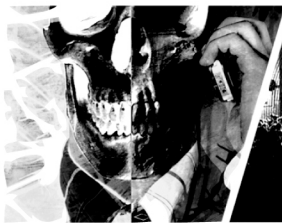




# Splurge.

Welcome to **SPLURGE**. Please consider henceforth that this collection of randomonious thoughts, articles and satirical commentary to be a reaction, not only to popular culture and the mainstream contribution it gives to the collective consciousness, but also to the uproariously similar movements poised against it (that ironically enough, imitate more than confront what they are supposedly confronting). Splurge as a word or concept is even at its most simple a term that implies the same ostentatiousness this collection aims to confront; and in revealing the consumptive habits of those around us we equally reveal how these habits cohort even our own best intentions. One cannot escape the viral nature of our consumption-based existence where living, breathing, emotional and rational beings are reduced to mere parts within a vast machine of destruction and further consumption. With this in mind, SPLURGE's goal is not the lofty aim of inciting revolution, or even inciting outright opposition (although some may insist otherwise). Consider SPLURGE to be a collection; a witnessing of our very nature within such a machine; and its observed effect on the individual, the collective, and the outer reality that surrounds us all. Verbatum as perceived through the eyes, ears, and thoughts of the contributors that very well may have more in common with you and those they are confronting than they may ever be prepared to expect.





# what's inside.



# endings can be beautiful.

Watching the leaves outside the window fall off the trees in masses I'm struck with a strange feeling of finality. Sure, this yellow and orange cluster gliding freely to the ground is a signal of the end of summer; but, perhaps as a result of all the news I've been reading, today I sense the end of something much greater.

Welcome to the future, where one by one our favourite science fiction tales are rapidly becoming nonfiction. We have video games that copy our movements, we have robots that freakishly emulate human behaviour, and our streets and homes are photographed for interactive internet maps.

Welcome to the end of the world, where the prevailing topic of international debate is a quickly melting hunk of ice at the top of our planet. Forget the wars that have always plagued civilized society. Forget our increasingly severe natural disasters. To understand the essence of our dire situation, you need but pay attention to one subject.

As we all know, global warming is severely threatening the survival of the North Pole; some

experts say the Arctic Ocean could be completely ice-free in summertime by the year 2040. With constant talk of the floundering Kyoto Protocol and more extreme and effective proposals to curb climate change, it would seem our world leaders should be deeply concerning themselves with this fact and preparing for the disasters it may cause.

But once again, they are instead viewing this frightening situation as a means of temporary financial gain. The Arctic, of course, is strewn with large oil and gas reserves. In fact, well-researched estimates that say the Arctic could contain as much as 25 percent of the world's undiscovered oil reserves. In addition, as the Arctic begins to thaw, passages for international shippers will open up in the sea that could drastically cut their travel time when making shipments to Asia from the West by boat.

So the race is on. The debate over the ownership of the Arctic has been heating up – no pun intended – since mid summer, and the main players are Norway, Denmark, Russia, the United States and our beloved Canada. The game they are playing has so far involved talking tough, plant-

ing flags and a whole lot of unproven claims, but it promises to develop into much more.

I know I'm not the only one who finds this whole thing disturbingly ironic. While the whole world is preaching conservation but doing little to conserve, our leaders who are trying to convince us that they'll do it for us are peddling ever backwards. With the debate over the Arctic they are using our past mistakes, which caused the big melt, to capitalize on worsening our situation by digging into this disappearing mass with the intent of discovering and prolonging the use of more of the fuels that got us into this mess in the first place.

In short, we're doomed. The human race has flicked the switch to Armageddon and there is no turning it off. Our businesses and other imperious organizations, which we have all composed and consummated, have constructed a rat's nest that cannot be torn down. Their products are becoming increasingly harmful and their modes of operation counterproductive. These structures are no longer of any momentous benefit to us.

Now, hold on. Take a breath.

# Kevin Maimann

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I urge you to take some solace in this. For once, the entire planet is slowly beginning to recognize that it is utterly senseless to live in a manner that perpetuates our current system. There is no longer time to waste doing things we don't enjoy, as all those things are simply accelerating our total eradication. In such a bizarre and downtrodden world, we can — nay, must — do only as we please.

If there is one last revolution, then, let it not be one with a common goal. Let it not be one meant to tear down a ruling establishment only to build another. Let it be an amalgamation of several billion internal revolutions; one of internal freedom birthing external expression.

## Let it be a revolution of art.

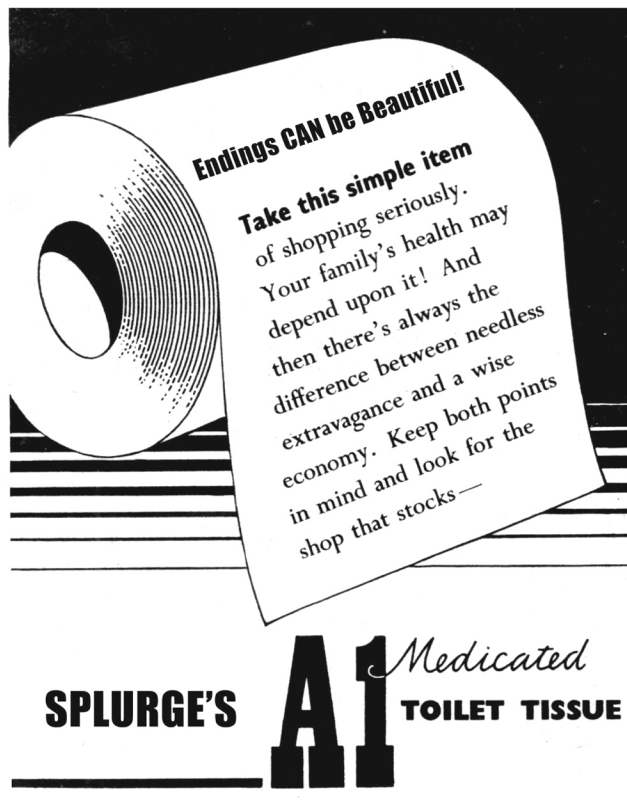
On an overcrowded and overdeveloped planet, creating more people will only generate more problems. Creating new technologies will inevitably do the same. What else to create, then, besides art? In a time when humankind has nothing left to lose, what else even serves any purpose?

We can only hope that an utter, constructive, gorgeous chaos will erupt before we all take our plunge. The time is here for the nihilists, the existentialists, and above all the artists, to shine. Let us make this world a sight to marvel, a sight worth mourning upon its death for any life forms who might be observing our demise from faraway galaxies.

As we approach the closing stage of our existence we mustn't waste time with impotent at-

tempts at reversing the irreversible. We mustn't waste time chasing someone else's goals. And most importantly, we absolutely cannot fear our impending death. We must embrace it as we must embrace ourselves, our hidden talents and all of our desires.

Like the rainbow of leaves detaching from their branches to die on the rain-soaked streets, endings can be beautiful.



**Endings CAN be Beautiful!**

**Take this simple item**  
of shopping seriously.  
Your family's health may  
depend upon it! And  
then there's always the  
difference between needless  
extravagance and a wise  
economy. Keep both points  
in mind and look for the  
shop that stocks—

**SPLURGE'S**

**A1** *Medicated* **TOILET TISSUE**

# here but i'm gone.

Initially published, in slightly different form,  
in Edmonton Street News

*"How did I get so far gone  
Where do I belong  
And where in the world did I ever go  
wrong  
If I took the time to replace  
What my mind erased  
I still feel as if I'm here but I'm  
gone"*

*-Curtis Mayfield, "Here But I'm  
Gone"  
New World Order, 1996.*

I knew something was wrong the instant I turned the valve. The gauge on the tank may have read empty, but the sudden gust of anhydrous ammonia that sprayed directly into my face proved it otherwise. My lungs seized. I couldn't breathe. I stumbled out the rear of the printing shop and finally caught a breath.

That was on a Tuesday afternoon in July, 1991. It began with the injury but it did not end with it.

As the days and weeks followed, I became conscious of a sharp, stabbing pain that crisscrossed my face. A deep-in-the-bone kind of pain, moving from one side of my face to the other, from the top of my forehead, down behind my eyes, to the gum-line of my upper jaw. A bone splitting pain. Like a mask I couldn't take off. I would blow large clots of bloody mucus from my nose until I could blow nothing at all. The anhydrous ammonia had burned away my sinus membranes and damaged my inter-cranial nerves.

As with most cases of this sort, there were improper safety standards (or a bare minimum) and the company was more interested in hushing up the entire affair the most expedient way possible. Before I could apply for my company's insurance, I was fired (The company didn't want an increase in their insurance premiums).

Unable to work due to the con-

stant pain caused by by injury, I was completely dependent on the meagre medical dole I got from social services to make ends meet and support my family, while the Worker's Compensation Board adjudicated my claim -- a process taking anywhere from six months to eternity -- during which time I was made to jump through every conceivable bureaucratic hoop imaginable. For instance, the date of termination on my separation slip, and the date on your letter of termination did not coincide (another bureaucratic hoop among many).

I would soon learn that there was something not quite right about the entire situation -- a sort of unwritten, unspoken collusion that went on between the provincial government, occupational health and safety, and the Worker's Compensation Board during the late 1980s and early 1990s. A kind of triangle wherein the claims of injured workers were being denied at alarming rates and for the flimsiest of reasons. I would wind up being one such injured worker. To add insult to injury, the opinions of government appointed doctors were given far more weight than one's own personal doctor in these proceedings.

Not that my doctor at the time was very much help. He had already added one word into my medical file that doomed my application for compensation from the start. Malingering. Once that single malignant, malevolent word had entered my medical file, it poisoned the objectivity of every other doctor and specialist that file came in contact with. For the longest time I wondered why doctors and specialists had refused to send me for such tests as MRI's and CAT scans. In one particular case, a neurologist said he could tell by just looking at me that a MRI would not uncover anything, any besides, why waste the taxpayer's money? The entire visit lasted about 11 or 12 minutes. I had waited 6 months to see this specialist.

Of course, I was denied compensation from the WCB. The govern-

ment doctor determined my injury the result of smoking. My current doctor figures that in order to attribute the damage done to my sinuses and inter-cranial nerves, I would have had to, and I quote "inhale 1000 cigarettes up both nostrils for at least 100 years or more. Ridiculous."

My last choice now was AISH: Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped. Every other avenue of compensation had been blocked, and I figured I had a chance considering the severity of my injury and my inability to work. So I applied. I spent weeks filling out all the necessary forms, letters from doctors (this is when I discovered the medical file with the word malingering in it -- given that I no longer saw that particular doctor, I didn't include anything from his file), et cetera. I crossed every "t" and dotted every "i" before submitting the application. The year was 1995. DENIED.

This I learned was the fate of all initial AISH applications. A means of weeding out those applicants who are not completely serious about their application. My AISH appeal, a year later, however, was a Kafkaesque experience I would never forget.

Alone sitting in plastic chair, five people enter the room (four men in their fifties and one older woman, perhaps sixty) and sit behind a long table opposite me about fifteen feet away. Under flickering fluorescent office lighting, the appeals board begins its work. They watch me, then flip through nearly identical file folders. It's like some inquisition. Questions and queries fling across the room at me as though they're trying to catch me contradicting myself. They repeat answers I have just given to them in the form of questions. They persist, persist and insist like an ceaseless loop of tape. The more I speak -- the more their questions multiply, I feel like an object of suspicion. It's obvious that nobody on the appeals panel has the slightest medical knowledge or training, but do have some connection with the provincial government (at least at arms



length). How long are they going to stretch this out? I wonder. Are they paid by the half hour? The hour? Or by the appeal? I will never know. Before adjourning, the older woman at the end of the table asks me if it's possible for me to undergo a sinus transplant.

Two months later I receive an envelope in my mailbox informing me that my application has been approved.

One might think that a time for celebration is at hand. Finally, five years after my initial injury I was getting some compensation. But I didn't feel very much like celebrating that day, and have celebrated very little since. In fact, that day marked my graduation into the ranks of the invisible poor. Invisible because unlike the more visibly poor like the homeless, or the indigent in our community, AISH recipients go unseen, and for the most part, unheard.

Living on a fixed income for the last dozen years has taught me the lengths that the invisible poor will go to hold a family together with what meagre resources are at hand. Cutting out one meal for an adult means another meal for a child. Cutting out two means another meal for one's spouse. Given that most AISH recipients already have poor health to begin with, it's easy to see where this sort of long term deprivation ends up. Poverty isn't recommended for your health. Hidden from the majority of society because of their disabilities, AISH recipients are further isolated by a system that keeps them voiceless and struggling with the effects of long term poverty.

And subsidized housing isn't always the panacea it is often made out to be -- when and if it is actually available (waiting lists have become so long it's almost no longer an alternative but a distant hope for many living on fixed incomes). And AISH recipients are made even more invisible as subsidized housing hardly even begins to touch on their particular housing requirements (i.e. wheelchair access, environmental

sensitivities). In the 1990s, the list of available subsidized housing was five pages long. As of the end of 2007, that list has been reduced to a single sheet of paper, and the housing itself is located in the city's most crime-filled neighbourhoods. Of course, this is a result of a long term NIMBY attitude in the city's many communities, but the solution is not the ghettoization of the poor and the disabled into "other neighbourhoods" but to spread out the responsibility to all of the city's citizens.

Believe me, charity isn't doing to others what you wouldn't to yourself. For instance, giving away food that you wouldn't consume yourself, or past due their "best before" date. The items that I've seen in more than one church pantry were so long past their best before date I was afraid to touch them. And most do not realize that in order to access a food bank, one first needs transportation there and back. How many people does this eliminate already? Once when I asked my own particular pastor where do the chronically ill belong in your church? His response was to block my email. You cannot get more invisible than that, but it is not entirely surprising either.

People are afraid of the poor. They are scared they are going to join their ranks. They are scared of losing what little they have left. Seems the more one has, the more conservative one becomes, and to hell with the good angels of our nature. Like them, poverty to me was just an abstraction, a passing thought, or perhaps a minor inconvenience whenever some panhandler asked me for change. Until I was injured at work. Then it became as real to me as the constant mind-searing pain I've experienced everyday since.

People are usually buttressed by the people in their lives: by relatives, by friends, by people one knows. But the chronically and severely disabled often lose these buttresses over time. Friends are first to go. Even family members find themselves to be "too busy"

with their own complicated lives. So the eventual marginalization, alienation becomes fairly universal and total as what little social support one has slowly evaporates. This isolation, combined with the lack of financial and physical resources just adds to this malaise of insecurity.

You count the number of pills each day, the number of pills each week, the numbers of pills each month. You measure your life between visits to the doctor and the pharmacy and back. It becomes as routine as the directions at the bottom of this or that vial: take with water, take with food, take on an empty stomach, do not take if pregnant or if you plan to become pregnant.

On TV politicians talk about solving our province's social problems. Must be election time. Throw some more money at the problem until the voters look away, or just get bored. There's always the churches to pull up the slack, or so we're led to believe. Some people call me bitter. I'm not bitter, I'm just terminally cynical. After 17 years is it any surprise?

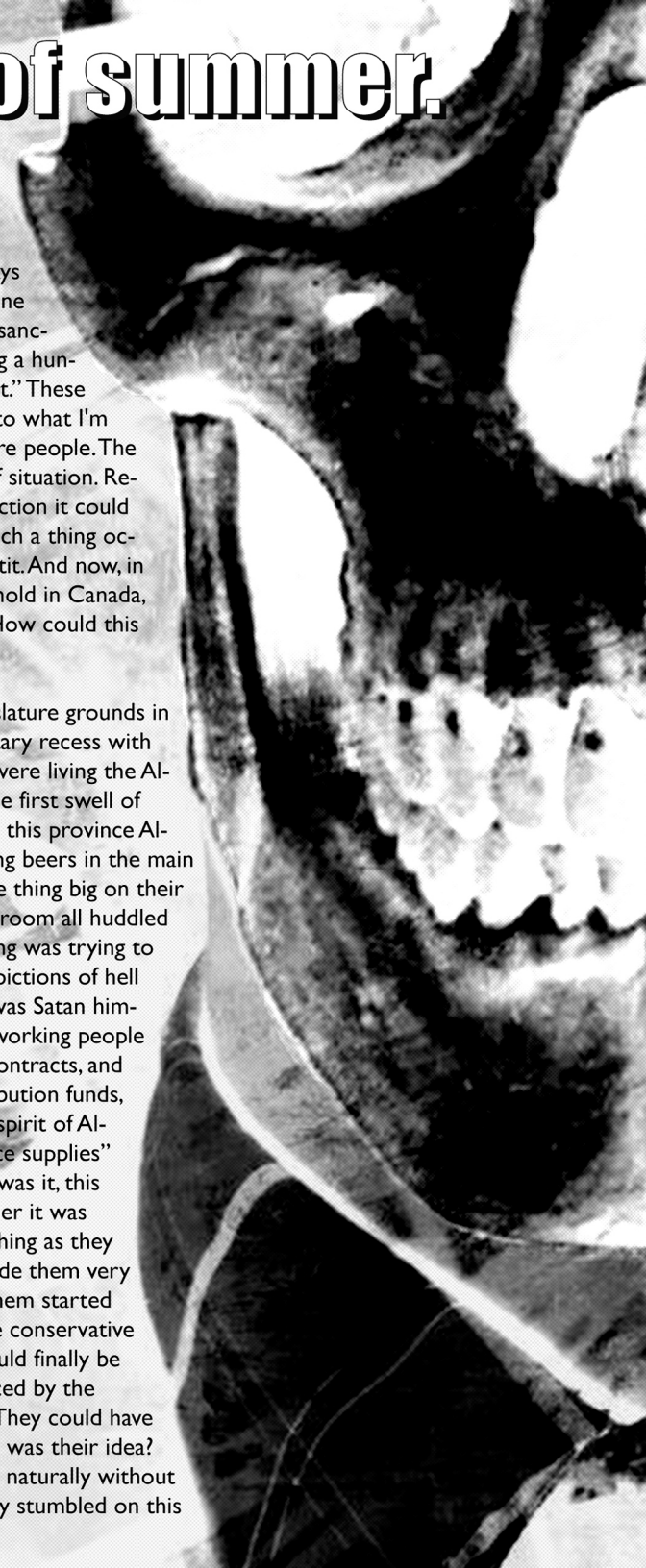
Very little has changed -- in some respects, it has gotten worse. Consecutive conservative governments have successfully demonized the poor, those on social assistance, as well as AISH recipients (We all recall a former premier's statement regarding certain AISH recipients "...that they didn't look disabled to me.") The image of the AISH slash welfare recipient sitting at home watching TV, drinking beer and making babies is still rife among the general public. On a personal level, it's barely been six months since I, myself, was referred to as a "sick lazy fuck." But it's easy to scapegoat people you outnumber, using fear and loathing as convenient tools to do so. We see it happen every night on the evening news. Is it such a big surprise when it happens to me? But when it happens to you, that's a completely different matter...



# the real boys of summer.

The scene outside the parliamentary grounds was one of total chaos. The politicians could be seen every where hiding in bushes and behind statues all talking on their phones. Always looking over their shoulders and talking only in whispers. If one closed his eyes and listened, he would think he was in a bird sanctuary. But, alas, it was just the sound of a hundred men, calling a hundred "friends", to get rid of a hundred "skeletons in the closet." These little mistakes and secrets ranged at the bottom from DUI's to what I'm sure topped off as murder. This is only the provincial level here people. The bastards at the federal level were the real pros at this kind of situation. Regardless, the Conservative party was finally faced with an election it could lose. Many of these people don't remember the last time such a thing occurred; these people were fully weaned off the conservative tit. And now, in their strong hold of power: the last fully conservative stronghold in Canada, the most non-Liberal part of the country, they might lose. How could this be? How could they have allowed this to happen?

It seems like only days ago they were racing around the Legislature grounds in smart cars and snorting coke in the bathrooms at parliamentary recess with the good ol' boys. They were the real boys of summer. They were living the Alberta dream. The Alberta Advantage. This would have been the first swell of what has become the full out economic boom that has made this province Al-fucking-berta. Then suddenly, one night, when they were having beers in the main control room at the Legislature grounds, these men felt some thing big on their radar. The ground was shaking, and the 4 or 5 of them in the room all huddled into different corners. The ground started cracking, some thing was trying to break through the floor. Having vivid memories of biblical depictions of hell (through having been teens in the 60's), they knew that this was Satan himself coming to get their souls, to avenge the countless good working people they allowed to get fucked over through land development contracts, and giving the property to big companies with big political contribution funds, instead of Mom and Pop shops that had embodied the early spirit of Alberta industry. For buying 40 thousand dollars worth of "office supplies" at the Lexus dealership instead of beefing up education. This was it, this was their time to pay. But, alas, it was not Beelzebub, but rather it was liquid money. It was oil. Initial confusion led to hysterical laughing as they realized what they had found. This find made them rich; it made them very very rich. With wealth came power, and the people around them started to associate their progress with their rule. This was to be the conservative century in Alberta, the wings of the free market economy could finally be spread. The beast that is modern capitalism would be embraced by the masses. For a small fee of 400 dollars they could buy us out. They could have us sold on the efficiency of the system. But how much of this was their idea? Was not oil always there? Had not the demand been created naturally without complex political dealings or intrigue? The Conservative Party stumbled on this





# Andrew Pitchko

9

economic boom like a bird hits a clean window going full speed. We may be content with what we are getting now, but what else could we possibly have? My math is not strong but I bet we could wipe our asses with 20 dollar bills for at least another 40 years with the money they're pulling in. Why end there? There's probably even more things we could do, like build infostructure and make Alberta the culture and industry hub of the world. And we can build all this through the taxation of the companies who have already been lured here and set up shop. They have swallowed the bait. So when I hear of corporations threaten -ing to leave Alberta if taxation goes up, I can't help but call their bluff. Let's face it. They're hooked on oil and we, as the closest deal -er, have the opportunity to jack up price and hold by it. Ask any exper -ienced drug dealer if threats of quitting drugs make him lower prices and start smiling more. He would do no such thing, and within hours the person would be willing to go fellatio on him just to get another taste. Yet the conservatives don't see their advantage. They keep caving in to empty threats which I'm sure are accompanied by large political contributions.

Unfortunately for them, however, great wealth also has a very potent odor, and the liberal masses and ideas from east and west had begun to sneak into Alberta. They were almost a joke at first. A funny side note to the "success" of this province. But now, now that they have a fighting chance, a game plan so to speak, there is not much laughter. The fire that is under the Conservative Party's ass can be felt throughout Alberta, and as the election gets closer, it will only get hotter. Listen my friends, we have a lot to work with here. Endless possibilities.

This is our inherent wealth as much as it is theirs. So why is it that when the economy grew 43 percent (according to Globe and Mail), I have not become 43 percent richer? Are you 43 percent richer? Do you feel your children's education is 43 percent better? Is the LRT and ETS 43 percent more efficient? I'm not saying the system needs to be perfect or even fair, but this is a bit much. Are you pissed? You should be. If you really want those bastards to have it: Vote. Vote with a vengeance. It's no wonder the politicians are so scared. They have a lot to hide. Right now it's all in the open. So before we have the Alberta sponsorship scandal develop, perhaps we should elect someone who will not rob us blind, leaving this province bare with no trace of economic prosperity. Other than a couple of nice Riverbend houses.



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## so dangerous to society at large...

This is DEADHEADDEVO ... it is my responsibility to research all the laws that haven't been passed yet. It is also my responsibility to alert each and every one of you to the potential consequences of various ordinary everyday activities you might be performing which could eventually lead to Incarceration (or affect your parent's credit rating). Our criminal institutions will soon be full of little creeps like you who do wrong things ... and many of them were driven to these crimes by a horrible force called ART!

Our studies have shown that this horrible force is so dangerous to society at large that laws are being drawn up at this very moment to stop it forever! Cruel and inhuman punishments are being carefully described in tiny paragraphs so they won't conflict with the U.S. Digital Millennium Copyright Act<sub>1</sub> (which, itself, is being modified in order to accommodate the FUTURE).

I bring you now a special presentation to show what can happen to you if you choose a career in ART ... The WHITE ZONE is for uploading and downloading only ... if you have to upload or download copyrighted material, go to the WHITE ZONE ...

Imagine if you will legislation that enjoys the support of such large copyright holders such as the Recording Industry Association of America (amongst them, no doubt, a plethora of various other fascists and copyright holders of the right wing contingent) known as the Intellectual Property Protection Act<sub>2</sub>, expected to be introduced in the very near future.

This bill will give the U.S. Justice Department the ability to combat Intellectual Property crime in bold new ways. It would soon become a new federal crime just to attempt to commit copyright infringement. All attempts, even if they fail, could be punished by up to 10 years in prison. This legislation would also permit the bypassing of copy protection even for "fair use" purposes.

It would permit wiretaps in investigations of copyright crimes, and would establish a unit within the FBI itself with budgets of \$20 million which would create advanced tools of forensic science to investigate copyright crimes.

This legislation would amend existing law to permit criminal enforcement of copyright violations even if the work in question was not registered with the U.S. Copyright Office. It would boost criminal penalties for copyright infringement originally created by the No Electronic Theft Act<sub>3</sub> of 1997 from five years to 10 years (and 10 years to 20 years for subsequent offenses), for the noncommercial piracy and posting of copyrighted photos, videos or news articles on a Web site if the value exceeds \$1,000.

This legislation would also create civil asset forfeiture penalties for anything used in copyright piracy. Computers or other equipment seized will be disposed of, for instance, at a government auction following the rules established by federal drug laws. Copyright holders will be able to impound records documenting the manufacture, sale or receipt of items involved in infringements, including server logs, IP addresses, and everything that person has ever downloaded.

It appears the future that Frank Zappa envisaged with the release of Joe's Garage has arrived as of 2008. Quite soon we'll all have two computers: a clean one we all do our internet business on, and a dirty one that will never ever be connected to the internet.

Big brother is watching. He wants to know what's on your hard drive.

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DMCA>

2 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellectual\\_Property\\_Protection\\_Act\\_of\\_2006](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellectual_Property_Protection_Act_of_2006)

3 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NET\\_Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NET_Act)

# disconnect.

Lying down, can't sleep. It's a still night, outside black as could be. Pitch black and soundlessly humid. The moisture in the air makes everything sticky and puts a delay; a disconnect; between everyone and everything. It takes twice as long in heat like this to transfer your thoughts to words. A car screeches in the distance. A drag of my cigarette. Two more sticky shots of southern comfort. Nyquil is for quitters and former alcoholics I say. The only way to sleep when it's this sweltering hot is half cut. I keep wishing for a cerebral event. So I keep drinking and I keep hoping for reprieve. Some low digit number flashes on my alarm clock across the room but my muscles can't afford the strain.

Neither can my eyes.

Moments spread apart, pulling and pushing against each other in a manner reserved only for convicts lying half naked in

uncomfortable prison garb, stuck between life and death, time existing only as carved lines on the wall next to the bed and in the lengthening and shaving of grey stubbly facial hair. A place where whole years can pass in a matter of streaming fluid moments or stand still for an eternity in the breadth of an afternoon.

Cold blooded creatures have it easy. Always have. As awake or asleep as the weather allows.

Edmonton is a city trapped within two extremes. From the rapidly-changing, never predictable weather to the small town gossip, big city attitude, Edmonton prevails at neither and fails at everything. Those who succeed here fail at succeeding somewhere that actually impacts anything outside the city limits. All their success implies is

that they failed to succeed anywhere else. Only two seasons here. Winter. And not-winter. The not winter season never lasts as long as it should. Yet here I bake. Toasted cajun style and fraying around the edges of drunkenness and exhaustion.

I scratch my matted hair, wet and stuck to the back of my neck, and sides of my face. My lighter explodes in a flash of flint and fluid as another cigarette finds its way to the left side of my mouth.

The clock beeps incessantly. Time to go to work. I wonder if besides the freedom to move around in my life, that this life is any less of a cell than the conventional kind. **Perhaps.**

Churning over I kick off the blankets and wrestle the pillow till it sits comfortable under the weight of my neck. Turn over and baste once an hour: my recipe for sleep. Maybe I can get twenty minute of sleep before work.

Just maybe....

**Devin  
McCawley**

**11**



# the puppeteers.



In the morning I wake up to my radio, because I can't stand the annoying buzz of an alarm. I would much rather awake to music, hopefully setting the stage for an upbeat day. Unfortunately, more times than not my sleep has been interrupted by a radio commercial telling me to immediately go down to a blowout car sale.

This is an issue far from being confined to a rude awakening. This kind of intrusive advertisement bombards us continuously, throughout the day, unless you never leave your house, don't use the Internet, don't check your mail, abstain from television viewing and have caller I.D. (and don't answer 1-800 numbers). One really has to wonder what kind of effect all this has on our psyches.

It has gotten to such a state of affairs that you can't even walk outside without seeing a bus drive by with an add for some new phone, nightclub, or entertainment center. Just driving around

the city, your eye catches a vast array of billboards in all different shapes, sizes, and lighting conditions. These billboards are not of the old fashioned variety. It has indeed become customary in advertising to constantly utilize sexual innuendo, including bad sex puns....how Shakespearian. I recall a sign recently that had a sexy girl wearing a cowboy hat that said something about a "posse."

It would only make sense for advertising firms to utilize one of man / woman's most basic reinforcing drives, the need to reproduce. If you think about it, it all really boils down to classical conditioning. Regular Joe wants to date, have sex with, and do what ever with hot girl. Regular Joe is not really sure how to go about accomplishing his goal. R.J. observes a beer add with hot girl having fun and liking said beer, with guys who drink given beer. R.J. thinks to himself... "well if I want hot girl, I'd better do like she and her imaginary friends do!" Regular Joe buys beer and gets wasted with

his geeky friends while playing Halo on a Friday night.

This may seem all to be all there is, but if we look a little deeper we notice something that is a lot more serious. In our typical beer commercial, we notice that hot girl is in fact not only hot, but also unnaturally hot. The reason for this is the layers of makeup and facial modification that has gone into her shoot. Not to mention tummy tucks, excessive exercise, and god knows what other horrendous things! Now, Natural Human Girl, flips on the TV and sees this beer commercial repeatedly throughout her viewing session. She sees all the hot guys that hang around this beautiful hot girl that is drinking this inconsequential beer. Natural Human Girl does not even see the beer, or care about the beer, she just sees the beauty of hot girl and the attention it brings to her. Now, this Naturally beautiful girl comes to think that the only way to attract men is to look as unnaturally hot



as this hot beer girl. She does not understand why she cannot look as hot as her. Depression sets in. Terrible eating disorders set in. All amidst decreased levels of self-esteem, feelings of anxiousness, and self-handicapping.

Guys are certainly not immune to the beer commercial syndrome. The hot guys that hot girl of our beer commercial attracts are of course also unnaturally fit and chiseled. Now our Regular Joe sees the kind of girls that are attracted to hot guy in the advertisement. After seeing this advertisement so many times over and over again, R.J. starts to think that if he is going to get unnaturally hot girl, he has to become unnaturally hot guy. The same situation develops with regular Joe as did with natural girl. Regular Joe goes to the gym everyday, cuts back on his eating, substituting creatine shakes for real meals. Soon all he really cares about attaining an unnaturally fit body. He just does not understand why he can't be as hot as hot guy. Soon Regular Joe becomes Juice Monkey Joe and no longer plays halo with the guys on Fridays, because he needs to work out more.

It is time for more people to wake up and realize that none of what is observed in modern advertisement is real, other than the product. Teams of experts who know how to pull your strings to maximum effect manufacture advertisements, and they'll push the limits as far as censorship boards will allow. When people are constantly bombarded with the same message over and over again, as with Regular Joe and Natural Girl, it becomes the norm in their mind. When we receive the subtle messages in these advertisements, we are adopting a reality. The problem with adopting such a reality, as those conveyed in advertisement land is it that it puts unreasonably high demands on us. Since these unreasonably high demands are not achievable buy most, we might all become disillusioned dreamers chasing impossible expectations.

It is difficult to even tell who is depressed any more, in this age, where extreme extroversion is the social norm and gloomy behavior is frowned upon. In many teen-pop movies I have noticed that it seems like the popular characters are chatty and upbeat for almost the entire movie, and the unpopular are gloomy and dark. This is echoed in our

societies perverted belief that it is not okay to be sad once and a while. So many times, I have seen friends go on anti-depressants that were prescribed by a physician. These people were not clinically depressed; they just have the blues. While a given physician may be excellent at what he does, it comes down to the fact that he is not a psychologist. Nor has it been definitively proven that anti-depressants are even as effective as the have been pushed for so many years.

Regardless, the usage of anti-depressant medication alone is not sufficient to truly help someone suffering from depression. The drugs are only meant as a quick, temporary solution, not a cure. Other forms of therapy are required, in conjunction with the drugs, such a cognitive therapy, to produce lasting effects. With drug-only treatment, the relapse rate is unacceptably high for it to be pushed as some kind of magical cure for depression.

Over-prescription of pharmaceuticals is extremely prevalent in our society, just as is the over stimulation of commercials and advertisements. People seem to think that if you have a runny nose, sneeze, cough a little, are not sociable, happy, or bubbly, then something must be requiring medication. I would venture to say that this has to do with the sheer amount of money and power behind these products. The cost of making a drug available for public sale is monumental, and the investors want their money. The cronies most likely don't really care how they get it.

It is really disgusting how far rhetoric spun in media and its accompanying commercials invades our personal life. The ideals and messages pushed in media are not to be mistaken with unfortunate side effects that are unintentional. Commercials are there for a reason after all, to get you to buy stuff. What better way to get you to buy stuff then make you think your friendships depend on it? It would seem if it isn't sex then it's friendship being utilized. So

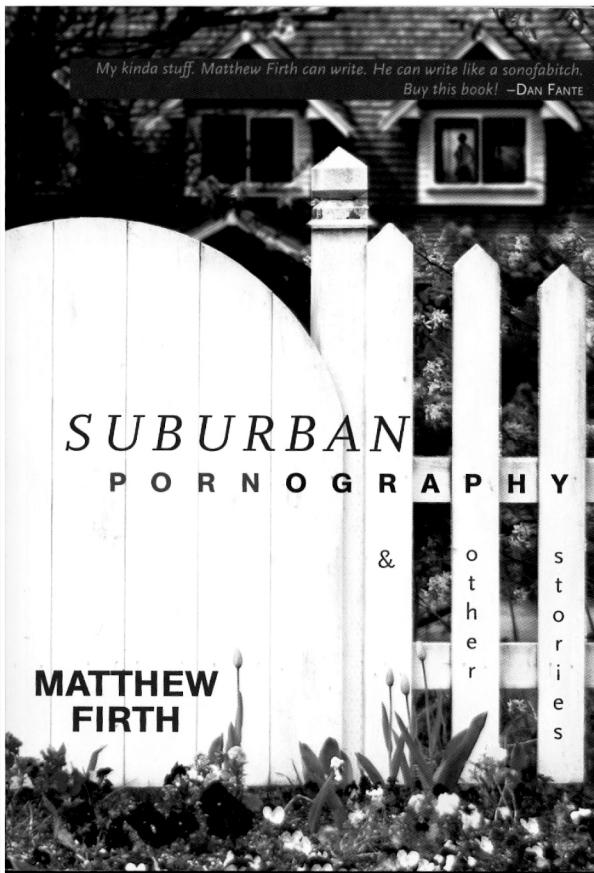
many televised advertisements targeted at the teenager crowd seem to pull the friendship string. We've all seen the ad, the one where Little Johnny gets his brand spankin' new whatever and suddenly there is a party around him and he's the coolest kid on the block. As if it isn't enough dealing with typical teenage angst and uncertainty, now teens have got to buy an iPod, silver chain, preppy boots, trendy watch and what not just to be cool and have friends. So the television says anyways. As with Regular Joe and Natural Girl, now Little Johnny is consumed by repeated imagery, brainwashing him with consumerist ideals. Soon Little Johnny finds himself only seeking friendship with people who have the coolest clothing, electronics, etc. Friendship is in extreme danger of becoming a gong show of who can have the coolest stuff. In many ways it already is. This severely takes away the genuine nature of true friendship. Don't make friends with people because of the cool things they have or the way they dress. Befriend people because you genuinely like the things they have to say and the interests (outside of shopping) that they have.

In fact, don't do anything that you do not truly like or think is right. Never do something just because it seems with the norm of our society. What the norms are in our society are not healthy ones and are bound to leave you hollow and empty. People like you and I do not create the perceived norms of society, mass media empires that have definite goals and objectives create them. Those goals and objectives do not include your wellbeing or comfort. Go for whatever feels right to you, even if people think you are bizarre or silly. That will of course be a natural side effect of escaping the ever-reaching influence of our consumerist society. This is not to say that you should look at whatever the majority is doing and then do the opposite. If you really feel for something that is popular, feel free to indulge, like food, it's good to eat food. Hey, everyone is doing it, why aren't you?

Adam  
Wallace

13

# re\_view: Welcome To Suburbia.



**Suburban Pornography**  
**by Matthew Firth**  
**Anvil Press, 2006**  
**207 pp.**

In Bryson's review, he evokes a seminal work of noted literary critic Northrop Frye, and "the universe of literary archetypes richly articulated" in *Anatomy of Criticism* in a paraphrase that "all writers are like other writers" to qualify the comparison of Firth by such writers as Kenneth J. Harvey and Hal Niedzviecki as "Canada's Bukowski." Except that beyond the conclusion that they both use booze, sex, shit jobs, and relationships that often end in violence -- the comparison stops there.

While Bukowski is an exceptional underground poet and popular cultural figure due to films such as *Bar-Fly* and *Tales of Ordinary Madness*, his fictions are ultimately far too two dimensional to be of any useful comparison beyond the superficial. Firth is much more complex a writer. Firth has more in common with other Canadian urban writers as Juan Butler and Daniel Jones. Indeed, Firth has more in common with other urban post-realist, Blank Generation writers as Dennis Cooper, Joel Rose, Gary Indiana, and small press authors such as Kevin Sampsell, Steven Jesse Bernstein, Deran Ludd, and M. Gira than he does with Bukowski.

These writers, including Firth, chose to explore the world they live in -- an urban (and suburban) frontier where the social fabric of everyday life has worn extremely thin and has begun to expose the crumbling hypocrisy and complacency of the values our communities are built upon. They are witnessing firsthand the fraying of the edges, and in some instances, the complete tearing away of old social structures and values: and the accompanying casualties.

After the publication of his first two collections of short fiction, **Fresh Meat** (Rush Hour Revisions, 1997) and **Can you Take Me There, Now?** (Boheme Press, 2001), Matthew Firth takes his readers, as well as his cast of quotidian characters -- waitresses, garbage men, bus drivers, soup kitchen clients, working folks, neighbourhood perverts -- on a journey into contemporary suburbia in the 17 stories that make up *Suburban Pornography* (Anvil Press, 2006).

From the beginning, Firth has been something of a conundrum to CanLit reviewers, who by their very nature like authors and writers to be neatly defined and well categorized. Firth's fictions have never fit comfortably into the CanLit categories, throwing all literary pretensions and conventions to the wind, so to speak, and the Canadian literary establishment be damned. That his fictions have made it to print reveal both the bravery of the author, himself, for his dogged perseverance, and the courage of his publishers as well.

A recent review of *Suburban Pornography* in *The Danforth Review* by Micheal Bryson is an excellent case in point.

Bryson also equates Firth's collection with that of the graphic novel and movie "Sin City" by calling it "a close approximate" to the darkness and male sexuality in Firth's fictions. Bryson views the collection to be "driven forward by male characters unable to control their instinct to inflict violence." And further evokes the Freudian concept of the unconscious to substantiate this view. Indeed, Bryson returns to Freud and to Northrop Frye again and again in his review to substantiate his claims.

Bryson also challenges the authenticity of Firth's vision by evoking CanLit warhorse Rudy Wiebe, and his modernist view of fiction: "Fiction is fiction, or as I heard Rudy Wiebe say once, in the language of his Mennonite grandparents, there is no word for fiction. There was only, in their view, "truth" and "lies." Fiction is lies. Fiction is by definition artificial; it is art, hopefully; it is artifice. Fiction is not reporting, it is not journalism."

But what happens, though, when our "real life" and so-called "fictional life" become completely indistinguishable from one another?

Welcome to the post-literary age.

Many of Bryson's views and conclusions would be acceptable if we were reviewing another book. Perhaps some grand narrative of the nineteenth century, or even a twentieth century modernist novel, but Firth's fiction simply does not fit into this academic paradigm. Firth's fiction does not play by these rules. In fact, he has thrown out the CanLit rule book altogether, and we are all much better for it.

The reader will not find standard conventions like figurative language, symbolism, or characterization in Firth's stories. There are no quaint, touching, or heart-felt epiphanies. Indeed, Firth's characters lack the self-awareness, or any engagement with the world of their psyches beyond that of their most basest desires.

But don't think that the identity of all Firth's characters in this collection are all purely based upon the male phallus. Identity in these stories isn't a matter of sexuality or gender, or even social class, for that matter, but that of rampant consumerism and consumption gone amok -- exposing the characters for what they really are, plain and simple, grotesque products of a culture bent on its own delusion, at any cost.

Indeed, this collection has less to do with such Freudian concepts of 'sexual fetishism and phallus' than it does with commodity fetishism: the central role that private property plays in everyday life. The characters in these stories organize their daily lives solely through the medium of commodities. The market determines who should do what and for whom and when. When these rules of commodity fetishism are not strictly adhered to, the basic social relationships become confused, societal structures break down.

For instance, as in "On A Quiet Residential Street," quite possibly the most disturbing story in Firth's entire collection, the story isn't about sex at all, but the exchanging of a service one of the characters has come to prefer to sex when she invites strange men into her house at night to iron their pants. It's a clear result of commodity fetishism and the breakdown of the use-value illusion:

"It's a compulsion. I go to bed and see my husband lying there sleeping. I'm tired, but I can't lie down with him. I can't stand the thought of seeing him in that mess of blankets and sheets. I think of all the sheets, towels, skirts, shirts, pants, in the house and all their wrinkles. I have to leave the room." (p. 172)

As Susan Sontag asserts in her essay, "The Pornographic Imagination" in her book **Styles of Radical Will**, "Pornography is a theatre of types, never of individuals."

This dissolution of the self in our urban menagerie, the death of the self in lieu of the virtual or the simulated self, and eventually the death of imagination and unself-conscious emotion by the media and those who control it, the individual is replaced by the type.

"What pornography is really about," Sontag further asserts, "ultimately, isn't about sex but death." And that is what Firth's stories are about at their source: the death of his character's individuality, and replaced with a type, mirroring the very dissolution of our own.

By their own lack of individuality, the characters in these stories have become a kind of mish-mash of contemporary culture; they are not "created" as they once were in the Grand Narratives of the past, instead they mirror our continuously homogenized society in which as characters they are as much a commodity as their author.

And as commodities in these stories, these characters are driven mad living an existence saturated with media promises to fulfill their deepest, most appealing desires -- for love, for adventure, for excitement, style, risk -- their every desire whipped up past the point of frenzy: but their desires are never appeasable. Nothing will ever be enough for them, nothing will ever fully suffice, nothing will ever completely satisfy. And absolutely no one is immune. Them, or us. And for some of Firth's characters, this hyper-state becomes psychically intolerable.

For instance, in "Aquamarine," Billy Arnason's past glory of being a great hockey player which he has been carrying around since high school becomes too great an illusion and a burden to continue to carry, although everyone around him -- his employer, wife, friends, townspeople -- all expect him to be nothing more and nothing less than what they expect of him: that illusion. Even if it kills him.

Lured by promises of the better car, the better relationship, the better self, many of Firth's characters have substituted their future for the present, mortgaged their children's and grandchildren's futures for their own selfish needs. In essence, consuming their children's hopes and dreams in a rabid attempt to fulfill their own.

Never appeasable, surrounded by commodities, and filling their lives with them, until they themselves become nothing less than the commodities they buy -- their lives become as fictive as the commercials they, themselves, are sold day in and day out. Exactly where is the line drawn between reality and fiction, here?

This is exactly what Raymond Federman envisaged in his 1981 book, **Surfiction: Fiction Now and Tomorrow**, when he envisaged "a kind of writing, a kind of discourse whose shape will be an interrogation, an endless interrogation of what it is doing while it is doing it, an endless denunciation of its fraudulence, of what it really is: an illusion (a fiction)."

According to Jack Kerouac, the prose of the future was to be, essentially, autobiography: "Uninterrupted and unrevised full confessions about what actually happened in real life."

Welcome to suburbia, Firth's **Suburban Pornography** tells us. That future is now.

<http://www.danforthreview.com/reviews/fiction/harvey&firth.htm>

Surfiction: Fiction Now and Tomorrow edited by Raymond Federman (Swallow Press, Chicago, 1981)

The Portable Jack Kerouac, edited by Ann Charters, Penguin Books: New York, 1996 (p.481)



**proud to be an american!**

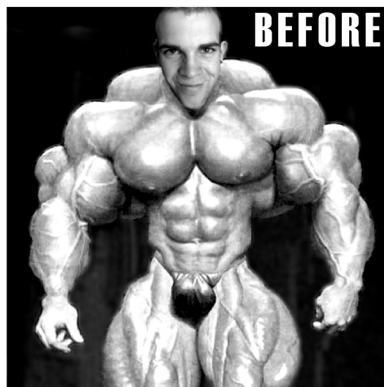
**I'm proud: to be an American! I'm proud of all the groovy things we've done! There's television, free religion, rock 'n' roll, standard oil, times square, jimmy darren, corey wells, and smokey bear, price reduction, reconstruction, peace corps, and lots more culture that we got to lend! I'm proud: to be an American! And I'm proud: I had a great time bein' one! There's your school and my school and both of us in high school, surfboards, cigarettes, homework, and southern comfort! VIC's dean was really mean, made us keep our locker's clean! Failed nearly every class, boy ditchin' was a gas! I'm proud: to be a young American! I'm proud, just think about it. All the far out things that we've begun: there's revolution, constitution, land, sea, and air pollution, cold wars, hot wars, gas wars, and confrontutions, constipation, consternation, open hearted palpitations, and muscular dystrophy! I'm proud to be an American. Because we got department stores full of cheap iPods! But when you plays 'em: they just go go go go! I'm proud to be an American: we got two chickens in every garage! And I wish every other kid could be one! In my country; The medium is the massage! 'Cause it's impossible to give! Equality and justice to inferior foreigners too jealous to trust us! Gimme your weak and your homeless! How 'bout checkin' the oil, fella?**

**I ' m p r o u d t o b e a n A m e r i c a n !**

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And if you don't believe us, just read this unbelievably true story from one of our most successful satisfied customers:

**2007 Mr. Universe Runner-Up, Alan Petroz:**



After coming in second at the Mr. Universe Contest, I was devastated. After all the working out and calorie watching, I was ready to let loosen my belt strap and truly feel comfortable in my own skin. Then I saw the light. BRAND-X's 90 Day Weight Gain Program has changed me forever. I never leave home! It's not how big you think you are, it's how big you REALLY are that matters. In only 90 days, I gained 600 pounds, 120 inches on my waist, have outgrown all pant sizes available, and can't even get out of bed! My wife left my for the 1st place Mr. Universe, but I don't care! I've never been happier! Really! No. REALLY!!! Believe me! Try it yourself! You'll see... Now where's that fucking burrito I lost in the roll of my armpit two weeks ago... I'm STARVED!!!

results not typical

Sincerely,  
Your BRAND X President,

Post Maestro Ded X

**'BRAND X' IS  
ASPARTAME FREE!!**

**yet 100%  
TRANS FATTY!!**

[ not even we thought it was possible!! ]



## **The definitive Wal-mart review; Decaffeinating of my coffee**

2:28pm Wednesday, Dec 19, 2007

So here we are my friends, the invisible hand of Adam Smith has finally made contact with the city landscape. Its fingerprint is the new Wal-mart at South Edmonton Common. This physical affirmation has managed to interlink both socialistic principles as well as the ideologies behind the third riche. Yes, the same corporate structures that financed Hitlers rise in Germany are now funding our politicians and saving you cash, and though they are not calling for any book burnings or public executions all it takes is a bit of imagination and a dash of paranoia to clearly see how that's the next logical step. Yes today we have a brand new 24 hour Wal-mart, but tomorrow we will have tears and blood. We will pay for this convenience, nothing is free my friends. In the near future your sex drive will be demolished, your receding hair line will speed up, your morning breath will worsen. It will be a matter of time before you start to slip into a vegetative state. The distinguishing characteristics of night and day will become blurred. You will be lost in your own life, un-reactant to all stimuli, unable to feel. You will vote conservative and consider Boston Pizza fine dining. Your children will grow up Chongos, your wife will fantasize about other men while making love to you (probably some one Latino). My friends do not let this happen to you. Avoid the convenience, it is still not too late. Fight the urge. Times like these you need to be on the lookout, be prepared. I suggest a diet of coffee and cigarettes, keep aware, stay able minded. Don't go down dark alleys, avoid strangers. Check every ones neck lines for possible form fitting masks and get heavy in to your neighborhood watch program. Start raising dogs, avoid large crowds, save all your newspapers. What ever it takes not to shop at Wal-mart. Its going to be a cold winter; you will feel it in your bones. The battle grounds have been chosen, the trenches are dug. The canons are loaded and the air is thick with tension.

**Your move shopper, YOUR MOVE ASSHOLE.**



click.

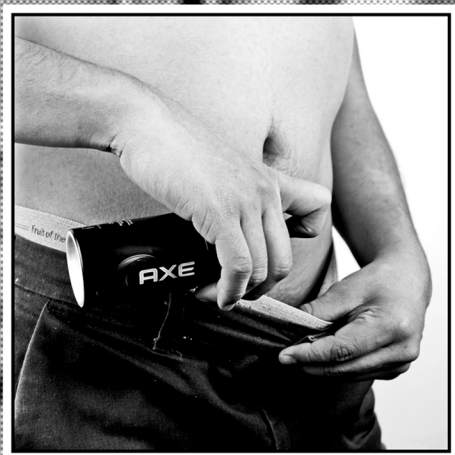
Click. The noise begins; a steady hum like explosively bright fluorescent bulbs overhead. Leaving a feeling like a rat under a microscope. Needles of noise probing in and out of my brain constantly injecting useless information. I am no longer assembling a single puzzle but mixing the pieces from other games. The result looking like a jackson pollack painted in shit.

The color in my face draining as rumination sets in. Always dark these past haunting memories. The small fragile creature left in the back of my brain cringing as the needles drive into it. Taking and injecting poison. The comfortable positions don't work anymore.

Click. The night seeps into the infinite. Falling from inhibitions and self doubt I am truly free. Flying in a ocean, viscosity of blood. Feeling the embryonic state of my inner child at last safe. How do I make peace with this child? How do I let go...?

# cleanup in aisle two.





**Nicole Manning is an  
iconoclastic photographer  
currently residing in  
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.**

**Nicole Manning 21**



# KEEP YOUR

Script that I spit, neurons firing mentally every split second,  
Vernacular Vocabulary a force with which to be reckoned  
The anti-thesis of my philosophy won't bother me,  
Just follow me, Submerged into the depth of my religion, like  
Taking a schism to your wrist that's politically driven,  
Criticism that leaves my subject of bloodshed unforgiven

This is the battle cry of the usurper of change on a heartless plane;  
The new dark ages come upon us, following the grain  
Of a cyclical history, like an anti-histamine  
Subduing the population, expending damnation  
Upon all of them who detest this inflammation

Because the godless future we're damned to is just an allegory,  
For the moral fabric of our scriptures prophesizing purgatory  
Manifesting fear on intellectual real estate, botanically  
Poising our values, raping spirituality satanically  
Gasping for air in the agnostic deathtrap, mechanically  
**CONDOMS WON'T PROTECT US FROM THIS FUCKING INSANITY**

Starting fires in the pit of despair, which consumes us  
Molding minds unable to discern acceptance from disgust  
Feeding the lust, for sex, graphic violence, surrounded by silence,  
Sacrificing humanity for the sterility of science  
Standardizing pseudo-intellectual moderate aristocrats  
You pay less tax than me because you paid off the right bureaucrats??  
**FUCK YOU**, I no longer need to succumb to this False country,  
Give my waking life to them as they wait their turn to fuck **ME**

Fucking with my head views, words carefully used  
So as to fit the specific guidelines for manipulated attitudes:  
Follow the set path, what's right for humanity  
Safe decisions are just a thinly veiled form of vanity  
Crippled politics, only focus on the important issues,

22





# MOUTH SHUT

Foreign Affairs FUCK genocidal powers being misused  
And miscues; Human interactions only turn loose  
Serpents feeding us tripe as the right wing ties the noose  
Passive aggression epitomized, as were standing silently  
While the masses sit quietly, DYING VIOLENTLY

Life goes on, man burns bridges, Pain is relentless  
FUCK the health code, deteriorating around political agendas

And Fuck politics, the government's financial backer's not the one who chooses  
Fuck Gun Laws, Nobody in the projects manufacture Uzis  
Fuck investment, Robbing bank accounts while they tell us they know the answer  
Fuck cigarettes, instant gratification in exchange for cancer  
I'm sick of watching our Nation sell its freedom by the gallon while our dollar plummets  
You're on the fucking expedition but you aren't reaching the summit  
Fuck Hydrating one thousandth of those dying of thirst  
Picking at the tip of the iceberg, neglecting how the world works

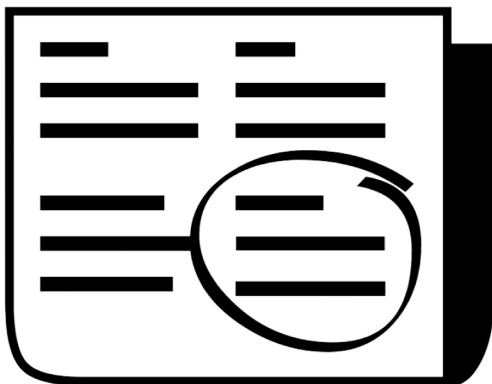
We'll all be clapped, in this religious war of mechanics,  
Nihilistic social stagnation is fucking Genderless,  
I render this, System useless with my ability,  
To undermine every tool's false sense of security  
Watching the Populous sit like they're subdued with a fucking sedative  
KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT, and just follow the rhetoric  
We're basic, operating on cycles of sex and anger,  
Requiring extreme fear tactics and hate to cooperate together

CHANGE; makes me sick to my stomach  
CHANGE; Build a bridge and I'll burn it  
CHANGE; debilitate society  
STAGNANT IRONY; They keep me getting closer to my deity

\_chris merrell



# classifieds.



## MEN SEEKING WOMEN

**OAKEN PHALLUS** - aging hippie love God, seeks perky chicks to learn about free love in my groovy shag carpet love van. Let me crash in your pad, smoke your loads of pot, eat all your food and freak out snorting glue when you go to work. Stupid rich college girls preferred. #309

**SELF-EMPLOYED FREE-SPIRIT** Meth addicted hippie sells drugs and steals from tourists. Sun-baked complexion, skinny, long stringy hair, living in Old Strathcona district seeks a groovy chick willing to turn tricks when cash is scarce. Into romantic walks in the 'hood watching you give blowjobs for \$10. C'mon baby! Live the good life! Discover good earthy hippie values by sleeping in parks and not bathing. We can argue and babble at each other about cosmic awareness 'til the drugs run out and the sun rises. You'll love the groovy vibes out here. #23

**VANGUARD CHRISTIAN** animal rights activist is tired of bombing abortion clinics and throwing fetus parts at women. I seek a fellow terrorist for God. We need to save cats and dogs! Millions of cats and dogs are killed every year and millions more are ruthlessly sterilized against their will! Let other Christians encourage the fuck ups of the world to breed like rats, it's our job to make sure they have enough pets. #15

**DWPBJTGVCHIV** - seeks S / DPBIW / BJM / C into BD / SM / SS / LSD / WS / MDMA / GS. MTW / AM only. #221

**OLD SPORTS HERO.** I promise not to kill you, baby. I just want a bitch that looks like she walked out of Playboy to play golf with. Call OJ. #555

**BEATNIK.** Bongo beatnik Daddy! Groovy beatnik wants a crazy chick into blowin' reefer and groovin' the coffee shop scene. Let me crash at your pad and eat your grub. Life's a gas, can you dig? #32

**LOVE ME TENDER.** Constipated, hopelessly drugged out fat former rock star widely reputed to be dead seeks woman to take quality legal downers with. Must love peanut butter and banana sandwiches and be willing to relocate to Memphis, TN #278

**FUCK ME,** I'm a liberal! No fur coats, carnivores, drugs, gays, blacks, poor people, tattoos, weird hair, pierced noses, smokers, fatties, drinkers, forgers, hypocrites or weirdos. #4

**POMPOUS** former Reform party leader that knows all the answers seeks brain-dead woman to idolize my opinions and let me suck your feet. Martini's, steak, Rush Limbaugh, Wayne Newton, and my wife's underwear put me in the mood for doin' the nasty, how 'bout you? Old fashioned ladies with family values only. #310

**BEEFY BUTCHER MAN,** extra lean ground beef, big loin steak, 200 lbs, 6' tall, seeks tasty filet mignon, firm rump roast and tenderloins. Chicken breasts OK. When we meat, call me Sir Loin. #312

**MALNOURISHED IDIOT** hick KKK member seeks corn fed cunt that will worship my wrinkly pathetic little aryan dick. #14

**FORMER CHRISTIAN EVANGELIST** - ISO large ugly prostitutes into burrito farts, greasy hair and cheap hotels for adulterous fun. Must be discreet. Contact Conservative Party of Canada, c/o Stockwell. #20

**NECROPHILIA** - Handsome in an ugly way garbage truck driver into dead chicks. If you're cold and rigid, call now! No weirdos please. #231

**SWM FROM EAST L.A.,** incarcerated Satanist mass murderer, attractive with long dark hair, budding artist, former angel dust addict, seeks sexy women for romantic walks and possible victimization. #577

**FAMOUS ROCK STAR.** I'm Big Hard Guy, lead singer of Saskatchewan's biggest death metal band Iron Cock. I seek a nice submissive brainless underage Mennonite girl with big tits into watching my band play our 10 original classic heavy metal anthems to crowds of almost 30 people. Preference for cheap beer, anal sex, and posing nude on my Satanic alter preferred. Let's spend a romantic night in the Iron Cook Palace (the drummer's parent's basement) drinking cheap pilsner, watching us practice then listening to a poorly recorded demo of our 10 classic heavy metal anthems. IV drug user preferred (BYO). #666

**MISS JERRY GARCIA?** I'm just like him! Fat, unhealthy filter into beer, heroin and unfiltered cigarettes seeks groovy free love chicks for cosmic orgies, a groovy mental haze and Grateful Dead bootlegs. #1967

**SM,** 25, PUNK rocker with nothing to do but pierce myself, dye my hair and mutilate my leather jacket, seeks F with money, a car and a place to sleep for romantic nights of shooting up, slam dancing, and walking home through the ghetto. #401

**CRUSTY OLD PUNK** ready to party! I finally found a good chiropractor, hemorrhoidal cream and a mohawk wig that doesn't pull off. I need a sexy punk chick to take to the Hard Core Logo show, and to rub me down with HEEET after all that slam dancing. #69

**GROOVY HIPPIE!** I'm a nudist with a big beefy "Bachman Turner Overdrive" build, looking for out of sight old hippie chicks that still groove on free love and LSD. Babble incoherently about the harmonic vibrations of your brain in synch with the mustard I spilled on my tie-dye and meditate on Jerry Garcia's corpse. I won't laugh at you if you take your clothes off. #619

**BURLY BUSINESSMAN** wants to be your baby. Lactating woman preferred for erotic chocolate milk and diaper sex. No weirdos please. #41

**MUCHO MACHO** muchacho que tengo un burrito grande en mis pantalones. Quiero chingar una chica bonita. Quiero fumar mota y besar sus chi-chi's y punta senorita! #170

**BADASS GANGSTA** X-Ray Tripsy 'da badass gansta' rappin' foo' about town. A shout out to all ya' big booty tight dress bitcha's out dere. Toot Tripsy's beeper, babel and X-Ray Tripsy can tweak yo' twiddle'n twiddle yo' tweak any day ta' week. #371

**WRESTLER!** Yank my balls in a double ball blatin' square knot before i twirl your ta-ta's in a full tittie nelson, babel! Freaky Funky Fred the Pimp, local masked wrestler, seeks big booty freakin' baby for bondage and wrestling. #171

**STRONACH HATER.** Conservative businessman seeks Mulroney loving sexy babe with family values and nice tits for a weekend relationship. Must like sports, cigars, steak and golf. My wife is out of town on weekends. Let's play golf or watch TV, baby! No smokers, druggies, punks, pierced nipples or Liberals. #62

**HIPPIE FOREST ELF** stuck in the city, not into heavy vibes, seeks groovy chicks who can buy me cheap suds and buds. I want to enjoy high times at your place and on the street playing bongos for nickels. Rod McKuen and Carlos Castaneda affect my daily life. Ask for "Hash Knife" along Whyte Ave. I'm one of the greasy haired hippie guys playing Grateful Dead songs on broken bongos. #175

**ROCK STAR** with a shit eating grin, and he loves it! Dump a loaf on my head, baby - I'll love it!! Let me videotape myself gorgin' on your big brown bombs, baby! Ever hear Chuck Berry sing "Brown Eyed Girl"? Gimme a call. Chuck Berry, St. Louis, MO. #888

**CONSERVATIVE COUNTRY** BOY - a fertilizer salesman into Molly Hatchet and Garth Brooks. I lead a double life as a big hairy piss pig, ringed, marked, needing more. I want a conservative woman with kinky family values. Let's squeal, lick, oink, wallow in slop, inflict pain and punishment, and drink my special yellow margaritas. #251

**TYPICAL** whining loser in urban music scene seeks the same. Why can't there be more free shows within 2 blocks of my house on my nights off? Why does it get so cold in the winter? Why does the music scene suck? I can't figure it out! #98

**PIMPY ASSED** heavy metal dude into potato chips and Slayer seeks sexy chick with fringe leather jacket for Satanic rituals, grave robbing and moshing. Let's get pissed and brand each other. #66

**IDIOT REDNECK** bastard farmer from north of Lesser Slave Lake seeks Mennonite dominatrix to whip his pathetic 60 acres into shape. Future run at provincial politics possible with right woman whipping me every step of the way. #145

**FAT UNHEALTHY** provincial premier with massive shit eating grin seeks liason with any SWF into beer, unfiltered cigarettes, and doing the nasty in the back seat of government vehicles. Must have private health insurance. #141

## WOMEN SEEKING MEN

**BLACK PANTHER** Princess wants to whip your white ass for cash. #440

**BRITISH NANNY** with Charlie Manson eyes seeks employment. I look innocent and promise not to bounce your baby off the walls like a screaming superball. #50

**UNSHAVEN ANARCHIST** straight edge vegan tattooed pierced female skateboard punk seeks politically correct punk boys with big dicks into Homo Broccoli Power, The Vegan Militia, Chicks with Dicks, Ass Worship, Bowl Movements, and other local punk bands. #997

**EX-HOOKER, I.V. Drug User,** rubinesque, jailhouse complexion, has genital warts, herpes, HIV+, with 5 ADHD, fetal alcohol syndrome children, ready to settle down. I seek sensitive SM, any age, race, ugly OK (I'm sure I've fucked worse), with steady job or big pension checks. I can microwave frozen burritos, boil eggs, and butter toast. I yearn to let the kids play in traffic while giving that right man a handjob in front of the boob tube watching Oz or Trailer Park Boys (maybe you!). #310

**KOSHER TWAT!** Former "Kosher Hotdog Queen" seeks sexy M for afternoon sex romps. A foot long dog never looked as good as it does in my Kosher twat. Intrigued? I have mustard, relish and buns to go with it too. #99

**ELEPHANTITIS** - sexy wench with horn on head and squishy mass the size of a softball growing on her ass seeks nice guy for sex. #765

**to respond to a personal ad, indicate the ad number.**

**FORMER LOT LIZARD** (truck stop prostitute) and gasoline huffer, HIV+, born again Christian, starting my own ministry. Join my full gospel one on one Biblical experience big boy. #664

**BLOOD SUCKER** - Gothic, blood-lusting vampress looking for tender necks. Party with a couple beers and my pain pills, sucker. #661

**SEXY REDNECK**. Former "Miss Crawdad Festival" winner seeks sexy potbellied redneck type for uninhibited fun. Bend me over the hood of your Ford with the engine running! My cellulite wiggles even thinking about it! #665

**LESBIAN VEGAN-CORE** band seeks M slave / roadie / driver / toilet. Race unimportant. #213

**MUST BE SOMEONE OUT THERE** - Overweight Korean Lesbian Jew for Christ into country music and hairy armpits seeks the same. #311

**HARPER HATER**. This bubbly liberal blonde cutie seeks a handsome Liberal to giggle and twiddle my nipple rings! We can enjoy quiet romantic evenings at home watching TV, eating dinner, and stimulating liberal conversation about the angst of the underprivileged. I seek a compassionate, gentle, short haired, successful, liberal WM. No smokers, druggies, punks, pierced dicks or conservatives. #45

**BUXOM PIERCED PUNK** heathen grrl seeks Christian preacher to demoralize and blackmail. Pentacostles preferred. sXe me up, preacher man! #445

**MEAN OLD HO'** - I was a truck stop prostatoot... I got more theeths than tattoos. I needs an edurcated man with money. Truckers preferred. cum to Uncle Bills truck stop an ask for Phillis. wisk me awy on a romantik nite of Wite Castle burgers, old milwakee bers and a drive-in! it always cures my constipation! Tha docter sayz my deit of bakon, wite bread, beer and oplates is bad. What does he no? #53

**CHEERFUL NUDIST!** - Let's go shopping naked! Let's eat fast food naked! Let's go to court naked! #312

**JET GIRL** seeks Jet Boy for about an hour on the tower of power. No wimps. #11

**SEXY GOTH SWF** has come out of the closet and doesn't need any of you dick-slinging losers anymore. Fuck you all. #233

## VARIOUS

**BOOPSI BOMBSHELL**, the famous hot to trot shit talking transvestite superwhore. I can suck a fire hydrant dry. I fuck so good I made OJ drop his knife. My ass is so stretched the Statue of Liberty fist fucks my butt and I still have room to fart. I'll make you feel like the super he-man that you're not. You'll prematurely ejaculate all over my sexy razor stubble ass as I steal your wallet. C'mon baby, let's go on a date. #36-28-34

**STRAIGHT ACCOUNTANT** by day, big hairy horny piss pig daddy at night, seeks June Cleaver look alike sissy turd boy to live in my suburban home. I'll mow the lawn if you wash the sheets. #176

**GWM, ISO romantic, overweight** foul smelling, uncircumcised men to play "rape the garbage-man" with. Mud wrestling, fist fucking, enemas and snow balling a must. No weirdos please. #406

**HICK CHICK WITH DICK** from rural Saskatchewan desperate to see new Garth Brooks tour seeks corn holin' sugar daddy cowboy for some whoopin' and hollerin' fun behind the barn. #447

**BEST ENEMA EVER!** Try Aunt Jenny's original "Oklahoma Blasters" use fertilizer and tractor fuel to blast that shit right outta ya! You don't need no doctor to help you shit, just call Aunt Jenny and she'll loosen yo' ass right up! #173

**TABLOID TV FODDER** - Did you see us on Sally Jesse Raphael last month? I was the concerned father with an 11 year old daughter who is a tattooed nympho drunk gang banger that doesn't respect me or my rusty trailer! Talk show appointments available, but you must provide us with a week's worth of Moon Pies and cheap beer. #242

**SEVERAL THOUSAND** NovaTel shares received as Xmas gift in late 80s by husband's associates. Shares going so cheap it's almost criminal. Almost. Contact Colleen. #39

**MUNICIPAL POLICE** force seeks new recruits. Successful applicants must demonstrate effective discrimination of racially profiled members of the public, as well as an innate ability to abrogate the charter rights of said members of the public with nary a thought as a perquisite for employment. #283

**AL QAEDA** sleeper cell seeks suicide bombers to strike Canadian infidels right where they live - Tim Horton's. Roll up the rim to... BOOM! Triumphant bomber guaranteed 30 blessed virgins in heaven. Praise Allah, and his prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him. #570

**SELL METHAMPHETAMINES!** Stay awake for days at a time until you collapse in hallucinating dementia! Fun for the whole family! Safe for truckers! Recommended for teen mothers working through night school! It's the latest craze! Put the E back in Ecstasy! #198

**CRAZY CHICKS** off their medication rant and rave incoherently about sex and voices telling them to polka in the nude until you either hang up, start playing the accordion, or cum! You've never had phone sex like this! 1-900-CRAZY CHICKS.

**REDNECK LUBE JOB** - Oral mechanic will service, lube and drain big thick rods for free! No job too large! No compact or foreign models wanted. #69

**BE ALL YOU** can be. Search for Taliban in Afghanistan. Defuse landmines in Bosnia. Drive stoneage jeeps on stoneage roads along Pakistan border. Defuse roadside explosives. Be a member of the Canadian Armed Forces today. Contact your local recruitment office. Be the adventure.

**MALES NEEDED!!!** Make \$799 US per month with a spy cam in your toilet. Voyeur website servicing this particular peculiar fetish currently looking for Big Hairy-Assed Guys. Penis length unimportant. Must be regular and consume plenty of daily ruffage. Call Jagger for more info. 1-800-BIG-DUMP.

**WORKFARE** Recipients - earn \$\$\$ cleaning up avian-infected bird farms with your bare hands. No danger. Really. Referrals through case workers only. #61

**REMOTE, IMPERSONAL** West Edmonton Mall requires Dolphin impersonators to replace live ones which have died. 3 shows a day M-F, 4 shows on Saturday. Payment in halibut, cod, salmon. Free antibiotics. #456

**ACTORS/INVESTORS** sought for direct-to-video project "The Comprehensive Guide To Proper Munging". Sell videotape and DVD on the internet for fame and profit. #181

**TOXIC WASTE**, Benzene, PCBs, Dioxins. Excellent opportunity for someone with entrepreneurial spirit who isn't afraid to get a little dirty. Contact: Friends of Lougheed. #121

**POLYGAMIST** PATRIARCH running in a newly formed "rurban" constituency on the outskirts of Calgary, seeks 3 or 4 more wives to help with tight campaign. Sexy Mormon babes with a flair for photography and extortion will be richly compensated. Remember to register to vote! #95

**BUTT-UGLY POETS** needed for new digital channel. Great opportunity for narcissistic self-promoter with talent for continuous bullshit and illustrious allegory. Must be 18+. Some nudity may be required. Beautiful people need not apply. #247

## HELP WANTED

**EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE** - New recruits needed. Neighborhood thugs preferred. Applicants must be able to fight effectively while drunk in group settings. Must be willing to participate in police corruption or at least keep your mouth shut.

**CYBER BUTT** WIGGLERS wanted for internet video sex. Must not mind stripping for 11 year olds that break into their parent's computer. #96

**ANARCHIST SQUAT!** Party against War! Steal against classism! Old Strathcona squatters subverting capitalism by living a largely cashless existence through bartering, begging, theft and drug dealing. Join us and discuss Marxism and sell hash while digging food out of the trash. It's rad! Join us in our fight for freedom from government tyranny, dude! #26

**POLITICIANS** needed for upcoming elections in Alberta. WM wealthy narcissistic freaks with talent for bullshit preferred. Must be available for continuous hours of shameless self-promotion. #240

**ENTREPRENEURS** - Own your own hotdog stand in Cuba. Call Fidel's Happy Weenie Wagon Corporation before it's too late! Tourism is booming! #297

**FAST FOOD**, fast moving robots over 16 years old needed at Burger Bomb restaurants near you. We pay 10¢ over minimum wage and will pay 15% of your medical costs if you work over 60 hours a week. Don't sell drugs for a couple hundred dollars per day, work here for about \$100 a week! It's legal! Free left over hamburgers! Be all you can be! #179

**LABORERS** Needed. Great opportunity for illegal immigrants and illiterate citizens! Earn over \$2 an hour cleaning up CN De-rail sites with your bare hands. Easy work! Be all you can be! #844

25

**ACTORS** needed for future homosexual pornographic blockbuster "The Anal-erotic Adventures of Gilles Duceppe". Closeted Bloq-Quebecois encouraged to apply. Grey hair, small penis and big "martini and steak" love handles preferred. #181

**EXPLOSIVES ENGINEER**. Reckless pyromaniac preferred to assist in Iran's development of nuclear weapons. Relocate to nice sunny environment. Women, homosexuals, Christians and other Godless scum need not apply. #388

**GUN CRAZED MILITIA** group invites all white Christian and moral Canadians to attend our Oloron-esque "Liberal Loin Steak" Barbecue. Dion's dick and Layton's head cookies for the children and Jack Daniels and target practice for the adults. Canada must return back to the values of some hazy mythical moral time in history that we don't know anything about. Join us in our fight for freedom from government tyranny. Amen! #52

**PILOTS** to fly unscheduled flights carrying "paperwork" from Jamaica to British Columbia. Must have your own plane. Call CSIS and ask for the Narcotics Dept. #249

**INNOVATIVE** artist seeks sexy "binge and purge" female models for my "Reverse Peristalsis" collage. I paint with puke and body fluids. Pig out on a free colorful meal and help me finish a mural! Studio well ventilated so it won't stink. #251

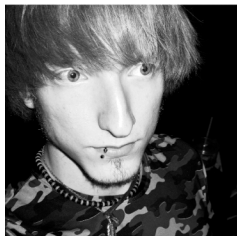


We always looking to help the local community reach out and seek other stable, likeminded and attractive people, just like yourself! Please find submission information enclosed within this publication.

**\_to respond to a help wanted ad, follow instructions included in the ad.**

# the contributors:

in order of  
appearance



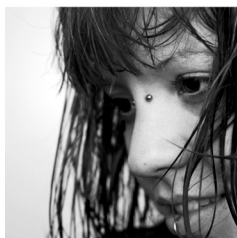
**Kevin Maimann.** When not laying down his soul to the gods of Rock and Roll or peeing on the doors of strangers apartments, he can be found drinking cheap beer and coffee. "Anything with power and substance; genre is irrelevant."

**contact:**  
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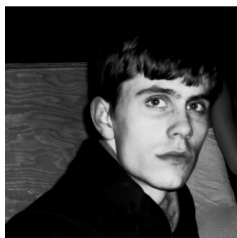
**Andrew Pitchko** is a renaissance man and a village idiot all in one. When not inventing helicopters, and riding the town bike while yelling at the top of his lungs, he attends post secondary at Concordia.

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**Dria Norman** is selling her soul, her self esteem: one dollar at a time. It's rare to witness such an earthly goddess.

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**Chris Merrell.** Who knows? His mind wastes no time. His posture: anything but lyrically blind.

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This Could  
Be You!

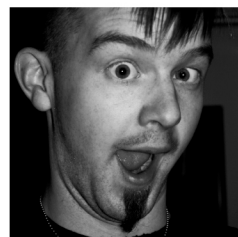
**Mark McCawley.** If not actively mad, he's at best a reformed or potential lunatic. Terminal cynic, this one. "You either survive your parents, or you kill them."

**contact:**  
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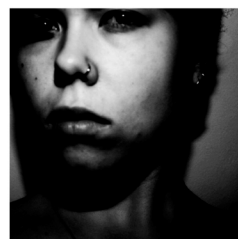
**Adam Wallace** is currently finishing a B.A. double major: Psychology and Philosophy. Once accumulating enough angst fueled inspiration (interwoven with mystical knowledge), he plans to write a book of sorts.

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**Nicole Manning** is a diver and she is always down. Hails from the windy city: Chicago, Illinois. When she walks down the street, she knows there's people watching.

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**Devin McCawley** is a chain-smoking, alcoholic, drug addicted starving artist, and has the nicotine stains to boot.

**contact:**  
[deadheaddevo@gmail.com](mailto:deadheaddevo@gmail.com)





# submit to splurge!

**SPLURGE** welcomes any and all critiques, comments or ideas concerning the nature of the articles, the general effect of the publication personally or otherwise, and even on the zine itself. We also encourage submissions of anything you feel worthy and fitting within future issues of a literary, photographic, otherwise visually artistic, or sardonic nature. And Besides. The worst we can do is find out where you live, break in, and leave a cordial note of how and why it didn't fit on your fridge.

**MANDATE:** Splurge is a Zine that decodes and defaces the ostentation of contemporary consumer culture; pulling back the thin veneer of our so called "Modern" existence to show the ugly truth of what lies beneath our daily actions and inactions, revealing the depths of depravity inflicted by this disney-replica of reality that demands the sacrifice of the real for the hyper-real. Their price is cheap: just everything you are.



## guidelines:

**\_LITERARY:** Prose, Poetry, Fiction, Non-fiction, and Creative

Non-fiction are all acceptable. No set essay structure needed, quotations optional (although citing of web/publication sources are encouraged if used). Hold no punches. It can include personal experiences, observations, anything. Most important is your thoughts and feelings on the state of society and the effect of consumerism on modern culture. Please limit word count to 2000 words or less.

**\_PHOTOGRAPHIC:** Photo Essays, and Portfolio's Excerpts are both accepted. Please send HI-RES scans of the piece(s), no originals please.

**\_VISUAL ART:** Any art excluding that of a Photographic nature is accepted for possible inclusion as background for page spreads or inclusion elsewhere throughout the publication. Please include along with the piece any sugges-

tions you may have for possible use. Please send HI-RES scans of the piece(s), no originals please.

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**\_CLASSIFIEDS:** Classifieds of a socially/politically relevant and sardonic nature are accepted for use in the classifieds section of Splurge. Please no derogatory, defaming, or hateful speech.

**Send** all correspondences/submissions to: **SPLURGEZINE**,  
c/o Devin McCawley,  
email: [deadheaddevo@gmail.com](mailto:deadheaddevo@gmail.com)

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