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Congratulations, MoYO Presidential Medalists!

Robert Levine

Alison Stine

Two out of seven ain't bad!



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Dirge for a Restroom

the search for a progressive potty rages on

I'll avoid the usual introductions. Tom and I are new, but the issue here is an old and very depressing one. The subject I mean, not the magazine. MoYO is packed to the hilt with delightful social commentary, quirky stories, and the same charming controversy that have sustained us thus far. But the subject, my topic, is indeed depressing.

Perhaps no one else has noticed, but the finest resource on Denison's gorgeous campus has been stolen from our helpless student populace. I am, of course, referring to the unisex bathroom in the Bandersnatch. Long a campus hangout, the Bandersnatch unisex bathroom became a shrine of sorts to the ideals of respect and community for which this college stands. Patrons often refreshed themselves within the walls of that warm and inviting space after consuming the various combinations of boiling water and "magic dust" that the 'Snatch proudly offers. After a long day forced to cower within the confines of oppressive single-sex bathrooms, students and faculty alike rejoiced in the liberation the Bandersnatch restroom offered. Men could be men, women could be women, pets could be pets! Everyone had a home in the Bandersnatch bathroom of old.

Not so today. While the remodeling does have a pleasant odor, and the sink (in the men's room anyway) is quite tidy and efficient, something beautiful has been lost. That something, in the case of the men's room, is women, and vice versa. Today people cross their legs tightly on the comfy couches of yesteryear while listening to open mic performances or the student-worker's favorite Indie rock band. They long for the days when men and women will perform excretion united once more. Many have admitted that they have given up on peeing since the Man told them who they can and can't pee with. This urination apathy is the greatest threat to student action on our campus! What can students accomplish with a full bladder and an empty heart?

There are, of course, a number of options. We as a

student body could follow the lead of late-night party-goers and do our dirty little business outside the 'Snatch, on the wall near the parking lot. We could boycott the Bandersnatch altogether. We could even hide pick-axes and shovels in our backpacks and send that dividing wall tumbling down in Berlinesque triumph. All of these are ideas that other campus organizations may implement, but the one that MoYO advocates is so simple, it's beautiful. Just ignore the signs on the door. Maybe it says "Men", maybe it says, "Women". It doesn't matter. It could say "Pets" on those bathroom doors for all I care. Just walk right in, fellow Denisonians! Or, if you're daring, deliberately use the bathroom reserved for the opposite sex. When they ask you why you're in there, tell them it wasn't your idea to create a sexist society and you want no part of it. Eventually, individual action like this will spread to enlighten all Bandersnatch patrons and employees, and someday,



those signs will come down. Maybe then the walls will follow.

Now, I know what you're thinking: *How is going to the bathroom with members of the opposite sex going to affect my education?* Good question, my friend. I have the answer right here. While the administration is proud of the way a residential college promotes community and friendship, this community is split down the middle when it comes to restrooms.

Residential Life staffers brag about the way the learning environment extends beyond the classroom and into the residence halls; but that learning community is segregated as soon as somebody feels nature calling. It's all right to be scared, faithful readers. Tell them your pets don't worry about what gender is near when they perform their excretory processes. And keep in mind the beautiful courage of Rosa Parks when she said, "No, I'm not moving to the back of the bus. I'm sitting right here."

In short, I call for a revolution. Join me as we liberate the Bandersnatch restrooms for universal use. I've got a vision, a beautiful vision, of the day when all bathrooms are nongendered, when men and women can gossip in the stalls, when we can all trade dirty jokes under the cool glow of fluorescents. We must reclaim our restroom rights before the administration cracks down further. Who knows what they might try next? Prohibiting women and men from living in the same suites? Let's stop this madness before it spreads.

Chris Million
Co-Editor In Chief

The White Crow

by Dan Fisher

Compassionate Activism in a Tibetan Community-in-exile

"The more and more you listen, the more and more you hear; the more and more you hear, the deeper and deeper your understanding becomes..."

- Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

Hiking down the dirt roads of the town that they call "Little Lhasa," it is easy to forget that you are in India and not actually in or around Tibet's capital city. It is as if Dharamsala, India, has been plucked from Tibet (or even Nepal or Bhutan) and dropped here.

You're reminded that this is, in fact, truly a part of India by the occasional cow or two that you run into while circumambulating the path around His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's temple, or by the businesses outlining the main part of town which are maintained by Indian families, as opposed to Tibetan ones. Local news serves as a reminder, too. In fact, the proprietors of one of the camera shops by the bus stand led a fizzled nationalist movement not long ago, in which they tried to expel the Tibetans from here.

Considering your surroundings can keep you in check as well. The Himalayas reach this far, but there's lots of green and it's not nearly as cold. But still, when you're seeing peaceful Tibetan faces ninety percent of the time, it's easy to forget where you are.

Since 1959, when the Chinese Communist Party forcibly invaded Tibet and violently reclaimed it as a part of China, the village of Dharamsala and the abandoned military outpost of McLeod-Ganj (which are unofficially known together by travelers as "Dharamsala") in Himachal-Pradesh, India have served as the receiving center for the thousands of exiled and escaped Tibetans.

The Dalai Lama was the first to escape there after the Indian government made the land available to the Tibetans. It was decided that the area was best suited for what the Tibetans were used to, as it is a mountainous region not too far from Tibet itself. The majority of Tibetans who have made the difficult journey from the devastated country have made Dharamsala their home (including, most recently, the Karmapa Lama).

I happened to be in India last year on Antioch Education Abroad's Buddhist Studies in Bodh Gaya (Bihar) program. For the independent research component of the program, I chose to spend a month in Dharamsala researching vegetarianism in exiled-Tibetan culture. As Tibet's religious heritage is part of the Mahayana (or, "Universal") Vehicle of Buddhism, believers follow the texts known as sutras. In these texts, the case is made that eating meat is a violation of the first Buddhist precept of "no killing." The eighth chapter of the Lankavatara Sutra even outlines all of the Buddha's reasons for vegetarianism, which include avoiding meat-eating because there is no way of knowing if a being that you might

eat was your mother in a previous life. But for Tibetans, following the Buddha's prescription of vegetarianism has been difficult because of how bleak and difficult the land itself is. Tibet is frigid and mountainous, allowing few things to be grown there. For its people—particularly the nomadic pastoralists—to survive, meat and animal products must be eaten. But since Tibetan Buddhist philosophy has always favored

a meatless diet and the Dalai Lama has been a staunch advocate (though not a practitioner) of vegetarianism since fleeing Tibet, I was interested to see if the community in exile—in a very different environment, with all of the food resources available in India which had not been in Tibet—was moving towards a vegetarian diet. It was there, while doing my research, that I met a white crow.

For Tibetans, the new locale of Dharamsala, India, would seem ripe for putting into practice an act of compassion that has historically been impossible for them to perform. Strolling through McLeod-Ganj, one notices signs of a turning tide, such as the large number of vegetarian restaurants. There's the Gakyi Vegetarian Health Food Restaurant, which offers traditional Tibetan cuisine that is entirely vegetarian (including their famous muesli). A few doors down the street from there is the Shangri-La Restaurant, another diner offering purely vegetarian Tibetan dishes. The Shangri-La also enjoys the distinction of being maintained by

Continued on Page 18



Dan Fisher

billboard on Dalai Lama Temple Road

Indie Film for Indie Spirit

“Cinema is the most important art.” -Lenin

by Laura Barrett

In addition to most film enthusiasts and cinema majors here at Denison University, the founders of the Cleveland Cinematheque would agree with that profound statement. The Cleveland Cinematheque was founded 15 years ago in 1984 by Denison graduate John Ewing ('73). The first movies were shown at Case Western Reserve University in 1985, and in 1986 the office space was moved to the Cleveland Institute of Art where the films have been shown ever since.

When Ewing attended Denison University, the Theatre and Cinema departments were under one discipline. As a result, Ewing majored in Theatre and Cinema, as well as English.

“When I was in college, I took film courses from Brasmer and Stout, mostly film history classes and independent studies. Bussan was still in Canton, OH, my hometown and his,” Ewing recalls.

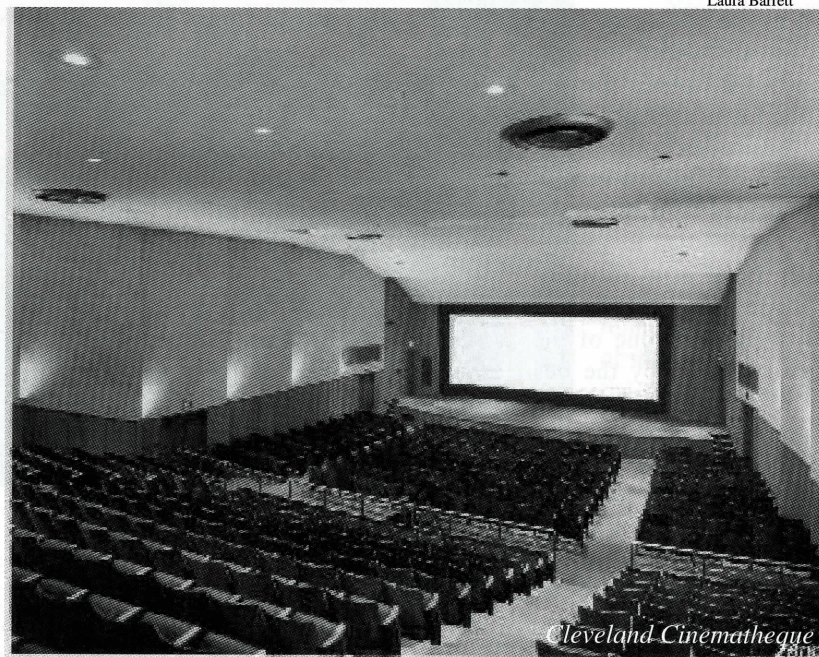
While receiving his education at Denison, Ewing served as film critic for *The Denisonian* and was an active member in the Denison Film Society. Denison University also saw Ewing's super-8 short, “The Myth of Narcissus” premiere in Ace Morgan Theatre in 1973. “It proved a surprise hit,” Ewing recalls of the film. Furthermore, he spent a semester interning in the film department at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Despite all of this, Ewing knew he did not want to become a filmmaker. After his liberal arts education, he went on to hold the position of district circulation manager for a daily newspaper in Chardon, OH. After that, Ewing worked as a classical music expert in Cleveland and then became registration assistant at Stark County District Library, where he ran the Canton Film Society. This job would prove beneficial for Ewing's future endeavors as film programmer and director of the Cleveland Cinematheque.

Ewing has served as the Cleveland Cinematheque's director for 15 years. “I was frustrated that many of the great movies of the past and present that were coming to other big cities in America were by-passing Cleveland. I stick with it because it's rewarding to present these movies,” Ewing said.

The Cleveland Cinematheque is run by Ewing and Tim Harry, who serves as its assistant director. Harry, who attended Kent State University and majored in Film Studies, is also an independent filmmaker (mostly experimental and documentary) and has lived and worked in New York and San Francisco. Harry assists in promoting the films and managing the theatre where they are shown. He also supplies and catalogues stills, posters, and films in the Cinematheque's archives. Ewing is responsible for choosing, booking, and shipping the films that are eventually shown at the Cinematheque. Other responsibilities that tend to fall on the shoulders of these two cineastes include publicizing, lobbying for coverage, supervising ticket sales and projectionists and paying the bills. “Whatever needs to be done to make the program work, we both will do,” Harry said.

From my internship at the Cleveland Cinematheque this summer, I saw first-hand how the Cinematheque was run and all that it entailed. I realized how distribution of the monthly member mailings and calendars were so important



in maintaining the support from the Cinematheque audience. I saw the eclectic press releases, movie stills and posters in the archives, from *The Dreamlife of Angels* to *The Apple*. I overheard how Ewing would negotiate bringing a film to the Cinematheque, or how Tim Harry would decide to write a public announcement for a film series. All of this for the sake of cinema.

I have seen many programs come and go this past summer, including “British Cinema: The Changing of the Guard”, “Brazil: Cinema Novo and Beyond”, “The Magic of Miyazaki,” and recently, “Alfred Hitchcock: Centennial 1899-1999.” It is not hard to see that the Cleveland Cinematheque is dedicated to bringing a wonderful array of films every month. It is no wonder why so many are flocking to Cleve-

land to see a newly restored version of a film, for example, or the Ohio premiere of another. “Cleveland is the best film city in the state in terms of what gets shown here,” Ewing said.

Just how does the Cleveland Cinematheque manage to bring such films to Cleveland? 85% of the Cinematheque's budget comes from ticket sales, 10% from the Ohio Arts Council and 5% from memberships. Despite the lack of a publicity budget, the Cinematheque manages to draw a crowd of approximately 600 people on the weekend. The calendar of films to be shown is what draws locals. “We rely on the power of our calendar, which is distributed to 9,000 people, mostly locals. Another 9,000 are placed in coffee shops, college bookstores, resale shops, record stores, art and live theatre joints, and just about anywhere else that folks who like movies will take notice,” Harry said. Harry and Ewing work together on the bi-monthly calendar which features the dates, times and descriptions of the films to be shown for those two months.

The Cinematheque brings films from France, England, Brazil, India, China, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Italy, Japan, etc. and also showcases the talents of U.S. and more specifically, local filmmakers' works. Harry offers that it is all about the want, not necessarily the need, to develop an audience.

“You have to take chances and start the trend, to show people what is cool by putting it out there. For example, the Cinematheque was the first place in Cleveland (or for that matter in the U.S.) to show Jackie Chan 12 years ago,” Harry said.

The Cinematheque has had further success in showing films from India. “Bollywood is a bigger industry than Hollywood and some of their filmmakers are real masters,” Harry said. Animation has also done well, including *Spike & Mike's Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation*. “The college crowd has a taste for it because of the obvious, due to the raunchiness and looseness of the films,” Harry said. October 28-31, 1999 drew over 1,500 people to the Russell B. Aitken Auditorium to see the films of the Japanese Animation series at the Cleveland Cinematheque. Some of these included *Kiki's Delivery Service* and the acclaimed epic, *Princess Mononoke*, both from Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki.

The Avant-Garage Film and Music Festival features rare films from various countries and directors. This program tends to do well because people want to escape from the movies dominating the multi-plexes and experience the films of independent filmmakers who have something to say in an unconventional way. Harry, an independent filmmaker himself, explains that having live music accompany an experimental film produces a “hypnotic” effect. Documentaries on bands (like director Grant Lee's *Meeting People is Easy*) tend to draw a good crowd of fans as well. Other programs that have done quite well in the past include: The Robert Bresson Retrospective in February of 1998; Leni Riefenstahl Series in September of 1994; Krystof Kieslowski's “The Decalogue.”

Ewing and Harry are already working together on plan-

ning the upcoming film programs for these next few months. Future endeavors may include: Hou Hsiao-Hsien Retro, Truffaut Series, and documentary films. A Michael Antonioni Retrospective is something both Ewing and Harry are extremely motivated to bring to the Cinematheque in the near future. Furthermore, there may be a series showcasing the works of up-and-coming French filmmakers. “There seems to be a second wave going on and much of the work I have seen lately is quite exciting,” Harry said.

While Ewing and Harry both agree that the establishment of the Cleveland Film Society and the Cleveland Cinematheque, as well as the annual Cleveland International Film Festival are helping to further the support and energy behind the film scene, productivity is a different story. “Here, everyone wants to be a star,” Harry said. In recalling his days spent in San Francisco, Harry said it was possible for anyone to take a cinema production course and rent equipment for a fraction of the cost it is today.

What needs to be done so that the “seventh art” not only be viewed and critiqued but continue to flourish in its creation? “Universities and industry should make available the means to further one's education, make film stock and processing readily available, have access to equipment,” Harry offered. Furthermore, a fund for visual artists should be established - much like the Ohio Arts Council, yet only pertaining to the art of cinema. The city of Cleveland should also promote itself as a location for film production and give more media coverage to the programs offered by the Cinematheque. All of these will undoubtedly lead to a stronger and more united community of filmmakers and film enthusiasts in northeast Ohio.

Ewing offers some words of wisdom to young filmmakers out there, “Don't let anybody stop you from realizing your ambitions. But part of the preparation for doing what you want to do (i.e. making a film) is to *know* what has been done before, and what is happening now.” The Cleveland Cinematheque is just the place to immerse oneself in these films. ☺

Admission to each film is \$6 or two for \$10

Members see each film for \$4
Want to become a member? Contact the Cleveland Cinematheque:
The Cleveland Institute of Art
11141 East Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44106

Or check out their website at www.cia.edu (click on campus).

American Interview

Making a film about making a film: a cozy chat with two independent filmmakers

by Robert Levine

American Movie is the story of Mark Borchardt, a live-wire resident of suburban Milwaukee who puts all his time, energy and funds into making movies. The film is also the story of Chris Smith and Sarah Price, two fellow midwesterners and kindred spirits, who spent four difficult years bringing Borchardt's quest for the American Dream to the big screen. The result is one of the most incisive, touching and hilarious documentaries ever produced about American life. *American Movie* went on to win the Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival. Smith and Price recently spoke with a *Coven* of Denison cinema students about the making of their movie, the ins and outs of independent film distribution, and the shortcomings of films about Gilbert & Sullivan.

Question: How did you get into filmmaking?

Chris: I started doing films and videos in high school, and then started making super 8 movies. I went through film school in Iowa, which is where I met Sarah. We took our first 16mm classes together. After I graduated, I made 3 or 4 short films, and was trying to get them into film festivals. After I didn't get into 3 or 4, I just felt like it was a waste of time and a waste of money. I felt like the kind of films I was making weren't ever going to get into festivals. So then I decided to just make a longer film. I enrolled in the University of Iowa for a 2-credit class and then used their equipment to make [Smith's first film] *American Job*. We weren't supposed to make a feature. The longest film they allowed was twenty minutes. So Sarah and I would work secretly every night, from midnight to 7 in the morning. Our friend Doug was the lookout, and when the faculty would come in, he would tell us and we would run out the back door.

I was editing the film there, but they didn't have production in the summer. The visiting artist there, a filmmaker named Kathy Cook, told me about Milwaukee, so I sent the cut of *American Job* up to the university. The head of the

department there, who was much more easy-going, really loved the film. He invited me to come up, and pretty much gave me the keys to the department. I started living in their editing room for four months, and Sarah came up to help me edit. We got the print done at the eleventh hour, sent it in to Sundance, and never heard from them again...there's basically three festivals in North America that you want to premiere a feature film at: Sundance, New Directors, New Films, and Toronto. I didn't get into Sundance or New Directors, New Films, so I had the same theory that I had with my shorts, where I felt like I should just go make another movie instead of wasting time trying to get this film out there. So next summer I started working on *American Movie*.

Question: When did you start filming Mark?

Chris: This first time I filmed Mark, he was going to the Toronto Film Festival with his Mom and Dad to try and raise money for this film he wanted to make called *Northwestern*, so I went up there with him and the same sound guy from *American Job*. I didn't know if it was going to be a short film or a long film, I just felt like I wanted to get out there and start filming something again. When I got back to Milwaukee from Sundance, I shot Mark on this radio show in October '95, and that's when this project really got more interesting and I thought it was turning into something bigger,

so I asked Sarah to collaborate on it. At the time we thought it we only be a six-month project, because Mark was bound and determined to make *Northwestern* in six months. When you see *American Movie*, you see it ends up taking him two years and he doesn't even end up making the film he started off trying to make, but it all makes sense in Mark's world.

Q: How long did it take for

you to get comfortable filming him constantly?

Chris: When you look at the early footage, then compare it to the footage at the end, there's this incredible evolution. We shot for two years, and there's this relationship that develops between Mark, myself, Sarah and his family and friends...you notice, for the first ten minutes of the film, Mark is putting on this show for the people he's trying to get to work on his film, but he's also trying doing it for us. He's a great salesman, and he's just playing up to the camera. But as time went on, you really start to see this other side of him. It took a couple months, but about fifteen minutes into the movie, you see this transition where you start to see Mark and all these people as humans, as opposed to these caricatures or stereotypes.

By the second year, we were spending six to seven days a week at their house, twelve to sixteen hours a day. We

were just there all the time, and they got to know us. His mother would put out plates for us at dinner. It wasn't that weird for them, because Mark was always making films. He'd been making films for fifteen years before we came along, shooting in his kitchen, his backyard, using their house as a set. So when we came along it was just an extension of what was already going on.

Q: What was your shooting ratio? How much film did you use?

Chris: We shot 70 hours of film.

Sarah: And there was 105 hours of audio.

Q: So, you shot 70 hours of film, but obviously you were there for a lot longer. The two hours we see in the film, are those just the high points?

Chris: We wanted to make a film so that when you left the theater, you feel like you went through the same experience we thought we witnessed in those two years. It definitely wasn't all the high points. We had to delete some good scenes that just didn't fit the narrative flow of the film. We did take the highlights, in the sense that we took stuff that was interesting or funny...

Sarah: ...or meaningful.

Q: How did you know when to stop shooting?

Chris: At first, we didn't know where the end would be, but there was this really natural ending to the film that came about. We didn't know if we were going to be in for another two years, but after this climactic event happened, it was so obvious. The energy and excitement that was there before just went through the floor. So we just did final interviews and stepped back.

Sarah: There was just a natural feeling that things had come to a close. And we knew that if we kept filming, we would start on a new chapter in Mark's life, and having already filmed him for two years...

Chris: The movie is more about Mark's family and his relationships rather than what happens, plot wise, and we felt like we had the movie we wanted. We had covered the relationships, the friendship, the loyalty, so whether we followed Mark for another year or not, I don't think it would have made the film a richer experience.

Q: What did you do for funding?

Chris: It was a very difficult movie to raise money for. I just started with nothing.

Sarah: You had like ten cans of film left over from *American Job*.

Chris: When I was at Sundance, I met a filmmaker named Jim McKay, who did a movie called *Girls Town*. He saw *American Job* and really liked it and was interested in what I was doing next. So I sent him the footage of Mark from Toronto, which he really liked. He is a partner in a company with Michael Stipe of REM, and they gave us \$25,000

Cameras and Cappuccinos

by Andy Hiller

For two months over the summer of 1998 I was a post production intern for a Miramax movie called *The Yards*. They told me it would be coming out by this fall, but I haven't heard anything about it since I left or seen any trailers. I have been sworn to secrecy on the details of the movie, but I think I can safely say it stars Marky Mark, Charlize Theron, Joaquin Phoenix, and James Caan. It is about corruption and bribery and murder. It was shot on location in New York and New Jersey.

The editorial was on the twelfth floor of the Magno Sound and Video building on 49th Street and Seventh Ave near Times Square. The building leased out space on its 22 floors to people editing TV shows, TV movies, documentaries and other big-budget feature length films. It had screening rooms, editing facilities and equipment, video transfer equipment, DAT transfer equipment and all of the things that you need to edit motion pictures.

I was referred to the project by editor Colleen Sharpe, who has worked with Jonathan Demme several times to the assistant editor Justine Halliday. She hired me without pay to be an errand-boy. I was to do things like get coffee, photocopy reports and run to the production office at Wall Street and to Technicolor to pick up film. Justin's job as assistant editor to Jeff Ford was to not disturb him while he edited the movie together on an Avid computer, and to synchronize all the pieces that needed to move for Jeff to do his job. Justin and Jeff both liked cappuccinos.

There were two apprentice editors, Andrew Buckland and Byron Wong. Justine, Drew, and Byron worked incessantly synchronizing daily rolls, matching the sound and picture of movies together before the film was transferred to the computer and edited. Each day of shooting there were between four and twelve dailies. At the end of shooting there were more than 1000 daily rolls. Each roll of sound and picture was transferred first to video and then digitized into the computer. Drew drank Chai tea and Byron drank Lattes.

Technicolor printed the rushes daily and kept the negatives stored for later use. The production office synchronized what was happening at the shoots and what was happening in the post-production office. When I arrived every day at 10:00 much of the work was already done.

Continued on page 20

to buy film. We used that to continue through the first year.

Sarah: We also spent a lot of money with credit cards. By the end of shooting we had 9 credit cards with close to \$28,000 on them.

Chris: We also did production jobs all the while. We shot the Michael Moore film *The Big One*; Sarah did sound and I did camera. So we used that money from the BBC, and I shot something for Nintendo, and I did a lottery commercial in Wisconsin. Just odds and ends production jobs that were really small time commitments that paid really well. Any money we could scrape together went into the film. We were living very cheap.

Sarah: We didn't even have enough money to process the film. We actually didn't see our footage until a couple of months after we were done shooting. Chris had an apartment with a balcony on it, and it is pretty cold in Milwaukee, so we had almost all of our shot cans sitting out on his porch with a

tarp over them.

Q: Was it hard to leave Mark to do these side projects?

Chris: Well, the Michael Moore thing was good because it was two weeks, a consolidated length of time, that happened to line up when Mark was editing full time. Of anything to miss, that was definitely it, because it was just him sitting at a Steenbeck. But Mark would work with us. He was willing to wait on certain things. It wasn't that we were controlling what was happening, but we didn't have problems asking him to wait, because we had to take those jobs to make money. But it was also frustrating—we would have liked to have had the money to pay ourselves to film the whole time, but we just didn't have that luxury. But I think this was something really great in the sense that we were struggling to make our film while Mark was struggling to make his. I think if we had had a lot of money, it could have created an awkward situation. I think it worked to our advantage, to be in that same situation, because it seemed more fair.

Q: How did you meet Michael Moore?

Chris: He had seen *American Job* and really liked it. When he was thinking about doing this film about his book tour, a friend of ours who worked for him suggested he use us.

Sarah: We were definitely hired guns. I get that question sometimes, how he influenced our filmmaking style. But there just wasn't much influence. Our styles are totally different—he likes to swoop in and create confrontation. But we both loved *Roger and Me*, and it was fun to meet him. He sleeps like two hours a night, works very hard.

Q: *The Big One* was shot on video. With film being so expensive, why didn't you shoot *American Movie* on video?

Chris: I get this question

often. The reason was, when we started, DV (digital video) wasn't out yet. Hi-8 was there, but I just didn't like it. It was so unstable. Plus, for me, there's something about shooting film. Personally, I feel like it adds a level of authenticity to what you're shooting. It gives it this authority.

There were two really positive things that came out of shooting on film that I don't think we realized at the time. With Mark, when you see him in the movie, you realize we could have shot 500 hours of video of this guy. But because we were shooting on film, and couldn't afford it and were constantly running out of it, we were forced to make editing decisions as we went along. Plus, there's this energy and electricity that I think comes from shooting film. It's not like shooting video; it's like...

Q: Like you're shooting something valuable.

Chris: Right. There's a lot of things you have to set up, it's so delicate, and I think the people you interview, they kind of pick up on that, and perk up.

Sarah: Well, with this, it also made sense because of Mark's passion for film. He sort of has this nostalgic sense for the cinema, so it seemed appropriate.

Q: So, with all this money you were spending, were you confident your film would be picked up? How did you take that leap of faith?

Chris: Well, after a while, you don't have a choice. We were going to go bankrupt whether we spent all that money or we didn't. There's no way we could get out of the debt we were in, so we felt like we should just go for it, in that sense. But we thought we had a pretty amazing story. If the edit didn't come together, I don't think we would have spent all the money we did to get it to Sundance. We spent \$350,000 to get it to Sundance. And then, after Sony bought it, we spent another \$450,000

dollars.

Q: You spent that much after you sold the film?

Chris: When you sell a film, it's not something where you just unload it and say goodbye. It becomes something you deal with almost on a daily basis. Basically when you sell your film, the distributor gives you a 25-page type written document of things that you have to give them to "deliver" the film. You don't get paid till you deliver the film, so it's a weird Catch-22 situation where you don't get paid till you deliver, but it takes six months to deliver, and you need the money that they're gonna pay you to give them all the elements they need.

Sarah: They pay you incrementally, but it's not enough to cover the costs.

Chris: So after it was picked up, we edited for another three months while we worked out some legal issues, then we began the whole process of blowing the film up to 35, developing the ad campaign, and doing the new sound mix.

Q: How much did you sell the movie for?

Chris: \$825,000. The cost of blowing up the film and delivering it to Sony brought us up to \$600,000. So there was about \$200,000 left over. The way the deal was setup, and this is a pretty standard deal for films, the investors get 50% of the profits, and the creative side gets 50%, and the investors get paid back first. The investors get their investment back plus half the profits divided by their percentage. From there, we divided it between ourselves, Mark, his family and their kids. Everyone in the film we gave a percentage.

Q: So once you've sold it to Sony, they own it?

Chris: For twenty years. They license it to you for twenty years, then you get it back after the twenty. But

Sony is notorious for working with filmmakers. I mean, we took our own photos for the poster. When we didn't like theirs, they let us pick the poster that we went with. They talk to us about the ads - if there is a quote in the ad we

“There's no way we could get out of the debt we were in, so we felt like we should just go for it, in that sense.”

don't like, they take it out. We approved the trailer. They're very filmmaker friendly, and they're known for that. Of course, they're also known for being cheap, but a lot of people will go to Sony for less money. Our friends did *Hoop Dreams* for Fine Line, and the movie did \$20 million, and they never saw a profit, because Fine Line just buried all the money.

We usually don't talk about numbers and what we sold the movie for, but in a situation like this... I know that when I was in school, I would have loved to have known the facts about what people make, because I was under the impression that with any movie that went to the local theatre, the people who made it were millionaires. When *American Job* went to Sundance, I was like, "If this movie sells, would it sell for like a million dollars?" (laughs) I just didn't know. I met the guy who won Sundance the year before, and he said he made \$2,000 off of that movie, and it won Sundance, got picked up by a big distributor, and was coming out on video. That's when I realized there isn't a lot of money to be made in independent film. We got really lucky that we made any profit.

Q: The film had kind of a sporadic national release. It just now came out in Columbus. Why did Sony choose to release it this way?

Chris: When it opened in No-

vember in New York and LA, it was really poor timing. It came out at the same time as *American Beauty*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Being John Malkovich*, *Dogma*, *The Straight Story*, *The Insider*, —all these movies that appeal to a similar audience, but with much bigger stars and directors. All these films buried us in the fall. So they pulled back on the release and moved half the dates to January and February. We really kind of regret that we opened in November.

Sarah: It helped, though. They have to open films in New York in order to get reviews. We've been told the performance of your film in distribution depends on a good review in *The New York Times*. We happened to get a good review in the *Times*, so that was good.

Chris: We also made their ten best list. We were after *The Insider* and before *Eyes Wide Shut*. I think things like that make a big difference with the distributor.

Q: *Eyes Wide Shut* was their number 3 pick?

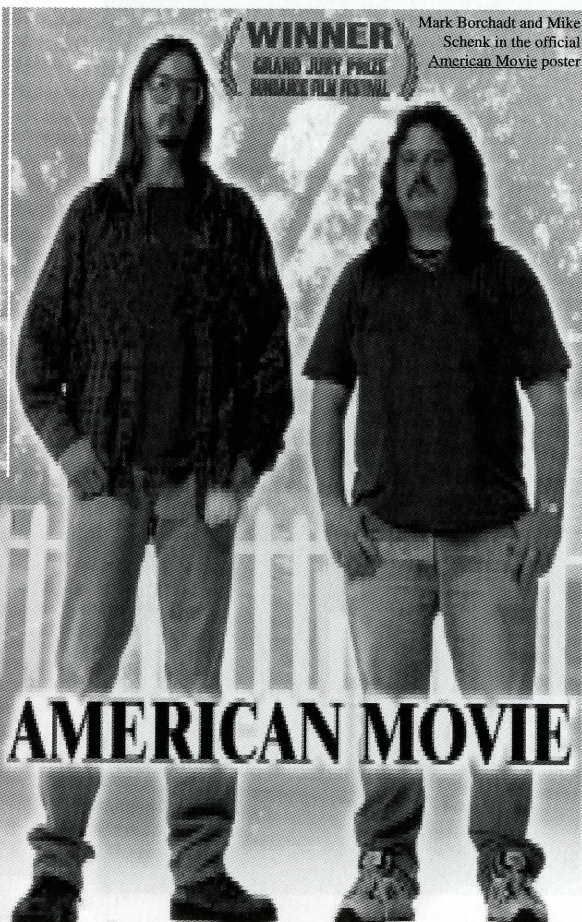
Chris: Number 9, actually. *The Insider* was 7, ours was 8. And *Topsy-Turvy* was 1. I don't know why. It was unanimously acclaimed, one of the top rated films of the year.

Q: And great makeup and costumes too.

Chris: Yeah, but you can only go so far with just three good scenes.

Q: It wasn't about anything!

Chris: No, it was excruciating. I think the critics felt like it was one of those movies that put them at a level above everyone else. You know—"I like this movie because it's hard to take,"—like they're intellectually superior to everyone else. I don't know. It was not an enjoyable film, I don't think. But some people obviously liked it. Just not us mid-westerners. ☺



Technology

Appreciating Modernity

Technology as Human Progress

by Jason J. Shuba

Upon arriving back in my hometown after finals last spring, an old friend ("Ted" for this article) visited me. After some pointless small talk, he told me he was engaged to his high school sweetheart (alias "Susie").

My response was half astonished, half bewildered. Ignoring my shock, Ted continued, explaining that after the wedding he and Susie were going to pool their money and purchase, of all things, an old school bus.

According to my friend, he and Susie were planning to completely gut the bus they intended to buy. He said they were planning to rip out the seats, lay out some throw rugs, and install five of what he termed "basic necessities": a sink, shower, toilet, oven, and refrigerator. He and Susie wanted to "get back to nature," and both of them wanted to stop being reliant on technology.

My jaw dropped. I looked at Ted and slowly moved from a feeling of shock to outright anger. I tried to explain to him how much technology adds to his, Susie's, and every person's life, but he refused to listen. He kept insisting people have become too dependent on modern conveniences and how "[He and Susie did] not want to be part of that dependency anymore."

People like Ted and Susie worry me. Like my friends, these people rebel against modern day technology and conveniences in order to live in what they hail as a more natural, pure state. These people claim an escape from technology enables one to get back in touch with the planet and allows a

person to be "more human" than an individual surrounded by modern-day technologies. Moreover, this type of techno-antipathy, as espoused by Ted, Susie, and others, is pervading more and more segments of modern society. People are moving out of technology rich metropolitan areas to achieve a basic, "back to nature" style of living, most often in more rural areas. I believe this movement is not only an anti-technology movement but also an anti-human movement, one I like to call the "Anti-Industrial Revolution."

I believe each human being's purpose is to achieve his or her highest potential. If nature endows a person with the abilities to be a garbage collector, then this person ought to try to be the best garbage collector ensconced in the halls of history. In the same manner, if nature endows a person with the abilities to be a doctor, then said person should try to be a very competent one. Consequently, anything assisting a person in the pursuit of the highest potential (short of direct

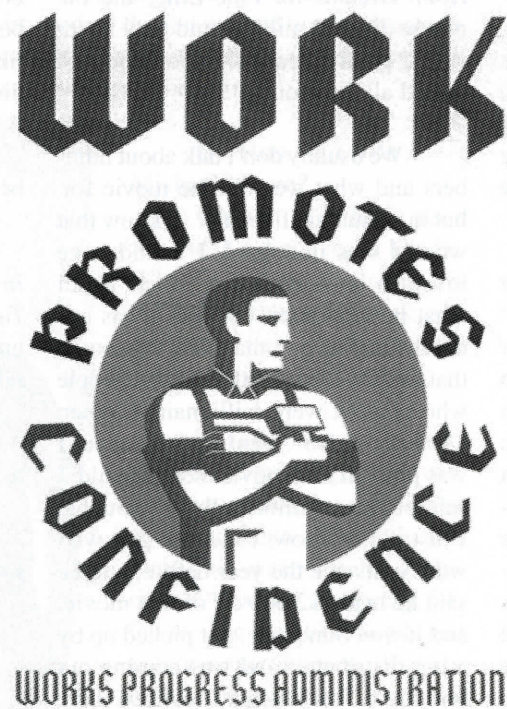
physical harm to other humans) should be utilized. Technology, in any form, can be considered one of these aids and must be implemented to the fullest degree to actualize personal potential.

Technology allows human-kind to create machines and devices empowered with the ability to do jobs and solve problems society normally see as "inconvenient" or "overly time consuming". These machines and devices allow humans to spend more hours per day and, aggregately, more days per year, creating, inventing, and producing things to help actualize potential. Technology does not detract from the human condition, as the anti-industrial revolutionists argue; rather, it enhances the human condition by allowing individuals to achieve and produce more and to creep closer to the fullest actualization of personal potential. In this re-

spect, the benefits of technology manifest themselves in average daily existence.

The modern day furnace replaces the burden of starting a fire during winter; modern day medicines allow people to get well sooner, reclaiming lost potential production time from sickness; and modern day washing and drying machines allow people to do other activities while washing their socks,

Continued on page 20



On Trial

The Role of Choice

Can "Progress" be the Only Option?

by Jim Dunson

"Progress" is a curious word. I suppose it calls to mind economic prosperity (although the question "for whom?" rarely seems a major concern) and possibly even some vain notion of the 'inevitable march of human history.' However, its perplexing meaning becomes even more problematic when discussed in the context of technological invention. If only we could label every new technology as necessary for "progress," then we would never have to publicly debate the merits of new discovery or ask the (necessary) questions about the purpose of such technology. After those crafty research-and-development experts churn out products to make all of our lives simpler and easier to manage (free time is certainly not a problem nowadays...), a few second-order questions need some attention. Namely: Who is the technology benefiting? Do the benefits outweigh the drawbacks or even risks? Why did this *particular* type of technology 'win out' over competitive types (i.e. was the decision a popular one, a political one, or one made purely out of the desire to disseminate the best product possible)?

Here are others: What is the relationship between technology and culture? For instance, when the Internet is introduced to indigenous communities in Latin America, is there something irrevocably lost in terms of culture? Conversely, is the Internet the very best way to promote free speech and inter-cultural communication and education? Is there anything creepy about the homogenizing effect that Western tech-

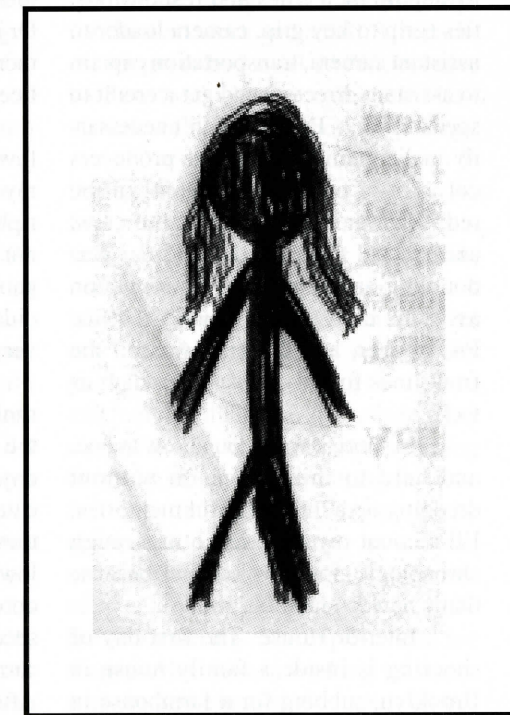
nology has on non-Western nations via globalization? Where do human rights and environmentalism fit into this entire technological scheme?

In addition to the above questions (and inevitably others as well), the technologically-framed debate over the definition of "progress" must include a discussion of technological decision-making. I find it at least strange and maybe even misinformed to criticize those who *choose to not choose* between particular brands, in favor of a simpler (more natural?) lifestyle. Technology is (or at least it *ought* to be) a decision-making process; this includes not only the creation of a particular type of technology but also the freedom to incorporate that type of technology into one's everyday life (or to reject it out-of-hand). However, the mere existence of free choice when it comes to technology seems somewhat suspect; for instance, a term paper penned in calligraphy rather than Times New Roman size 12 would either greatly impress or terribly annoy a professor. Therefore, someone

who decides not to partake (as much as one can) in the unabashed glory of technological "progress" is making a doubly-difficult decision by choosing not to choose. Moreover, this decision is just as valid and important as the scientist who chooses to concoct more efficient ways of minimizing the explosion and maximizing the radiation contained in weapons of war. Actually, it might be slightly nobler and less dangerous to society. Fortunately, one need not consider the technology of war in constructing a defense of those who bother to question the purpose and effect of technological "progress."

Perhaps we are entering a new era of colonization: this would entail a moral obligation to spread the holy message of technology throughout the world, especially to modernization pagans, so as to help everyone enter an efficient and pro-

ductive 21st century. While technology can conceivably be used to promote human rights, solve world hunger, and effect a more peaceful and prosperous human race, there is at least some skepticism in order. Simply adopting a more holistic view of "progress" and asking the important questions involved can improve technological decision-making...for whomever it is that actually decides. ☺



Cash, Blood, and Coffee

Life as an NYC Film Intern

by Rob Levine

Ever since the establishment of the Mayor's Office for Film, Theatre and Broadcasting in 1966, New York City has been saturated with films shooting on location in Manhattan and the five boroughs, between 60 and 90 every day and over 200 in a year. I worked on but one of them, and this is my story, though it's not the story I'd like to tell.

I wish I could tell you about scene coverage strategies, how to light a close-up, or what an opal flag is used for, but that's not what I got to see. I spent precious little time in the presence of the camera.

I had joined an independent film crew, meaning the film would be produced, marketed and hopefully sold outside the studio system. They talk about independent film being very "gung-ho," and from what I experienced, that's an accurate description, though I might scratch some of the dogged nobility that comes along with it.

When you shoot a film, problems stack up fast and unavoidably. Most independent films are shot on location, meaning they shoot in houses, stores, offices and restaurants not intended to accommodate film crews, and problems arise when you try to impose the extremely controlled working environment of a film set onto the unpredictable environment of the real world. Shortage of money only magnifies these problems, since you can't really compensate the owners of the locations (called vendors) for their time and cooperation. The budget on this movie was hairline (under \$500,000) and it

was stretched very thin, so I'm sure the producers on this film simply decided early on that they would not pre-empt or solve any problems that arose. Rather, they would simply try to out-run them.

This shoot was very much a scramble that left a lot of misled and dissatisfied people in its wake, and since I worked locations, I was right on the front lines for all of it.

And then there's the crew. The strains this production placed on its crew members had people addled and compromised from the start. The salaries were substantially smaller than the industry standard, or even the industry sub-standard. Everyone on crew was either underpaid or working for free, and that meant they were disgruntled from the get-go. The crew agreed to their pay because the shoot would be short, the picture had a good chance of being released (so they said), and because they would have the opportunity to step up their titles and responsibilities (grip to key grip, camera loader to assistant camera, transportation captain to assistant director) and get a credit to speak for that. But that didn't necessarily make them happier. The producers cut a lot of corners to stay out of the red, often at the expense of the crew, and since I (like all the interns) was doubling and tripling as a production assistant, craft service manager, office PA, gopher, and driver, I was on the front lines for all of that discontent as well.

In short, it was a tough row to hoe, and hard to think back on without dredging up a lot of painful memories. I'll recount my experience in a rough chronology, mostly by location, because that's how I remember it.

Interior House: The first day of shooting is inside a family house in Brooklyn, subbing for a farmhouse in the film. Subway noise, car horns, and dog barks lend incongruity to the ambience. The location manager still has scouting to do, and will not be on set. I comprise the locations department, "department" being a generous term. It includes me, Jeff, the location manager, and two other interns who, like me, do everything and anything that someone

isn't being paid to do. Regardless, I feel good about having responsibilities.

I learn quickly how to talk over the walkie. "What's your twenty?" means "Where are you?" "Going 10-100" means "using the restroom." Other important phrases: "Copy that," "back to one," and the vacuous "standby":

PA: "Hey, uh, I've been standing on this street corner for three hours. Am I supposed to be doing something?"

Assistant director: "Uhhhhhh...stand by."

Aside from code phrases, I really learned how to talk on a movie set, which is to say, I learned the language of deterrence. It's a way to avoid implicating yourself in that most unwanted state of affairs: uncertainty. When asked a question, never respond with "I don't know." Instead, say, "let me find out" or "standby." Never decline an order because you know you don't have the time. Find someone else to do it, or give an estimation (exaggerated in its expediency) of how soon you can get to it. Or just lie, say it has already been done, then run and do it before anyone notices. I did that a lot.

Because I could see, in those first few days before I learned to measure my words, how someone's eyes move right past you the second you admit to not knowing, like you're no longer capable of the task at hand, or even a candidate. Everything was a one-shot deal, very cutthroat and very frustrating.

We're not a union crew, but are running it according to union rules, so the crew is guaranteed three meals a day: a pick-up breakfast, a sit-down catered lunch, and a second meal that they can eat fast or take home. My fellow intern Shilpa and I are in charge of coordinating meals. We get pizza for second meal, from a nearby parlor. We carry the pies over to the set in two trips. After I set down the first half of the pizzas, the best boy electric looks at the table and freaks out. Before I knew what was happening, he turns to me, shouts, "You cannot tell me this is all we're getting for second meal!" and runs off to complain to the producer. Moments later, the remaining ten pizzas arrive. I receive no apology.

I'm asked to attend to the best boy

electric, who is vegan. He takes fifteen minutes to explain to me what a vegan is, then to tell me exactly what to get on his special order pizza. At the parlor, I wait twenty minutes and pay \$9 for his little 6" pizza. Walking back to set, I realize that grips and electricians like to give orders, and that bullshit, as they say, runs downhill.

Int. House, Day 2: Ally Sheedy starts today. She is the star of the film, and supposedly the reason it is getting made. When she shows up, I hardly recognize her. She is surprisingly skinny, with red straw-like hair extensions that reach down to her elbows. She looks haggard and vampish—perfect for the part, but not the vision of health. The lead actor arrives, too. His name is Reg Rogers. This is his first lead role—his training is in theatre. He resembles a dopey Al Pacino. I recognize the actress playing the grandmother role. She was in *Awakenings*.

I am also partly responsible for craft services (the on-set food and beverages), and it is quickly becoming a fiasco, especially with the coffee. Coffee is held in ridiculously high regard on the set, so much so that it transcends beveragehood, becoming something else, some kind of idol fluid. If there is hot coffee on the set, the crew remains pacified, though no one really drinks it—we find full and half-empty cups everywhere.

At one point, the scenic designer comes outside to get coffee, and can't find any milk. She screams aloud, "How can there not be any milk here? All I want is a cup of coffee. Is that so much to ask?!" She storms down the street to go to the supermarket. I intercept her and offer to get it for her. She stops, declines my offer and starts into a tirade, not about milk, but about her job, how she can't possibly do the job she's expected to do in the time she has, etc. She settles down, and apologizes for yelling at me.

"It's not you I'm mad at," she says. "I'm mad at production."

Turns out there was another carton of the milk under the craft service table.

I get assigned to baby-sit the grip truck. All I do is sit outside and make

sure no one tampers with the equipment. After two hours, I start to feel slighted by this duty. Kids pass on the street and ask me questions.

"What are you doing in there?"

"Making a movie," I say.

"What movie?"

"Terminator 3."

Int. Apartment: We move to the next Brooklyn location, an apartment that will act as the main character's home. It's in a neighborhood just south of Park Slope that's not quite gentrified yet. Lots of mediocre apartments with outrageous rents.

My fellow intern and I are now officially running on empty. Every morning, we are required to be on set one hour before the crew call, with the location and holding areas opened, coffee brewed and breakfast ready. Crew call is 5:00 a.m., which means we have to be there by 4:00 a.m. With half an hour to get dressed, and another half hour to drive from our house to Brooklyn, we're facing 3:00 a.m. wake-ups for the next week and a half. The earliest we get to bed is 10:00 PM, because we have to stay late every night to clean up and, worst of all, dispose of garbage.

One of my locations duties is finding holding areas, and I've had no luck in this area. Holding areas are separate locations near the set where hair, makeup and wardrobe are stationed, and where talent go to chill out when they're not needed on set. I had spent a day going door-to-door looking for a place and found nothing. We either had to find a place quick, or the talent were going to spend the entire day sitting in vans. Jeff tries the landlord who owns the apartment we are shooting in, and she concedes to letting us use an apartment of hers around the corner for an additional \$200 a day. She explains that her daughter has just moved out of there, and she had planned to clean it up before she rented it out to someone new. We open it immediately. The place smells damp and musty. It looks like the daughter left in a hurry—there is still furniture in the apartment, plus a television, dirty clothes and a baby's crib. We find dirty diapers on the bathroom floor and hypodermic needles beside the toilet. We clean half out of fear, and

work double time to make it all go away.

That night, I go to lock up holding. I turn on the kitchen light to find the room overrun with cockroaches. Later, we ask the landlord how much she plans to rent the apartment for. "\$1000 month," she says. Outrageous.

We have to buy breakfast, and usually the best we can do is egg sandwiches. We try to vary the selection, but there are only so many options. Nonetheless, the crew starts to be openly critical of the food. One morning, the scenic designer grabs a sandwich, throws it onto the ground and starts stomping on it with two feet, screaming, "Feed the crew! Feed the crew!"

Later, she apologizes. "I'm not mad at you," she says, "I'm mad at production."

Finally, we have a day off. The first day back, I arrive to open up, and upon stepping out of our van, get knocked sideways by an unbelievably rank odor. The air is thick with it. It smells sour and rotten, and I can't help but feel like my health is somehow in danger. "That'll take the wind out of your sails," someone says. I go inside to unlock the apartment, and when I come back out, I see it, running the length of the block at the base of the curb, right where our vans would be parking: a long, thick, maroon puddle of what looks like blood. I say aloud, "That can't be blood." We examine it more closely. It is definitely blood, with what looks like feathers floating through it. The night parking attendant fills in the gaps: the restaurant next door to our location had dozens of crates of recently slaughtered chickens delivered the night before. The crates were left standing in the street for several hours, and all the blood, feathers and entrails from the chickens had drained out into the gutter. The curb on that block dips slightly towards the middle, so instead of running down to a drain, the blood just amassed in puddles and festered for the duration of the night. I stare in disbelief. The sound guy calmly asks, "When can we expect the frogs?"

I set up craft services in the basement of the building, moving in a daze of sleep deprivation. As I plug in the coffee urn, I notice a garden hose lying

on the dirt-covered floor. Almost on cue, the AD's voice comes screaming out my walkie: "Locations! Can I get someone from locations outside to clean up the chicken gore!"

I decide to get it over with. I grab the hose and stretch it across the floor, to a pair of exterior doors built into the sidewalk. I run outside and pull the hose through. I have about twenty feet of hose in both directions. The crew has arrived by now, and the grips are freaking out at the sight of the blood. They want to know who's taking care of it. I prepare to start hosing it down. Before I start, the best boy electric is sure to point out that there is blood running all the way under his truck, and that I need to push it all the way down to the drain at the corner. I call down to have the hose turned on. The best boy electric then asks that I be sure not to spray any water on the ramp of the truck, however, because he doesn't want any of his guys to slip and get hurt.

I begin spraying down the blood. The pressure from the hose is weak, so I have to hold my thumb across the opening and squat down, my feet practically in the gutter. The stench is overwhelming, and as I spray, blood splashes up onto my hands and clothes. After ten minutes of spraying, I have made no visible progress. Because of the dip in the street, the blood runs back as soon as I turn the hose away from it.

I stop momentarily to curse my fate, and immediately, the grip truck driver starts berating me from the doorway: "You're only making it worse! Why are you spraying it BACK under the truck? Why don't you spray it towards the gutter?!" I resist turning the hose on him. I have made a pledge never to yell or get upset at another crew

member, but I'm so fraught with anger I want to scream. All I can say is, "Chill out. Just chill out."

I continue to spray down the blood for another hour. I can see the red starting to dilute, but the puddle and the stench remain resolutely in place. I have relinquished all concern for my sanitary well-being. My hands are wet and clammy, and the areas under my fingernails have started to sting. The unit production manager suggests we go buy absorbent from the nearby auto shop, which is a good idea. The auto shop is still closed, so I run over to the corner grocery and spend all forty dollars of my petty cash on kitty litter. I dump six bags of it onto the blood.

It's now approaching eleven o'clock, and I still have not made a dent in the clean-up. The sun comes out, heating the blood and worsening the stench. I realize I've reached a crossroads. I need to buy more absorbent, but I have no petty cash. Compiling my receipts and submitting for more cash will take me at least an hour. That means one hour will pass when no one will appear to be working on the blood. I decide to risk it.

It takes more than an hour. By the time I return, the best boy electric has taken it upon himself to spray down the rest of the blood. He works with a fury. I say to myself, "Fuck it, let him do it. Get your other work done." Ironically, I have to prepare lunch, which seems like the last thing people would want me to do in my condition. First, I go 10-100 and scrub my hands for fifteen minutes.

At lunch, I sit alone, feeling low. I hear some grips and art department people from the next table talking about the blood. One of the girls finishes with, "And poor Dave (the best boy) had to clean it all up by himself." I think about the entire crew holding this against me. I feel like lashing out, but I don't. I wonder if I will get sick.

The remainder of the blood evaporates after a couple days. The stench, however, never leaves.

Ext./Int. Dress Boutique. We're shooting in Little Italy, on the same street where Martin Scorsese grew up, apparently. My friend complains that an

old woman from the nearby butcher shop is stealing food from craft services. Later, we catch her walking off with an entire tub of peanut butter.

The day ends, and I am sent out with Ally Sheedy to hail her a cab home. It is 5:00 PM on Broadway. Going north or south, there are no available cabs. Ally and I start walking down the side streets. This is the only time I've spent alone with Ally the entire shoot. She looks tired. She talks about her daughter a little bit. I mention that I might go see a concert that night. I find it strange, talking casually to Ally Sheedy, who I watched as a kid in *The Breakfast Club*.

No cabs are available. Ally decides to take the subway, the proletariat mode, and I can't help but feel incompetent. She says she doesn't mind. She hugs me, says she'll see me tomorrow, and descends into the subway. I decide that I like Ally Sheedy. Though I wonder if, on a bigger film, with a bigger actor, this might have meant my job.

Int. Pawnshop. This is a popular shooting location. Sidney Lumet and Sharon Stone were here two months ago shooting a remake of Cassevette's *Gloria*. Sharon's picture hangs on the wall. I wonder how we can afford this place.

I had spent the entire day yesterday looking for holding areas, with no luck. Maybe it's because I'm so young looking, combined with the minuscule sum of money I'm offering, or maybe I'm just not forward enough. Who knows?

After several strikeouts, I come upon a bar, The Mambo Lounge. It looks closed, but the door is unlocked, so I enter. I ask for the manager. I explain myself, and he says the bar will be closed on the day we need it. I offer him \$500 to open it for the day, which I guess was brash of me. I mention that the crew might buy a couple drinks after we wrap, so we'll put some money into the bar as well. He says he wants \$700-800. I thought that was enough to work with. I called Jeff, the location manager, and put him on with the bar manager. After five minutes, he signals me back to the phone. Jeff says, "I got him for \$250." Amazed, I hung up. How they went from \$700 to \$250, I don't

know. Regardless, I did a little jig on the way home.

The day finishes calmly. I clean up, do my petty cash, and put in several check requests for the holding area vendors. An hour after wrap, I return to The Mambo Lounge. Inside, I find a raging, full-scale party. "Black Magic Woman" blares from the jukebox. The bartender is running in circles. The bar is littered with empty bottles and half-consumed margaritas. I see bare shoulders and letdown hair. I see shots being downed. I see my normally tight-assed crew members cutting loose on the dance floor. It is glorious. I breathe a sigh of contentment. I can't help but feel somewhat responsible.

Everyone goes home drunk and happy. I'm the designated driver. The line producer asks if I'm okay to drive. I tell her I'll be fine. That night, while trying to find a parking spot, I turn onto 9th avenue into oncoming traffic.

Int. Antique Store. We're out of the city now, in upstate New York. It's now an hour drive to get to set, which means we get up at 3:00 a.m.

Some local kids watch from outside the set.

"They're making a movie in there."

"Who's in it?"

"Ally Sheedy and Sylvester Stallone."

I still say he looks more like Pacino.

I'm sent scouting for the next day. Walking through Central Park, I pass the set of the TV show *Trinity*, shooting by the ice skating pond. I start talking to one of their PA's. We exchange "credentials." She gives me her take on the whole intern lot:

"Never give your best when you're an intern. Never give 100%. If you do, the people you work for will resent you. Then they'll screw you."

Ext./Int. Log Cabin. The coffee urn strikes a leak. We try to patch it with duct tape. By the time we get to set, coffee is all over the van. I'm starting to feel like everyone on crew hates me.

Another day off. I pay \$9 to see Velvet Goldmine and fall asleep in the theatre. My friend and I and half our crew try to piggyback into the wrap party for the new Woody Allen film. Our "in" is named Tooter Jones. For some reason, I think this is the funniest thing I've ever heard. The only thing I know about Woody Allen's new movie is that Sean Penn is in it. At the party, we recognize no one. We start talking to these two girls. We tell them we didn't actually work for Woody Allen. They say they didn't either. We start to wonder if anyone in the bar worked on the Woody Allen movie, or if this was even the right party.

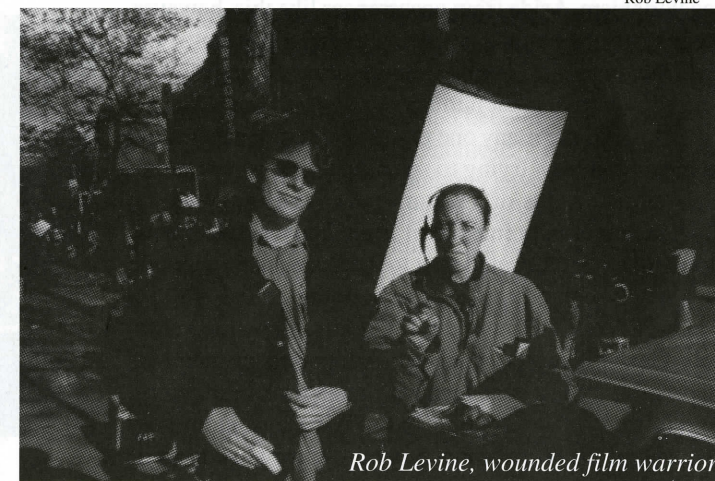
Soon after, we leave, having decided that the party we just attended was a decoy.

I did get to meet Tooter Jones, however. Nice guy.

Ext. Pawnshop. A street scene, leading up to final shot of the film. This is a big day—we're getting a crane to do this shot. Holding is in the apartment of the super whose sidewalk we're shooting on. Jeff swung the whole thing for about \$250. We arrive early to open up. Jeff leads me down to this guy's place, through the basement of the building, which is all cement walls and exposed piping. It's dusty and

damp, like catacombs. I enter the guy's place. He has no doorknobs on any of the doors. Just holes. The place reeks of pot. The super has been up all night drinking, and can barely stand. He asks if he can lay down for a couple hours undisturbed. Jeff says okay, but asks him for his keys, in case we need to open something. He says no, and that he'll only sleep for an hour or so. An hour later, we need a door open, and Jeff sends me to get the keys. The super is face down on his bed, passed out. I can't wake him up. We let him lie. He sleeps for eight hours.

About 11:00, I get a call on the walkie to go down to holding and open the window. One of the actresses is complaining about all the cigarette smoke. I approach the back windows. In keeping with the no-doorknob scheme, the window's latch is missing, and in its place, crammed into the notch, are several coins. I figure the super put them there so the window couldn't be opened from the outside. I pull the coins out of the slot, and the entire window caves. The top partition comes crashing down onto the tip of my middle



Rob Levine, wounded film warrior

finger.

I walk around the rest of the day with my finger in a bandage, holding it in a cup of ice. Ally Sheedy and the still photographer coo over me, which, you know, never hurts.

The day is closing, and, despite my injury, I'm having the time of my life. We have police blocking traffic for today, and I get to nap in the back seat of the cruiser while we wait. At lunch, an art department girl commends me for my work. Afterwards, I shop for CD's with the lead actor. I brought my disposable camera, and get pictures with Ally, the director, and the crew. I feel very content.

Into the last week of shooting. The crew is upstate, shooting driving shots. We still have no holding areas for the two upcoming shoots, and the line producer is very nervous. She's considering renting a trailer, even though she knows she doesn't have the money. They send me back to the city. I have a day to find holding for two different locations, and I decide failure is not an option. I'm not about to face the crew the next day having found nothing. Walking along 14th St., I see a space above Burger King, with tall ceilings and art

Continued on page 21

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MoYO: the voice of
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Continued from page 5

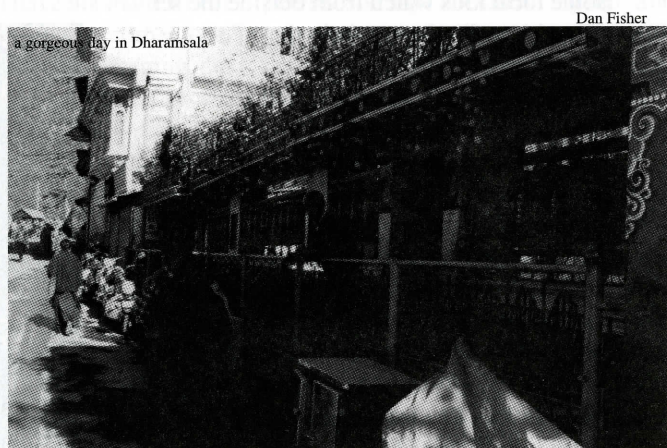
monks of the Gyumed Monastery of Southern India—on the wall by the cash register, there is a great photo of all the monks with a placard on the frame that reads, “The Management.” And every Western visitor becomes quickly acquainted with the vegan restaurant managed by a group of young Americans called Khananirvana (“Liberation Through Mastication”). But these restaurants are really there for the hordes of visiting new age westerners and don’t reflect the eating habits of the proprietors or the community.

Among Tibetan youths, though, there seem to be quite a few in Dharamsala adopting a vegetarian diet for ethical reasons. These ethics may stem from their own Buddhist religious tradition or from the secular world (the environmental concerns of meat-eating, for example). During my own stay there, a group of students from the Tibetan Children’s Village, for different reasons, took a pledge to convert to vegetarianism. Aside from occurrences like this, however, there seems to be little evidence to support a statement that Dharamsala’s Tibetan community has moved towards vegetarianism in great numbers.

But if there is any one group or enterprise that could be cited as at least trying to spear-head any sort of large-scale animal rights or vegetarian movement among the Tibetan community in exile, it is the Universal Compassion Movement. Located next to the Dalai Lama’s temple in a newly constructed office building called Ahimsa (“non-violence”) House, the U.C.M. is led by the Venerable Geshe Thupten Phelgye. Addressed properly as “Geshe-la,” he is a large man with a noble yet blithe spirit. I spent most of my time in India living in a monastery and was, at the point of meeting him, somewhat desensitized to the monastic community. But I felt such a charge in Geshe-la’s presence—the intimidation of being around someone so remarkably peaceful and boundlessly kind. A monk for nearly all of his life, he spent most of his existence before the end of the 1980s in the south of India, where he became a geshe (a doctor of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy). After becoming a geshe, he spent six years high up in the Dhauladur mountain range in the Himalayan foothills (which Dharamsala and McLeod-Ganj rest under) alone in deep retreat meditation before establishing the U.C.M. in April of 1996. The founding of the U.C.M. came almost immediately after Geshe-la attended a meeting of India’s People for Animals that same year in New Delhi at which the organization’s president, Mrs. Maneka Gandhi, spoke. “(After becoming a vegetarian), I thought that I must do something for those poor animals,” he told me. “I was inspired and encouraged by Ms. Gandhi. I thought as I listened to her, ‘I can do something.’” Gandhi now serves on the U.C.M.’s board of trustees along with Geshe-la and the Dalai Lama.

Though the U.C.M. is a charitable trust that works for any destitute or disabled sentient beings, the mission statement reveals that the organization’s main focus is “in re-

sponse to the unbearable sufferings of helpless animals, resulting from their unlimited slaughter for meat consumption, ritual sacrifice, hunting and the abusing of animals in farms, industries, and cruel sports, etc.” Geshe-la explained to me that the reason animals come first in the U.C.M.’s mission is because “humans are more capable of fighting for their rights—the human condition is much better than the animal condition. Animals are thrown away from people’s minds.” Ahimsa House is also home to another, human-focused organization which Geshe-la is actively involved with called the Gelugpa Institute, a humanitarian aid project directed exclusively by Tibetan monks and nuns. The U.C.M. also makes clear in their mission statement that while their future goals are for global work, their current efforts are primarily directed towards Tibetan communities-in-exile: “As Buddhists, since we talk about compassion to all other sentient beings, enjoying the flesh of innocent animals is very unjust and a contradiction (of what we believe)...compassion and justice are our common realizations.”



In 1998, Geshe-la expounded on this idea in great detail at the first annual Gelugpa Conference. Held in New Delhi, it was an assembly that invited all the world’s geshes and tulkus (recognized reincarnations of gurus). It was there that he was given the opportunity to present a proposal which called for all monasteries and nunneries to practice and advocate vegetarianism. For Geshe-la, awakening people—particularly Buddhists—to the realization that human beings have the ability to stop an enormous amount of suffering by simply altering their diets is key to solving many other problems: for him, vegetarianism is the first step towards realizing universal compassion. For if humans can learn to extend their heart out to animals, he explained, they can develop compassion for all of their fellow human beings.

Visitors to McLeod-Ganj become quickly aware of the U.C.M.’s presence, courtesy of a gigantic billboard on Dalai Lama Temple Road in front of the Tibetan Dialectical Institute, which reads: “Take Pity on Animals / Do Not Cause Their Slaughter / Be a Vegetarian / Join U.C.M.” In terms of getting the U.C.M.’s message across to its target audience, the site on Temple Road is strategically the smartest, as everyone who goes to the temple must pass it twice. Although

Geshe-la is currently collaborating with a professional chef on a Tibetan cookbook for vegetarians, the sign is the only major work from the U.C.M. at this point. Geshe-la and his associates have been desperately working at raising funds—while the lease and artwork for the sign only costs about \$170, it’s a small fortune in rupees for a monk operating a non-profit organization in a third-world country. In addition to struggling to raise money to renew the sign’s lease and purchase an office computer (so that the U.C.M. can widen its visibility on the worldwide web), the U.C.M. is hoping to gather enough funding to produce a short video about animal issues. Though it sounds superfluous, the video is actually a top priority, as a large percentage of the Tibetan community-in-exile is illiterate and need to have the U.C.M.’s message communicated by means other than the sign or literature. But the video will take time, as simply funding the sign is taking time. “I have many dreams, but am empty-handed,” Geshe-la told me with a chuckle.

When I spoke with Geshe-la about his beliefs and convictions regarding animals, he revealed to me that his own move towards vegetarianism came in 1980 after a routine walk through an Indian market. He happened to glance inside of a butcher shop and catch sight of some rather atrocious work being done. “Butchers were not only doing their killing, but fighting and wrestling with the animals, too—such a horrible sight to see. And they did not care if animals were dead or half-dead when they would cut and skin them.” This story came when I asked him about the popular Buddhist cop-out regarding vegetarianism: that it is a form of harmful attachment, in that it is clinging to a diet. “Nothing changes, the suffering of animals does not stop when we think that vegetarianism or veganism (is a form of attachment)...I think actually that eating meat maybe is a form of attachment. People are addicted to the taste...this is why we must work to show them that there is a process—a very terrible process—to their delicious Momos.”

Geshe-la went further, telling me that he felt that all of the different and specific regulations about meat-eating in both the Theravada and Mahayana traditions have often been misinterpreted to be observed literally, and not understood as gradual teachings meant to wean followers off of meat-eating completely. “The Buddha’s teaching was always step-by-step—the easy way first. When his followers had ripened their minds, the Buddha would go further with his teaching (encouraging a progression).”

While convincing people to explore this idea is important to Geshe-la, the biggest challenge is getting people thinking about these issues at all. “So far in our Tibetan world, it is difficult to be a vegetarian—if one is a monk or not. Ninety-nine percent eat meat and they don’t even think about it. This is why we are now trying to bring more awareness.” While he strongly believes that the older generation can always grow and change, his faith in change is largely placed in Tibetan youths. “I think that there are lots of people trying, but especially the young generation. They are more educated and sensitive and they also have better understanding and are more open-minded.”

One might speculate that the younger generation would be the demographic to keep the closest eye on, with the responsibility that the age bracket holsters to preserve the cultural heritage of the homeland that many of them have never known. In their book *Tibetan Cooking*, Diki Lobsang and Indra Majupuria make the argument that certain cooking traditions and foods are passed to the younger generation as something that they must strive to conserve. If there is any truth to this, organizations such as the U.C.M. will need to be on their guard to ensure that Tibetan families are educated to understand that it is possible to maintain Tibet’s cultural identity in food without the needless suffering of animals. Holding up a plain white khata (prayer scarf) in front of me, Geshe-la said, “Children are like this when they are born. They can be painted, dyed any color. As a society, we must make sure that they are dyed the right colors so they cause no harm and look after and take care of their fellow human beings and all sentient creatures.”

On my last night in Dharamsala, Geshe-la invited me to have dinner with him and a visiting friend of his who was also a monk. His friend practiced at a monastery in Australia and he and Geshe-la had not seen each other for many years. As we all sat and talked before dinner, the monk revealed to his old friend Geshe-la that he had become a vegetarian and that many of the monks at his monastery in Australia were also vegetarians. I could tell that this gave Geshe-la a lot of hope and joy. Watching him light up then, I remembered one of the last things Geshe-la and I had spoken about earlier that afternoon. I had asked him if he ever felt isolated as a vegetarian and all-out animal rights advocate in very traditional monastic circles. It would seem impossible not to be respected for responding to a feeling about suffering and responsibility which few others in his community have. His action has obviously enriched his practice as well. I wondered if he had any sense of whether he was criticized or admired. He told me that he sometimes felt a little lonely in his quest: “In Tibet, we talk a lot about white crows. They say it is very inauspicious to see a white crow. A white crow among black crows is greeted with, ‘Why are you here? What are you doing? You are different!’” But Geshe-la—quite an inspiring sight as he faces a substantial amount of opposition with the characteristic warmth and cheer that Tibetan culture is famous for—confided in me that he was hoping to change some feather tone in his time: “One day, Geshe-la will be ashes, but someone will be working for animals. This is my dream and this is my practice.”

“Every day, think as you wake up, ‘Today I am fortunate to have woken up. I am alive. I have a precious human life. I am not going to waste it. I am going to use all my energies to develop myself, to expand my heart out to others: to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. I am going to have kind thoughts towards others. I am not going to get angry or think badly about others. I am going to benefit others as much as I can.’”

- His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama of Tibet

Cameras and Cappuccinos

Continued from page 9

but the day would continue very late for the editors sometimes past midnight. While I was at work, there was a constant clinking at their workbenches and reels sliding. We would watch the daily rolls on the Steenbeck flatbed, and I would get snacks and get coffee, and watch my co-workers practice their craft.

What was most striking about the entire process was the voluminous paper work that was done for each part of the production. There were camera reports, sound reports, printing reports, script supervisor notes, and on and on. Because of this meticulous cataloguing, every second of tape, every inch and frame of film was traceable between its various digital and celluloid manifestations. Therefore, once the movie was digitally edited the negative cutter would be able to go back to the actual film that went through the camera and assemble the film together according to the editor's digitally aided construction.

I enjoyed that job immensely and learned a lot about how the whole process of making movies works. So if you see that movie, think of me running up and down stairs, photocopying reports, and getting cappuccinos. Imagine that wonderful film-processing chemical smell in the Technicolor building. Imagine hundreds of people collaborating to make a final product worth giving over your \$9.50 to Harvey Weinstein, and the uncredited unpaid intern that made it all possible.

Appreciating Modernity

Continued from page 12

recapturing production time once lost to the tedium of cleaning. As shown, technology does not make humans more dependent; it makes humans smarter, quicker, and, above all, more productive—all in the interest of allowing a person to actualize potential.

Another anti-industrial revolu-

tionist argument revolves around technology's interplay with the natural environment, to the detriment, they contend, of the latter. To prove this, they point to such things as holes in the ozone and the depleting rain and redwood forests. To my regret, this stance does not embrace the wider picture.

If allowed to run its course, technology has the potential to solve the same problems it may seem to create. Although I concede, with the birth of factories and modern day production techniques, the environment has come out with the short end of the stick, I maintain, if given time and the opportunity to proceed unhindered, technology can overcome any form of pollution or other environmental degradation. If allowed to use technology to eliminate tedious tasks such as cleaning, laundering, or cooking, scientists could conceivably find a way to replenish the ozone layer, grow a huge redwood tree in a matter of months, or create fuels that burn pollution free. In my opinion, the hindering of technology is not essential to environmental cleanup.

Having taken a look at some basic arguments for and against the maximization of technology in everyday life, I would like to put these arguments into action and observe what a day in the life of a typical person ("Howard") would be like if anti-industrialists have their way.

Howard wakes up at 5 AM to be at work at 9 AM. In the past, he could have awoken later and used his car to take the half hour trip to work, but automobiles have been declared dangerous to the air and have been eliminated. His only option is to take a community bus, irregular in schedule and taking two and a half hours to get him to work.

Howard always liked toast for breakfast. He doesn't have an electric toaster anymore, as it was outlawed as superfluous, since it used electric power and electric power plants contribute to pollution. He is now forced to bake his toast in the oven. After daydreaming for a couple of minutes because of lack of sleep, he realizes his toast has been in the oven too long, and he finds it burnt when he opens the oven door. There is no time to make another piece. Howard

throws away his burnt bread, grabs his jacket and walks an excruciating ten blocks in the bitter cold to the outdoor bus stop. He gets on the bus twenty minutes later, 6:10, and arrives at work at 8:45.

Howard used to work in the office of his company. He works for a paper company, and the company's orders have taken a cut since limits on paper consumption have become the law. Instead of using his masters degree in economics to compute future financial decisions for the firm, he uses his degree in the company's "physical" division, lifting heavy reams of paper in an under-heated, under-powered factory, which suffers from frequent brownouts (labor like his father did for forty years in order to put Howard through college). When the brownouts occur, the factory is pitch black for up to hours at a time. These conditions cause Howard to sit down and deal with the mind-numbing boredom he now associates with work (for economics was very stimulating). Fortunately, there is no brownout today, and this allows Howard to fill the two orders scheduled for shipment today. Halfway through the second order, Howard has lunch. Unfortunately, because of his extraordinarily early rising time, he has only had time to pack a cheese sandwich and coffee. By lunch, the sandwich has gone stale because of a lack of a proper container and the coffee has turned lukewarm because of the recent disappearance of plastic thermoses. Howard shrugs this off, thinking it a fair trade-off for how "clean" things will be in a few years.

Once home, Howard spends three hours cleaning and making dinner. In that time, he does what was once the work of a dozen machines. While sweeping his floor (vacuums are energy wasting), his antiquated oven inexplicably turns off, causing Howard's dinner to be cold and undercooked when he finally sits down to eat it. He finishes up his paltry meal, washes his dishes by hand, and sits down in his living room. Here though, Howard finally realizes the reality of his existence. What is he to do with his free time? He has no television, no computer, no de-

MoYO

Fall 2000

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vice to play music. All he has is one 25-watt light bulb attached to his ceiling, an item that does not even permit him enough light to read during the evening hours.

Howard feels alone. He could go out and catch the bus into town in the hopes of meeting someone, but from being forced to wake up at five AM and experience a full day's labor both at work and at home, he does not have the energy (like most of blue collar America) to do anything at all, let alone, something productive. As he sits in his chair, slowly allowing his being to be taken by sleep, he thinks about the pure, crystal clear air soon to develop and just how much longer he will be around to enjoy it.

Back to reality, I concede the above fiction is not going to come into being tomorrow, a week from now, or even a year from now; however, I can assure everyone that if my friend Ted and the anti-industrialist revolutionists have their way with the world, the story of Howard will disappear. It will disappear because every person will be living like Howard. The fight against technology results in one end, the one told above. Having said that, only one question remains: Should a human live and advocate a technologically rich or a technologically sparse life? The choice is yours. Choose wisely.

Mind of Your Own would like to thank the following for their assistance in the completion of this issue: Dr. Fred Porcheddu, Computing Services, and Exile.

Cash, Blood, and Coffee

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hanging from the wall. I ring the buzzer. The guy buzzes me in, and steps outside his door. "What's going on?" he asks, in a thick Dutch accent. I ask him if his space is an art gallery. He says "Yeah," lets me in. I tell him I'm not there to see the art. I tell him I need his place open tomorrow at 4 a.m. I offer \$200. He declines, says he hates getting up in the morning. I bump it to \$250. Money appears not to be an issue. He just doesn't like the hour. I stand there for twenty minutes while he wavers, wavers, then finally gives in. I call my location manager with the good news. Pieter, the gallery owner, says he'll just stay up all night. "See you in six hours," I say.

The next morning, I'm immediately dispatched to find a holding area for that same afternoon. I manage to land two heated offices, complete with couch, for \$150. The building manager owns a hardware store and rents out the offices above it. He turns out to be a puppy dog, one of those naïfs you pray to find. He even gives me folding chairs for the extras to sit on. I call the location manager to tell him. He tells the line producer. I hear her singing my praises.

The morning location wraps. So does Ally Sheedy, for good. She gets her hair extensions removed immediately, and I finish the day sweeping her dispatched red locks off the floor of Pieter's studio. Glancing at his computer, I realize he is a graphic designer. I also realize that after today, I'll have nothing to do for my last two weeks in the city. I turn to him: "Hey, Pieter. Do you take interns?"

I worked for him for two weeks and made \$400.

The Lost Crusade: Former Editor Muses on the Myth of True Love

by Paul Durica
Editor Emeritus

Let's be honest, I have hurt everyone I have ever loved and have been hurt by everyone who has ever loved me. I have told lies out of fear and, I am convinced, out of care. I have told the truth to preserve love and to foster hate. In short, I have spent four years toeing the line between saint and sinner, and as a relapsed Catholic and failed Boy Scout, I place myself among the world's fallen angels. My enduring motivation for actions both benevolent and questionable is the pursuit of genuine maturation through a sampling of the weird and wonderful. But as before, let's be honest, I'm after the One.

The One — call it what you will, soul mate, beloved, lover, life partner — makes us sip that extra beer at a party, cry ourselves to sleep at night, and carry ever onward into the realm of the vulnerable and sublime. Even the nymphs and satyrs among us must admit to an occasional pricking of desire for a single individual to sate their passions. When a relationship expires, buries itself in the elephant graveyard of false intentions, stale desire, and lost hope, we, the lovers of the world, console ourselves with time-tested bromides, "If it was meant to be," "If you love a bird, set it free," and on and on, until the dull realization of having once again failed coats the mind and the search continues.

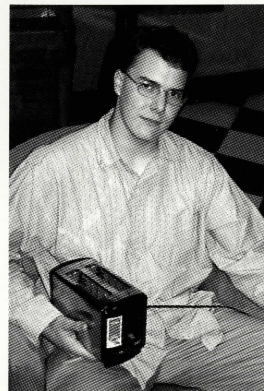
Time for a story. When I was child, I developed a crush on a girl with cheeks round like chestnuts and pigtails the color of honey. I consulted my father, who never smoked a pipe nor read the morning paper, and the best he could tell me was to hand her a lollipop and ask, "Who loves ya, baby?" He was sampling Kojak. My father is a man with hands callused from a love of work and works of love and an innocent smile, but is not to be trusted on tricky matters of the human heart. His stratagem failed, and I remember running home from school crying—I really believe I did or perhaps I am mixing memory with an almost daily supplement to life's dilemmas courtesy of the Glass Tit—and seeking the far more sensible counsel of my grandmother, who swept me up in her arms and said, "Boo-boo (her name for me, although I preferred Indiana after the cinematic hero whose influence proved as troublesome as my father's belief in Telly Savalas), some day all the girls will love you." I took it as an offering

of hope. I realize now she was setting a curse.

The writer Harlan Ellison calls True Love—for me, synonymous with the One—the Holy Grail, the relic fixed in our vision of beautiful things and forever out of reach, more legend and lore than smelted metal around which our fingers can hope to latch. Extending this analogy to my own experience, I am reminded of the conclusion of Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (with philanderers like the whip-snapping archeologist, James Bond, King Arthur, and Batman as my childhood mentors, it's small wonder my excursions into

love are like African safaris, replete with malaria-bearing mosquitoes and man-devouring hippopotami), where a room of Grails confronts our hero, only one of which is the genuine divine. Select the wrong cup and your skin turns inside out, your bones form a neat pile on the floor. This looks like the cup of a carpenter's son. So easy for Indiana. No moment of doubt. The beauty of this search: everything an individual is taught about love insists it be made, but how is one to recognize the One? What makes one Grail genuine and all the others an assortment of pain and misdirected desire?

I once relied upon a dull ache in my skull to tell me whether a relationship would work or not, like arthritic, old men whose knee pains predict storms, or my grandmother's intuition, which makes her turn right when left would lead to traffic jams and stalled autos. Even if everything seems perfect on an external level, the ache is accurate; it is a portent of doom. But even the ache has failed in recent history, and I am left to rely upon something more civilized and cunning, complex, and downright deceptive: communication. I can tell any fellow searcher this much. If you find a good person who loves you and whom you love, hold fast. Genuinely decent people are difficult to come by, and if you think no one better exists, then you are probably right. Some prickly doubts and desires may remain, but the search is far worse than contentment. Even the Flying Dutchman will come to port, the story goes, if her pilot discovers the love of a good person. It also helps to regard your elders, motion pictures, and television with a healthy amount of skepticism.



The Real Appeal of Cinema

by Tom Hankinson

What is the mystical allure of film? Why so many cinema students, why so many film articles, why so many citizens flocking to the theaters, laying down their cash for two hours of non-participatory fun? This has puzzled me for quite some time, but I think that I have finally found an answer: Film is the closest that humans ever get to two-dimensionality.

The urge to achieve two-dimensionality is deep seated in the human psyche, along with the will to fly, the desire for power of the ravages of time, and the search for a container that will keep hot things hot and cold things cold. While we have surmounted all of these other challenges by means of the personal jet-pack, the time capsule, and the magical "thermos," the hindrance of our third dimension still tugs at us from behind. Its unconquerable presence mocks our other efforts and reduces all of our accomplishments to mere trifles. We, as a species, rail against the Z-axis of our bodies and the limitations this three-fold extension imposes.

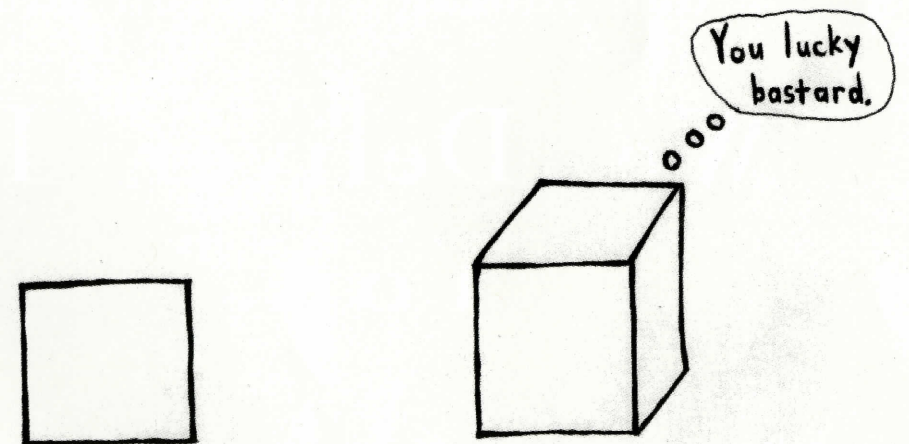
Think what humans without their pesky third dimension could do. They would never be locked out of buildings, as they could simply slip under the door. They would be able to hide behind May poles and parking meters. They could throw parties with infinitely more people

packed into the same space.

If you doubt that the urge for shedding our third dimension exists in the human will, consider a child who has just learned to draw. How does this innocent young person, who has not yet discovered the restraints of world weighing upon his or her soul, how does this fresh human spirit depict the body? As a "stick person," a spontaneous outlet of the will for two-dimensionality that persists strongly, even in the very young.

Similarly, observe the fascination of the adult public with waifish fashion models. These wafer-thin runway workers are not beautiful. They are not pleasant to view in the least. Indeed, considered in the context of regular folk, they are but grotesque parodies of the human form. And yet people pay them to parade on stage in revealing outfits. Why? These absurd caricatures of the body are the closest approximation of human two-dimensionality in the realm of the physical world. This and only this gives them their grisly allure.

Returning to the subject of cinema, it is easy to see the application of the two-dimensionality complex regarding film. People go to the theater to see humans living, breathing, eating, interacting with each other, all projected on what they know to be a flat white wall. Movies evoke the thirst for flatness in us all. They call us to follow, to shed our third dimension and be fulfilled. Our frustration at not being able to enter the film's tabular world only makes us want more exposure to it, leading to further exasperation and further strengthening of our desire. This cycle of desire is the steel hook of the cinema, pierced through our lip, reminding us constantly of that blissful two-dimensionality that we can never truly achieve.



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