections of styles, with only the famous blues standards of Whiskey Belly, and Zombie by the Cranberries being popular songs/cover. In Mondo Pepper Patrick's Celtic violin skills, the African soukous and Latin style originals from Marc, and MP's reggae, funk/punk and rap metal styles were all new and well received for examples.

Broke: The 1990s is a really primordial time in Korean music history. By the time I moved to Korea in 2003, it was already different, as things were more gelled, and roots were more firmly planted. Supposedly the 1990s was a time of figuring out all the global music genres that had been blocked from Korea prior to democratisation. What was your impression of those early days?

Tim: Live music was rare, and was barely to not at all legitimate venues most of the time as there were still conservative attitudes prevalent. I for one followed politics and was amazed two presidents were imprisoned, and I knew their connections to 경남 region. We felt apprehensive to an extent, but it was exciting.

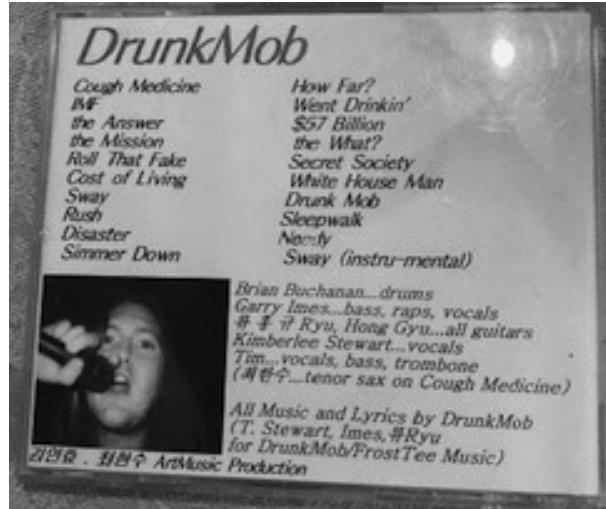
Broke: Did you ever go up to Seoul, or know much about it? Would names like Club Drug, Crying Nut, No Brain, or Rux mean anything to you? In a documentary by Stephen



A live shot of Mondo Pepper / Courtesy of Tim



The front (up) and back (down) covers of DrunkMob's CD / Courtesy of Tim



Epstein focused on Seoul's scene, particularly around Club Drug, they used the term "Chosun Punk" a lot. Did you ever hear a term like that?

Tim: Unfortunately I did not, I got married in 96 and my first son was born in 97 so I worked numerous jobs simultaneously and traveled mostly within the province.

Broke: Was there much violence in the scene in those days? I'd heard there had been, but also by the time I arrived, it was pretty nonviolent. Feel free to share with me any incidents that stick out in your memory.

Tim: I never saw violence in the scene, it was always harmonious and melodious lol

Broke: I'd be very interested if there were a way for me to hear that DrunkMob CD. I'd also be interested to see any more show posters you might have.

Tim: Haha, look up 류홍규 or contact the studio, we only made one copy for each of us as a memento. I listen to it every now and then and it stands as testament to a time and era that was and remains meaningful nearly 25 plus years ago.

Broke: Have you never been back to Korea since 1999? You'd probably be surprised by how much it's changed. It's no longer a developing country, despite some

rough edges. Camp Hialeah is closed and there's now a park in its place. Most of the live music venues there these days seem to be centered around Gwangalli or PNU.

Tim: I visited my (now ex-) wife's family in 2001, 2004, and 2007, and everything I new changed tremendously. I especially cherish the friendship of three men I lost touch with.

Broke: The earliest Busan indie/underground/punk song I know of personally is Run Carrot. Curious if it rings any bells for you.

Tim: Crash was and is my favorite band, but Come Back Home from Seo Taiji was huge when I arrived in 1995, and my snowboarding friend from Oregon was in their first video for the song.

Broke: I tried looking up some of the venues you mentioned. I know there was a Moo-Monk, which was apparently across the street from Monk. Looking now, it seems to be called Monk, confusingly. Across the street is a newer venue called Interplay, which I've heard of. Here are a couple of street views that might jog your memory. Both these images are opposite sides of the same street.

Tim: Interplay is probably the old Monk, it was on a big street close to the subway

Up on the Cross

RAC refugee in Korea



What follows is an account written by Andrei, lead vocalist of Vladivostok-based RAC band Bashka, who is in Korea seeking asylum following the events depicted below. It is presented without commentary such as doubts or endorsement.

On November 5, 2022, in Vladivostok city, at the "Vodolei" club, at 3 Sukhanova Street was held a concert against the war and the current government of the Russian Federation that was called: "Hands Off".

The concert was interrupted abruptly by the security forces who suddenly broke into the club.

Everybody, including the staff and even the women were put face down on the floor. Members of musical bands and visitors were beaten. They were not allowed to get up even to the toilet.

My head was cracked. I didn't get first aid. I was lying on the floor in my own blood. We lay on the floor for about an hour, riot police officers periodically walked over us with their boots.

After one hour police officers arrived to the club and we were taken to the police station at the address of Makhalina street 3a.

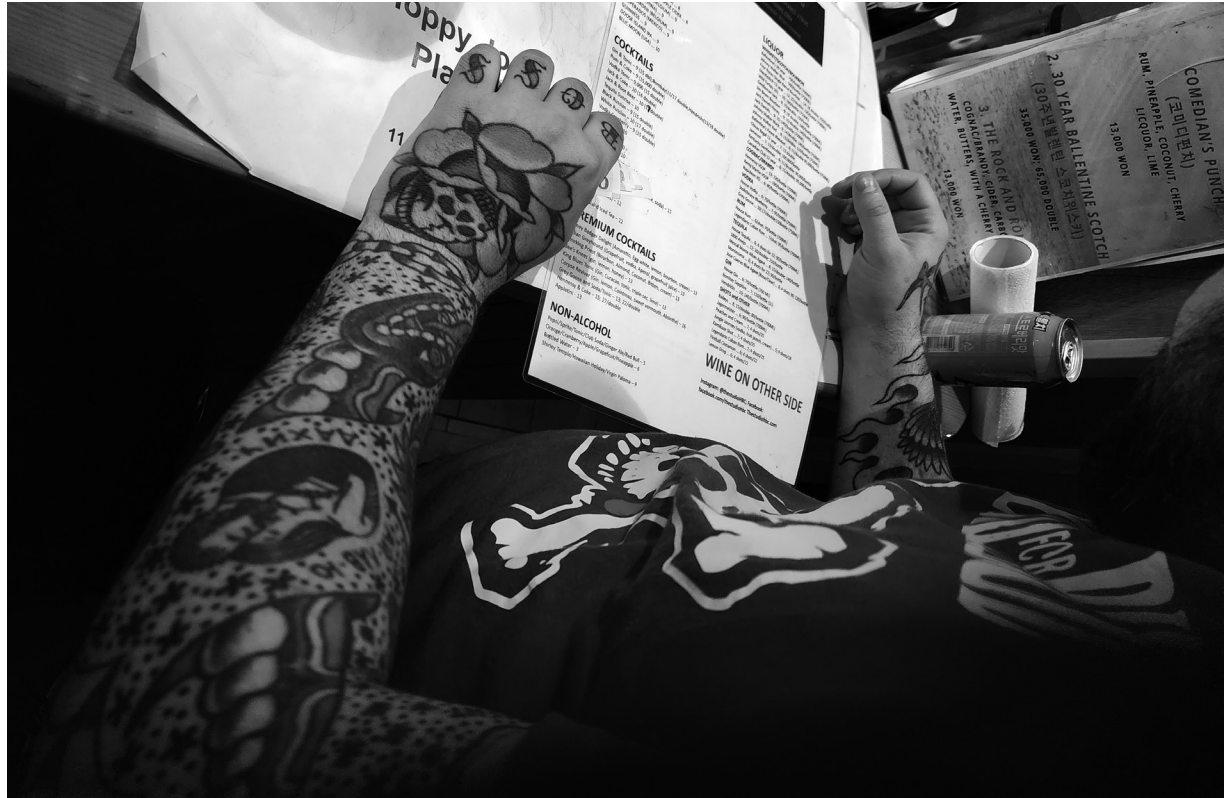
At the police station police officers informed us that they got the information about drug selling at the concert.

They said that we will be tested for drugs in our blood and then will let us go.

After a while, masked people came to us and took me and several other people, handcuffed us, guided us outside, put us in a civilian car, put medical masks on our eyes in the car, apparently so that we wouldn't see where we were being taken and were driven to an unknown direction.

I recognized place after we arrived there.

At that police station work counter-extremism officers. I have already been there before because I've been persecuted for my music for a very long time. Some of my songs were included in the list of prohibited materials in the territory of the Russian Federation. In these songs I I disagree with the actions of the current government and police. (You can check on the website of the Ministry of Justice. In 2016, I was already tried for holding such a concert, but after a year of trials, there was a decriminalization of the criminal article under which I was tried and I was released from



While seeking political asylum in Korea, Bashka's vocalist peruses the menu at The Studio HBC, 20231028.

responsibility. Only the songs were banned by a court decision.)

We were taken into the room and some of the concert participants were already there. We were placed facing the wall, hands behind our heads. There was a man sitting behind us with an electric shock and he just electrocuted any request to give water or go to the toilet. We stood in this position for 2-3 hours. After some officers arrived to this police station, we were taken one on one to the room. They took a photo of me there and started to ask us if we keep in touch with the Ukrainian authorities. Also, they asked if this concert was sponsored by Ukraine government. They asked where do we spend proceeds from tickets.

When asked to call or call a lawyer, I was simply ridiculed and told that nothing is allowed to motherland's traitors. I tried to not answer their questions referring to the fact that my head was cracked and I feel bad.

They let me go only in the morning, the rest of the participants were released a little later. They didn't give me any protocols and didn't tell me what would happen next.

In the morning I visited the hospital, where I was examined. The doctors put stitches on my

head. I refused to be hospitalized, I had to lie to the doctors that I had been beaten. If I had told them the truth, then by law they would have been obliged to call the police to question me. I wanted to avoid a repeat meeting with the police officers who beat me. In Russia, under no circumstances can the opposition can receive assistance from the government and its structures.

After that incident no one called me and I thought that all the problems are gone. After some time, people who have visited that concert and musicians who played music on 05.11.2022, started to inform me that they were summoned to the investigative committee for questioning as witnesses. There they tried to convince them to testify that they know that I held the concert on the order of the Ukrainian military, and I had to send the money from the concert to support the AFU (Armed Forces of Ukraine). The most interesting that I was not summoned. One of the club employee told me that the recordings from the surveillance cameras were deleted by the officers who detained us.

One day, in early December, when I left the house, two men in civilian clothes came up to me, said that I needed to go to

the police station with them and talk about something. I refused, they tried to grab me, but I ran on a short distance and started to speak loud to attract other people attention and began to call my lawyer. I told them that I will not go anywhere without my lawyer. They got into a civilian car and threatened me that we would see each other soon. I recognized that car. It was the same car that they use when they grab me to the police station before

After few days I were at home and someone knocked to my door. I checked the door peephole and saw two police officers in the uniform and a couple people in civilian clothes. I didn't open the door. After that I got a call from the unknown person. That man introduced himself as an officer of the Federal Security Service and said that an officer of the investigative committee could not find me to interrogate. I were told that and I need to come to the Investigative Committee at 42 Krasniy Znamya St. I were also informed that very soon I'll get a call from the officer and he will tell me the time when I must come to the police station. He threatened me that if I didn't come myself, they would find me and take me to the police station.

After that, I packed my things, moved to my friend's apartment.

I changed my phone number and started searching tickets to South Korea. I chose Korea because I have been there before and I have someone there to stay with.

I also know that political asylum is provided there in similar situations. The nearest date of the ferry for which there were tickets available, January 5. So, I bought the tickets.

I had my own business in Vladivostok - a bar in the center of Vladivostok city. I had to urgently sell it for half the price.

Despite the fears that I was put on the wanted list, I passed the border without any questions. Returning to my homeland for me will end in prison, and in Russia political prisoners are tortured, beaten and often killed. Moving inside the country will not help, because Russia, although a big country, but the centralized and federal security service will simply transfer my case to another city and the persecution will continue there.

As proof of my words, I can provide several videos from the concert and a certificate from the hospital about the medical care provided. I will also be able to provide witness statements of people who were at the concert and who were summoned to the investigative committee.

Follow-up Questions

The following are questions asked of him after a review of his statement.

20231010

Broke: A few months ago, I met you and your other Russian friend. Is he in the same situation as you? Is he part of your band? I would also like to know: why do you oppose the Putin regime and Putin's war in Ukraine?

Bashka: I don't remember exactly what friend was with me when you met me. but there is no one from my group here, some cannot leave the country because they have already received a travel ban, and some do not want to leave. As for the Putin regime and the war in Ukraine, all my life I believed that the Putin regime was hostile to the Russian people. No matter how fanatical it may sound, people are literally being zombified. just yesterday everyone said that they love Putin because at least there is no war under him, but now everyone is happy about the war and wants more. this war wipes out the Slavic peoples from the face of the earth, fraternal peoples become enemies. I believe that the main enemy of the Russians is the Kremlin and its policies. if the Russian people want to start building a truly new and good world within their country, they need to stop looking for enemies around, and remove the real enemies within. I have no illusions that someday power will fall into the hands of the people and oligarchy will disappear. I have nothing against rich businessmen in power, but I believe that in addition to their own benefit, for the sake of which they are going to destroy their people and brotherly people, they should think about the welfare of their country, the education of the population, medicine, and the standard of living in the country. 80% of the country's territory is forests and swamps, among which there are thousands of villages where people live without gas or water in their homes. The toilet is a hole in the ground, and you have to walk to get water. They are going to free someone from "Nazism". we have a huge pile of our own problems and an equally huge pile of land that can and should be developed. If we talk about it directly, prison awaits you in Russia. people are tortured, people go missing, many are killed openly. Kadyrov's son can film himself beating a defendant who has not even been charged yet, and instead of serving time in prison, he is given the status of "hero of the Chechen Republic" and the Russian authorities support this. while their own people, who dared to criticize



A gigantic rock lock is displayed during Block Party in The Studio HBC, 20231007. The Blood for Blood skull shirt is worn by Andre, vocalist of Vladivostok-based RAC band Bashka, who is seeking asylum in Korea.

this government, are openly repressed, tortured, and killed. I don't want to raise my children in this country. I want to live in a country that will encourage my desire to make it better, and will not shut my mouth and force me to love it for who it is

20231012

Broke: So how was the asylum application interview?

Bashka: total fucked up. The interview lasted from 9 am to 6 pm. They drained all my blood. but I think this is for the best, many are interviewed for only 1 hour and in the end they are refused

To confirm that this was really my Instagram, she began to look at the correspondence and saw that they were writing to me with questions about my situation. very strange interview. they tried to force me to sing the song I was performing. I said I could give them the text. says "no, you need to sing." naturally I didn't sing anything

this is actually complete bullshit. I felt like I was being interrogated by Russian police

Broke: maybe they wanted to confirm you were actually a singer. I doubt they know what oi is, so it's probably a good idea you didn't sing. I wonder how much they know about RAC

Bashka: she doesn't know what rock and roll is. so she definitely hadn't heard of RAC

20231116

Broke: Any updates on your case?

Bashka: As for political asylum, the results will be on December 28 (update: he was rejected Dec. 13, and plans to file an appeal)

Broke: does your band have any recorded music I could listen to somewhere?

Bashka: We uploaded almost all of our music to Russian sites, so the Russian court was able to block them. Now we have recorded a new album, I'm waiting for the cover to be completed and I'll post the album online. the remaining tracks must be searched either on the Russian social network VKontakte or on YouTube. you can try watching it in any player, we often participated in collections and these tracks were posted everywhere

Broke: it would be interesting if you could play in Korea someday. I admit I'm very cautious about doing any reporting on your case, because RAC has a reputation of being violent, white power, anti-Asian, anti-refugee. I'm concerned about the possibility of more people knowing more about it and being biased against your case.

Bashka: I know Koreans who play rac ahahaha I often discuss my political views with locals and there have never been any problems with this in Korea. I know that there are many fanatics among right-wing skinheads. but for me racism is not hatred of everything that is different from your race, but love of your own. don't beat people who are different, but take care of people like you and don't tolerate disrespectful treatment. Koreans are in solidarity with me. in Russia we often fought, but I never beat people just because they were a different color, I have friends of different colors)

Broke: Fair enough. I have known Samchung for almost two decades.

Bashka: Korean band)) I don't think they would support the anti-Asian movement

and if you delve into politics, almost all Asians are Nazis.

they're just allowed to do it, but white people aren't hahaha

Broke: Lol how so?

Bashka: The main thing is not to be a fanatic and not to waste your life on blind hatred.

Among racists there are many who simply hate everyone around them. this is wrong, but basically these are ordinary people who are not interested in politics, but just want to bark louder.

Broke: What appeals to you about RAC, and is your affiliation with it why the police targeted you?

Bashka: I know people who adhere to the idea of white power and they have no problems being friends with people of different races. build a business together and respect each other. a real racist, and not a sick fanatic, will always respect someone else's culture if this culture is not imposed on him. he will simply demand respect for his culture. and if you just shout white power, Asians are shit, blacks are shit, then you are not a representative of your people, but a buffoon and a fanatic

Communism has greatly damaged the history of my country. Since childhood, I didn't understand how red bastards could be considered heroes. my great-grandfather and great-grandmother were sent to a labor camp by the communists because they were Cossacks. my ancestors fought in the Russian liberation army during the Second World War, because they did not want communists to rule the Russian people, and I also inherited these views. but my parents are very loyal to the communists, so it's not upbringing, but genes ahaha

Broke: Why did you originally join the rac/skinhead community?

Bashka: the red army killed many more Russians than Napoleon and Hitler

at the age of 11 I already had a mohawk and was a punk. At 15 he became a skinhead. but even when I was a punk, we didn't like left-wing punks. I didn't join the community, I created it myself in my city

Broke: Why did the police target you?

Bashka: it's me and a few other punks from my city. we disrupted communist rallies when we were still little. this is 2010.

Broke: Communist rallies?

Like bring back the ussr?

Bashka: All my life they have been pressing me because I was against the authorities. but

if you delve into politics, almost all Asians are Nazis. they're just allowed to do it, but white people aren't hahaha

right now, a criminal case was fabricated against me because I organized an anti-war concert and called on the Russian people to protest against this war. I have a lot of friends in my city and

the police understand that my influence on them has a bad effect on their propaganda

in Russia many people want to return the USSR. mostly these are people who have not seen the USSR, but only heard that it was good there hahaha

there were no products in the stores. people stood in line for sausage for 2-3 days. there were no jeans. You couldn't express your opinion. it was impossible to go abroad. you need to respect the leader who killed millions of Russian people in the fight for communism and, as a result, millions more died of hunger. you'd have to be an idiot to want this back

20231213

Bashka: Hi! we were denied political asylum. If you want, you can add this to the article. We will now file an appeal in court.

Broke: What? I thought you weren't going to get an answer until Dec. 27

Bashka: they answered earlier. Now we'll think about what to do next. The eldest son studies in a Korean school, it seems that he can get a visa based on his studies. but now we will appeal for my political asylum. I will try to defend this right. If it doesn't work out, I'll think about studying. maybe I'll get my wife into university

I'll file an appeal, and then we'll see.

Broke: I've known a few asylum seekers in Korea, and I know you're far from out of options

You also mentioned you were planning to release a new album soon. Do you have any more information about that?

Bashka: the album is already ready. Now I will record discs and after I sell them, I will release the album on different platforms. my guitarist will now also go here to seek asylum if he can leave the country. he has a military specialty and that's why they are trying to take him to war. he resists, now they want to lock him up in a mental hospital. if he succeeds, he will come here and we will form a group

Walloping websnappers!

Jon Twitch

The following is a transcript from an interview done in June sometime, with the "British Spider-Man," the guy who was caught halfway up the outside of Lotte World Tower. After meeting him, I gained an appreciation of how good he is at this shit. This interview was transcribed in a way that leaves out a lot of my questions and interjections.

We've since done a couple other interviews, and he left the country sometime in late November/early December, after receiving a five-year return ban. He also has been working with Blackmarket in Itaewon to offer screenprints showing his vertical adventures around the globe.

George: My freedom is restricted but my mind is not. I can't legally leave the country. I'm kinda stuck in time. I'm broke, I'm free.

100% the sole reason that I am in Korea right now was for Lotte tower. The plan was to climb it and base jump off it. My dream was to perform an urban freebase, the idea to climb a skyscraper free solo and then jump from the top.

There were issues along the way, mostly out of my control. Retrospect can be haunting. In some ways I could have done it a different way. I do not see this project as a failure. It's actually far more progressive than that. It was an amazing experience. I spent a long time planning it in terms of where I was gonna access the building, how I was gonna climb it, what was the most efficient way of doing it and what ways I was going to approach changes in the structure that were gonna change the way I climb it. I had all these pieces of information which was mapped out before through surveillance mainly back in november. I took the information and then throughout January, February, March, April, and May I put the puzzle together.

It was on the Monday at 5am. I was staying in a motel about a mile out, and I walked from the motel. It was dark at the time. It was one straight road and the building was at the end of the road and I was just walking towards it.

Funny thing I felt during that was it was pretty humid in the air. I've climbed a lot of buildings in Europe and it's far less humid than Asia. The sweat was dripping off me. I was thinking this is new information, this could be problematic, but nevertheless, I turned up, I stretched off, I warmed up, I put my heart rate up, and began the climb around 5am. I got in a nice flow, saw the sun come up, and it didn't seem like anyone noticed at all for a long time, couple hours, 3 hours maybe.

No one noticed. I was looking at the streets get busier and busier, and cars get moving and moving more and more and more sound elevating from the street below and



George ascends Lotte World Tower 20230612 in this exclusive shot provided to Broke in Korea.

it didn't seem like anyone noticed me and I was in my own world, this world which I know very very well from a lifetime of doing these things. It's a beautiful world, it's a mystical world, and in some ways it's a different dimension altogether to any kind of life I experienced beside it. I was experiencing a very pure, beautiful moment.

Broke: How were you climbing? You weren't using suction cups or something, were you?

George: It wasn't suction cups. On Lotte Tower there are profiles(?) which come out of the building, and it was enough to get my hands and feet in, and the holds got progressively more narrow the further I got up. I knew this piece of information, it was no news to me, it was workable. I'm not gonna say it was an easy task at all. It was a very physical climb. But it was certainly within my level of skill. I actually got the exact measurements. I think they were 99 cm, just under a meter. I really had to really lean back into them, sometimes guiding my foot into them it was quite a stretch. That really exasperated how strenuous it was, how physical it was, but it was certainly manageable.

What was difficult was actually the humidity. Looking retrospectively, I would have done hydration a little differently. I lost a lot of fluids sweating. The salt from the sweat makes it sting the eyes a bit more.

By the time I reached 72 floors, this cradle – they have like a window cleaning machine – they just drove it straight in front of where I was climbing, so it trapped me. It went in front of my route. At this point of the building climb, I didn't have the opportunity to traverse laterally, so they trapped me, so that was a bit of an issue.

I still thought it looks like i've reached a situation where I can no longer climb anymore, but how about the jump? So in order for me to do the jump, I need a good solid platform to do a jump off. It needs to be flat. The exit on a base jump is so important. Where I was, it just wasn't safe, it wasn't doable,



George, nicknamed "British Spider-Man" by the local press (and the reason for my J Jonah Jameson profile pic), poses on a rooftop in Seoul, 20230703.

so I thought my last resort was to get on this cradle and try to jump off, so that's what I tried to do. So I got on the window cradle machine with two operators on it, and I got myself over and ready to jump, and they grabbed me and they pulled me down, and I was devastated, I was absolutely devastated.

So I didn't get the jump. They took me into the building, and I was confronted with all types of authority figures.

Broke: What can you tell me about the charge of obstruction of business?

George: I believe I have not obstructed any business of Lotte Tower. I think their argument is to state that by me climbing the building I've obstructed the people who would normally do their job in Lotte Tower. But because I climbed it early and the Lotte Tower observatory platform was not open, none of the building was really open, kind of shows me that I don't think I've obstructed any business. But I haven't seen the court papers, I haven't seen what Lotte have got to say, I haven't seen what the prosecutors have gotta say. It's a strange one. With it being so heavily reported in international media, I have a feeling it could influence the judge's decision

Broke: How does this compare

I do not aspire to be anything but someone who strives for adventure, and that's it. But it's a cool nickname to have.

It's always quite hard to categorise how I view myself. I like the idea of being an extreme adventurer because I try not to limit myself. My primary thing is urban environments but I try not to limit my adventures to climbing buildings or jumping off buildings. I like to think that my life has more than that and I can stretch off in different directions. There's a part of me which is a climber, there's a part of me which is a base jumper, there's a part of me which is an urban explorer, there's a part of me which is an athlete, there's a part of me which is a presenter.

Broke: Can you tell me how your sponsorship works?

George: I've always wanted to make a living out of what I do because therefore I can do what I love doing as much as I possibly can. And it's taken a while but I've managed to find a very good sponsor called Riot, a vaping company. They've taken me on board. The last 7 months they've been helping me out. They've been very helpful to me.

Money can sometimes motivate people to do certain actions which maybe they wouldn't do themselves. But for me the way I've approached sponsors is that I have an idea, I have a project, I need funding for me to get to the country and do the project to the best of my ability, and then I seek the funding. If a sponsor came up to me and said 'I want you to do this,' I'm not interested. I'm only interested in what I want to do and I will help facilitate that by getting people on board to help do that. I will never just have a sponsor say 'oh go hang off a building and do pullups and put a flag by the side of it' no matter how much money, because to me it's all about what I wanna do.

The sponsor which I have currently has been extremely cooperative and respectful of that. They got me the lawyer. I would be without a lawyer at the moment if it wasn't for the sponsor, so that's a massive help. Their whole mission is to be a media powerhouse, like Red Bull but more underground. That's why I and Riot have met hand in hand in such a good way.



George visits an abandoned apartment in Haebangchon, 20230906.

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공연장에서 편의점에서 음료를 사는 사람들의 관행에 대해 어떻게 생각하십니까? 그것이 행사장에 불공평합니까?

What do you think about the practice of people at shows buying drinks from convenience stores? Is it unfair to venues?

I'm guilty of this and sometimes I feel bad because I want venues to be able to stay open but it's something I've done before I was even old enough to legally drink. It's a hardwired part of this punk subculture and kind of expected. Also some venues don't really make it easy or affordable to drink. I'm not drinking out of lightly rinsed used plastic cups FF. Also if I'm paying 25,000 to get in and another 8,000 per beer you're gonna find my ass at the GS25. Simple economics, esse. Saying that, I think venues could come up with better approaches to how they make money but most are not interested or lazy.

It depends on the venue, I guess. A lot of places don't offer alcohol. If the place is deferred entry and you choose not to buy a drink, it looks like you don't care if it lives or dies.

It depends on the prices and selection available at the venues. Not everybody wants to drink shitty important beer by the bottle for 4,000. If a venue has a beer on tap for a fair price then people are more likely to get that.

I don't drink alcohol so it's not something I personally have to do but if I was a bar owner, it would bum me out that people are buying beer at the convenience store next door instead of at my bar. That's how bars make money right? Selling alcohol!

With that being said, if the beer is overpriced, I understand the people going to the convenience store to buy drinks too? Also, if people are paying 20,000-40,000 won to get into a venue, I can see why they would want to try and save a few bucks and get their drinks at the convenience store as well. I think no matter what though, people are going to do it but if I may add... If the show is free, I think folks should at least buy a few drinks at the venue. It's a trade off for not paying any entry fee.

아무 생각 안한다. 왜 문제가 되는지는 스스로들 알고 있겠지. 몰라서 서로 그러는게 아니고 알지만 하고 싶은대로 하는거라고 생각한다. I don't really have any thoughts on it. I suppose you all know why it's an issue. It's not because we're unaware of it, but because we choose to do what we want, despite knowing.

개인적인 생각으로는 공연장마다 다르겠지만 바가 있는 공연장에 편의점 음료를 들고 가는건 공연장에게 좀 미안하다. 내 경우는 그런곳은 밖에서 먹고 들어간다. 하지만 아예 바가 없고 편의점에서 사와서 먹도록 확실한 답은 없는것 같다..

Personally, it might vary for each venue, but bringing convenience store drinks into a venue with a bar makes me feel a bit sorry for the venue. In my case, in such places, I consume them outside before entering. However, because there are places that encourage bringing in drinks bought from convenience stores due to the absence of a bar, there doesn't seem to be a definitive answer.

If the venue sells drinks, bringing outside drinks to the venue is not respectful. I think it just depends on the policy of the venue. 그러니 처음가는 공연장이라면 꼭 물어보세요. 공연장에서 허락을 한다고 해도 바깥에서 가져온 음료나 쓰레기는 잘 처리해 줘야 합니다. 공연장에 아무데나 버리지 말고.

술과 콜라를 제외한 알코올이 없는 음료가 있으면 사서 마시겠지만 잘 없어요. If there were non-alcoholic drinks available aside from alcohol and cola, I would buy and drink them, but they're not readily available.

If the drinks aren't overpriced I have no problem with buying them at the venue. But when they are overpriced and there is a convenience store right next door with the same or better drinks for a fraction of the price, the free market wins and I'm gonna buy at the convenience store. I'd rather support a venue, but at a certain point it becomes price gouging and I won't support that.

만약 행사장이 음료를 판매 하지 않는 곳이라면 크게 문제가 되지 않는다고 생각합니다. 물론 안전 문제가 첫번째입니다.

반대로 행사장이 음료를 판매 하는 곳이라면 이것은 서비스 제공자와 사용자 간의 문제라고 생각합니다. 서비스 제공자는 가격이 합리적이거나 특별함을 제공하거나 사용자가 납득할 수 있는 부분을 제공 해 주는 것이 맞다고 생각합니다. 또한 사용자는 일정 금액을 지불하고 해당 서비스를 제공 받음으로 그 공간의 유지, 보수에 도움이 되는 부분을 생각 해 봐야 합니다.

If the venue doesn't sell beverages, I don't see it as a significant issue, but safety concerns would be paramount. On the contrary, if the venue does sell drinks, I see it as an issue between the service provider and the users. I believe it's right for the service provider to offer reasonable prices, uniqueness, or aspects that users find acceptable. Additionally, users should consider paying a certain amount for the services provided, as it contributes to the maintenance and upkeep of the space.

장려하는 곳도 있기 때문에

외국처럼 공연장에서 음료나 술을 팔 수 있으면 문제가 되지만, 한국은 법적으로 공연장에서 술을 팔 수 없게 되어있다. 술을 파는 클럽에 편의점 맥주를 가져 가는 것은 문제이지만, 술을 팔 수 없는 공연장에 편의점 술을 가져가는 것은 괜찮다고 생각한다.

Although it may be an issue to sell drinks or alcohol at concert venues like they do in foreign countries, in Korea, it's legally prohibited to sell alcohol at performance venues. Bringing convenience store beer to clubs that sell alcohol is problematic, but I think it's okay to bring convenience store alcohol to performance venues where alcohol sales aren't allowed.

If a venue sells booze I buy from them as long as the prices are decent. If the venue doesn't then there's no choice but to bring your own. Booze-less venues need to buy the nearest convenience shop and make a killing. (follow-up question: what if the venue sells booze at indecent prices?) Then I don't buy alcohol there, I just wait till the gig is finished and grab a drink after if I'm in the mood. Most venues I have been to have been decent though. In Busan the main venues all sell alcohol so I wouldn't go elsewhere during the show.

Buy drinks from the venue if they are selling them! Especially if there isn't a door fee.

It is what it is. If you have the ability to spend a little bit more to support local venues, you absolutely should. If you really need to save a little money by drinking outside, at least make sure you pay to get in. Don't go in on the guest list AND drink outside all night.

It probably does suck for venues. If I can afford it, I will gladly buy from the venue—but if not, sorry, I'll be back after a visit to CU. If the venue has its own space-specific drinks (like made there, or made by locals) that's a different matter.

The practice of people at punk shows in Korea going outside to buy drinks from convenience stores can be seen as a challenge for venues that rely on drink sales for revenue. It's understandable that venues might find it unfair since it affects their business.

However, the issue can be nuanced. Bringing outside drinks inside might conflict with the venue's policies or potentially impact sales. On the other hand, finishing the drink outside could be a compromise, ensuring that patrons support the venue while also accommodating their desire for specific drinks not available inside.

Ultimately, it might be beneficial to find a middle ground that respects the venue's rules and supports their business while also accommodating patrons' preferences for certain beverages. Communication and understanding between both parties could help navigate this situation better.

Letters from the Underground

Jon Twitch

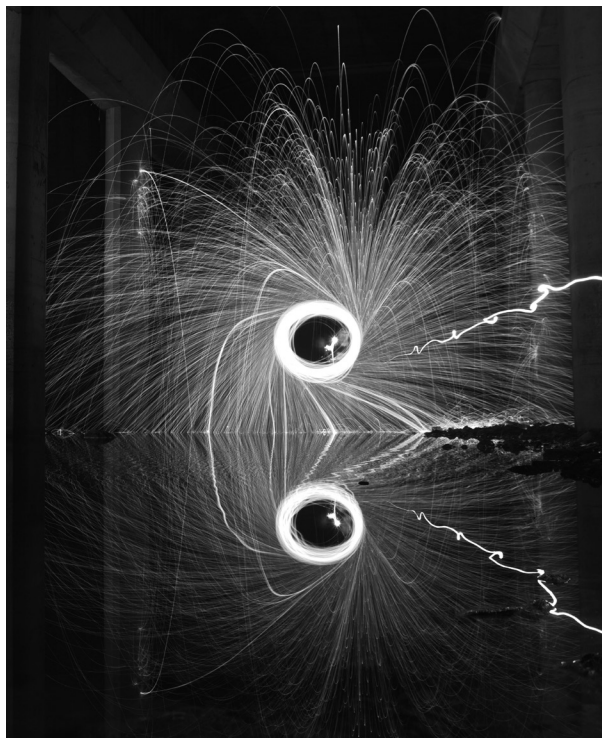
I received a big surprise in August, right before my trip to Canada, when a Korean urban explorer registered on UER, where I have been the main consistent Korea presence there since joining in 2005. He was able to point me toward a pretty active DCInside forum and a KakaoTalk groupchat.

The existence of an indigenous UE community in Korea caught me completely by surprise. Of course my own network has included Koreans, but they tend to come and go, losing momentum over time and often leaving the country. I had given up hope that this would ever materialise, and now that it had, entirely without mutual awareness or guidance, we were facing a first contact moment. But would this be more like "Star Trek: First Contact," or a Columbus scenario? And if the latter, which of us would be the Columbus wreaking devastation on the other side?

The fact that they'd been active for a few years (the DCInside Pyga gallery was founded 20210115) means they could have developed their own take on UE ethics, which could potentially be incompatible with what I've been promoting. Many of them are active on YouTube, a platform I've always distrusted when it comes to urban exploring. But overall, it seems like the core Korean explorers, the ones who have identified each other as trustworthy, maintain solid ethical practices. But good ethics build naturally, even if you don't get them from reading a book. Any active explorer watching sites get ruined will quickly learn what needs to be done. In fact, I've considered the need to tighten my own ethics to match them -- I plan to start censoring things like my images of found photographs or other personal information, as they all do. Also, as they are pretty unforthcoming about their own personal identities, which means I have to take measures to protect their information, including their faces. I'm pretty open about my identity in exploring, even if I maintain a thicket of aliases for artistic purposes.

I met that one guy who joined UER, the same Drone Explorer interviewed in this zine, a few times, and we seem to get along well. However, he's very good at English and doesn't have any hangups about it. The others, who figured out I was a foreigner very quickly, all start making nervous jokes about English language skills whenever the topic of meeting me in person comes up. I feel like my own stagnant Korean language skills are suddenly a major impediment. The times that I have met other Korean explorers, I've had the impression they've felt out of place because of language barriers. For the first time in ages, I might actually have a strong reason to continue learning Korean.

I've also seen remarks about



Deep under Seoul's surface, 20231209.

how if you (as a Korean) get into any hobby, you'll find more and more foreigners there, or foreigners having already done it. About all I can do about that is try my hardest to be great at what I do, and in the time since first contact was made, I've been going a little farther -- not exactly taking dumb risks, but making sure to document things better, and doing a thorough job so I don't need to make repeat trips and so that I can tell others about any safety risks.

One big difference between the Korean explorers and the network I've built around me is that very few of them have met in person. I've been pushing them for face-to-face meetings, even among them -- I've already seen two first-time meetings among Korean explorers in my presence.

I've decided that my role in this new reality isn't going to be as a leader or a founder, but as a supporter who helps amplify their own voices and help them with the opportunity to be heard by more people around the world. As our worlds merge, the network I've formed is no longer the Korean urban exploring community, but a subgroup of that.

Hunting for Monsters in the Host Tunnel and Bone Tunnel

In the interest of bringing together our two communities, I put together the annual Christmas visit to the Host Tunnel. We didn't do it last year due to general lack of interest and no new faces around. This time, I was happy to invite the Korean explorers, but also there were more foreigners around expressing interest in urban exploring. My hope was that by putting everyone together, it might activate some more

explorers, and get some kind of collaborations happening.

So the date was set for 20231209, earlier in the month than usual, in consideration of the fact that, while I've scheduled the tunnel walks as close to Christmas as possible for foreigners with no family, having it further away from Christmas would probably be better for Koreans. I sent out maybe about two dozen invitations, and of those, almost all of them showed interest. We had two cancellations -- two foreigners on the day of, and two Koreans who apparently live in other cities.

Prior to the meeting time, I stopped by the massive riverside tunnel entrance, only to find...a fleet of trucks and one excavator in front. This has happened previously, back in 2018, and all we needed to do was enter from somewhere upstream. Back then, by the time we reached the river, all the workers had left for the day. I prefer going in from the river, because it feels more like you're entering the city, just as the characters from Bong Joon-ho's "The Host" had done.

There's another entrance next to a pumping station, but you have to walk through a little neighbourhood. Sometimes that can create problems, if there's any activity there. I stopped by to drop off some heavy items alongside the stream, and got in and out no problem.

When I showed up in front of Yongsan Station, I found one person waiting there for me. But then within a span of five minutes, we went from two to about a dozen. I was a little disappointed that the large group meant I wouldn't get as much chances to get to know everyone. But also, a bigger crowd means a more fun tunnel experience. Right as we started to leave, two

more groups of two showed up and joined us.

One time in 2012, I organised a UE meetup and we ended up getting 24 people, which was untenable for what we had planned, going to a roof. We had since then had one meetup in the tunnel in 2017 where it must have been close to 20 people. This time we ended up with about 18, possibly breaking the record, not sure. The good thing about the tunnel is it doesn't matter how many people you have, once you get inside it.

But the backup entry point was suddenly not going to work: an old woman was hanging laundry or something in the middle of the neighbourhood. So I told everyone we could wait around for 10 minutes and hope she goes inside, or we could go around the corner to a third entry point, a pretty intense ladder out over rushing water. Everyone was comfortable with the water.

Getting everyone down the ladder one by one was a time-consuming effort. During that time, another group of three showed up: the Parkers, along with their young son Peter. On a previous trip I had gone down here with a blind guy, so I was willing to bring a kid, if his parents were willing and aware of the dangers -- they were, having done the tunnel with me before at least once.

For the first part of our adventure, we went upstream into the Bone Tunnel. It gets that name because it used to be filled with bones, all the same jawbone from the same species of animal (cow, pig?). I believe they came to rest here because of a slaughterhouse that used to be at the top of Gyeongnidangil. They must have dropped unwanted parts in the stream, maybe down a sewer, and the parts flowed downstream, under Yongsan Garrison, and ended up settling where that branch meets with the main one. But almost all were removed during renovation work in 2019.

This time, we found the Bone Tunnel a little more flooded than usual. I had worn rubber boots, which I always say are not necessary, but which simplify a lot of the challenges. When I went in a little deeper, some of the others followed me and found a way to walk where they didn't go through much deep water. Although I was the only one with rubber boots, a handful of the others had no problem dipping their shoes in the water. Everyone came in and most got pretty far -- about half a dozen others went further, immersing their shoes completely. I had a spare pair of rubber boots, which I dumped off for the further-back group. Peter Parker's mom grabbed them and joined me.

While we were examining the furthest point in the tunnel I like to go, behind us Seth Mountain pulled out his banjo and started making music. We responded by pulling out some of our Roman candle fireworks and lighting off

a few volleys. Then I went back to the downstream group and let them have some pyrotechnic fun.

After that, it was time to leave the Bone Tunnel and head downstream. There was one more attendee who hadn't checked in yet -- Coetzer. As we entered the main tunnel heading toward the river, I saw a flashlight ahead. I turned out my own and crept on ahead of the others. Then when the other flashlight was across the tunnel from me, I lit up. It was Coetzer.

We reached a sort of basecamp area, which I call the Halfway Pipe, about 750 meters from any exit to the surface. There's a big flat platform here where we can hang around comfortably and stay for a while.

I dumped out the firewood I'd brought, and Peter Parker began setting up for a campfire. Meanwhile, Seth Mountain pulled out his banjo again and began playing songs for us in and around a corrugated metal pipe that has amazing acoustics.

I had decided to set off the Roman candles in the Bone Tunnel, where the riverside workers wouldn't stand a chance of hearing them. At the Halfway Pipe, we were prepared to do quieter activities. This included the campfire, as well as spinning steel wool Coetzer tried setting up a DJ station which didn't seem to work. I broke out the Korean raspberry wine, AKA sewer juice, the official drink of the underground.

When it came time to leave, we decided to risk it heading downstream to get out by the river. After all, the workers would have gone home by now, 5pm. As we approached, we saw a bright light shining steadily in the distance, aimed toward us. It wasn't a flashlight, but just some kind of machine with a headlight. No human activity was detected, but whatever it was doing, it was loud.

As we neared, I started to feel concern about the group, so I offered to go ahead and scout it out. I reached the machine that was making so much noise, and slipped around it. On the other side, there was a tent right in front of me, now no more than two meters away, and inside it I could see a worker starting to stand up, but not in a way that made it look like he'd noticed me.

I backtracked and hurried back to the group. There was no way we were getting past this guy, not all 18 of us. And since we had a minor and a refugee and who knows who else in the group, I decided that group safety comes first, and we'd have to backtrack our way out to the same exit we'd come in.

As we emerged upstream, the daylight was fading from the sky. We took the exit out through the village, and fortunately that old woman was long gone.

Once we'd escaped, it was time to celebrate an excursion that had gone well, and explore the collaborations that had been suggested.

Visit gall.dcinside.com/99922 for a look inside Korea's real underground

Droning on and on

Jon Twitch

I found out there are local Korean explorers active here, when one of them joined an ageing website I'm a member of. This led immediately to a DC Inside page, a couple Kakao groupchats, and several YouTube channels. The guy in particular who I ran into online has a channel where he shares drone videos of abandoned places.

After a few months and a few adventures, I decided I might as well interview him.

Broke: Is it true you're really an airline pilot? How does that fold into your drone hobby?

DE: An airline pilots' job is to bring the aircraft safely & timely into a destination. It's a challenging task by itself, but you need to follow precise rules and regulations, while flying pre-determined routes. If an airliner deviates from its registered route without communication, authorities may assume it is hijacked!

Flying a drone is great because you can do fun & creative activities with much more freedom (no passengers on board). Your aviation skill definitely helps too.

Broke: Is your wife supportive of your drone exploration activities?

DE: She suggested learning to fly drone in the first place, and I've been going out exploring abandoned areas on the condition that I post my exploration videos in YouTube. She is kind of a person who is always working on something, while I prefer having a good time and chill. She hopes I will be more... 'productive' if I operate a YouTube channel as a hobby. It turned out to be a good practice, as I've learned how to create contents and edit videos. She's an editor herself, so She keeps telling me various ways to make my videos more appealing to the mass... like filming locations related to K-pop.

Broke: What drove you to become Drone Explorer?

DE: After flying my drone for few months, I got bored of simply flying in open areas. Many FPV pilots do acrobatic movements (which is called 'bando' in English), but one mistake will shatter your drone, which was too risky (and costly) for me. So I started going to areas which were supposed to be spooky, such as a reservoir called 'Salmokji' (살목지) which was very popular because of ghost stories related to it on YouTube. I don't believe in ghosts, but the process of flying in and exploring the area, and safely return was thrilling. After that, I actively searched for abandoned places, where I could fly in, which was how I became an urban explorer.

As for Youtube, I was reading a self-development book, and it challenged the readers to stop reading the book and post a



Drone Explorer's gear includes a DJI Avata drone, mousepad runway, cat food, and other stuff. Courtesy of Drone Explorer

video on Youtube. So I thought 'why not?' and posted a short vid exploring Salmokji so that I could show it to my friends. I forgot about the whole thing for months, but when I checked my channel later, I found out more than thousand people watched my video about Salmokji. That was how my channel began.

Broke: Can you describe the different sensation/perspective you get from exploring remotely by drone?

DE: First of all, drone is useful in terms of recon. I typically fly my drone from a distance first to check if it is really abandoned. I had many cases of so-called abandoned places, which were actually not abandoned at all. I can always pack up and move on to the next site when I see people are in the location.

Also, using drone means I can explore places hard to reach on foot. One such case was an island 1 km away from the shore. I wanted to check there because I saw an unusual object from the satellite view. It turned out to be a deserted hovercraft, pretty much intact as no vandal could reach there.

But above all else, drone exploration brings a very different challenge to urbex:

First of all, you rely on visual image from the drone camera only; You can't hear, smell, or feel the environment. And camera's view is not wide enough, so you need to remember what kind of obstacles are located where when you move backwards or sideways.

Also, the moment drone takes off, it burns energy. My drones' typical flight time is 10 minutes per battery; the drone needs energy to come back, so you must crosscheck the battery status and prepare for return within few minutes. Finally, your drone goggles (receiving the video feed from the drone) and drone controller's connection to the drone gets weaker as the drone moves deeper. The connection could abruptly cut off, depending on the structure or materials of construction; if I can't see what drone is seeing, or can't control

the drone, the drone is likely to crash.

All these challenges bring thrill throughout flying and give satisfaction when your drone safely returns from the abandoned site.

Broke: What do you think of Korea's drone restrictions?

DE: Korea has more than 20 military airbases & numerous no-fly zones. This severely limits not only drones, but general aviation itself. In the US, you could fly your private aircraft on clear weather as you please (certain rules apply, of course); in Korea, all airplanes must get preauthorization for time and route. Drones are actually more liberal from this restriction, as it can be flown on most areas (below Seoul) without clearance.

On the one hand, I think restrictions are too tight in Korea. In sensitive areas, you get calls from the police and the military all the time even if you got preauthorization; you can't practically fly in such places. But on the other hand, I've seen many people being careless. Drone spinning its propellers in the air can be a dangerous object in wrong hands, so I think smaller drones should also require demonstration of flying skills, rather than current internet-based exam.

Broke: Is "hobby" the right word to call what you do? How would you say your hobby has helped reshape your understanding of history, society, geography, etc?

DE: Yes, it's my hobby which I prefer to maintain it that way. I believe it won't be fun anymore when I consider it as something more serious.

In general, abandoned places are forgotten and unknown, but they contain memories of someone. It reminds me that everything has an end; I've been to many places where they had glorious past. Business was good, lots of people visited there in the past, but now it's empty and forgotten.

Also, they remind me of suffering minorities in the society. There are places where people

were tortured or exploited, even in 21st century. In many cases, justice is not served, and people were not properly compensated. I think we should not forget such tragedies, so posting videos of such places helps.

Lastly, it sometimes contains lessons to be learned. I visited an abandoned water treatment plant surrounded by residential areas. Residents fiercely protested right after its test run because of intolerable odor. It was a huge waste of tax, really.

Broke: Some of the sites you've visited have some pretty insane backstories. Are there any you're comfortable sharing?

DE: I visited one of the first mental institutions in Korea. It was built in the 70s, located in a small island. In reality, it was a slave labor camp than a hospital; families sold their siblings or children who didn't require mental care. The institution forced 'patients' to work in salt evaporation ponds and various nearby farms, taking their wages. After several investigative report from the media, it was finally closed in the 90s. But patients couldn't return to normal life, as it required consent from the families who sold them in the first place. The responsible people were never fully punished for all of their crimes. The former owner of the institution went to jail for 18 months, but was not charged with murder or anything serious.

I also visited the citadel of a Christian cult called 'Providence' better known as JMS after the cult leader's name, who was prosecuted two times because of sexual assaults. It was not really abandoned, but after watching the Netflix document 'In the name of God' (나는 신이다), I was curious how it was after the prosecution of the leader. So I went over one of the mountain tops near the citadel and briefly took a video of the site. The video became the most viewed one on my channel; Many followers of the cult threatened on the comments. Nothing happened, of course.

Broke: Why did you decide to offer your videos with English subtitles?

DE: I translated English game news when I was a kid and worked as a freelance translator for several years. It was a simple task for me, and I wanted to share my videos to worldwide rather than only in Korea.

Broke: Whose voices are we hearing in your videos?

DE: It's an AI generated voice provided by Naver. I prefer a voice-less video, but I added it because many viewers and friends recommended adding a narration. I'm not good at narrating, and I'd prefer to hide my identity so that I can visit any crazy places in the future again.

Broke: Do you have any legal

fears about your drone incursions, or videos?

DE: I think this is similar with other urban explorers. I always make sure I fly in unrestricted airspace and not to film anything related to national security, but all abandoned places are someone's private property. I sometimes find someone nearby or inside the place; In most cases, they don't mind when I say hello and politely explain I'm here to look around with my drone.

In rare cases, people are hostile; Once, an old man living in a container right beside an abandoned hotel told me to go away. I first thought 'what the hell, does he think he owns this lot?', but I chose not to fight and move on. A week later, another channel interviewed the guy. Turns out he really was the owner of the hotel, once very rich but now poor.

Broke: Do you hope that your YouTube channel (or the exploring community) grows and gets more and more attention, or is it better to keep it low-key?

DE: I have mixed feelings. One the one hand, I'd of course enjoy more people watching my channel. But on the other hand, when any abandoned place becomes popular, it is destined to be vandalized by someone. I describe it as 'the lifecycle of an abandoned place'. When a building gets abandoned and forgotten, it sometimes gets noticed by an explorer. If it is interesting enough, it will gradually become famous. The more fame it gets, it is likely to be vandalized and draw attention from the authorities; its lifecycle ends when it is deconstructed.

For example, I once visited a large veterinary hospital. One of the popular Korean urban explorer channel visited there and recommended the place to me, but by the time I went there, the authorities blocked all entrances with hard wood. Luckily, the 2nd floor was still open, so I still managed to explore the building with my drone.

Broke: How much do you enjoy video production?

DE: Exploration is much more enjoyable, but video production has its own fun. When flying, I sometimes miss interesting details because I'm concentrating on flying and maneuvering; Such details are found when I review my videos for editing. For example, I once visited an abandoned agricultural lab - it turned out that there was a high tower nearby, entirely covered with vines. It's not visible on the satellite view, and I only recorded a glimpse of it during flying.

In another case, I entered a building from the rooftop, explored all floors and exited backwards, only to realize later that the main entrances' glass door was broken, thus open all the time. It wasn't visible to me because the goggle display was sweaty at the time!

Watch Drone Explorer's videos at youtube.com/@droneexplorer

서울을 제외한 한국에서 가장 좋아하는 지역은 어디입니까?

What's your favourite part of Korea outside Seoul?

Busan is really amazing but I'm gonna say Gangneung because it reminds me of home. It has the most Cali vibes in Korea if you ask me and scratches that SoCal itch to be near the ocean and even surf. Plus there's tons of good food and some excellent breweries.

There's stuff in Korea outside of Seoul? Who knew? (Most of Busan is pretty good. Especially them mountains)

속초 Sokcho 청주. 한국의 중심. Cheongju. Korea's middle. 제주도, 부산, 경주 Jeju Island, Busan, Gyeongju

I love Danyang. It's one of my favorite places to go outside of Seoul. So Danyang is my favorite part of Korea outside of Seoul. I literally walked 5000 miles there. Ok... Maybe it was way less than 50 but it felt like 5000 to me... Plus, I was listening to that song as I was walking so yeah...5000 miles I walked!

Jirisan, Hallasan, Seoraksan.

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Due to potential controversies, I'm cautious, but personally, I love Pohang the most. I still visit Pohang occasionally. It's a smaller city, relatively shielded from comparison with other areas, but that's precisely what appeals to me. I appreciate everything about it for being a smaller city. It offers all urban services, yet just a bit outside the city, you encounter the incredible sea.

Gyeongju

I'm curious about Busan. I've only been there a handful of times, but the city has a very relaxed atmosphere. My friends and I showed up to Basement, without any gear whatsoever, and the owner allowed us to play a show there.

Outside of Seoul, I'd say Busan holds a special place for me. It's a coastal city with a relaxed atmosphere, beautiful beaches, and a fantastic food scene. The contrast between the city and the sea creates a unique charm, and places like Haeundae Beach and Gamcheon Culture Village offer distinct experiences. The seafood markets are incredible too! There's a different pace there compared to Seoul, which makes it a refreshing and enjoyable destination. Have you been to Busan or any other places in Korea outside of Seoul?

Addition: I'm sure you know this but The song is called I'm Gonna Be (500 miles) but it felt like I walked 5000 miles. I forgot to add the song name in the email.

딱히 없다. 다 비슷비슷하게 좋지도 않고 싫지도 않다.

There isn't really one. They're all kind of similarly okay, not particularly liked or disliked.

내가 지금 살고있는 산본이 서 울을 벗어나서는 제일 좋다. Living in Sanbon (Gunpo) right now, I feel it's the best option outside of Seoul.

I love the little beach towns way up north on the east coast.

Playing in Traffic

Jon Twitch

I bought a new scooter recently, a Wacco E6S. It accelerates faster than the old one, but doesn't have quite the top speed. Also, there's a sharp limit on how much driving it can do. I've had to continue coming up with little ways to hack the traffic laws so I can speed around as much as I like.

have to swerve from the line between one lane to another. Sometimes the best way forward is along the curb on the right.

In a curbstomp, you drive through this gap with your right foot placed on the curb, allowing you to lean the bike a little more toward the right than normal driving would allow.

Sometimes your clearance between the curb and a four-wheeled obstacle is questionable. If you're curbstomping a taxi, beware of passenger doors opening suddenly. Be especially alert if it's any kind of bus. As a general rule, passengers are unlikely to exit a bus that's moving, although the doors might open before it comes to a full stop. And with a taxi dropping off passengers, it is entirely possible a passenger will open the door before the taxi comes to a complete stop. So watch out.

Also look out ahead, because that gap you're going through could narrow, especially if the road curves, either right or left, and the bus is showing any forward motion, or starts moving. If this happens, the best you can do is stop and lean further onto the curb so that the other

Hop on the cop: Whenever you do any sort of questionable maneuver that gets the attention from the filth, such as driving through a hot crosswalk, there is only one move left you can do: stop at the closest safe spot and get off your scooter as if you're parking there.

Maybe, just maybe, you'll get away with it, because there's sort of a liminal space between normal traffic and spaces where scooters park.

I could see this working, but more times than not I imagine it would fail.

Curbstomp: It's nice to be able to drive past halted or slow-moving traffic. Usually this is done by lane-splitting, and could be in order to filter forward at a stop. But sometimes you



My new and old scooters are parked next to each other in a garage, 20230812.

vehicle can roll past you.

EV poseur: A combustion-engine vehicle becomes an EV poseur when it is rolling downhill and doesn't need power to move forward, and can just glide downhill somewhat quietly. It feels good because you're not burning gas, but the second you have to power up, everyone's gonna hear. So enjoy it for the few seconds you can.

Visiting the Hilton: This is a move, sort of the reverse of what I described last time as visiting Hyoja-dong. In this, you avoid a hot crosswalk or disadvantageous red light by turning right, either onto a sidewalk, a parking lot, a parallel side road, or something else like that, and bypassing the place you're not supposed to ride through, then pulling out onto the same road again.

I've been struggling with what exactly to name this one, and might settle on a different

name later. Currently the Millennium Seoul Hilton is closed, and it's within reason to turn right into its parking lot, drive through past a red light and hot crosswalk, and keep going straight. Or, to come out and make a left turn, essentially pulling off the maneuver I identified previously as a 7-turn.

Speed bump moves

Speed bumps serve a purpose, but often that purpose is pointless and it just creates an obstacle in the road, holding up traffic.

I've always said that there are three types of speed bumps:

1) the warning kind that makes you slow down to pass over safely

2) the flat kind that scares you into slowing down but offers no driving hazard

3) the stealth kind that is unmarked but can fuck you up if it catches you by surprise

It's always good to know

how to bypass speed bumps, so here are two maneuvers.

Gutter ball: Speed bumps usually don't extend all the way to the curb at the side of the road, so you can ride into the gutter to avoid the bump without slowing down.

Posting: Posting is a horseback-riding technique, in which you are sitting down and standing up in rhythm with a horse's trotting.

Essentially how this works on a scooter is if you're going to hit a speed bump at some speed, right before doing so you rise up out of your seat, lessening the weight burden on your scooter. It will bounce up under you, sort of catching you on your way down, but it won't exactly be getting a lot of air. Then you will land more gently on the other side of the speed bump, as both you and the vehicle come down in a little more harmony than you would if no action were taken.

Dog people

Jon Twitch

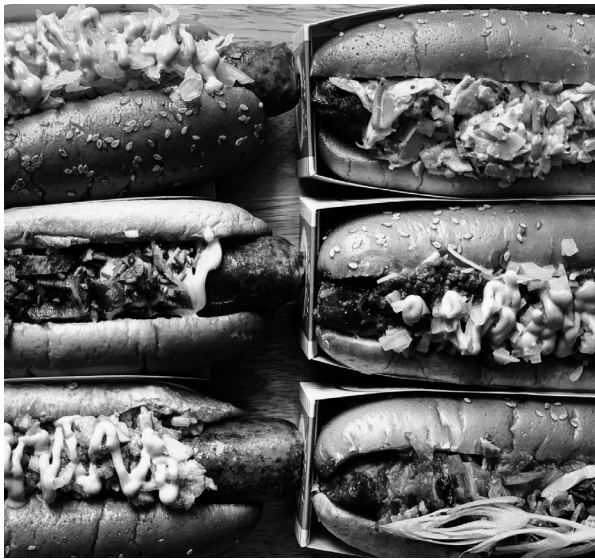
I interviewed Jake at Dogma Hot Dogs for an article for the newspaper, and I was going to republish this in Broke 33, the IT'S A FEST! issue, if he were to offer a pop-up there. He didn't, but I still wanted to publish this at some point. The pop-ups are still going strong and he does them all over.

Broke: First, how and why did you come up with the name Dogma? I think I alarmed one of my coworkers when I said I'd be writing about "Dogma."

Jake: A friend came up with the name pretty quickly. It's a pun in both Korean and English. The English is somewhat obvious. In Korean, it's "hot dog/핫도그" mashed with "ak-ma/악마," which means "devil." I like the juxtaposition of theological term being intertwined with the devil. Ultimately, though, it's a pun and a cool name. It's not to be thought too much about.

Broke: Could you tell me a little about yourself?

Jake: I was born and raised in Toledo, Ohio. The chili dog I serve was influenced by the hot dogs I grew up eating at local joints, such as Rudy's or Tony Packo's. I went to university (St. John's University) in New York City and I got a love for working in kitchens at the Upper West Side Shake Shack (when it was one of two locations). I loved the organized chaos of digging one's self out of the weeds (pile of tickets). Shortly after that, I moved home to Toledo for eight months and had lots of odd jobs. One of those was cooking for a retirement home where I got lots of



Dogma Hot Dogs / Courtesy of Jake

compliments on my chicken salad sandwiches. I moved to Korea in 2011 to teach English. Not that 2011 Korea was missing a lot of good western food, but I wasn't very close to any of it, so I taught myself, through much trial and error, how to cook. I also met a lot of people who helped me cook better and I'm forever thankful to them.

A little over a year ago, I decided I wanted to cook the one thing that I thought I had a genuine cultural connection to. That's a hot dog. Some kids grow up eating kimchi jjigae. Others have tamales. I have hot dogs. So I want to be the best hot dog man I can be.

Broke: Is a hot dog a sandwich? Jake: My instinct tells me that a hot dog is not a sandwich, for the same reasons a taco isn't a

delicious version of a hot dog. If it's very good, they will come.

As far as the hot dog scene has been up until now, Hassdog was doing this in Kyungli-dan years ago. He made great dogs and all credit goes to him for taking that first brave step. Long after I started working on this concept, I saw some others doing similar things, such as house-made sausages. I'm glad to see it and hope we can all get the interest in "craft" hot dogs up. A rising tide lifts all boats.

Broke: Can you tell me about the hot dogs you offer? And has anyone ever been offended by kimchi on a hot dog?

Jake: The last pop-up, at Groove Coffee Roasters, had the chili dog, spicy slaw dog, kimchi dog and kraut dog (it was a secret menu item). Each hot dog got a lot of praise. I heard compliments such as "this reminds me of my childhood," "this slaw is better than my aunt's," and "the kimchi dog is amazing." Every dog was loved by different people for different reasons. All four of those hot dogs will be on the menu at the July 3rd pop-up.

Also, I get some people might not want to try a kimchi dog and that's alright. To me though, it just makes sense. It's very different from, but also similar to sauerkraut. I first made a version of it eleven years ago and have been tweaking it since. If you like Korean barbecue, this dog is directly inspired by it and I hope you get that vibe when you take a bite.

Broke: In this age of supply chain instability, do hot

dogs present any particular advantages over other foods, or disadvantages?

Jake: I knew, from the start, I wanted to make most of what I serve from scratch. By doing so, I've got the advantage of being less susceptible to an unstable supply chain or relying on a generic product that my competitors can more easily copy me from. I make the sauerkraut using Korean cabbage and fermenting it on my own. I use kimchi that I made with my relatives. I grind, season and stuff beef into sheep casings. The only part of the hot dog I plan on commissioning out is the bun. Admittedly, I'm an amateur baker, so I currently use buns from Costco. I'm looking to find someone to bake a custom bun for me in the future.

Broke: What are your plans for Dogma?

Jake: I'm hoping to turn Dogma into a few things. First of all, I want to make it a food truck. Hot dogs are an ideal street food. You can hold it in the sleeve and walk with it. I hope to post up and serve at parks, events or anywhere that would have me. I also plan on creating different styles of hot dogs. Currently, I have the classic beef dog. I'll keep the sheep casings, but I plan including smoked, lamb, or pork versions to recreate flavors and combinations of other popular street foods with compatible toppings that have inspired me over the years. Maybe, at some point, we can sell the hot dog itself to other businesses, in stores or online and allow the people to make their own version of a Dogma hot dog.

Visit fb.com/DogmaKorea

Broke Crossword

ACROSS

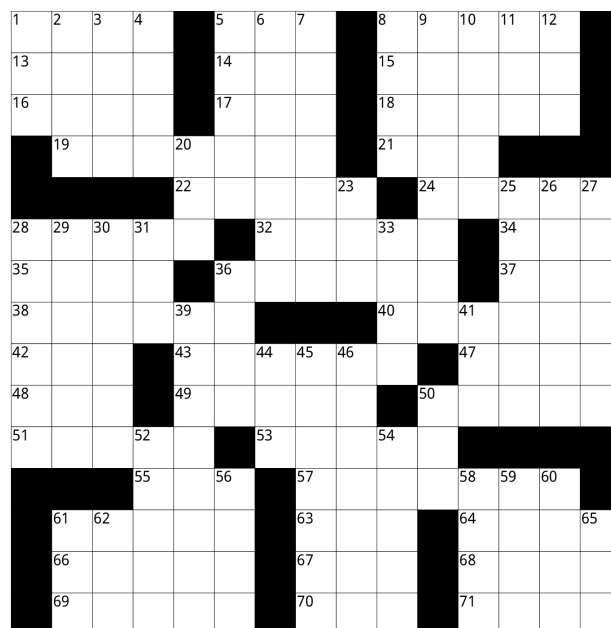
- 1 A former jazz club where Whiskey Belly played
- 5 A Will Smith movie
- 8 "Joy as an Act of Resistance" band
- 13 Pushy soap company
- 14 "A dingo ___ my baby!"
- 15 Explorer
- 16 "Othello" villain
- 17 Smidgen
- 18 City of 1 Across
- 19 ___ Man, the superhero alter identity of Greg
- 21 Opposite of WSW
- 22 Northeastern district of Seoul
- 24 Former mentally ill burger chain
- 28 Southeastern Gyeonggi Province city
- 32 Philosopher who wields a razor
- 34 Jamaican session musician Robbie who worked for Sly and Robbie
- 35 "Deal ___ Deal" (2 words)
- 36 The tattoo artist ___ to make money (2 words)
- 37 Opposite of subtract
- 38 University next to

Hongdae area

- 40 Brass instruments
- 42 "___ to Joy"
- 43 Russian RAC band
- 47 Points of attention
- 48 Curse
- 49 Hawaii's garden island
- 50 Noncanonical thing fans believe
- 51 "Coffee ___?" (2 words)
- 53 Stone and Peel
- 55 Personal area network tech
- 57 Person running @broke_ in edmonton
- 61 "___ is a Rudie"
- 63 CJ ENM cable channel
- 64 British Spider-Man's e-liquid sponsor
- 66 One of the Kardashians
- 67 Revolutionary Guevara
- 68 Vientiane's country
- 69 Stockpile
- 70 White wine aperitif
- 71 "This round's ___" (2 words)

DOWN

- 1 Meejah frontwoman
- 2 Speed skating rink
- 3 Korean double-drum played during Confucian ancestral



- rites
- 4 Dickhead
- 5 HBC's recently closed pizzeria Al ___
- 6 Dong where Gyeongnidan is located
- 7 Former name of Togul
- 8 "Why, ___ delighted!" (2 words)
- 9 1990s-era punk band from

- 18 Across
- 10 Beck song
- 11 Bambi's aunt
- 12 Sun Yat or Hun
- 20 University in Sillim
- 23 The answer is "NCS" -- I tried my best
- 25 13-step support group
- 26 Bayou music style
- 27 Turns out to be (2 words)

- 28 Pirate's chant
- 29 Wind or water
- 30 It's important for a promoter to know who this is (2 words)
- 31 Run for exercise
- 33 "___ boy!"
- 36 What 1 Down attended while in Korea
- 39 Hwaseong women's volleyball team (2 words)
- 41 "Birds ___ feather" (2 words)
- 44 Friend who introduced me to Black Air
- 45 Hog part (2 words)
- 46 Skippers song
- 50 KGB successor
- 52 Deadly disease
- 54 Li'l comic strip character
- 56 Canadian hardcore band Open ___
- 58 Director of "Untouchable Crew"
- 59 Director of "The Last Jedi"
- 50 Genre familiar to Black Air and Varim
- 61 Genre that has a lot of 40 Across
- 62 Unit of resistance
- 65 Mao ___-tung

Answers next to the soap.

Broke in Edmonton

Jon Twitch AKA Hubbard

Only a year has passed since my last visit to my hometown, the shortest interval since 2004. Before that, my previous visit had been in 2017, leaving a five-year gap until the pandemic cleared up enough for me to return in 2022. This year, my parents didn't want to come all the way to Korea, so they tempted me to go back for another visit.

Last year I had checked off almost everything on my bucket list, so I figured this year I would be able to relax at home and spend time around my parents. But it didn't exactly work out that way, as the post-pandemic reopening meant there was a lot more going on and I was able to see more of my old friends.

Prior to my voyage, I published *Broke in Edmonton* issue 1, which I'm treating as equivalent to *Broke in Korea* 34, and kicked off the @broke_in_edmonton project.

Last year when I landed in Edmonton on 20220805, the temperature was 13 degrees Celsius when I stepped outside around 6:30pm. This time, 20230818, when I came out of the airport it was 9 degrees, although a fairly heavy rain could be blamed for that. For my first week there, it never went over 20 degrees.

My hometown is a flat city, and any views of things in the distance, such as tall buildings on the horizon or a lookout over the River Valley, can be tantalising.

Untouchable Crew

On 20230819, a Saturday, my first day back, I went to the city's main IMAX theater for a screening of "Untouchable Crew," a documentary about my hometown's early breakdancing scene. The film was produced as part of the Telus Storyhive's Black Creators Edition, a project to give a platform to talented people representing underappreciated sides of the city's history.

This film was directed by Arlo Maverick, who was a grade behind me in high school. I remember seeing him performing in the school gym once, but I have more vivid memories of his tour to Korea in 2017, when he



Legal Canadian marijuana, 20230822.

performed at Zandari Festa. We reconnected and I got to meet a lot of his crew, including Natalie Meyer, a talented makeup artist who handled the photography for the film.

I went with my dad, who's not a fan of hip-hop but certainly was able to appreciate the film. Unfortunately we sat near the front, so the whole time it felt like we were squished up against the cheek of whoever was on screen. The film was easy to enjoy just from listening to the stories of these middle-aged guys talking about forming an unbeatable b-boy crew in the 1980s. There was very little archival footage, because in those days there wasn't much handheld video recording equipment, but also because they kept their moves closely guarded. Breakdancing was a visual art form that propagated in a pre-visual media world. Video footage of breakdancing moves was highly sought after, and also treated as a trade secret.

Lobster Man

On day 2, a Sunday, I had supper at the home of my grade school best friend, Greg. He lives with his wife and two kids in a nice three-storey house, the top floor of which is approximately the same size as my own apartment.

During dinner, one of his kids broke a question that had been apparently bugging them for years: "Who is Bertha?"

Bertha is the name of a large binder I used to store my original comic book series, *Lobster Man*. *Lobster Man* was a superhero character that was kind of created out of school lore sometime in junior high. Sort of like how Bruce Banner gets mad and becomes the Hulk, *Lobster Man* emerges when his regular human persona is embarrassed. That human was Greg, who used to turn red when he got embarrassed.

I took that gag and turned it into a comic series. I think there were around 40 issues, and they tended to average at least 20 pages. We even made a *Lobster Man* home movie, starring Greg as himself and as *Lobster Man*. However, he wasn't in on the joke, as he hadn't known how many *Lobster Man* comics there were at the time.

I recall in issue 1, it starts off with a cheap joke, as he sees

a person with long hair from behind, and thinking it's a girl, gooses the person, who turns out to be another one of our friends, a not-feminine dude who happened to have long hair. Haw haw. I also slipped in a remark about gay people being "sexually confused."

There were higher points later. *Lobster Man* went to Eternia, where in the heat of battle he decapitates one of *Skeletor*'s henchmen, leaving all the G-rated *He-Man* characters traumatised. In another, he goes to wherever *Peanuts* is based, revealing that grey aliens are the product of *Peanuts* characters being bred with anime characters (or possibly another configuration of those three; can't remember now).

I felt increasingly shitty about how much of it there was, so I decided the only way to atone was to surrender the whole binder, *Bertha*, to him, on one of my previous visits to my hometown. Only one copy of each comic was ever made, often on the back of grade school note pages, written in pencil I believe. He had the whole run of *Lobster Man* to do with as he wished. I recall he sent me a message like "Wow, it's a lot!"

Greg told me he held onto the binder for years, never looking inside. He brought it with him when they moved to a new house. But when he moved into the current house, he finally threw it out. I said "Good."

I was prepared for this to come up, but I wasn't expecting his kids to be the ones to bring it up. While agonising over what I could say to make it better, all I could think was that knowing him throughout our childhood had inspired my creativity deeply in ways that I can still draw on when writing. Whenever I write any story with characters who are genuine friends, I'm drawing on my friendship with him, even if like in real life my characters might often be at odds with each other.

After supper, Greg and I did what we did so much in our youth: wandered into a ravine. At some point, we came across those Lime scooters and he was able to activate two for us. We had a fantastic ride into the River Valley, at which point my own scooter died and I had to walk out. Would have been a great revenge scheme by *Lobster Man*.

On Tuesday, I visited Aaron, who had been a highly trusted show promoter back in the day we all called *Jebus*. I'd seen him last year, and left him with a bunch of things including my books. I had given him a copy of *Rapscallion's Den* last year, in which there is a character that is obviously somewhat based on him called *Moses*, who is landlord of the main characters and an unlikeable hippie. I explained to him that the intention was not to make a parody of him, but to make a



With Kamal Alaeddine before his Fringe play, 20230823.

character he could play in a TV show. This was not a *Lobster Man* situation.

Last year he seemed to have gone kind of low-key, but this year he was more active in promoting events, and it was good to see him in action. He even showed me a documentary about Edmonton's scene history, which ended up focusing mainly on how amazing he is.

There was a shooting situation at West Edmonton Mall, the megamall not far from my parents' home. It turned out to be a gang-related shootout in the parking lot. Last year, I'd passed through the same area, and remarked on the sign pointing the way to the shooting range, where a friend had died violently years earlier. This time (Wednesday now), I came back and saw that same sign saying "Hey! Turn back around to try out real firearms!" and suddenly it had a completely different meaning.

Another superhero

That night, I went to the Edmonton Fringe Festival, where another one of my superheroic friends was performing. Kamal Alaeddine, as he's known now, put on a one-man show in which he relived his sometimes traumatically confusing childhood. I had always known him as Matt, when as a half-Lebanese kid he'd been white-

passing. When he was in high school (same grade as Arlo), he became a superhero, and he shared a great deal about that experience too (you can find a great deal about that republished in *Broke* 6). When I first heard there was a superhero running (well, waddling) around my high school, I decided to step into the role of a journalist and find out more. Twenty-five years later, and I'm still careening down that path, and I always cite him as the guy who pushed me down the path of journalism (or at least my version of it).

So in my first week back, I'd already met at least two real-life superheroes, plus *Jebus*.

I'm not even counting the *Push-Up Guy*, a former street performer known for, you guessed it, doing a lot of push-ups. He used to like hanging out at high schools, and when I ran into him in the line for *Powerman*'s show, he mentioned he knew a former mayor of the city, back when the guy was in high school. He then said how he was a consultant to the government, and he'd predicted to the day when Russia would invade Ukraine, being so accurate that even his government contact was left with jaw dropped. Which is entirely believable, I suppose.

While I was in line with this weirdo, my friend Ester arrived, and I tried to block her from having to listen to this dude (who



Jebus at home, 20230822.



From right, *Jebus* with Eric of *Open Eyes* and his partner, 20230825.



Open Eyes perform at Purple City, 20230826.

I hadn't identified yet). Instead she seemed enthralled to be in his presence. Ester is really into urbanism in the city, running the FB page YEGuncovered.

There's an art installation at the side of a bridge on a busy mess of roads. It's just a pile of metal balls known as the Talus Dome. Earlier this year, some guy had figured out that the thing was sort of hollow, and he managed to squeeze inside, becoming trapped. Rescue workers had to cut him out, and the whole incident made international news. Now, four months later, I was in time to see them placing a big canopy over the dome so it could be repaired out of the public eye. I don't give a shit about this thing – I think it's stupid, and only exposes the stupidity of the city's car-based culture. But when Ester said this, I told her I'd have to quote her: "I love the balls; I think they're great."

My sister flew in from Vancouver on the Thursday, and we both partook in legal drugs. She likes talking to my parents when she's high, but I guess I'm not used to it, being only used to Canada before legalisation and South Korea. Last year, I visited her in Vancouver, but for this visit I wanted there to be fewer moving parts, so we all got together in Edmonton where we wouldn't have to worry about transportation or housing.

Purple City

For my second full weekend back, I managed to score free passes to Purple City, a music festival I'd say is comparative to Zandari Festa or Block Party. It was three days long, and

way more expensive than those two Korean events. This year's festival featured over 60 acts at eight stages within a two-block radius, although it's worth noting that the venues were nice as hell.

I volunteered as a photographer, and they asked me to cover the Downtown Edmonton Community League venue for the first two nights, and the outdoor stage in the afternoon on day 2. I didn't have to stay glued to those places, but I had to get everything there, and I could run to other venues in between. I made it, but my camera ran out of batteries during the last band on day 2 at DECL and I shot the rest on my phone.

Purple City is named after a weird ritual that appears to be unique to the city, in which people (probably but not necessarily high) go to the Provincial Capital Legislature grounds at night and stare into the powerful orange floodlights. After about a minute, if you look away, all the cityscape around you appears purple.

The festival gave me a lot of surprises, both in terms of old friends I ran into and bands that I liked.

One person I finally met was @780punkflyers, a somewhat anonymous figure who has been posting show posters from back in the day on Instagram. I had actually shouted her (I mean them) out as one of the main inspirations for @broke_in_edmonton so it was nice to meet, and be able to hand over a tangible object giving her (I mean them) a shout-out.

One of the highlights of the festival was BatScratch, a hardcore band with a seven-

year-old singer. But he only sang the first couple songs, and I showed up too late. Apparently this act was what convinced Off! (Keith Morris of Black Flag/Circle Jerks) to play the festival. I stayed long enough the first night to see the local oi band Kroovy Rookers, and saw a bit of the band Bootlicker then left, as I had to drive myself home due to my sister backing out on the first night for whatever reason.

One thing I really didn't like about Purple City was the timetable. They just provided a bunch of lists, rather than an actual timetable that lets you strategise where you'll go. It took a little extra mental labour to figure out where I had to be next. I later showed them examples of some of the Korean festivals' timetables, so hopefully next year they'll improve that.

On the second day, I showed up bright and early in the early afternoon with my sister, and we were there through the entire outdoor stage performance schedule. I remember meeting one of the main festival organisers, and remembering his face from over 20 years ago -- I'm pretty sure I used to bootleg alcohol for him.

When the festival broke for supper, my sister took me to Fu's Repair Shop, a Chinese restaurant "speakeasy" where you have to enter through a contrived secret door. These have apparently been showing up in Korea too, and I have to admit, I think they're kind of stupid. Especially since I've been in bars in an actual speakeasy situation during the pandemic. They had soju cocktails, and when I asked what kind of soju, the (white) bartender started listing fruit flavours of those macro-sojus. I told him those aren't soju and ordered something else.

When we returned for the rest of the festival, the highlight was at the free stage, for the hardcore band Open Eyes. This trio contains members from various bands I remembered from back in the day, including the Operators, Nevertheless, and Misdemeanor. I took so many photos, my camera died, leaving me unable to photograph one more band after, for which I used my smartphone.

Local UE

On Sunday, 20230827, the final day of Purple City which I totally skipped, a very beaten-up car arrived at my parents' suburban driveway to pick me up. This was driven by one of the local urban explorers. He whisked me off to a restaurant on the far side of the city, where about six experienced explorers from around the province, I believe all of whom I'd met on my 2017 visit, were assembled. We didn't try exploring anything, deciding just to meet up, hang out, and catch up. I later noticed that the mini-mall next door seemed abandon, but we didn't attempt anything.

The urban explorers in my home province work hard for the few locations they can get.



With three close friends at the Black Dog, 20230830.

If I had spent the last 20 years in this environment, I don't think I could have hacked it as one of them.

There were a lot of restaurants last year and this year that I wanted to try out, mostly for nostalgia, and after this year I got through a satisfying amount of them. I tried Arby's for the first time since 2010, and actually it exceeded my expectation. The one disappointment was they no longer served peach juice. I also had a Baconator at Wendy's, and I can see why people in Korea obsess over its time here decades ago.

Phillies vs Black Dog

For my penultimate day, I went to Whyte Ave, Edmonton's version of Hongdae, where I met up with Jim, the former main owner of Phillies in HBC, and his wife. He had moved to Edmonton a month or two previously, during which he had been accompanied by a lot of other Phillies owners/investors. Some of them had told me that during their visit, they found Edmonton boring, but when they went down to Calgary they found it more exciting. I asked Jim about this, and it turns out he lives in St. Albert, which is sort of like the Ilson of Edmonton, a satellite community right outside city limits, and these guys visiting hadn't ever gone in and seen Edmonton up close. Calgary does seem to be pretty fun these days, but Edmonton didn't get a fair chance.

We went together to Black Dog, a fairly well-known local bar, and at that point I realised it was basically the Phillies of Edmonton. It has a nice big open window where you can sit looking out, and a basement where there are shows. While we were there, a metal show was starting in the basement. I poked my head in to see what was going on, and all the younger people inside looked

at me like I was some kind of narc. Anyway, your loss, chumps.

End of the World

On my final full day, I ran some errands with my dad, dropping a spare car off at a shop for some repairs and then picking it up after. As I drove home alone, I stopped by the University of Alberta, one of the few final stops I hoped to make.

On leaving, I was stuck in gridlock traffic in a fairly narrow road. So I pulled a Hyoja-dong detour, turning left, and sped ahead, merging back in on that road further ahead, probably saving myself 45 minutes.

I also stopped by the End of the World, a scenic former site of an elevated road that brushed past the River Valley. This had been depicted in a story from "Rapsallion's Den," in which two main characters go here looking for someone possibly suicidal. They clamber down all the way to the riverbank, and then manage to climb up. Looking at it now, I'm pretty sure this would be a remarkable athletic feat to pull off.

When I got home, we went out for a farewell dinner at Sorrentino's, a local Italian restaurant. I had actually worked here as part of a student work experience program around 1994. During that time, I stuck my finger in an industrial cheese grater which sliced the tip off. My fingertip still has scars to this day. Somehow I was overcome with fatigue, almost like a pre-emptive jetlag.

And then the next day, 20230901, I began the long journey back to Korea, back to two hungry 17-year-old cats, an RAS Garden Party, a disturbing new underground space in the city center, a native Korean urban exploring community I'd never heard of before, an electric scooter, two pages a week, and a lot more.

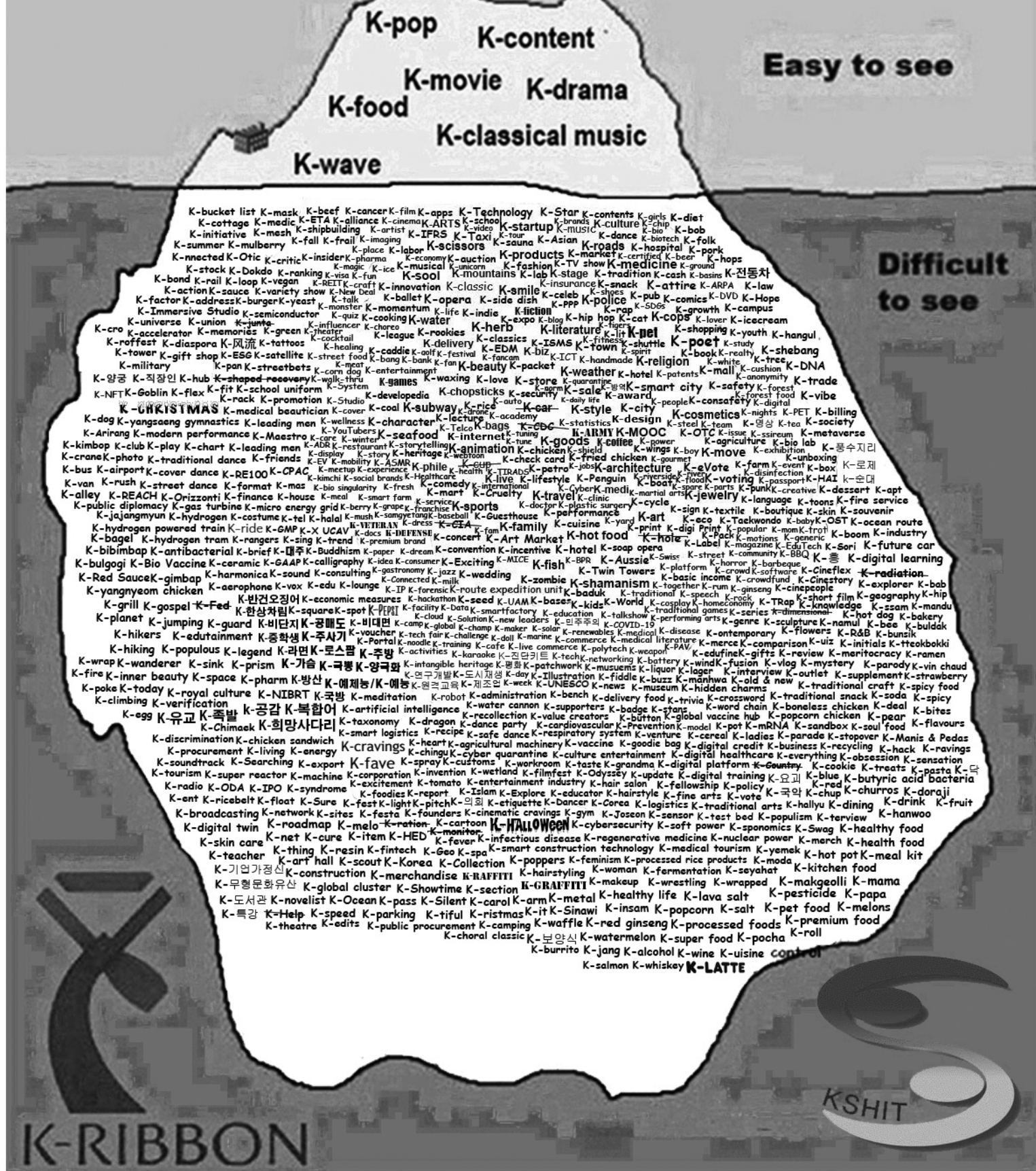


The Nurple, mascot of Purple City, 20230826.



At the End of the World, 20230903.

The K-iceberg



Visit daehanmindecline.com/k-iceberg for the latest version plus sources

The Guy with 7 Names

2023. 9. 15. 오전 7:16

Hey who runs this account? Great work btw

2023. 9. 15. 오전 10:37

Jon Dunbar

Thanks

2023. 9. 15. 오후 3:12

Hubbard!

Wow nice to hear from you ou

Ty hatwasbt supposed to Hubbard

Junber!

broke_in_edmonton



broke_in_edmonton

프로필 편집

보관된 스토리 보기

Hubbard

This account documents Edmonton during the Incline era, from 2000 to when I moved away in December 2003. All pictures taken on a Nikon Coolpix 950.

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게시물

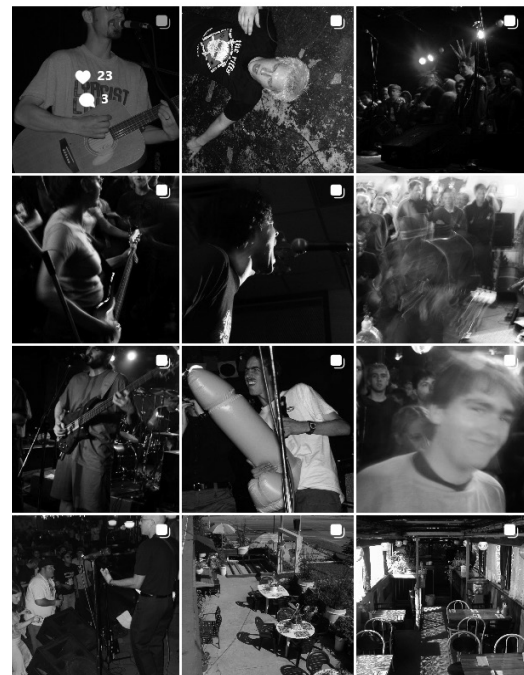
팔로워

팔로우

425

632

83



Hubbard: During the summer I started the IG project @broke_in_edmonton, sharing my old pictures from around 2000 to 2003 when I moved to Korea. The project was met with a lot of interest.

Not recognising the account, one of my old friends contacted me asking who it was. This friend had actually been in a serious bike crash the previous year, which put him

into a coma and gave him brain damage. When I said who I was, he garbled the response: "Hubbard!" He was apparently in a dark hospital room, and he meant to type Junbar, one of my many aliases which has been disclosed in a previous one of these columns.

I decided the best response was to go with it, and I changed the account name to Hubbard. It's great because it sounds like a real name, and it's absolutely not one I would have thought to come up with. But anyway, I hoped he would recognise the gesture and appreciate it. He seems to have.

John Denver: My actual name is close enough to this that sometimes Koreans just assume it's my name. It isn't.

Various immature nicknames: My surname rhymes with a lot of things, like Chocolate Bar, Candy Bar. When I was in grade school, everyone couldn't wait to make fun of my name. Meanwhile, I was in the same class with a Vietnamese guy named Harry Quach. In Korea it rhymes with various types of frozen snacks.

Dunbar: One of my smarter classmates came up with this variation on my surname, which I thought was smarter than the others for being less obvious and a little more hurtful.

Dunbarf: This one wasn't actually targeted at me, but used against my sister by a guy who she was dating at the time. Maybe that's why it stings less for me, but anyway I think it's pretty brilliant.

Yangbantal: Previously



You're looking at one person (20110329). Image courtesy of Ron Bandun

I disclosed that I was Seonbital, one of those masked urban explorers who posed in urban exploration photos with all the Hahoe masks. At that time, I had not disclosed that I was also Yangbantal.

In photos with the two of us together, it's only just me you're seeing. I set up my camera on a tripod and take multiple exposures, changing costumes to make it appear as if I'm multiple people.

For a long time, this allowed me to remove various racial hangups from some of my work. People would look at the images and not see foreignness.

Once, someone on Flickr said something like "You're not just a couple of foreigners messing around, are you?" Truthfully, I wasn't.

In order to embody Yangbantal, I had to avoid displaying my mediocre Korean language skills. This kept me a little mysterious maybe, which worked on sites like Flickr and IG. In some cases, I could create prepared statements with the help of trusted Korean accomplices.

But now that I know there is a network of Korean urban explorers out there, I know it would be impossible to deceive them, and also not

very respectful. So I think my anonymity on that project has reached its end.

Yangban: When I started joining Korean UE websites, I decided to shorten the name from Yangbantal to Yangban. It seemed more natural to take the name of an aristocratic class, rather than of a mask used for performances.

My one main regret with this change is that, while Yangbantal was a symbol of the peasant classes parodying and mocking the aristocratic class, calling myself Yangban seems like some sort of boast, like I'm claiming to be part of this old Joseon-era class.

I've found there's a disappointingly low understanding of this difference between Yangbantal and Yangban, as contemporary people see the mask as a symbol of the aristocracy rather than mocking it. In 2011, the Andong Maskdance Festival presented the slogan "Festival, make me a King!" as if to say there's some royal culture behind this tradition.

I see it as a historic example of political satire, not as a form of pretending to be higher class than the reality.

Bimonthly Bootfuck

In this day and age when Korean boys are freaking out about that thumb-forefinger pinching gesture, I've noticed there's another thing that triggers mostly foreigners, especially guys, who must be feeling insecure about something.

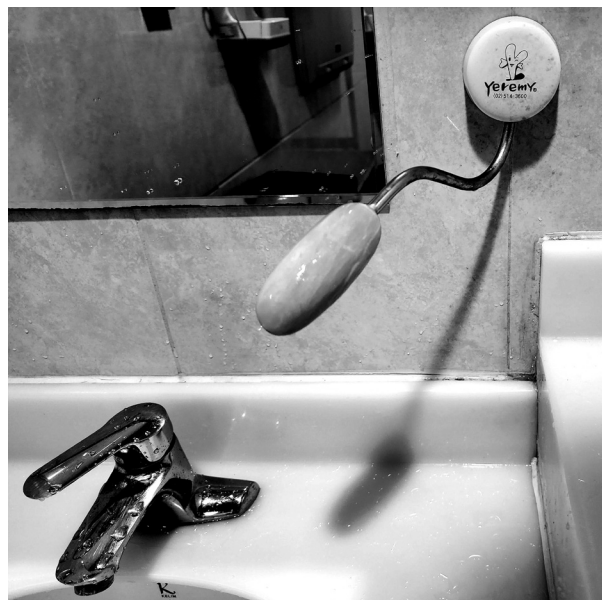
It's that kind of soap installed on a bar in some public washrooms here.

A lot of foreigners tend to see this kind of soap distribution method as unhygienic for some reason, even there's no reason to believe they would be any less hygienic than soap sitting in a dish, or liquid soap where you have to press a button or lever.

As well, I've noticed a lot of

remarks made about the sexual nature of the soap, as if it reminds people of sex acts such as giving a handjob. That's simply magical thinking, and I believe this is the real reason why some people subconsciously make that connection that it's unhygienic, because it would be unhygienic to give a handjob in a public washroom. Although I guess it would be anywhere, and at least in a washroom you have access to soap and water right there.

This is a punk zine run by a 44-year-old, so I'm not going to tell you to grow up. Instead, just lather up, think of England, and make sure your damn hands are clean.



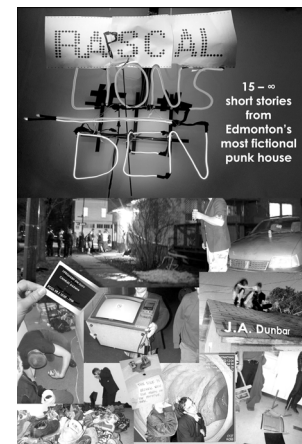
Soap seen at a train station or somewhere, 20231202

65 TSE
62 OHM
61 SKA
50 DOOM
59 RIAN
58 ARLO
56 EYES
54 ABNER
52 EBOLA
50 FSB
46 KIMUCHI
45 HAMMOCK
44 SUE
41 OFA
39 IBKALTOS
36 IKAA
33 ATTA
31 JOG
30 ONNEXT
29 ERODER
28 YOHOO
27 ENDSIN
26 ZYDECO
25 ALANON
23 NCS
20 NNS
12 SEN
11 ENA
10 LOSER
9 DRUNKMOB
8 IDBE
7 BEDROCK
6 ITAEWON
5 MATTO
4 KNOB
3 NOGO
2 OVAL
1 MAI
DOWN
71 ONME
70 KIR
69 AMASS
68 LAOS
67 CHE
66 KHLOE
64 RIOT
63 OCN
61 SOOTY
57 HUBBARD
55 BLE
53 EMMAS
51 ORTEA
50 FANON
49 KAUAI
48 HEX
47 FOCL
43 BASHKA
42 ODE
40 TBONES
38 HONGIK
37 ADD
36 INKSTO
35 ORNO
34 LYN
32 OCCAM
28 YEOLU
24 KRAZE
22 NOWON
21 ENE
19 LOBSTER
18 BUSAN
17 TAD
16 IAGO
15 DRONE
14 ATE
13 AVON
8 IDLES
5 MIB
1 MONK
ACROSS
ANSWERS
CROSSWORD
BROKE

Yes, Broke is not just a zine, but also a very small publishing company.

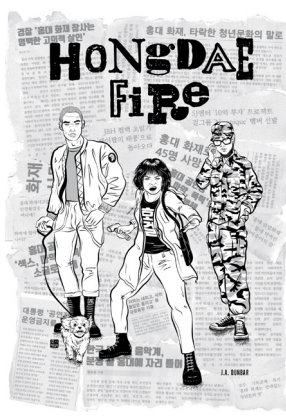
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1. RAPSCALLION'S DEN

A collection of short stories set in a punk house in Edmonton. Also has a "Choose Your Own Adv — I mean Path" story where you're a cop trying to shut it down.



2. HONGDAE FIRE

A novel set in Seoul in the 2000s. Survivors of a catastrophe struggle to get justice for their friends and try to keep the punk scene alive.



3. YANGBAN NATION

Photo book by Yangbantal, an anonymous urban explorer. Cranes, abandonments, subway tunnels, drains, and rooftops.



4. CATS ON KEYBOARDS

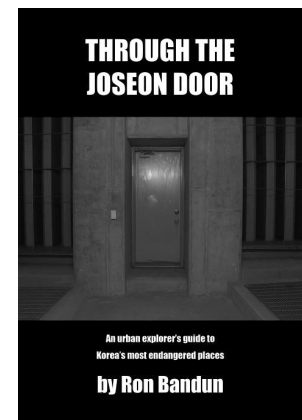
A paper zine written mostly by cats. Why is this our best seller?

(₩10,000 or 1 can of cat food)



5. SEONBI CITY

Photo book by Seonbital, a formerly anonymous urban explorer. He does the same thing as Yangbantal but with a worse attitude.



6. THROUGH THE JOSEON DOOR

A collection of 48 essays and one short story on adventures in the forbidden areas of urban Korea, written by Ron Bandun who's definitely a real person.



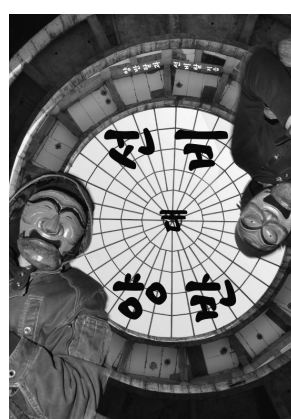
7. Bune's Home

Bunetal gets her own photo book, but it's all about the domestic setting. Is that a bit sexist?



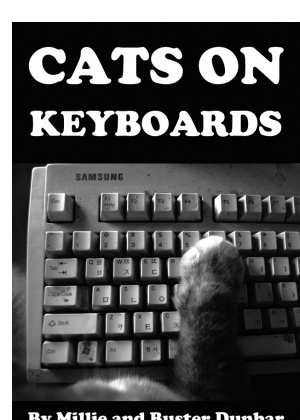
8. YANGBAN'S KOTE

The next Yangbantal book is an ode to Insadong KOTE. It was distributed at an art exhibition held there. They probably haven't found all the copies hidden all around the place.



9. YANGBAN VS SEONBI

Yangbantal and Seonbital are back, and this time they're at each other's throats.



10. CATS ON KEYBOARDS

Everyone kept buying the little paper zine, so I made this into a full-size book, you cat-enabling weirdos.