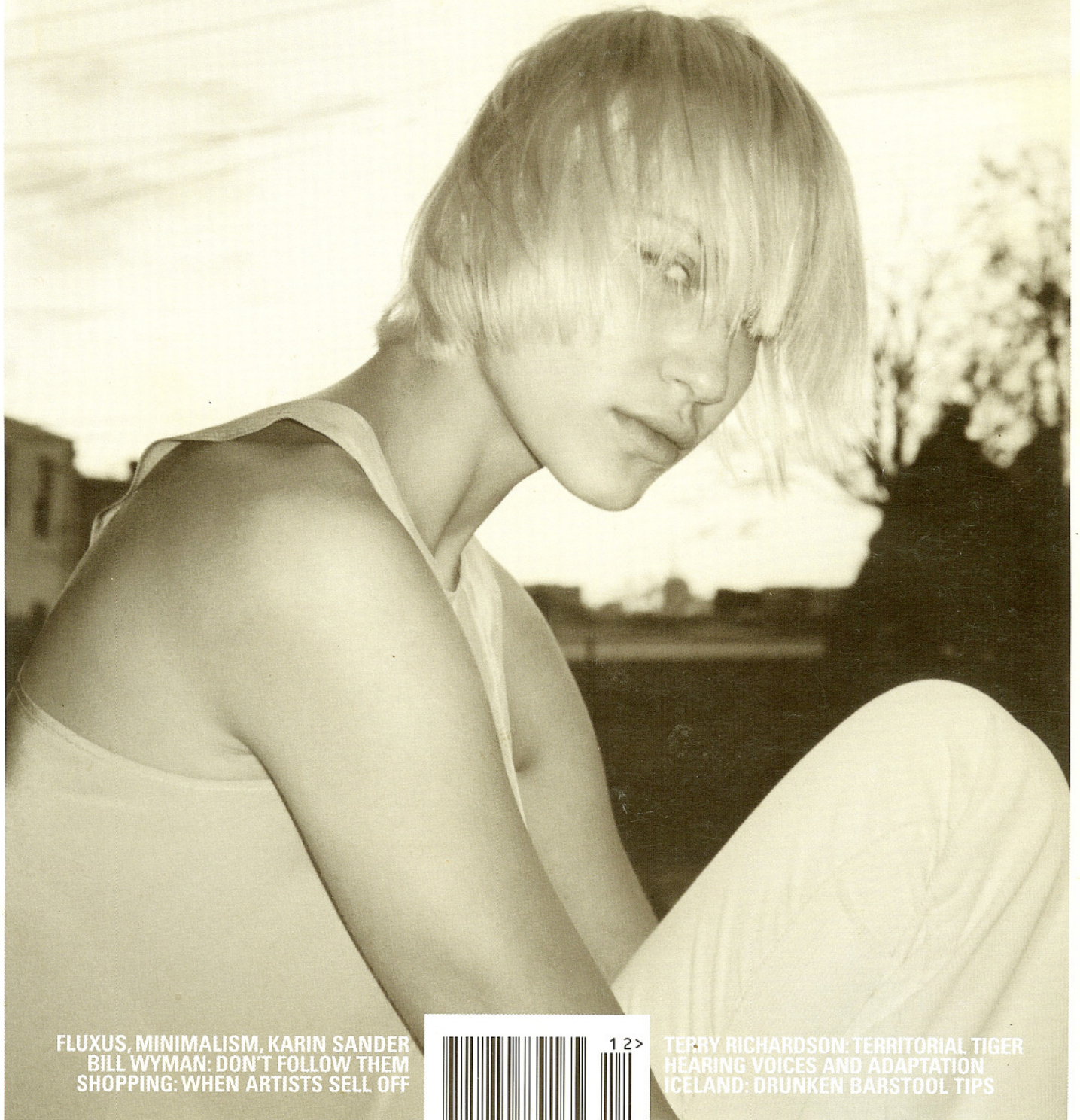


The white issue

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THE WHITE ISSUE



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MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL KULT

text Mark von Pfeiffer photo Alice Patterson

In the realm of straight rock and roll, few bands manage to maintain their tenuous existence for more than five years, even less in the mercurial genre of electronic music, and fewer pass the decade mark. My Life with the Thrill Kill Kult, the exhibitionistic electro-glam-sample-heavy-industrial-lounge rock overlords with a name ripped from a tabloid headline, is a group that's walked its own peculiar line for over fifteen years. Granted, it's a fetish-obsessed, whip-wielding, rubber suit-wearing, booze-swilling, monkey-slapper of a line but they've held to it.

While early Industrial kinsmen like KMFDM, NIN, Front 242, Skinny Puppy and The Revolting Cocks have all fallen off their rockers or been shoved off their thrones, the Thrill Kill Kult have remained predatory—always evolving, always blowing the fuses. “The beginning was dark and abstract then we changed a bunch of times. Some people stayed for it, some people were like ‘Fuck that disco shit,’” says Frankie Nardiello (aka Groovie Mann).



tied to his back and a dancer dressed up as Mary Magdalene would come out wearing these big-time torpedo tits and give him a blow job,” Nardiello testifies. “Shit. I still can’t believe we were never arrested.” Heady stuff. But if you’re one of the offended then you’re one of the targeted. The TKK aims the point of its spear at people who take themselves, life and the universe in general a bit too seriously. “We continually have people contacting us with crap like, ‘We worship you in the Satanic community.’ Take a cold shower and get back to us folks.”

After a period of relative dormancy the Kult have blown the boilers. In the last two years they’ve dropped not one but three LPs on their artist-owned label Sleazebox Records. *The Reincarnation of Luna*—a new studio album which continues their explorations in malevolent disco-lounge with cuts like “Girl Without a Planet” and “Flesh Playhouse” was born in 2001, then *Golden Pillz*—a remix CD that allowed a wide range of artists from The Baldwin Brothers to Vermyn to get

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With an oscillating circle of membership that pledges fealty to Nardiello and co-frontman Mars Daley (aka Buzz McCoy) MLWTTKK is a sort of Warholian collective à la The Factory. As we chat in Chicago on a chill October evening the troops are arriving from every corner of the country to gear up for a bound-for-hell tour where they’ll be kicking thirty-two venues in the nuts. Nardiello waxes nostalgic, “Every time we get ready to tour I’m reminded of the first time we went on the road. I had to quit my job working the counter at Wax Trax! Records [the store] because we had just been signed to Wax Trax! [the label].”

If you’re lucky enough to be near one of their stops, it’ll prove well worth your greenbacks. Their onstage antics rival Ozzy himself, “We used to have this guy dressed up like Jesus, wearing a big dildo sewn to a jock-strap. He’d come out on stage, hop around with a Styrofoam cross

their paws on Kult classics. They followed in March of this year with *Elektrik Inferno*. And right now a live album that revisits such ball-gonging power-chorders as “Kooler than Jesus” and “...Cuz it’s Hot” is being made available to you, the seething masses.

These days, when everyone and her auntie is marrying guitar, sampler and drum machine and claiming to be the sonic equivalent of Christopher Columbus, it’s refreshing to see that one of the great, original instigators of hybridization is still tripping the light. TKK was electro before there was electro—they helped transubstantiate disco into post-modern rock and they still turn your brain into stew without breaking a sweat. Nardiello—for one has seen it all and done it all—is still not bored. “It’s a fun trip. We’re a crazed sideshow, let yourself in and see what happens,” he invites with a trademarked air of self-assured humility. Let us pray. ■