

SPECIAL ISSUE

ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING | PHOTOS WORTH SEEING

ISSUE 143

*Our favourite
stories from
the **ColdType**
archives*

Contributions from

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MARK FRITZ

JOHN GRAY

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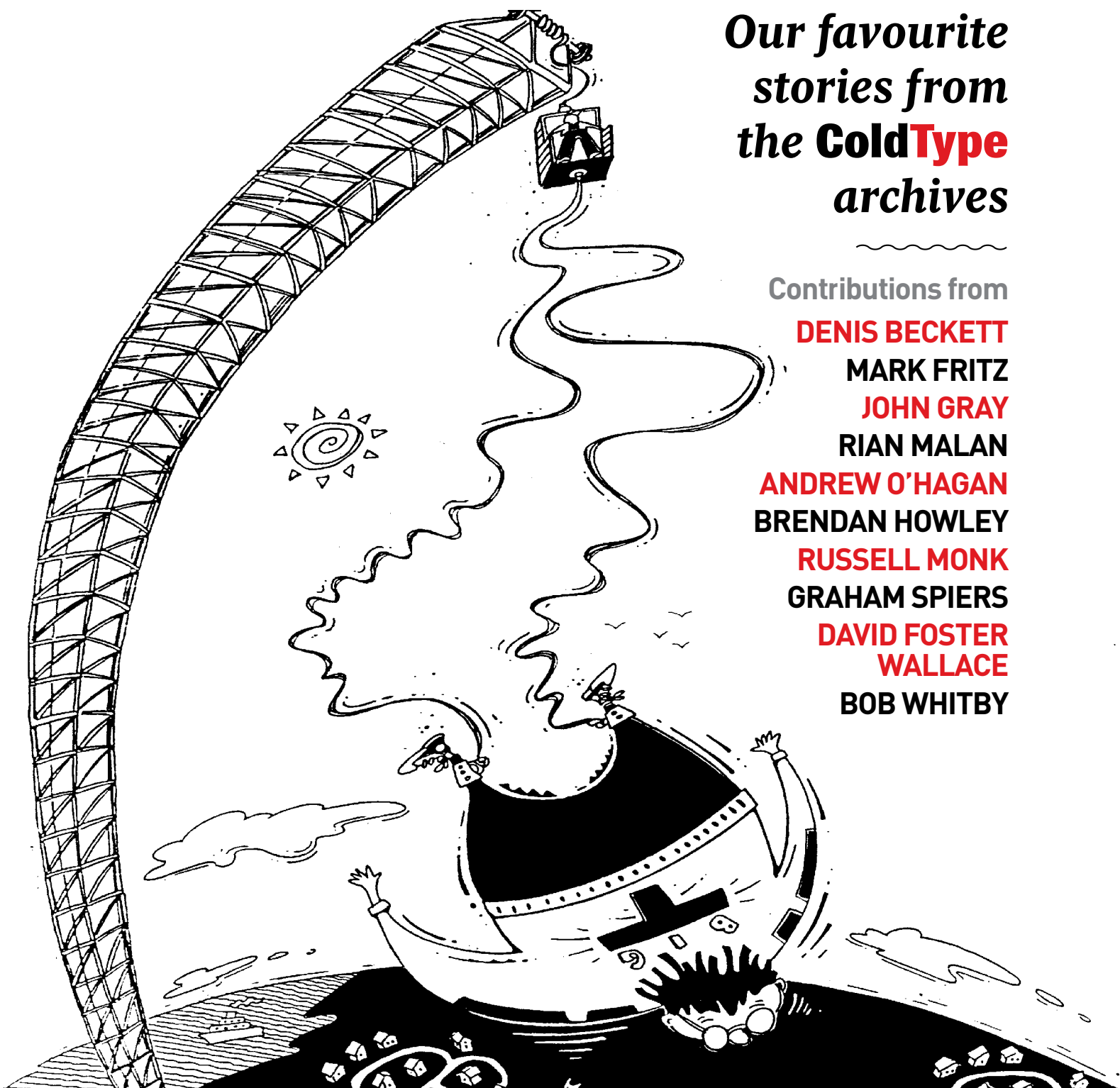
RUSSELL MONK

GRAHAM SPIERS

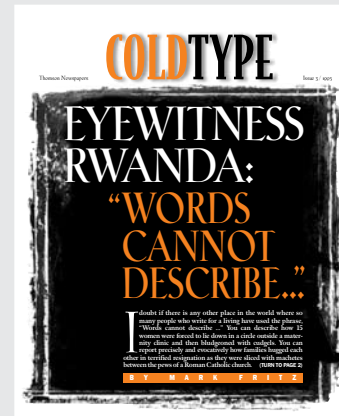
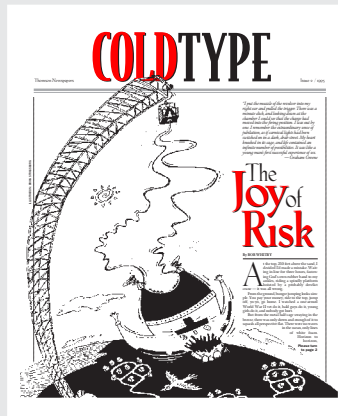
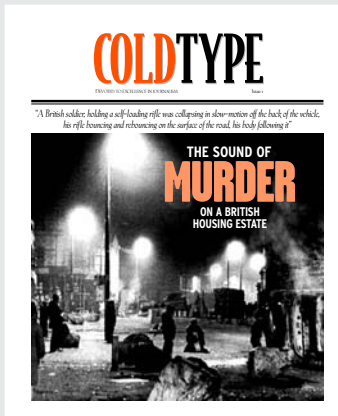
DAVID FOSTER

WALLACE

BOB WHITBY



Read the Original tabloid version of **ColdType**



Before it was relaunched as a magazine 12 years ago, ColdType was a tabloid newspaper, featuring top writing from around the world. Read the back issues in pdf format now at www.coldtype.net/old.html

ColdType

Issue 143 / July 2017

WELCOME to the second of our special 'looking back' issues of ColdType (Issue 111, from February 2016, was the first). This issue highlights some of the best work from the original tabloid ColdType – launched as a tool to help journalists improve the quality of writing in their newspapers – which ran from 1994 to 1996.

At the time I was head of design for the Thomson Newspapers group in North America where, as I wrote in my first Editor's Note, it struck me as wrong that the company – like much of the newspaper industry at the time – “tended to concentrate on the visual side of the craft . . . But, without a concurrent effort in improving the quality of content, we've produced a generation of newspapers that are often bland and lifeless when the packaging is stripped away. That is not good journalism . . .

“As we planned this new product, we decided it



Cover Art: Brian Strassburg, for *Isthmus* (See Page 110)

would be boring, perhaps futile, if we simply produced articles explaining in scholarly detail the mechanics of good journalism. Wouldn't it be better to ignore the school-room approach and concentrate instead on good writing.”

The result was a collection of great writing from publications inside the company and around world, accompanied by superb photographs and stimulating artwork.

That was the recipe for the original ColdType, which saw five issues until I left the corporation in 1996. I acquired the title a few years later and ColdType has continued in its present format for the past 12 years, following its original philosophy:

Writing Worth Reading. Photos Worth Seeing.

Another of my hopes all those years ago was that the content would still be interesting 10 or 20 years hence. It's now 23 years since that first issue was produced, I think the stories in this special issue have held up well over the years. But what matters is what the **readers** think. Please let me know. **Tony Sutton**, editor

THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS ISSUE? Write to editor@coldtype.net

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Lost boys

*Each year, thousands of young people simply disappear from the face of the earth. Andrew O'Hagan tells the story of one of them, Daniel Handley, who was later found murdered. This is an excerpt from O'Hagan's highly acclaimed first book, *The Missing*, published by Picador*

The graveyards in English cities, especially in the east of those cities, are nearly always wasted and terrible. In Scotland, the tombstones are made to stand up and the grass is most often cut and weeded

FROM THE TABLOID COLDTYPE: *Issue 3, 1995*

It was a Sunday morning, and a minister strode past me with a Labrador. "That looks like a contented spot," he said, dog and dog collar glistening. I sat in the middle of a little wood, just to the side of Kenilworth Chapel in East London, on October 9, 1994. The church looked closed and unattended. All around me, in tangles of ivy and nettles and scrub, lay hundreds of dilapidated gravestones. They sloped every which way and off into the distance, across a wide open ground beneath the Beckton flyover. The graveyards in English cities, especially in the east of those cities, are nearly always wasted and terrible. In Scotland, the tombstones are made to stand up and the grass is most often cut and weeded. I was fairly shocked the first time I saw a London graveyard – in Walthamstow, I remember. It had nothing to do with the decorous, landscaped dead-parks of recent memory: It was



a place where riot and decay ruled. It looked like a spot where time was having its way.

I sat on a stone, bent over a piece of paper. I was copying down the inscriptions on some of the gravestones. As I was doing so, two boys – around 10 – nipped between the graves just a little off to the right. One of them wore a West Ham soccer jersey; the other was a flash of yellow. Their missiles (clods of dirt and pebble-dash) would come from nowhere and bounce off the tomb still standing. You'd hear giggles and see some yellow, then a stripe of claret; they'd peep for a second and disappear. The more I ignored them, the braver they got. They started letting out little hollers, rinky-dink battle charges, but I sat still. I was laughing a bit by this time, and they obviously knew I knew about them. Eventually, they got within one or two tombstones, and I looked up from the page. "What is it?" I said. "C***," they said, running away, tumbling through a wall of ivy as if the whole world was after them.

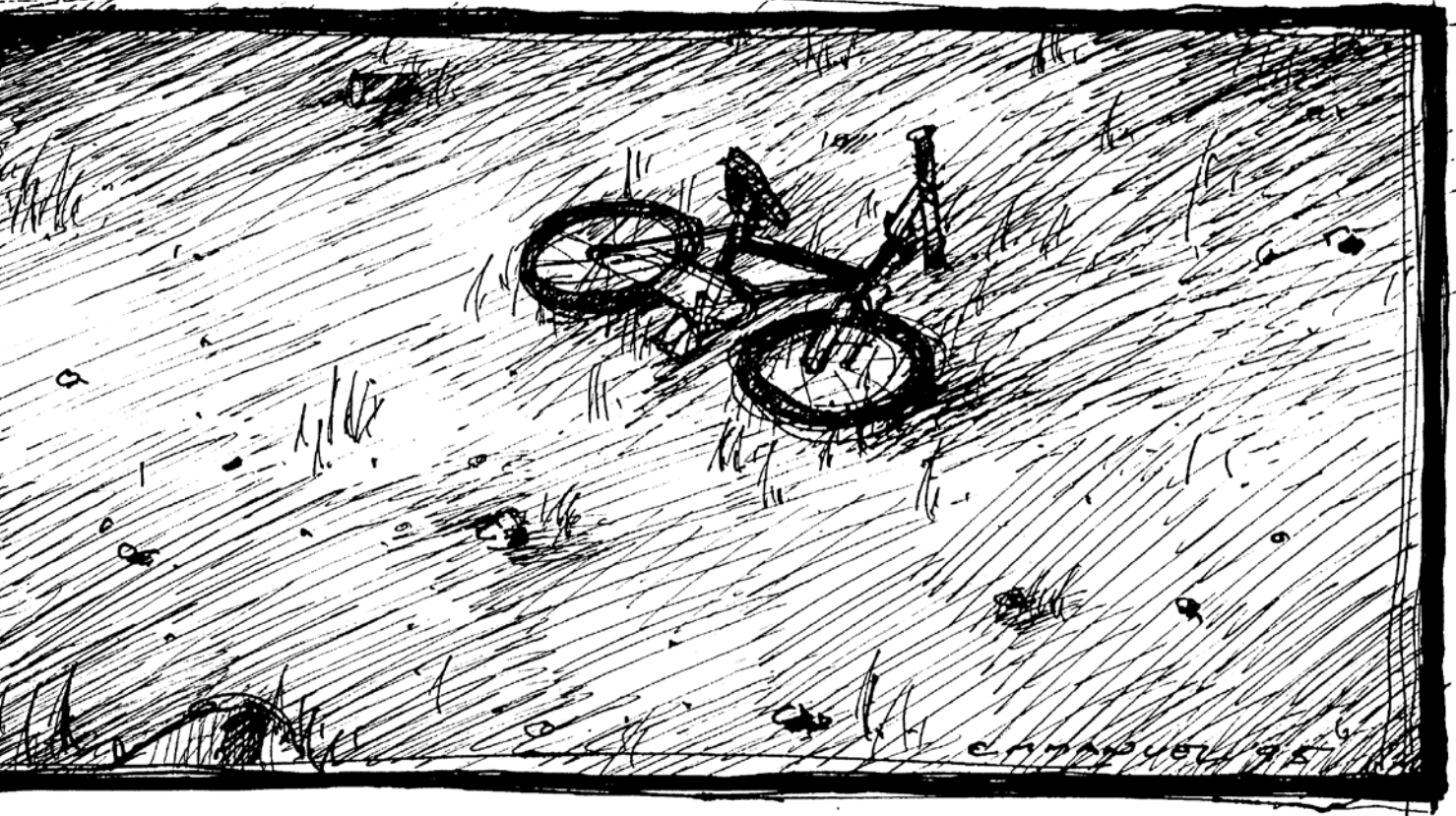


Illustration: Ermanuel Lopez (Crackers World)

The stone to my right was Africa-shaped and fringed with damp moss. Most of the writing was gone now. “Also Rebecca Askham, mother of the above,” I could make out. And then: “who died October 1st 1903. Aged 50 years.” The nettles around the bottom were at the top of their power. They stood for pain. The stone on my other side was in memory of “Frank Cyril Nicholson, who died January 13th 1897, aged 14 year.”

It was a cool day, very quiet at times, then some horn or deep engine on the dual carriageway would break in. Frank Cyril died after 14 years; died, it seems, of natural causes. His death must have been very sad, but was probably not mysterious. His was a named loss. The cause was known; the end was marked, his spot was here and was in a manner of speaking sacred. I sat thinking about all this, feeling the breeze well enough and considering the script carved below Frank Cyril’s dates: “In the midst of life,” it said, “we are in death.”

I had a stick, and with other people, later that day, I searched the long field of stones around the Chapel for traces of a missing boy. Daniel Handley, aged nine, had been missing from his home on the Windsor Park Estate since the previous Sunday. As I made my way down the field, losing sight of other people, I grew more and more uneasy. This was the largest patch of scrub near to Daniel’s home. I turned over in my head the various things that could have happened. I looked through the undergrowth, poking with the stick, and I reached a place almost under the flyover itself. The traffic noise was now thunderous, and the grass seemed longer than at any other point. My breath was quite short. It felt wrong to walk in this deep grass. Not just unsafe. Wrong. As I made my way through the field, looking into the grass and under bushes for signs of the boy – hoping there would be nothing – I found it hard to keep my footing.

The light at the top of Canary Wharf

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Daniel was out playing on his bike the day he disappeared. It was silver and had no saddle. He was out on Sunday, October 2, and he played for some time at the house of a friend, but he failed to return home afterward

blinked just over the other side of the carriageway and the sun was high up. The tower looked broad and massive, and its windows gleamed like the vicar's collar. Daniel Handley was missing, and we were there trying to find him. We were there, walking on graves, trying to find the missing boy.

The previous day I'd gone to Daniel's house. The Windsor Park Estate sits very near the Royal Albert Dock, just on the north bank of the Thames beside East Ham and Barking. It's an area made up of newish housing schemes, heavy roads, flyovers, industrial parks, expansive malls and playing fields. At the beginning of the estate, on the corner of Windsor Terrace and Woolwich Manor Way, about five minutes from Daniel's house, there's a giant building site. There are mounds of rubble and dirt, roving dumpers, stacks of brick, packs of cement and pyramids of cellophane-wrapped pipe. There's a giant sign at the edge of the rubble: "Another prestigious hotel development for Whitbread Medway Inns, constructed by Dean & Bowes Ltd., Huntingdon." The site was fenced off, though I managed to have a look around without much trouble. It was mostly empty, with hard-hatted workmen doing their thing in this or that corner. The ground was uneven, it was full of holes, but I guessed the police had already considered that.

A large Asda superstore stands across the road, with bus stops planted outside. Daniel worked here as a bag filler – you know, putting people's shopping into bags at the till. This was how he earned pocket money, and he was a well-known face around the area. He was out playing on his BMX bike the day he disappeared. It was silver and had no saddle. Like many kids his age, he would use the kerbs and ramps around the scheme, and the empty industrial estates just beyond it, to practice stunts on his bike. He was out doing that sort of thing on Sunday, October 2, and he played for some time at the house of a friend, but he failed to re-

turn home afterward. He set out late in the afternoon but had somehow not made it. That evening, two boys found an abandoned silver BMX on Eisenhower Drive, round the corner from Daniel's house. The boys took it back to their home in Clapton, where they wiped it down and thought to keep it. When they heard of the missing boy, though, they gave the bike to the police, who found that it was Daniel's.

Daniel was the fourth of Maxine William's five boys. In April 1994, Maxine had left the family home she shared with her husband, David Handley, in Newark Knok and taken the kids to live at the house of her boyfriend, Alex Joseph, at Lobelia Close in Beckton. Daniel went to Beckton Cross primary school and was one of those kids who'd talk to anyone. He already had girlfriends and was one of the daredevils at school, one of the live wires, one of the minor pushers-and-shovers. He had, in the usual manner for the younger of several boys, a fair amount of brotherly reputation to live up to or to live down. Some of his brothers were thought to be quite flash and to be fairly unshy when it came to the business of standing up for things. His schoolmates talked to me of the Handleys as of one of those families who can easily absorb trouble and who could dish it out just as easily. The mother's boyfriend, Alex, is black, and even in an area as multi-racial as East London can be, there was a certain amount of prejudice in the local area about the fact of his living in Lobelia Close with a white woman and her children. People talked about them, and they did so, it seems, even before Daniel disappeared.

Daniel had been wearing a red boiler suit that day, which had the word "Racing" stitched onto the left pocket. Underneath he had a green jumper. He also wore brown boots. The lake at the top of Beckton District Park had been dredged with special equipment; the gasworks and sewage treatment plant to the east had been searched repeatedly; warehouses and parks had been gone

into; and door-to-door calls were under way all week. I turned into the Close the day they were due to start digging in the garden. There were television vans parked along the sides, and journalists were lining up behind the police tape, anxious for photos and news. At first, there was only a solitary female police officer guarding the house. The tape stretched across the road in such a way that people who lived on either side of the Handley's house had to run underneath it. Most of those going by were kids, and they zoomed right under the tape on their BMXs and racers; they did it repeatedly. They were showing off for the journalists and clearly trying to wind up the lady officer.

A man from the Mail on Sunday walked round and round the Close, chatting at all the doors, getting himself steamed up. Every time he heard something interesting – and often when he heard something not – he'd draw out his mobile phone and call his news desk. He'd repeat it to them hastily, clearly experiencing some sort of deadline fever. The policewoman told me she thought he was “facetious,” and sort of rolled her eyes when the Daily Star walked up. Even amid the solemnity and dead seriousness of this stake out, there was something very funny about the man from the Star. Everyone looked at him. He stalked up and down the pavement, sucking one cigarette after another down to nothing, his head bowed with the weight of two or three cameras. His hair was very short at the front, very long at the back and greasy all over, his suit was shiny, and the trousers flapped at half-mast. He had a thin moustache and he walked up and down like a loopy pigeon.

He pointed to a little Asian boy who played just in front of the tape: “Is your mom in, sonny?” The boy nodded. “Can you ask her to come out here a minute?” The boy ran inside. A few seconds later an adult arm appeared at the door, but only for long enough to pull the thing shut and turn

the key in the lock. “That,” said The Star, “is a definite no.”

“Why don't you stand on the back wall?” said a blond woman in shades.

“Tried that.”

“Eight of them, there's eight of them digging in the garden,” said an older guy, a producer-type, who had just stepped out of a red Volvo. “I think one of the snappers has got them at it.”

Maxine Williams and Alex Joseph, Daniel's mother and her boyfriend, were in a DSS safe-house during the search. One of the neighbours, a middle-aged white man, backed up by his jittering wife, takes the opportunity to speak with the assembled press. He has the air of someone familiar with the plot. He emphasises certain things, he makes a few tough points about how one should live in a community, and then he hammers home a series of assertions that you wouldn't care to hear. I couldn't print them, and the TV journalists knew – as he spoke – that they wouldn't be able to broadcast them either. Halfway through his spiel, I saw the guy from Newsroom South-East switch off his camera.

I stayed by the fence for a while after the other people had gone. I wanted to talk with the kids. The Asian woman from next door eventually turned the key. She came over and asked if there had been any more news. I gave her what I had. She offered me coffee and told me I could look out of her bedroom window if I wanted. It was right over the spot where they were digging. I didn't go in. The police were coming in and out from the yard, wearing blue jumpers and white gloves. CID were doing the rounds of the houses, dressed in gray suits and carrying clipboards. A crowd of small boys had gathered around the tape.

“Give us a cigarette,” said one.

“You're too young,” says I.

“Am I f***. I've smoked for ages.”

“Age are you?”

“Nine,” he says, pulling a 10-pack from his pocket and lighting one up behind a tiny

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cupped hand.

“Same age as Daniel,” I said.

“He smoked as well. He used to go out with my big sister. What do you think has happened to him?”

“I don’t know. What do you think?” At this point the others butt in. Two of them are 13, one other is nine. They give me their theories, tell me all about their parents’ suspicions and reel out the local gossip. The little one is still swaggering about with his fag, clowning and blowing excellent smoke-rings.

They talked about Alex, about how good a fighter he was.

“He’s a bodybuilder,” said one of the thirteens.

“Brilliant muscles like that,” said another, pulling up a sleeve of his T-shirt.

“Can we talk into your tape recorder?” shouted Jason, the miniature smoker. I gave it to them, and they started barking into it – sentences and short stories all to do with such and such, among them being “dickless” or “a virgin” or “pricks” and “bastards.”

“Daniel is just like any other kid,” said the neighbour with the jittering wife. “These children were often kept away from school. I’d see it, and I’d want to complain. I knew something wasn’t right. One of the kids told me that Alex’s mom was the funniest person alive. She gave them money; you’d see her staggering across Lobelia Close with a can of Superlager, her dog Lady limping at her back.”

“She’s brilliant,” said Jason, handing back my recorder. Just then, an ice-cream van – Tony’s Super Whip – came jangling down the street, and they all went after it.

Several months later, Daniel Handley was still missing. There was no sign of him; nothing had turned up from the searches or from the digging. Police were going over the same ground again and again. Mr. Joseph, the boyfriend, was in the psychiatric wing of Pentonville Prison, having been charged

with offences committed against some other children. Daniel’s mother was on remand, charged with similar offences under the Children Act. For six months or so, Daniel Handley’s whereabouts were unknown.

He was yet another missing child, and most people had given up hope of ever finding him or of ever finding him well. They weren’t to be proved wrong on the last bit. The boy’s body, still clad in his red boiler suit, was found in a wooded area outside Bristol in April. He’d been murdered and placed in a rough grave, covered in leaves and dirt. That’s where he’d lain all those months.

The police spoke of a paedophile ring and revealed details of Operation Oyster, an attempt by officers to close in on an East London gang. Witnesses came forward. A woman in Bristol recalled seeing someone just like Daniel, a little boy in red, in the company of three men in a cafe. The boy seemed quite happy, quite cheerful, and the men were friendly enough too. But, for whatever reason, a clear picture of the group remained in her head. A boy like Daniel was spotted again in Bristol one Sunday in November. Two men were holding his hands tight, walking him down the street. The boy seemed a bit distressed.

The child who rode down Eisenhower Drive on his saddleless bike that bright afternoon in October had encountered something dreadful on his way. The police have issued photo-fits and descriptions and called for every sort of assistance. They are waiting for more responses and, in the meantime, have brought down the files on missing local children.

There are thousands of missing persons in Britain whose disappearance, unlike Daniel’s, is never reported. They fall out of troubled homes, Special Care and approved schools every other day. Under new regulations, many people with mental health trouble are decanted out of hospitals and into the streets and night shelters that now act as a sort of security net for them. Such people – often voluntarily at first – lose sight

of all that they have been before. Many you talk to can't remember much or anything about who they used to be. Runaways, amnesiacs, schizophrenics, victims of abuse.

Every year, thousands burst – or are thrust – out of what community they have known; they take up their lives anonymously, often on the streets of Britain's bigger cities. Most of them lose touch; benefits are often unclaimed; relatives are gladly left behind or were never there in the first place. Such missing persons you might call the unmissed, and it is possible that more than 200,000 people at any given time in Britain can be described this way.

Whether missed or not, the common condition of all the missing (apart from their being out of sight) is that their documentary lives stop at the point they disappear. This termination, in fact, explains what it means to be a missing person in a country such as Britain. From birth, something like a small maelstrom of official paper swirls round your body, defining your human relations (birth and marriage certificates); outlining your religious life (baptisms, Holy Communions, Confirmations); describing your physical progression (medical records); the history of your teeth (dental records); your education (report cards, school files); giving evidence of your social life (club minutes, membership cards); your professional life (employment records, application forms, job appraisal reports); your mental or custodial history (psychiatric reports, social work papers, prison records); your domestic routines (phone records, gas bills, newspapers delivered); and hundreds of extant documents relating to the conduct or the business of your life. These are bits of paper long forgotten by you and by most people. These official records (to say nothing of private documents, letters and diaries) give a very full account of who you are and what your movements have been over the course of your life.

Ours is a very written-down sort of life; it can't easily be erased, nor can the binding

power of ongoing records be easily snapped. Many of these records follow you wherever you go, and in the normal run of things, they can cause you to be traced very quickly. Missing people have – for one of a variety of reasons I'm turning over – severed, or been severed from, their written life.

They are not cashing checks in their own name, they are not drawing benefits or earning money through their National Insurance number, they are not paying tax, they are not visiting a doctor or a dentist in possession of their files, and, as police investigators quickly find out during a search, they are not regularly matching the pattern of what is known about them.

You can change your identity, but it is not just a matter of going to another town and calling yourself Jeremy. It is a gigantic undertaking: a trail of subterfuge and avoidance of past documents leads away from the who-you-were to the who-you-are-now.

This scenario mostly applies to the non-vulnerable missing – that's to say, people who may deliberately go missing for reasons of their own. It applies less to the unmissed or to vulnerables whose disappearance is much more sinister. There is no big deal, for them, in turning away from the documents of the past. For runaways and abuse victims and schizophrenics, those documents are not binding in the way they are for your average mortgage holder in Northampton. They are unmissed, and nobody is making the connections: They never had checkbooks, they never had work, and they will have all sort of names to offer to hostel workers and doctors if they ever see them.

Children who disappear, the most vulnerable category of all, have no big documentary lives anyway, they just have lives. When they go missing, there can only be the possibility of foul play, a strange accident or strangers. The police call them mispers. They're everywhere and nowhere, in the world and out of it, each of them different and each the same.

Mispers.

You can change your identity, but it is not just a matter of going to another town and calling yourself Jeremy

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Andrew O'Hagan's
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CT

Illustration: Brian Strassburg



The j

Bob Whitby is 250ft in the air, attached to a rubber band, wondering how he managed to get himself into such a scary position

FROM THE TABLOID COLDTYPE: Issue 2, 1995

At the top, 250 feet above the sand, I decided I'd made a mistake. Waiting in line for three hours, fastening God's own rubber band to my ankles, riding a spindly platform hoisted by a probably derelict crane – it was all wrong.

From the ground, bungee jumping looks simple. You pay your money, ride to the top, jump off, yo-yo, go home. I watched a one-armed World War II vet do it, bald guys do it, young girls do it, and nobody got hurt.

But from the metal half-cage swaying in the breeze, there was only down and enough of it to squash all perspective flat. There were no waves in the ocean, only lines of white foam. Horizon to horizon, no building stood higher than my temporary vantage point. There were two paths back to terra firma:

oy of risk...

head-first off the platform in a swan dive or, still gripping the half-cage rail, eased back down in disgrace.

“Are you sure I can do this?” I asked the guy who rode up with me. He rode the platform all day, encouraging people to jump off. The Safety Guy, I noted, was securely tethered to the platform. He’d known me for all of a minute, but the Safety Guy said yes, he was sure I could do it. And the ride would be smooth. To this day, when I recall standing on the edge of the platform looking down, my blood pressure rises and my eyes water.

I learned something of risk – and its henchman, fear – that day. Like nothing else, risk clears the mind, conjures up amazing powers of concentration and enables the body to perform incredible feats of stamina and athletic prowess. If confronted and subdued, risk has an almost narcotic calming effect that can last for days. Risk is erotic, addicting and, for some people, essential to mental well-being.

Bungee jumping was a risk some people would never consider taking and a risk some would take in stride. As a society, we tend to think of risk only as potential harm to life and limb. But risk is really whatever the risk-taker believes it to be. To one person, Russian roulette is not out of the question; to another, asking for a raise is too terrifying to consider.

In his book *Chancing It*, author Ralph Keyes interviewed risk-takers of all types: from a Frenchman who walked on a cable

strung between two New York skyscrapers to a woman who considers getting out of bed an iffy proposition. Keyes found every one of his subjects had a personal risk threshold they wouldn’t cross. The wire walker, for example, was frightened of committing to a relationship; a woman who rescued her daughter from “a house full of drug addicts” at gunpoint was terrified by the idea of submitting an article to a magazine.

Keyes concludes that risk is rooted in fear, and whether the fear is real or imagined makes little difference. Fear of getting on stage before an audience is just as real as fear of falling from a mountain, which is just as real as fear of crossing the street. According to Keyes, risks taken are often a substitute for those considered too frightening. Thus, the tightrope walker who is really afraid of marriage doesn’t consider his balancing act nearly as dangerous as getting married. He is able to enjoy the benefits of taking a risk without confronting the truly frightening. “In many ways,” writes Keyes, “the risks we duck say something far more profound about who we are and how we feel than those we take. They speak to us of our deepest fears.”

Tim Cahill has spent the last 20 years taking risks and writing about them. His four books and numerous magazine articles for *Rolling Stone*, *Outside*, *National Geographic* and others chronicle a life well spent, if adventure and flight from boredom are the yardstick. Cahill has dived among sharks, been held at gunpoint, trekked through unexplored Africa in the company of pygmies,

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“Every time there was a commercial break, I would get up – they brought a wastebasket in for this purpose – hold my tie down and vomit into the wastebasket”

raced horse-drawn chariots and spelunked in the deepest caves of North America. If all goes well, he’s planning to spend the summer in Mongolia among an indigenous, nomadic people he says share many cultural similarities with American Indians of the last century.

But even Cahill has his limit, which he reached one night during the taping of a television show. The show, scrapped before it hit the airwaves, centred around the idea that great adventures would be interesting to listen to in a kind of faux after-dinner setting. The bold risk-takers, dressed in formal wear and quaffing brandy, would swap stories around a fire.

The idea’s Achilles’ heel, says Cahill, was that those engaged in such activities often are not overly anxious to brag. Especially on camera. “We are all terribly, terribly embarrassed,” he says.

The show, going badly on that particular night, spun out of control for Cahill, who says he “began to get the very worst case of stage fright I suppose anybody at an NBC thing had ever seen in their entire life. Every time there was a commercial break, I would get up – they brought a wastebasket in for this purpose – hold my tie down and vomit into the wastebasket. I’m sure it was one of the most hilarious things they ever saw.”

Like most engaged in risky business, Cahill doesn’t consider the things he does overly dangerous. Unusual maybe, but he keeps the danger to a minimum by intensive preparation. “When I do various things, I’ve researched them,” he says. “I’ve practiced for them, trained for them and generally know what to do in case of an emergency.”

That kind of preparation both minimises danger and increases the benefits that come from taking a chance. The adrenal glands release two hormones to help the body deal with emergencies – adrenaline and nonadrenaline. Researchers working with monkeys have shown that, with suf-

ficient warning, extreme stimuli caused the animals’ brains to increase production of “good” chemicals – among them, non-adrenaline. Stimuli that sprang forth unannounced and unprepared for released more “bad” chemicals – adrenaline for the most part – and the monkeys were basket cases.

Matt Stauffer, a 22-year-old senior at Beloit College, is big on preparation. Stauffer and three friends recently returned from a winter climbing trip in Wyoming’s Grand Tetons range, where they tried to climb the 12,800-foot Middle Teton. After coming within 1,000 feet of the summit, they were turned back by 60 mph winds, zero visibility and wind chills of 120 degrees below zero – cold enough to freeze Stauffer’s fingers when he took off his gloves for a moment to adjust a boot binding. “It’s like fun, only different,” he says.

The payoff for weeks of preparation is a sense of the extraordinary. “Climbing mountains just provides a sense of adventure you don’t get in everyday life,” says Stauffer. “It’s a sense of isolation, of self-sufficiency. If something did go wrong, no one would be able to help you anyway.”

Frank Farley, psychology professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin, believes all people fall somewhere along a continuum based on their genetically predetermined arousability. The spectrum runs from what Farley calls “Big Ts” (people who need thrills and excitement to get revved up) to “Little ts” (people who are excessively responsive and therefore require little stimulation).

Most people fall somewhere between the extremes, Farley says, but it’s the Big Ts who leave an indelible mark on society: Amelia Earhart, Bonnie and Clyde, John Belushi, etc.

All people, says Farley, seek to maintain an essentially balanced central nervous system. Big Ts do that by seeking risk and the adrenal rush that follows. Little ts, already

hyper-excited, seek a balance by avoiding such stimuli.

When channelled in a positive direction, Big Ts become scientists, performers, surgeons and artists. When no socially acceptable outlet is found, however, they gravitate toward delinquency and crime. Farley found juvenile delinquents more likely than not to be Big T types. And Big T delinquents were harder to manage in prison and more likely to escape.

Farley's work has implications for early childhood development, education and prison reform – as well as for thrill seekers. According to Farley, the need to risk is probably as genetic as eye colour and, if satisfied in a responsible manner, risk can be a factor in overall mental health.

In his studies of the psychological effects of risk, University of Chicago psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced Chick-simi-hi) studied rock climbers, dancers and surgeons. Csikszentmihalyi noticed his subjects often described a sense of euphoria that blotted out all references to time and irrelevant stimuli (such as doorbells and phones) and left the people with a sense of euphoria lasting for days.

He calls the state “the flow” and says that adults seek out this state of mind for

experience alone. It is, he says, “an autonomous reality that has to be understood on its own terms.”

Tipping forward, I remember wind noise and the sand rushing up to smack me in the face. I knew, or believed I knew, there was little likelihood of dying on God's rubber band. But I was also cognisant of experiencing what jumpers must feel before they hit the pavement. For a few seconds, nothing existed outside the wind, the sand and gravity. My time on the bungee was total isolation and elation, a joyous and exceedingly rare experience.

The bungee halted my fall imperceptibly, as if the air itself had become more viscous toward the ground. Then the sand receded and I was on the way up again. When I stopped bouncing, the crane operator eased me gently to the sand. It was all over in probably 20 seconds, but every second is permanently hard wired into memory. The Flow. **CT**

Bob Whitby's piece first appeared in Isthmus, the alternative weekly newspaper in Madison, Wisconsin.



BRITAIN'S DEFIANT MINERS

Download ColdType's special supplements on the 1984-85 British Mineworkers' Strike and its aftermath at www.coldtype.net/Miners.html



Hard men, hard country

*Rian Malan goes on the road with
some of the toughest truckers on the planet*

Santa Clara has the feel of a frontier town in the old Wild West. The bars and whorehouses start pumping at ten in the morning

FROM THE TABLOID COLDTYPE: *Issue 6, 2001*

Eric Gagiano is a battler from way back, a tough guy from a frontier town where Saturday nights are for drinking and fighting and just looking at an oke the wrong way is enough to get your ribs kicked in.

In his wild youth, Eric was the terror of farm dances and sakkie-sakkie jols all across the old Suid-Wes, so widely dreaded that his enemies eventually jumped him in the alley behind the Otjiwarongo Hotel and beat him up with fence droppers, leaving him with a pulverised cheekbone and an eye that droops lazily, like the TV detective Colombo's.

After that came a stint on the border, where he fought "terrorists," and a spell on a cattle ranch near Etosha, where he

fought marauding lions. These days, he fights bad roads, bandits and chaos in Angola, which is why he's sitting in the cab of a 40-ton truck at Santa Clara border post, waiting.

You do a lot of waiting in Angola. You wait for cops, for customs officers and border guards, for bandits to be cleared off the road ahead. Right now, Eric (48) and his son Mannetjie (21) are waiting for the third vehicle in their convoy, a pickup stuck on the far side of the border on account of a flaw in its papers.

Santa Clara has the feel of a frontier town in the old Wild West. The bars and whorehouses start pumping at ten in the morning. Young hoods roam the dusty border plaza in dark glasses and Nike trainers, trying to flog diamonds and ivory.

On the far side of the fence, in Namibia,

traders armed with suitcases of hard currency are buying truckloads of groceries and beer for shipment to Luanda, which has become something of a boomtown lately.

Drillers have struck oil offshore – five new fields in the last 18 months or so, with reserves in the region of six billion barrels. Oil production is set to double. Diamonds are pouring out of the eastern highlands. Fabulous mineral deposits await exploitation in the hinterland. Angola is Africa's new El Dorado.

On the other hand, it's also the site of "the worst war on the planet," a ghastly conflict that seems to be hotting up again, if near-hysterical press reports are accurate. Angolans have been slaughtering each other since 1961, when locals took up arms against Portuguese colonists.

After 1974 came the Cold War phase, with South Africa and the CIA supporting the tribalistic rebels of UNITA while the Soviets backed the ruling MPLA, a movement led by assimilados and mestizos.

The foreigners pulled out in 1988, but the war continued like an old, bad habit, leaving a once-thriving country devastated beyond comprehension. Now the latest truce between government and rebels is disintegrating, or so the newspapers say. There are reports of arms shipments, troops massing, attacks on outlying towns. Eric just shrugs. "Ag, ek worrie nie," he says. "Ek ry maar."

So he revs up the engine and the giant 26-wheelers lurch into motion, Manneljie leading the way in his red International, his dad trailing bringing up the rear in an ancient Scania and the bakkie (pick-up) sandwiched between. We'll be in Angola for at least three weeks, so Eric's cab has all necessary comforts – orange fur on the dashboard, sakkie-sakkie tapes, bunk screened off by a Confederate flag in Yankee rebel trucker style.

The freezer's full of cold Cokes and braai meat, and there are several crates of cheap

whiskey on the trailer, to be dispensed as bribes to customs officials, difficult policemen and bazooka-toting teenagers.

Beyond such inconveniences, there's malaria to contend with, and Angola's stomach bugs are dreaded, especially since a dash into the roadside bush can be very dangerous in a country littered with landmines. Still, says Eric, these things are as nothing. "In Angola, dis die paaie wat jou werklik laat kak."

Consider the one we're travelling on. Once tarred, its surface has been cut into knife-like ridges by tank tracks and pitted with bomb craters. The verges are strewn with blitzed Russian troop carriers and tanks, relics of a great battle against the South Africans in the eighties. We're moving at walking pace, the truck creaking and groaning over savage potholes.

"This is nothing," says Eric. "There's places north of Lubango where the potholes are so deep the truck in front of you vanishes inside them. There's places where the mud's so deep in rainy season that you can't even open the door of your cab."

He starts telling hair-raising stories about breakdowns in a country where there are no phones, no spares, and no hope of rescue. "Who's gonna help you, my man? You just make a fuckin' plan."

Trip before last, he says, the trailer jack-knifed and bent the differential. He and his son hauled the twisted metal into the shade of a tree, found some rocks and sand and ground it back into shape with their bare hands. "That's four months ago, and it's still working."

It seems foolhardy to be heading into a war in a truck with a dodgy differential and no weapons save a steel rod that Eric keeps handy in case someone soeks him at a truck stop. But where is the war? We can't seem to find it.

United Nations soldiers say that bandits are hitting at least one convoy daily on the

It seems foolhardy to be heading into a war in a truck with a dodgy differential and no weapons save a steel rod that Eric keeps handy in case someone soeks him at a truck stop

Barebreasted women wander footpaths with water vessels on their heads. A goatherd has an AK 47 slung over his shoulder

road ahead, but truckers coming out of the badlands shrug as if to say, so what? There are always bandits on the road to Luanda.

At worst, the situation is “confusao.” One driver – a mestizo in a pirate bandana – responds to our questions by brandishing his own AK47 and yelling, “No problemsh.” He puts foot and vanishes in a cloud of dust. We pull into a town called Xangongo, where a nightmare of sorts awaits.

Xangongo (pronounced Shangongo) lies 200 km inside the border, but this is where customs are located, for reasons best known to the inscrutable Angolans.

Northbound trucks park in the ruins of an old prison and send emissaries to a Quonset hut on a bluff overlooking the crocodile-infested Kunene River. Exactly what goes on there is hard to say.

Some trucks go through almost immediately, trailing rumours of connections in high places. Others get stuck for a day or so while “informal taxes” are negotiated. We fall into a problematic third category: our consignment is owned by a upstanding company that has no intention of bribing anyone.

In fact, they’ve dispatched an executive from corporate headquarters to pay the necessary taxes. He comes out of the sky in a twin-engined Cessna and hobbles into town with 30,000 US dollars stuffed down the crotch of his trousers, only to be informed that there’s a problem with the papers.

It takes all day to sort it out, and we sleep in the dust under the trucks. Next morning, the Angolans decide that our bill has to be settled in local currency. Ten years ago, one dollar was 29-kwanza. After a decade of hyper inflation, the exchange rate is now 67,000 and rising. Thirty thousand US is 20-billion kwanza, enough to fill a small bakkie. Where do you get a bakkie-load of cash in a town with no banks, no credit system and no communications?

The executive leaps into the pickup and roars off to find out. We sit in the dust all

day, sipping Eric’s bribe supplies and speculating that this is all a plot on the part of the authorities to wear us down so that we slip them something under the table. The wind kicks up and blows trash around.

Eric regales us with a few battle epics, including a rather good one about the night he came off his bike at 270 kph and his leathers tinkled like a glockenspiel when the medics peeled them off him on account of all the smashed half-jacks in his pockets.

Bored out of his skull, Mannetje gets into an argument with a black man who threatens to stab him. They chase each other around a rusting bulldozer until that gets boring too. Come sunset, we’re still sitting.

We buy a goat, slag it and braai it on a fire. Mannetje throws open the door of his cab and cranks up his beloved Leon Shuster. A stray Baster named Oupa Sakkie gets lekker getrek on Eric’s bribe supplies and dances the langarm all by himself under a full African moon.

Next day’s a repeat of the two previous. All our papers are in order now save for a single stamp from the economic police, but their offices are deserted, today being Saturday, so it’s 4 pm before we roll across the river and out onto the open plains.

The road runs straight as a die across golden savannah dotted about with baobab trees. Barebreasted women wander footpaths with water vessels on their heads. A goatherd has an AK 47 slung over his shoulder. Every hour or so, we pass a cluster of pastel colonial mansions crumbling gracefully to dust under the equatorial sun. The road is worse than ever.

Why don’t they just send this stuff by sea, I ask, jerking a thumb at the eighty tons of construction material on our trailers. “Hey,” says Eric. “You try it.” As he tells it, Luanda’s docks are a carnival of chaos and chicanery. Bureaucrats seize incoming

consignments pending payment of extortionate bribes.

It takes weeks of haggling to secure their release, by which time your containers are likely to have been looted anyway. So it's simpler to send goods overland, and the truckers aren't complaining because they're making a fortune. You can double your money every two weeks running beer and Coca Cola to Luanda.

The margins in potatoes are even more intoxicating: a pocket of spuds costs about two quid at the border, and sells for five times that in the capital.

"It's mad," says Eric. "We haul food across some of the best farming country in Africa that's just lying fallow because of all the fighting and all the landmines in the soil. We haul salt past buggered salt mines, beer past buggered breweries. It's IFA, man - Independence Fucked Angola. Nothing works here any more." On that note we pull over in a hamlet called Uia and crawl back under the trucks for the night.

Eric's up at sunrise, checking his engine. He says something doesn't feel right, and sure enough, the gearbox is dangling at an awkward angle, four key bolts having been shaken loose by yesterday's vibrations. I want to turn back, discretion being the better part of valour, but the guys make a plan - throw a sling under the gearbox, truss it up and push on.

An hour later, there's an ominous knocking in the engine and the gears freeze. "Whoa, vok," says Eric. "Hier's groot kak." We open the engine again. There's oil everywhere. Eric figures the bearings are about to smash through the block. We can't go on, we can't go back, and we can't raise base on the radio. The only thing for it is to take the bakkie and hunt down a telephone.

Five hours later, we're in Lubango, a sizeable town loomed over by a mountain topped by a giant statue of Jesus, Rio de

Janiero style. The power has failed, but there's a light on in the back of the central post office. A clerk informs us that the phones have been down for the past nine days, but we're welcome to try again in a week or two.

We're driving around in the dark, trying to make a plan, when the lights suddenly come on again. The whole town whoops and pours out onto the streets. It's Saturday night, and Lubango is bent on partying.

We hit a restaurant, order chips and steak. We ask about the war. Angola's in a state of "meltdown," we explain, quoting the world's great newspapers. People look at us as though we're mad. Sure, the generals are manoeuvring for control of the diamond fields near the Congo border, but otherwise, there's "no problemsh" aside from bandits, and they're no problem, either, provided you stay in convoy and don't travel at night.

Next morning, we cadge a call on the United Nations' satellite phone system and head back for the convoy, pausing only to have two tyres fixed. We figure this will take ten minutes, but in Angola, it takes all day, so it's sunset by the time we hit the road, whereupon both tyres blow in quick succession, leaving us stranded in the middle of nowhere with no spare.

The guys stand around, scratching their heads. I watch the moon rise over the thorn trees and think about Ryszard Kapuscinski, the great Polish foreign correspondent who came to Angola in the seventies but could never quite find the frontline of the war he was supposed to be covering. "The front line is inside your head," he eventually concluded. "It travels with you wherever you go."

Right now, my head is saying that we are in serious danger - stuck in the dark in the bandit zone with few tools, no radio, and little hope of salvation. We're making an enormous racket, trying to lever the tyre off the wheel with sticks and screwdrivers

The power has failed, but there's a light on in the back of the central post office. A clerk informs us that the phones have been down for the past nine days, but we're welcome to try again in a week or two

Our hair is matted with twigs and dust, and the reek of our bodies is unbearable

so that we can replace the tube and get going again.

Every bandit for miles around is surely zeroing in on us. In the end, we get so desperate that we claw one side of the tyre off the rim with our fingernails, stuff the tube inside, pump it up and send it, as Eric says.

Back in Namibia, the bosses are rustling up a new “horse” to replace the crippled Scania. Our instructions are to meet them back at the border, bringing the broken truck with us. One problem: no towbar. Eric makes a plan. He hacks a branch off an ironwood tree, mashes it into an angle iron under the wheels of his son’s 40-tonner, and voila – an Angolan disselboom.

We leave at dawn, heading back whence we came. Our hair is matted with twigs and dust, and the reek of our bodies is unbearable. We’ve been in Angola for a week, and covered fewer than 300 kilometres. At this rate, it will be a month before Eric sees a cold beer and a hot shower again.

The truck bucks through potholes at walking pace. Clouds of powdery dust billow through the open windows. The battler lowers his face into his hands and groans. **CT**

Rian Malan is the author of My Traitor’s Heart, A South African Exile Returns To Face His Country, His Tribe, And His Conscience.

Read Rian Malan’s In The Jungle at www.coldtype.net/Assets/pdfs/Jungle.pdf

Desperately seeking a superwoman

FROM THE TABLOID COLDTYPE:
Issue 2, 1995

By Ed Cassavoy

The ad sailed across my desk ... “Wanted Woman With Four Breasts. Call Dean,” it said. So I did. Oh, sure, I know you cynics out there reading this are sniggering. You think I was attracted by the seedy and tawdry aspects of this advert. A voyeur-in-journalist’s-clothing.

But you’re wrong. I’m normal, just like you. And curious. I just wanted to find out what could have driven Dean to such a desperate plea.

His message demanded immediate attention. Was this a bald-faced

12 midnight. 9	Asian and Caucasian women for S&M role play. No Straight. No exp nec. 718-784-0127 Qns - 50th St. Bridge loc.	Me You deser Catering
H b by July 7	WANTED WOMAN WITH FOUR BREASTS Dollar Dan’s Kinky Sideshow Show World Center 42nd St. & 8th Ave. New York City Call Dean 212-582-7438	PROMF Mod 21: ESCAP!
YORK artist. able. 7173	ADULT SERVICES	D BL Available fo Men Call
DYRUB vale. Women calls only. 7-404-5422	“DATING SERVICES” Date. Sensual. Fun.	21: DYN Sensual & v You can d Dyna Mod
OND, stress ng -802-4999		
ORK PLUS handsome, at touch. 2-459-4221		
AICAN Massage &		

grab for money? Probably. Or was Dean just being a good businessman, looking for a grand gesture to make the business expansion of his Show World Center something really special? After the red velvet curtains had been stapled securely to the walls and the new coat of Stain-

gard dried on the theatre seats, did he realise he needed more. A competitive edge, perhaps? Would Dean stand astride Mount Olympus as Striptease Titan of the Big A when he found his new Venus?

And, even if he did succeed in his hedonistic crusade, how would he be remembered? There’s no special place in the Smithsonian for men of his ilk, no gleaming Oscar to take home. Like all men of true foresight before him, he will have to wait for history to judge him.

But I’m musing. Filling space. We’ll never know whether Dean found his Holy Grail because he didn’t answer my pleading messages. Even though I used my I’m-just-an-innocent-journalist-with-no-evil-intent voice.

I guess he was too busy. Preparing for the Geraldo Show, perhaps. **CT**

Ed Cassavoy was associate editor of ColdType during its tabloid years, 1994-1996.

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Instituto No. 7: The least of all mercies

Cuba, an economic basket case since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the tightening of a decades-old embargo by the United States, is one of the most troubled nations in the world. But, in a dilapidated building in an industrial suburb of Havana, a dedicated group of people is teaching us all a lesson in the power of commitment.

*Exclusive photographs by **Russell Monk**.*

*Text: **Brendan Howley***

FROM THE TABLOID COLDTYPE: *Issue 2, 1995*

Instituto Numero 7, a long, bottle-blue one-storey building, stands on a cul-de-sac in an industrial district of the west-central Havana suburb of Vedado. The open side of the Instituto's U-shaped structure, built in 1981, when Soviet roubles flowed like water, lies

open to the Caribbean breezes rustling through overhanging shade trees; its gentle dilapidation suggests a California beach house imagined by Graham Greene.

The Instituto's street is eerily quiet, the silence broken only by the rumble of decrepit buses and trucks whose state of repair defies physical law. This is Havana in a time of collapse: sporadic power and water,





comic telephones, milk science fiction, gasoline US\$1 per litre, fantastic bus queues echoing the street scenes of Weimar Germany.

The Cubans, despite the enormous social, political and economic pressures visited on them between the twin vises of their own regime and the American embargo, remain defiantly kid-struck. This instinct drives

one of the few genuine marvels of Castro's 35-year-old dictatorship — that the crumbling island's health-care system still so inspiringly cares for the very least of the country's children.

Inside the institute, the echo of children's voices burbles down the cool Spartan hallways, the two long arms of the U comprise the girls' and boys' dormitory



spaces. There are no extras here: no surplus lights, no fans or air conditioning, no cheerful Disney murals, no stuffed animals guarding a classroom or dormitory doorway. One hundred and twenty children, all mentally challenged but otherwise fit, have their home here, with a further 50 kids seen on an outpatient basis; disabled children are cared for elsewhere in the city.

The children of Number 7 – a modelo departamento facility of the Ministry of Health – “need constant care,” explains director Beatriz Marrero Gómez. “They are very dependent: We have to do everything for them.” The institute’s staff numbers 73 nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, teachers and support staff, all of whom work for a pittance







— I counted some 40 staffers present the day of our visit. Not surprising, all Cubans working outside the tourist-dollar economy moonlight like crazy, simply to survive. The comeda empleado, the staff kitchen, is blacked out and empty. The children, Gómez assures us, receive three meals daily, with a milk supplement.

Number 7's toys are well worn, but the staff uniforms are crisp; the children's clothing, chiefly donated by the Spanish aid agency Medicos del Mundo, is well laundered; the tables and chairs worn by a decade's hard use. But these are details: The best evidence for the institute's standard of care is the children themselves.

Non-family visitors are rare here, never mind Westerners. We are instant local celebrities, welcomed by smiles and squeals and the subject — especially Monk's Leica camera — of conspiratorial whispering among the children. Their demeanours range from Marcos Costas' James Cagney song-and-dance extroversion to

the heartbreaking shyness of the child I remember as "the girl at the end of the bench," captivated by the starling at her feet, not us, and Ariel, the bitter boy sequestered in the infirmary, fiercely alone.

True innocence has an almost physical force: It is impossible not to be won by the children of Number 7. But even more, it is impossible not to be moved by the patience and love of those committed to their care.

Cuba will change soon, submerged by a tidal wave of the new, as the island capsizes into what passes for normal life in the free world. These children bear witness to the best of what was; their fate in the new Cuba will bear witness again, mute measure of the best intentions of those to come.

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*Russell Monk is a freelance photographer in Toronto. A journalist and novelist, **Brendan Howley** lives in Stratford, Ontario.*



Conscious of the Troubles

For more than two decades the British government has been trying to find a balance of power in Northern Ireland that will suit both Protestant and Catholic communities, writes John Gray

A lucky visitor is hardly aware of The Troubles. Away from the newspapers and television, almost everywhere you go there is a deceptive normality about the place

FROM THE TABLOID COLDTYPE: Issue 5, 1996

The strange, sad story of a beautiful land and the loyalties of its people is painted everywhere in large and defiant letters, in vivid images. To the outsider they are incomprehensible tribal incantations. To those who live in Belfast, they reinforce 300 years of history, with all its loves and hates and desperate fears. No Surrender. Ireland Unfree Shall Never be at Peace. 1690 God Save the Queen. Out of the Ashes Came the Provos. Hang All IRA Murderers. Welcome to the Loyalist Heartland of Ulster. Shankill Road No Surrender. IRA 1 RUC o. Join the UDA. Tiofaidh Ar La - Our Day Will Come. One Faith One Cross. Taig Scum. Belfast says No.

There are giant paintings that cover a building: King Billy's triumph for Protestantism at the battle of the Boyne in 1690, masked IRA gunmen preparing to murder for the sake of a republican dream, Union Jacks, young men who starved themselves to death in prison.

On the few occasions when there is even a shred of humour, it is grim. On a wall in the Falls Road there is a sign that says Semtex is Ozone Friendly. That is not really funny: Semtex is the gift of the now vanished Communist government of Czechoslovakia to the world of terrorism, a high-powered

and almost undetectable explosive that has killed scores in car bombs throughout Northern Ireland.

These are the mean streets, the streets that shape the country, though most of the people of Northern Ireland are never there; they know what they know from newspapers and television.

A lucky visitor is hardly aware of The Troubles. Away from the newspapers and television, almost everywhere you go there is a deceptive normality about the place.

The green hills roll endlessly into each other. Hedgerows and stone walls and wandering country lanes divide the peaceful patchwork quilt. Nobody ever calls the North the Emerald Isle, because history has made it different. But it is the same island, and it has the same soft beauty.

As anywhere else on the island, the practiced tippler will find the easiest avenue into a conversation is through a pint of Guinness and into a debate on the nature of the rich stout that is forever Ireland. They will tell you how it has to be drawn from the cask with care, in stages, and that if the froth is right you can draw your initial with your finger on the froth and it will remain legible until the bottom of the glass.

It is not a great leap from the dark mysteries of Guinness to the beauty of the island and expressions of sympathy for a visi-



Mural in Falls Road, Belfast, pays tribute to Republican hunger striker Bobby Sands. Photo: Stephane 339, via Flickr.com

tor who must make his home in London. It is all more welcome than the daily news.

The places that have put Belfast on the consciousness of the world – the Falls Road, the Crumlin Road, Ballymurphy, Andersonstown, Ardoyne, Shankill – are where the Protestant and Roman Catholic working classes live, each locked into its own ghetto, the ghettos divided by a 10-metre steel-and-concrete “Peace Line.”

Elsewhere there are few slogans on the walls, little barbed wire, no carpet of broken glass on the streets. And the pubs and drinking clubs are not divided by religion. Waves of sectarian sympathy wash into the plush corners of the land, but the war itself is working class.

One of the most-wanted men of the Irish

Republican Army lived for months in the middle-class comfort and three-piece respectability of Belfast’s Malone Road area because it never occurred to his neighbours that a terrorist might be living in their kind of neighbourhood.

As Aidan O’Reilly says: “Money transcends these stupid things.” If not a lot of money, then a little money and some distance. Out in the neat suburb of Carryduff, where Mr. O’Reilly, an ambulance driver, lives with his wife Heather and their 2-year-old son Christopher, Ballymurphy and Shankill are a world away. Life in Carryduff is, as he says, very normal.

It is a mixed Protestant and Catholic area, and when the neighbours get together everyone is careful not to mention politics or religion. There are enough reminders of Northern Ireland’s problems in the news-

It never occurred to his neighbours that a terrorist might be living in their kind of neighbourhood

High up in the Belfast sky there is the constant and unmistakable sound of the army helicopter that always hovers in search of trouble in the streets below

papers and on television.

The O'Reillys are a mirror of the neighbourhood: he is Catholic, she is Protestant. Christopher will go to the integrated school that is just down the road and, with luck, his father says, "he won't have the experiences I had."

Even if he escapes those experiences, when Christopher finishes school his father will urge him to leave, as the Irish have done for generations. Mr. O'Reilly's older brother is in Calgary, a sister lives in Britain, and he thinks a younger brother and sister may leave soon.

"The whole idea is to get educated and leave."

Mr. O'Reilly would leave for Calgary tomorrow, but his wife, who grew up in middle-class comfort, is happy enough in Carryduff. She has no demons to flee. He grew up in a predominantly Protestant neighbourhood in East Belfast, where they still talk about largely Catholic West Belfast as "the Irish side." It was not too bad until he was in his teens, in the late 1960s, at the beginning of the Catholic-led civil rights movement. The Troubles began, and "suddenly we had to choose sides."

On Kimberly Street, as in every other mixed neighbourhood of Northern Ireland, there was a low-grade war. The kids were the worst – "I thought I was a punching bag until I was 16," Mr. O'Reilly says. Once he and several friends were shot at.

The adults were not much better. Led by a pipe band and a thundering lambeg drum whose sound still gives him the shivers, Protestant parades would detour to march menacingly up to the Catholic houses. The O'Reilly family finally moved out after Protestant vandals broke every window in the house. Elsewhere, the same kind of thing happened to Protestants, of course.

Everything is history in Northern Ireland, and everyone has a different starting point. Nationalist political leader John Hume says despairingly: "Our respect for the past paralyses our attitude to the future."

Mr. Hume may be right. But respect for the past – sometimes it seems like wallowing in the past – is comforting. It can make the present understandable and even bearable.

For Aidan O'Reilly and thousands of his generation, history is places such as Kimberly Street and the start of the Troubles. For the Protestants in the Shankill, history is the paintings of King William of Orange astride his white horse at the Boyne. No surrender in 1690, no surrender in 1990.

There is a corner of Milltown cemetery in the heart of West Belfast that is a monument to Northern Ireland's Republican and Catholic history.

There is the grave of Bobby Sands, the first of the 10 hunger strikers who died in prison in 1981, the grave of another who was hanged in 1798, the graves of three IRA gunmen who were killed by the British Army in Gibraltar in 1988, and a grave site reserved for Tom Williams, an IRA man who was hanged in 1942 and is still buried in Belfast jail.

It goes on for row after row. Murdered. Killed in Action. Shot dead by the British. Died on a prison ship. And there are lingering signs of paint bombs on a few of them, for one man's hero is another man's terrorist.

And high up in the Belfast sky there is the constant and unmistakable sound of the army helicopter that always hovers in search of trouble in the streets below. This is the newest of high technology in search of a peace that has eluded Ireland since the larger island to the east claimed a role here more than eight centuries ago.

An invading army from England first landed in Ireland in about the year 1170. Since then the struggle has never really stopped. They still fight about power and land and religion with a ferocity that is frightening to recall.

Ireland's Celtic inhabitants were stub-

born about their independence and about their religion. Britain became Protestant and Ireland remained Catholic. Even the terrors of Oliver Cromwell did not cure the Irish of that. Then Britain tried to overwhelm them by numbers. Boatloads of Scottish Protestants were sent to establish a plantation in the northeast corner of Ireland that is now Northern Ireland. Catholic graffiti in Belfast occasionally describes Protestants as “planters” and “visitors,” as though they arrived just last year for a temporary stay. In fact they began arriving in 1606, at about the time Samuel de Champlain was founding a shaky little settlement at what is now Quebec City.

For Britain, the solution of the Irish problem was finally partition of the island. The dividing line separated 26 largely Catholic counties in the south and north west from the six largely Protestant counties of the north east that remained a province of the United Kingdom.

But history was not so easily settled, for “largely” is not all. The Protestants who had been a minority in the whole island were at last a comfortable and unthreatened majority in the north.

But there remained a Catholic minority, about a third of Northern Ireland’s 1.5 million people. The civil rights struggles of the late 1960s and early 1970s were about blatant discrimination in housing, in education, in employment, and before the law. When those complaints were rejected by a majority that would not relinquish its advantages, the Troubles began. And once they began they could not be stopped, because on one side or the other there is always a death to avenge.

South of the village of Crossmaglen the road crosses into the Republic and then back again before you have any idea you are in another country. Only someone who knows the area can tell you where the border goes – from that fence, along the side

of the barn and then the concrete wall to the middle of the road, down the road for half a kilometre and then left along that hedgerow.

But it is not what it seems. Crossmaglen is Bandit Country. The village square is dominated by a police station that looks like a fortress of barbed wire and concrete, a steel-plated lookout tower, aerials, television cameras.

On the highest of the surrounding hills are fortified lookouts from which British soldiers survey the countryside. The soldiers are usually flown in by helicopter because even armoured vehicles are easy targets for bombs on these narrow roads. Local history is a sniper here, a car bomb there, and a mortar attack from behind that hill.

At the headquarters of the Royal Ulster Constabulary in Belfast, they assure you that the crime rate in Northern Ireland is lower than anywhere else in Britain. Homicides per 100,000 of population: Detroit 59, Washington 31, Northern Ireland 7. Anyway, less than 10 per cent of crime relates to terrorism.

Still, the toll is grim. Since the Troubles began, more than 2,800 police, soldiers, paramilitary activists and innocent civilians have died as a result of shooting or bombs. More than 33,000 have been wounded.

In the package of crime statistics distributed by the RUC, it is carefully noted that in the same period car accidents accounted for 5,500 deaths and 120,000 injuries.

But of course you don’t think about car accidents the same way. They are, after all, accidents. You do not have patrols of men with dogs and automatic weapons sweeping through the commercial centre of Belfast to stop car accidents.

It pervades the society. A few days after two men had been shot on the Antrim Road within an hour of each other, several people in North Belfast were talking about adapting their lives to a society where there are deliberate assassinations and random

Since the Troubles began, more than 2,800 police, soldiers, paramilitary activists and innocent civilians have died as a result of shooting or bombs

Every attempt to give the Catholic community some share of power has been fought bitterly by the Protestant majority

sectarian killings.

You stick with your own kind. You drive the children rather than letting them walk or take the bus. You make sure you don't go drinking in pubs and clubs that you don't know; otherwise you might not get home again.

"You're always listening to the news," one elderly woman said. "And I for one don't go to bed at all without ringing the whole family to see that they're all in their own homes and safe. And I suppose there are thousands like me around here."

For the better part of two decades the British government has been trying to find some balance of power in Northern Ireland that would suit both the Protestant and Catholic communities. So far a solution has proved elusive. In deference to Catholic complaints, the limited self-government enjoyed by Northern Ireland was suspended in 1972. Everything except municipal government now is run from London. Every attempt to give the Catholic community some share of power has been fought bitterly by the Protestant majority.

There was an attempt at a solution in 1985. To the consternation of the Protestants in the various "Unionist" parties, London and Dublin agreed that they should consult regularly about Northern Ireland affairs and they should co-operate on security along their unmanned and unmarked border.

The Catholic Nationalist leaders were delighted; the Protestant Loyalists were not; for the Protestants this was involving a foreign government in Northern Ireland's affairs. The result has been a stalemate.

When Rhonda Paisley talks of Northern Ireland's troubles, there seems at first a tone of conciliation and change. She is 31, an artist, and a Unionist city councillor in Belfast. An exhibition of her paintings has just opened in Dublin.

She talks of the young people of Northern Ireland who do not care about the quarrels of the past and who just want to get on with their lives.

There is no justification for killing on either side, she says. "Catholic tears are no different from Protestant tears."

It is important to understand Ms Paisley's background. For more than 20 years her father has been the single most powerful figure in Northern Ireland. Rev Ian Paisley, head of the Democratic Unionist Party, head of his own Free Presbyterian Church, is the implacable enemy of republicanism, nationalism and Catholicism.

British leaders have assumed that Mr Paisley himself will not be won over. But they have always hoped that a younger generation of Unionists would view the island differently.

Ms Paisley is clearly different. Her father has made a career of defiance and rage; he describes the Catholic Church as the whore of Babylon and the Pope as the anti-Christ. By contrast, Ms Paisley is quite moderate. But on the essentials of Northern Ireland politics, nothing has changed. North and South can be good neighbours, but there can be nothing beyond co-operation, she says.

She shrugs off Catholic concerns about rule by the Protestant majority. She is contemptuous of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Nationalist political leader John Hume has been the tribune of moderate Catholic nationalism for almost as long as Ian Paisley has been leading Northern Ireland's Protestants. He was one of those who pushed hardest for the Anglo-Irish Agreement. By rights he should be dispirited, but he doesn't seem to be. He thinks that somehow time is on his side. Northern Ireland's problem is out of date and the quarrel is out of date, he says. He returns again and again to Europe. If Greeks, Italians, French and Germans can forge new relationships, why not the two parts of Ireland?

"We need an agreement on how to share

the island. Then the future will take care of the relationship, because, having extracted the poison, people will grow together at their own speed.”

There is not so much optimism when Rev Tom Toner talks about the future. In Belfast’s Andersonstown he lives at the sharp end of the Northern Ireland problem. In St. Agnes parish the unemployment rate among young men is 35 to 40 per cent.

“If you scattered 100,000 jobs around, that would make a difference,” Father Toner says. “The whole thing would be transformed.”

At that, Andersonstown is comparatively lucky. In areas like Ballymurphy the unemployment rate is closer to 80 percent. Some of them will never get jobs.

Belfast seems to be riding something of an economic boom these days, but that is not a promise of jobs for everyone. Some of the jobless, the Rev Toner says, are afraid to leave the comfort of their own neighbourhood because of the danger of sectarian attacks. Some, because of lack of education,

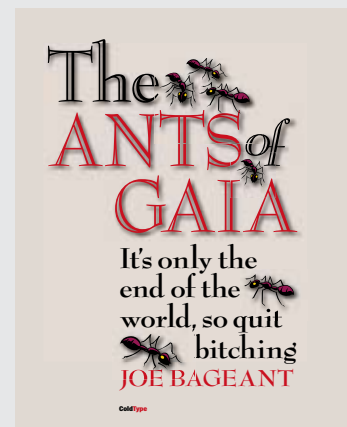
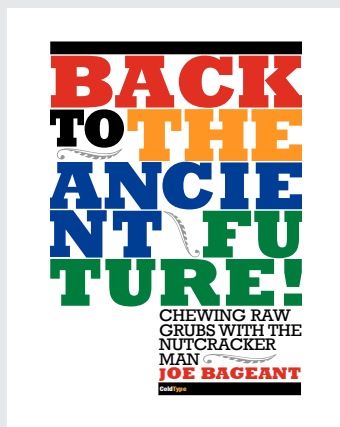
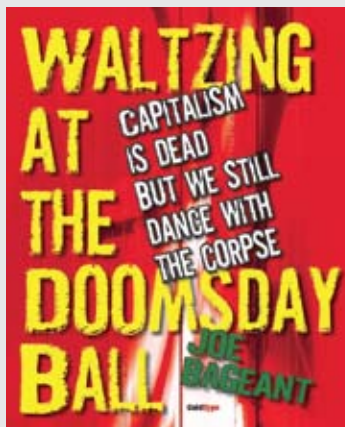
do not qualify for work. And some have been defeated by the despair of an underachieving society.

Father Toner has seen it all. He has lived in the parish all of his life. It is the kind of place you leave if you can. Only one family remains from the time when he was growing up. He has been outspoken in his condemnation of terrorism, which has won him no friends in the IRA. But he was the prison chaplain at Long Kesh when the 10 young hunger strikers died. He has had to conduct funeral services for young IRA men shot by British soldiers and he has had to comfort their grieving parents.

To the outsider it seems an unreasonable and intolerable burden. Father Toner smiles. “We are always conscious of The Troubles. But you can’t afford to be obsessed with it.” But his is a sad smile. **CT**

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John Gray’s article was first published in Toronto’s Globe and Mail newspaper. It was the winner of a 1996 Canadian National Newspaper Award.

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Illustration: Angelika Rother

Batons fly at the State Fair

David Foster Wallace *finds himself caught up in hostilities during the finals of the Illinois baton-twirling contest*

A metal loudspeaker begins to emit disco, and little girls pour into the tent from all directions, gamboling and twirling in vivid costumes

FROM THE TABLOID COLDTYPE: *Issue 1, 1994*

I'm once again at the capacious McDonald's tent, at the edge, the titanic inflatable clown presiding. There's a fair-sized crowd in the basketball bleachers at one side and rows of folding chairs on another. It's the Illinois State Jr. Baton-Twirling Finals. A metal loudspeaker begins to emit disco, and little girls pour into the tent from all directions, gamboling and twirling in vivid costumes. In the stands, video cameras come out by the score, and I can tell it's pretty much just me and a thousand parents.

The baroque classes and divisions, both team and solo, go from age three (!) to sixteen, with epithetic signifiers – the four-year-olds compose the Sugar 'N' Spice division, and so on. I'm in a chair up front behind the competition's judges, introduced as “varsity twirlers” from (oddly)

the University of Kansas. They are four frosted blondes who smile a lot and blow huge grape bubbles.

The twirler squads are all from different towns. Mount Vernon and Kankakee seem especially rich in twirlers. The twirlers' spandex costumes, differently coloured for each team, are paint-tight and brief in the legs. The coaches are grim, tan, lithe-looking women, clearly twirlers once, on the far side of their glory now and very serious-looking, each with a clipboard and whistle. The teams go into choreographed routines, each routine with a title and a designated disco or show tune, full of compulsory baton-twirling manoeuvres with highly technical names. A mother next to me is tracking scores on what looks almost like an astrology chart, and is in no mood to explain anything to a novice baton watcher.

The routines are wildly complex, and

the loud-speaker's play-by-play is mostly in code. All I can determine for sure is that I've bumbled into what has to be the most spectator-hazardous event at the fair. Missed batons go all over, whistling wickedly. The three-, four-, and five-year-olds aren't that dangerous, though they do spend most of their time picking up dropped batons and trying to hustle back into place – the parents of especially fumble-prone twirlers howl in fury from the stands while the coaches chew gum grimly. But the smaller girls don't really have the arm strength to endanger anybody, although one judge takes a Sugar 'N' Spice's baton across the bridge of the nose and has to be helped from the tent.

But when the sevens and eights hit the floor for a series of "Armed Service medleys" (spandex with epaulets and officers' caps and batons over shoulders like M16's), errant batons start pin-wheeling into the ceiling, tent's sides, and crowd, all with real force. I myself duck several times. A man just down the row takes one in the solar plexus and falls out of his metal chair with a horrid crash. The batons are embossed "Regulation Length" on the shaft and have white rubber stoppers on each end, but it is that hard dry kind of rubber, and the batons themselves aren't light. I don't think it's an accident that police night-sticks are also called service batons.

Physically, even within same-age teams, there are marked incongruities in size and development. One nine-year-old is several heads taller than another, and they're try-

ing to do a complex back-and-forth duet thing with just one baton, which ends up taking out a bulb in one of the tent's steel hanging lamps, showering part of the stands with glass. A lot of the younger twirlers look either anorexic or gravely ill. There are no fat baton twirlers.

A team of ten-year-olds in the Ginger-snap class have little cotton bunny tails on their costume bottoms and rigid papier-mache ears, and they can do some serious twirling. A squad of 11-year-olds from Towanda does an involved routine in tribute to Operation Desert Storm. To most of the acts there's either a cutesy ultrafeminine aspect or a stern butch military one, with little in between. Starting with the 12-year-olds – one team in black spandex that looks like cheesecake leotards – there is, I'm afraid, a frank sexuality that begins to get uncomfortable. Oddly, it's the cutesy feminine performances that result in the serious audience casualties. A dad standing up near the top of the stands with a Toshiba video camera to his eye takes a tomahawking baton directly in the groin and falls over on somebody eating a funnel cake, and they take out good bits of several rows below them, and there's an extended halt to the action, during which I decamp. As I clear the last row of chairs yet another baton comes wharp-wharping cruelly right over my shoulder, caroming viciously off big Ronald McDonald's inflated thigh. **CT**

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I don't think it's an accident that police night-sticks are also called batons

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Shit, spit, squalor, and lessons for all

Television trekker Denis Beckett takes a camera crew from Johannesburg to India and winds up strangely relieved that he was not, after all, able to run away from it after Day Three

Several times I was ready to catch a passer-by as he fell. But he'd regain equilibrium, calmly roll the wodge around his mouth, and expectorate

FROM THE TABLOID COLDTYPE: *Issue 6, 2001*

After three days in India I had three things in mind: shit, spit and squalor, each in the dictionary definition. That India has squalor, everyone knows. But knowing it is only knowing it. Being in it makes the worst we have in South Africa look cosy. In Mumbai we met the South African delegation to an International Homelessness Conference. The delegates, shack-dwellers, said repeatedly (a) "how is this possible? Our Indians are so organised," and (b) "we never knew we were so lucky."

The other two S-words, I was even less prepared for.

Spit: what got to me wasn't so much the motion of a globule of gob scuttling into the dust; it was the sound effects. People hawk up gluey golf balls of phlegm with such energy that the uninitiated think they're having seizures. Several times I was ready to catch a passer-by as he fell. But he'd regain equilibrium, calmly roll the wodge around his mouth, and expectorate. Mumbai newspapers debated a new rule against spitting on the buses. A letter-writer said it was the people's birthright. Another, that if they couldn't spit on the floor they'd spit out the window, which from the top deck meant spitting blind onto innocent pates below.

The faeces factor was more original. In many countries a degree of public spitting is common. The other thing, not so much. In South Africa the segment of the populace that contributes to the irrigation of concrete walls and tarred alleys draws the line at full-frontal cacation. (Yep, real word, from the Latin *caecare*.) In India it's routine to glance around a busy place and find half a dozen men squatting in quiet contemplation, penis and scrotum dangling imperceptibly before the world like turkey-neck and gizzards, steaming pile rising on the ground below.

I know we children of the millennium are supposed to be sensitive to other people's customs, but this can be difficult when a squashed heap of human excrement has just flowed over your sandals and is squishing between your toes. As Musa Radebe the sound man said, if you don't look for it all the time you step in it.

Mumbai has a nomenclature problem. The visitor politely applies the new non-colonial name and is startled that half the locals fiercely correct him: "Bombay!" He adjusts and is startled that half the locals fiercely correct him right back: "Mumbai!" He retreats to "the city," but with his fingers crossed because he doesn't truthfully see the city as a city, he sees it as a squatter



camp with severe elephantiasis.

You can travel for hours through undifferentiated slumland. Pavements do not exist. Where they once were, are now endless human pigeon-holes, with sides, back, and open front. Unlike the industrial packaging and bits of road-sign better known in Africa, these units are concrete, or they wash away in the monsoon. But they're catacombs. Middle-class Africans are pained that a squatter African family can live in a space the size of their kitchen. Squatter Africans, like the Homeless ladies, here felt pain that two Mumbai families live in a space the size of their kitchen. A family unit might be two-storey. Downstairs a ten-year-old can stand up straight. Upstairs, only a baby can sit up.

Washing, weeing, cooking and life takes place in the potholes outside. To walk down a street – if the process of dodging scooters, bicycles, rickshaws and 1960ish Fiats may be called “walking” – is to feel perpetually embarrassed at invading somebody's bathroom. Naked children scrub, brush teeth, dry, oblivious to the maelstrom and evading death by Fiat with unconscious deftness. The first day in India my heart stopped twenty times, at a hasty bumper bearing down upon a toddler with apparently inevitable results. By the end I'd adjusted to Indian life: a miss by millimetres is still a miss. So? The same miss in Johannesburg, never mind Stockholm, would leave both parties shaking.

Respite is depressingly absent. All of

Naked children scrub, brush teeth, dry, oblivious to the maelstrom and evading death by Fiat with unconscious deftness

Every driver spent 40 seconds per minute leaning on his hooter. If his hooter broke he'd be immobilised (if his indicator broke he wouldn't know), but he didn't hoot in anger, he hooted to be manly, and nobody got cross

Mumbai is the same, a long chaotic sprawl. South or old Mumbai is supposedly classy Mumbai, but the class is back-handed – run-down colonial leftovers. Half a century of independence seems to have delivered the city nothing inspiring or impressive or even a momentary counterpoint to the morass; not as much as a shopping mall. Well, maybe the super-class district, Malaba Hill, is an exception. It's a drab flatland, with pavements.

We left Mumbai without tears, for Varanasi – fierce correction “Benares!” – holiest of the holy cities of India. Varanasi is the place on the Ganges that people go to die, so as to short-cut the interim incarnations between this life and heaven. Its principal livelihood is waiting-to-die. Thousands of people are waiting to die, and vigorously importuning tourists to keep them alive until the wait is over. They are in competition with hawkers of anything batteries and cellphone kits to shrines and gods. Gods are available in every shape, size and material.

With ears echoing to “only 100 rupees” and “special price” it becomes awkward to tune to the mystical side of affairs, but once we got on a boat and the din subsided a sense of the spiritualism began to make itself felt.

Men were bathing in the river. Given the sight and smell of the water, and the guide-book's assertion that the e-coli count was 250,000 times the safe limit, I took it they were keen to hasten the route to heaven. In case they failed, their women did the laundry from the shores. On the banks dozens of sects engaged in prayers involving dramatic physical contortions.

The spiritual impact wore in gradually. Everybody was high on the Ganges; bathers and laundry-women and all. Not only were these people getting something out of this river and its magical properties but there was a contentment here, a contentment of a kind that eludes we of more secular per-

suasion, a contentment not to be scoffed.

Our local host, a professor at the Hindu University of Benares, (its only and official name) explained the philosophy of contentment. You take things as they are, was the bottom line. You accept your lot, and swallow whatever indignities it entails, and bask in the knowledge that however lousy this life might be, if you handle it alright you'll come back next time in a higher life. Much of what we were seeing began to make sense.

For example, if South African driving was half as wild as Indian driving, Road Rage would be our leading cause of death. In India temperatures weren't raised. True, every driver spent 40 seconds per minute leaning on his hooter. If his hooter broke he'd be immobilised (if his indicator broke he wouldn't know), but he didn't hoot in anger, he hooted to be manly, and nobody got cross.

At Varanasi I began to see a plus side to India, though overlain by the Three S's. Moreover our Prof had placed us in the most off-putting hotel I have ever known (which, since I'd rather stay where locals stay than stay where tariffs are in dollars, is saying a lot). If I'd left India after two days of Mumbai and one of Varanasi, I'd have left feeling solely an almighty relief to be leaving.

That thing nearly happened. Next stop was Delhi, where our connection had checked us into a youth hostel (I imagined them expelling me for false pretences, but the manager laughed: “you can be young at 100 if you want to.”) I called home and found that two of my children had been hospitalised from two mishaps, one fairly dire. I was for instant return, but Superwife insisted that no-one was dying, I should run the course. (Next day her mother was under the surgeon's knife too, and the day after, one of our dogs – more operations in half a week than in the preceding quarter century.)

Despite a suspicion that the cosmic order was sending me a message, I stuck it

out and learned that there's more to India than the S's. Delhi for a start was an antidote to Mumbai. New Delhi is spectacular, if not that new. Its pride of place is Raj Path, with the old Viceregal – now Presidential – palace as its anchor. Under the last Viceroy the palace famously maintained a domestic staff of 1,000, of whom 60 chased crows off the lawns. Current employment figures were not available but are presumably not much different, given India's employment habits.

Retrenchment mania hasn't got here yet. Factories look like refugees from DH Lawrence – teeming hordes of manual workers and giant black clouds spraying carpets of soot. Health & Safety regulations are science fiction. Status comes from how many people you employ, not how many you cut off the payroll. Everyone has an assistant or five – taxi drivers have assistants, porters have assistants, assistants have assistants.

Many jobs, pathetic pay. I accompany a girl to school, by rickshaw. A mile trip for five rupees, a US dime. In Durban, rickshaws are protected from such exploitation. They make fifty times as much for giving a tourist a jaunt down the esplanade. But Durban's rickshaws are down to twenty and its jobless is up to half a million. Delhi has half a million rickshaws. $500,000 \times 10c = \$50,000$. $20 \times \$5 = \100 . The girl's rickshaw driver has a career. He provides a service, which to the girl's father is satisfactory – you never wait more than a minute for a passing rickshaw; she does her homework as she rides; robbery or danger does not enter the equation.

The Taj Mahal is three hours from Delhi in a lusty 4x4 with a double-dose of 4x4 arrogance: if vehicle ahead failed to notice our hooter, we nudged him with our bumper. Had we passengers been ECG-wired there would have been peaks on the graph.

Everybody had said that the Taj is indescribably bigger and better in real life than in reputation, and I was surprised to agree. European tourist palaces tend to be tacky

close up, with furniture glued up and chandelier bulbs missing. The Taj is nothing but marble. There are no accoutrements to wear out. In the pattern of grandeur it has a bloody history, with craftsmen press-ganged to build it and rewarded by having digits amputated to thwart rival tomb-builders.

It may not have been fun to live under Shah Jahan, who commissioned the Taj when his wife died giving birth to her 14th child, but he did subsequent generations a favour. Four centuries later they have an immense focus of Indian pride and prestige, as well as continuing income. If kinder and gentler contemporaries put effort into health and education and community uplift, they did not score total success. The average Indian peasant ploughs the same paddy fields standing on the same sled-like contraption drawn by the same oxen as his forebears have been using for a millennium.

Is that a lesson? I don't mean slave labour and hacked limbs, but the principle of going for gold, as it were. If an impoverished society puts all its energy into filling bottomless pits, the pits stay bottomless. Creating things that inspire or ennoble – and are slammed as elitist or extravagant – may do more for the people than for the proprietor. (The Taj did not do much for Jahan's career. He died in jail, imprisoned by his son.)

The Taj entrance fee was 5 rupees – for Indians. For foreigners, 505 rupees. Four of those knocked a hole in the wallet. Still, I persuaded myself, that was right. Tough on backpackers trying to see India as the Indians see it, and tough on South Africans translating their ravaged rands via dollars back to the as-ravaged rupee. But in principle there was something just.

Next day we got into an airplane tangle. The original cause was a monsoon, about which I, not being an American tourist, couldn't complain. However the original cause became compounded by what even-

The average Indian peasant ploughs the same paddy fields standing on the same sled-like contraption drawn by the same oxen as his forebears have been using for a millennium

I shuddered at all the dollar-a-day spade-wielders who are heading for retrenchment under the onslaught of globalism

tually, 15 hours later, the captain cheerfully described over the intercom as “a lot of bungles and slip-ups.”

We sought an alternative flight. The first option was Indian Airlines, at whose hands 100 people had been killed two days earlier. [In a crash that bypassed the western media, which go ballistic about crashes in the west.] The ground-staff person offered solace: “We only have a crash once a year so you’ll be fine.” Sublime logic but not wholly reassuring. Seat-belted and ready to go, the Indian Airlines flight was cancelled, surprising no-one but us. Option two was Jet Airlines.

“Sure,” said the Jet lady, “three hundred dollars, please.” An Indian guy we’d befriended blew up. “What!? For four? It’s thirty dollars a seat!” She replied coldly, “for you it’s thirty dollars. These people are foreigners.” I re-mulled my formerly phlegmatic tolerance of discriminating against foreigners, particularly since “foreign” clearly meant “white.” She saw whites and slapped 150% onto the fare. Clearly, too, we weren’t meant to know. Our Indian ally bollocksd her for racism but she stood her ground – it was policy, that was that – and then broke into Hindi to bollocks him back for betraying trade secrets to us. I should have had soundman, Zulu Musa, buy the tickets.

In the end that flight also didn’t happen. We arrived at Udaiphur on the original plane, a day out of time but worth it to hear the captain’s “bungles and slip-ups” candour.

Worth it, too, to have hung on in. By now Bombay memory was several days old and the nostrils were clear. I was becoming gripped by other sides of India. Like ingestion. The average Indian eating house offers neither meat nor liquor, so the average African adult male experiences blind panic upon arrival. Thirty minutes later he’s apt to change his tune. An Indian veg-and-lassi dinner is as delicious and filling as anything that comes from butcher shop or bottle store, and much kinder on the liver.

Plus there is a profound relief in a virtually drunk-free night-life.

To say nothing of violence-free. There is a solid quota of ethnic and religious barbarities, along with India’s private speciality, caste barbarities, but walking the streets of an Indian city, Mumbai included, is peculiarly liberating. The passing wheels keep you on your toes – and thank heaven for all those sober drivers – but there is no thought of attack, assault, guns, knives, boots, aggression in any guise whatever.

In Udaiphur we took on a concentrated dose of another thing – majesty. A British immigrant put it nicely. “With respect,” he said, very correct, like a lawyer about to zap you, “with respect, as I ride my bicycle to work every day I pass a dozen castles, tombs and palaces, any one of which, if you had it in South Africa, would be your most famous national treasure. Here, they don’t even have names.”

Back at Mumbai airport for the Jo’burg flight the departure hall was thick with South African businessmen, plugging in to the opening of India’s economy like they’re doing to Africa’s economies. In one lobe I was proud of them and the way they are making us as a hub of Third-World commerce. In another lobe I shuddered at all the dollar-a-day spade-wielders who are heading for retrenchment under the onslaught of globalism. But the main lobe revolted at my compatriots (of diverse complexions) who ridiculed and derided everything Indian. A few days earlier I might have kept my lip zipped. Now I argued that it wasn’t one-way; we had to see beyond the easy three S’s to the subtler arenas where India gave us a model. They thought I’d been smoking something strange. **CT**

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Denis Beckett, former publisher/editor of *Frontline magazine* – www.coldtype.net/frontline.html – was presenter of the South African TV series *Beckett’s Trek* for six years.

Eyewitness Rwanda: Words cannot describe

The sight of a week-dead body of a teenage boy beside a road made Mark Fritz realise it was time to move on to another assignment

FROM THE TABLOID COLDTYPE: *Issue 3, 1995*

I doubt if there is any other place in the world where so many people who write for a living have used the phrase, “Words cannot describe ...” You can describe how 15 women were forced to lie down in a circle outside a maternity clinic and then bludgeoned with cudgels. You can report precisely and evocatively how families hugged each other in terrified resignation as they were sliced with machetes between the pews of a Roman Catholic church.

You can try to evoke the eerie unreality of seeing a single arm poking out from the packed dirt of a mass grave containing hundreds of bodies. Or walking through a city in which every occupant is a corpse.

But no medium can capture the confluence of sense at riot. You can’t describe each expression of shock and pain on each decaying face.

You can’t begin to convey the thick, dense lingering odour of human decay that clings to the clothes and seems to have its own taste. You can’t replay for the reader the soundtrack of a hundred thousand flies so bloated from feeding that they can barely stay aloft. You can’t count every orphan wandering the roads alone.

I took three trips to Rwanda between early May and mid-August last year [1994]. Each was a study in the ways a human being can die. There was the mass starvation,



Illustration: Andrew Peycha

dehydration and disease at the Rwandan refugee camps in eastern Zaire – the type of death that was common in Somalia.

There were the shrapnel-torn bodies of uniformed soldiers killed in battle, the type of death common to any guerrilla war fought in the bush.

A man told me how he killed two of his old schoolmates, who screamed that they were his friends as he slashed them with his machete

Then there were the robotic massacres in the towns and villages, the thousands of moments when one group of villagers suddenly rose up and killed another group with every device at its disposal: clubs with wooden studs, machetes, guns, grenades, spears. Even a sharpened umbrella.

This was a special type of killing, among neighbours, up close and personal. The scope and scale and swiftness of such remorseless cruelty gave Rwanda its standing among history's truly horrible moments.

One day last May, AP photographer Jean-Marc Bouju and I went to a village where everybody was dead. Perhaps 5,000 bodies lay in the streets, in the schoolrooms, in the church, in the hospital, outside the maternity clinic. We wrapped T-shirts over our mouths and noses and forced ourselves to look inside every building, examine every scene. We wanted to try to understand.

Families embraced each other in church. A teacher lay beneath a schoolroom blackboard. A couple clung to each other beneath a picture of Jesus Christ. A schoolboy, who looked as if he'd been frozen in terrified motion, lay sprawled amid overturned desks.

We found some survivors in a refugee camp in a nearby town. They told us the victims far outnumbered the killers. Yet most people went to their deaths on their knees, in terrified obedience. A few days later, we found some people who confessed to being killers being held by the anti-government rebels. We asked them the obvious question. Why?

What is strange after spending too much time in Rwanda is that seemingly incomprehensible events begin to take on a perverse logic.

Many of the people who killed were illiterate peasants. They were told that a rebel army was coming to butcher them. They were told that there were supporters of this army in their midst. They were told they had to kill these people before this army

arrived or they, and their children, would soon die horribly.

Many of these people truly believed they were doing their patriotic duty. Old people dutifully compiled death lists that showed who had ancestors from the rival ethnic group. Children listened to the conversations of their playmates' parents, trying to detect whether they said anything negative about the government.

When the radio said it was time to kill the people opposed to the government, the masses slid off a dark edge into insanity.

Women were raped before and during their deaths. Eyes were gouged out, testicles cut off, babies decapitated, pregnant women speared through the womb.

One mother of five told me how she killed two of her neighbour's children. While the men dealt with the adults, the women in her town gathered up the children of the families deemed to be enemies. They put them in a circle and began pounding their heads with bulbous clubs designed for this unfathomable task. "They didn't have time to scream," the woman told me. "They just made big eyes."

A man told me how he killed two of his old schoolmates, who screamed that they were his friends as he slashed them with his machete.

In much of Africa, women grind a root called cassava into a paste by using what are essentially huge mortars and pestles. The pestles are like clubs and the mortars are about the size of a bassinet. A young student I spoke with said he saw babies being placed in these mortars and ground to a bloody pulp.

Almost overlooked amid the death in Rwanda is the large number of people permanently maimed. I met an Italian doctor who spent his entire day amputating gangrenous limbs, some of them crawling with maggots. At one point in his tour, after he felt he'd seen everything, a man staggered into the clinic with his brain clearly visible through a deep machete gash in his head.

"I couldn't save him," the doctor said.

The civil war and the massacres, of course, triggered one of the worst refugee crises of the post-World War II era. There were great crosscurrents of people who seemed to alight en masse virtually overnight.

I don't know how many times I would travel down a road that I'd travelled a day or two before and see 50,000 or 100,000 people setting up camp, seemingly appearing out of nowhere.

Amid the sickness and death, a simple, mundane sign of normalcy, even happiness, was a jolt. Early one morning in the southern town of Cabbing, I was awakened by the sound of children singing. On an otherwise empty street, a dozen youngsters from a refugee camp down the road were walking to a new well on the other side of town, carrying and clanking together a motley collection of scavenged water containers.

They had passed a mass grave. They had passed destroyed homes of murdered people. They even had passed men who harassed them because some of the children were members of the Tutsi minority. Eight of the 12 had lost parents in the massacres.

One 10-year-old girl had watched men drown her father in a cattle dip. She had watched them take her mother away to what was likely an even more prolonged and tormented fate. All these kids had seen

the most horrible things a human being can experience. And yet, on a sunny day in the company of themselves, these children found a reason to sing.

Toward the end of my first tour, after I'd grown accustomed to seeing hundreds of bodies in every possible configuration of death, I reached a small moment of personal truth. I was travelling from the capital Kigali, when we passed what appeared to be a boy no more than 15 years old who had been dead for a few weeks on the shoulder of the highway. I gave the corpse such a passing, casual glance that moments later I was rattled by my own reaction. I'd lost the ability to be appalled, and it was time to move on to another assignment.

Human cruelty is not infinite in degree, I believe. It has a ceiling, a wall, a point at which violence and horror reach a saturation point, where pain and death reach the apex of pointlessness and any further depravity becomes redundant.

That level, that ceiling, that ultimate degree of cold inhumanity, I think, was reached in Rwanda. **CT**

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Mark Fritz won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting for Associated Press West African during the Rwanda ethnic massacres. His reporting from that conflict also earned him an ASNE deadline award. This article was originally given as a speech to an AP Managing Editors conference.

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Think soccer's a game for girls? Graham Spiers' report of a Christmas Eve match in Scotland might make you think again

Illustration: Rui Ramalheiro



Peace on earth, and goodwill to all men?

FROM THE TABLOID COLDTYPE: *Issue 4, 1996*

In the bleeding canon of these Ayrshire Junior derbies, it's hard to work out whether this was a brute of a collision or a mere feud. Cumnock beat Auchinleck at the football, and some of the kicking and elbowing as well, thanks to a two-goal hero, Big Dunky Sinclair, whose balding pate and beer barrel-thick thighs suggest he came out of the womb just to grace this very occasion.

It was a game not inclined to the pre-Christmas lore of peace, played out amid frosted rays of sunshine that skewered their way through the council house chimney-tops and down on to a park of con-

stant cursing and bellowing passions. Six players were booked, one sent off, and the invective here ran thicker than sweat in a knocking-shop.

The level of swearing around this game would have mortified even [comedian] Bernard Manning. Not on any patch of mud and slime, in any part of the world, can such concentrated, venomous cursing have been heard as in Cumnock yesterday. The referee was always either a “bastard” or a “wanker”. The opposition players were always “turds” or “shitebags”. The two sets of fans, Cumnock’s up one side, Talbot’s down the other, called each other “pricks” or “tossers,” or sometimes even “wank-heads.” One fan, a 17-stone neanderthal with grey sideboards like monkey’s hide, shouted out: “Stick these f*** in’ Talbot shitebags up yer erses!” The imagery here was as startling as it was vivid.

There is no press box as such at Townhead Park. We watched this fetid action right down at trackside, where the lather and blood of the players almost comes spilling about your ankles. At one point Cumnock’s Sinclair went crunching in on Chris Ellis, until his studs were shuddering and embedding themselves right in on Ellis’s crotch.

“Ooow, ma ba’s, ma f***in’ ba’s!” Ellis whined as he writhed about in the grass. “Ah, ye f***in’ erse!” someone shouted from the Cumnock bench. “There’s f***-all wrong wi’ye!”

Talbot’s Ken Paterson then stood on Paul Courtney’s head. It was an ugly tangle between the two, which left Paterson sprinting off, the crowd going berserk, and Courtney, still on the ground, appearing to grope around for lost teeth. “Referee, referee, that’s a f***in’ disgrace!” one of the Cumnock subs shouted. Moments later this same player was bawling: “That’s right, Rab ... hatchet the c***!”

The referee, a poor, bedevilled figure by the name of O’Neill, who looked like a tutor from a Catholic seminary somewhere, was booking players all over the place. He jotted down “Anderson” for a kick, “Irving” for a

lunge (Cumnock bench: “Well done, Robert... you got him good and hard there!”), “Paterson” for studs that were meant to maim, plus no end of other miscreants. In the first half alone, he was already up to five booked and one off before he got anywhere near to slaving for half-time.

The man who went off, Cumnock’s Norman Montgomery, stood watching the second half in disgust and a little self-disdain, peering down from one of the Cumnock’s clubhouse windows that isn’t yet bricked up, smoking his way through a pack of Virginia cigars. “It’s crap that I went off,” he complained. There then followed a little Anglo-Saxon about the referee’s mind and body, in particular his testicles.

In fact, Montgomery had banjoed one of the Talbot defenders. Or at least he had won the ball, been dispossessed, and then kicked out at the black-and-gold-shirted player haring away in possession. “Quite right, ref, get the f***in’ c*** off!” a Talbot fan bellowed. The ref, a “total tosser” throughout this match, suddenly came in for the kind of gushing approval rarely given to his kind here.

Cumnock’s goals were right out of the stick-them-up-ye variety. Big Sinclair, the sort of meaty-looking Ayrshire Junior you imagine scrubbing his jockstrap with asbestos, walloped the ball from 20 yards after six minutes with a colossal lash of his boot. Chris Wilson, the Talbot goalkeeper, stood quivering as it sailed towards him. He let it slip through his hands and nestle in the rigging behind him. “Sinky! Sinky! Ya f***in’ beauty!” the Cumnock bench were chorus-ing. A Talbot fan called Wilson “a stupid, daft c***”.

Derek McCulloch equalised for Talbot with a beautiful left-booted curler, but Big Sinky struck again for Cumnock with five minutes remaining. At that point, he rushed toward the home fans with his shirt up over his head. Everyone was singing and swearing, and blood and snorter was lying everywhere. **CT**

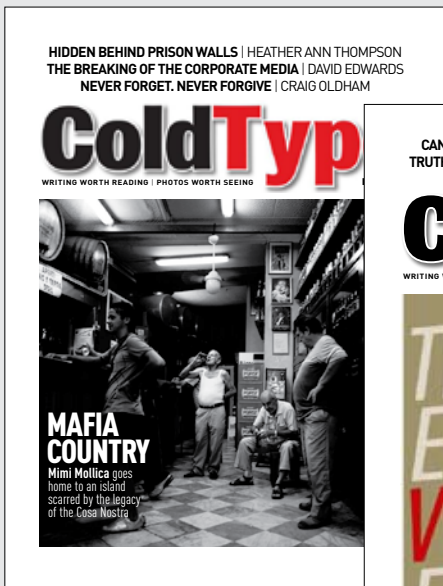
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This article first appeared in the Edinburgh-based newspaper. Scotland on Sunday

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