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Mussolini, part one: in which the author suspects his friend has a better sex life than he does.

By Kjören and Hanna Thomas

Once upon a time a scorpion sat by a shallow river, wanting to get to the other side. Some time later a dog walked past and – seeing the scorpion’s problem – said, “I am about to cross the river, would you like to ride across on my back?”

The scorpion gladly accepted, and half way across the river stung and fatally injured the dog. As they both sank into the water, the dog asked, “Why did you sting me? Now we will both die.”

“I couldn’t help it,” the scorpion replied. “It is in my nature.”

—Attributed to Aesop

“You boys looking for me?”

There was an alarmingly loud splash from the corner of the room and I heard Mussolini say in a creepy way, “Say... She’s a hottie.”

The ‘she’ Mussolini was referring to was Fey Valentine, one of the animated characters from Cowboy Bee-Bop. I hadn’t been aware that Mussolini was watching the TV and had been enjoying this particular episode until he spoke. His comment ruined my interest in both the show and Ms. Valentine, however.

“I suppose you expect me to believe you’re an expert on what passes as ‘hot’, now?” I asked, swiveling around to look at Mussolini. I casually threw a few pieces of popcorn at him, wondering if he’d eat them. The popcorn was covered in the sort of delicious artificial cheese that only Orville Redenbacher could provide, and to make things a bit more interesting, I had put garlic powder on them as well. With little hesitation, Mussolini eagerly devoured the burst maize and looked at me with his glassy eyes. I should have known he would eat the popcorn; he’d eaten everything else I’d given him. I saw him trying to eat a marble once....

“Well, truth be told, I don’t have first hand experience with what you might consider ‘hot’ or even ‘cute’, but I know what you like, and she’s got a lot of it. Lacking in the tuchis department, but still, not bad,” said Mussolini as he chewed on the popcorn. I threw

him another piece and, before he’d even finished with what was in his mouth, he made a low leap above the water and grabbed the yummy out of the air, landing with enough force that he got me mildly wet.

I suppose, at this point, I should explain that Mussolini is a fish. A goldfish, to be precise, though saying “goldfish” really demeans him. He’s the biggest damned goldfish I’ve ever seen, and I never wanted him in the first place.

Originally, I had a fishtank with a number of Betta splendidis I’d been breeding to make a little cash on the side. During one of my frequent visits to the local pet stores to see what there might be in way of raw material for breeding purposes, I happened to see an axoloti for sale. Axoloti, commonly known as water dogs, are the coolest salamanders you can imagine. Most salamanders spend a part of their life being entirely aquatic in that they have gills. While many eventually forfeit them and start using lungs, axoloti never lose their gills. Instead, they look a bit like a Rastafarian, their gills protruding from their head in dread-lock-like projections. Couple this with two adorable cross-eyes, looking (vaguely) at the surface of the water, and you’ve got one of the silliest looking things you’ll ever happen across.

Naturally, I had to have one.

Five dollars poorer, I ventured home and introduced the axoloti to my tank. Most of the fish and other aquatic creatures I acquire are usually named after historical or literary figures, but this critter naturally came to be known as Spot. I wish I had a photograph of Spot; you’d understand.

After a few days, I began to suspect Spot wasn’t doing too well. Specifically, I didn’t think he was eating. I’d been giving him the sort of pre-packaged salamander food that one can purchase at pet stores, but as far as I could tell, he’d only eat it if he saw it sinking toward him, and most of the time he’d lunge at it and miss. A bit of research into axoloti explained a lot: they are fish eaters. In hindsight, his big dopey eyes pointing straight up and his gaping maw of a mouth really indicated he would be looking above his head for large things to eat.

Slightly concerned, I watched the other fish – fish which I could breed and make money on – interact with Spot. Fish-fish, a plecostomus originally gotten to control algae in a sealed ecology experiment, was simply too big to be considered as food. This didn't stop Spot from looking longingly at him, though. His gaze seemed to say, "Some day... oh yes, some day. I will eat him. I Will Eat Him!" The other fish sharing the tank with Spot were bettas: one male and several females. The male betta, Huxley, was simply too fast for Spot. The females, One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish and Blue Fish, tended to examine Spot, but hadn't been eaten yet. I could only assume speed was on their side as well.

Not willing to let my poor, silly creature suffer,¹ I returned to the pet store and began scrutinizing the types of fish for sale on two criteria: price and speed. Price was easy enough to compare. Speed, though highly amusing to determine, earned me the disappointing stares² of several wage slaves as I'd crouch down and suddenly rush at the tanks, arms akimbo, causing the poor denizens to scatter.

In the end, simple feeder goldfish, at five cents a pop, turned out to be the best bet. I unhappily bought six of the nasty little things, brought them home, and without the customary fanfare, dumped them into the tank with Spot.

Gluttony must have given Spot some pointers, because in less than 4 hours, Spot had swallowed three of the six goldfish. In his zeal to eat the fish, Spot became, um...bound up, couldn't poop, and died in an unceremonious manner. This, of course, left me with three goldfish I didn't even want (and with that month long Jello binge way in my past, couldn't even fathom a practical use for).

Luckily, one of them quickly died of some fish disease or another. Frankly, I'm surprised any feeder

fish survive at all. If you ever get the chance, go into a pet store after they've just gotten a new shipment in and look at their feeder tanks. It's a roiling pile of fish, alive and dead, struggling for space and, I can only assume, oxygen. It's like Frank Herbert's *Dosadi Experiment* made real. The selective pressures in these tanks have got to be unreal – not that feeder fish get a chance to reproduce all that often. Usually they're just...well, food.

Anyway, there I was with two fish. Deciding not to waste materials at hand, I plopped one of the goldfish into a brand new tank I'd set up. The plan was to connect the two tanks via some PVC tubing so the bettas would have more room, but I wasn't going to expose the fish I was interested in to chlorine water. I had to have a canary, or in this case, a goldfish.

After spending his life surrounded by other fish, his sudden, total isolation must have been too much for him. Dr. W. C. Minor³, as I came to call him, spent just under two days trying to rejoin the fish in the tank he could see, but couldn't reach. In the end, he just sat on the bottom. Even after I moved him to the original tank, he sat in a corner by himself. Eventually he died, but I feel no regret; the idea that a fish went insane is too amusing.

So then there was one.

I assumed the remaining goldfish would just die in an efficiently timely manner,⁴ but he didn't. Instead, he just kept growing, and growing. Eventually he started scooping pieces of gravel off the bottom, cleaning the yuck off of them for extra food, then spitting them back out. Seeing this, and resigning myself to the idea that this fish was here to stay, I named him Mussolini, after el Duce's notoriously terrible dining habits. Now-a-days, it's marbles Mussolini scoops up into his mouth. He stopped chewing on gravel when it started getting stuck in his nose.⁵

¹ Remember this sentiment, folks.

² And the sternest reprimand I've ever gotten on the subject of proper decorum and etiquette around our piscine friends. [*There have, in fact, been less stern reprimands.* -Adam]

³ There's a crazy Irishman born every second.

⁴ Adjective, adjective? Sure, we can write like Sumerians. Writing like Sumerians is something we can do. When we write, it is possible for us to write like Sumerians.

⁵ What a nightmare that was. Imagine my distress when I came home one day to see what looked like a handful of black rocks shoved up Mussolini's nose. How was I supposed to get them out? More importantly, what was he doing to get them up there in the first place. Eventually the rocks disappeared, so they were either cleared by the fish equivalent of a sneeze, or they've worked their way deeper into his body, where they are causing permanent damage as we speak. Either way, out of sight out of mind...unless they've actually worked their way into his nervous system. There's something to keep me up tonight.

It wasn't until I heard Mussolini making beeping noises as he backed out of the PVC pipe I used to connect tanks together that I discovered he could talk. How a creature that's supposed to have a five second memory could learn how to talk was beyond me. How he could carry on coherent conversations was another mystery, but there you have it.

You can understand why I was confused as to why Mussolini would assume he knew what it was humans would find attractive, then. After all, we're talking about an eleven and a half inch fish, with big Muppet-like googly eyes that would just as soon eat his own excrement as the popcorn I'd given him. All in all, Mussolini is not what I'd think of as a lady's man...um, fish, and if he'd ever been on a date, I certainly hadn't heard about it. I didn't want to, either. Pisces-primate relations are just too icky to even visualize.⁶

"She has a lot of what I would look for in a woman, huh?" I asked, gesturing back to the TV set, where Ms. Valentine was busy blowing the crap out of a bar with what looked like a Tommy Gun.

"Well, maybe not you in particular. I'm talking about humans in general." He swam to the surface and made gulping noises. I knew he wanted more popcorn, but he'd have to ask first. I hate cocky fish.

"That's a pretty broad statement, don't you think? I'm assuming you're taking a sociobiological stance here."

"Of course. Just because I'm a fish doesn't mean I don't read."

I looked at Mussolini, but it's always difficult to tell when he's making a joke; his face just isn't expressive in the same way human faces are expressive. He lacks the muscles, for one. This did, however, explain why I'd find water stains on many of my books from time to time.

"Besides, I wouldn't so much say I'm taking a sociobiological stance as I'm just accepting what is obvious to me."

I had to admit to myself that I bought a lot of the sociobiological party line. I found it laughable to think that humans could possibly evolve without a whole

host of instincts. The problem, of course, is trying to determine what is instinctual when the researchers themselves are potentially struggling under the limitations of the same instincts. I was reminded of the story of a raccoon that was taught to place a quarter into a machine to get food. Once trained, the raccoon was given two quarters, but instead of using the quarters to acquire twice the amount of food it was used to, it sat there rubbing the two quarters together.

This apparently non-sensical behavior can be explained if one understands raccoon feeding behavior: when given food, raccoons will clean it prior to eating it. As a child I derived a great deal of joy from giving sugar cubes to a raccoon my father used to train hunting dogs. It would diligently clean the sugar cube in water, dissolving it and leaving one very confused raccoon.

In the absence of water, raccoons will rub a piece of food to clean it. When presented with two coins, the raccoon's hardwiring did it an injustice. It associated the coins with food and began cleaning the coins instead of the food that the coins would bring it. Sure, it sounds crazy to us, but the story always makes me wonder what species-wide craziness we exhibit without our being aware of it?

"Maybe obvious to you, but not to others. Maybe if William McDougall had hit upon a real list of instincts versus his silly post-Victorian Age idea of what were human biological motivations we'd be better off, but as it is, it took the European ethologists, Edward Wilson and Richard Dawkins, to give the concept respectability."

"Please. You have the phrenologists and Kate Moss to thank for that."

"Kate Moss? The Calvin Klein model? What the hell are you talking about?"

He swished about the tank in an agitated way and said, "You know, a little popcorn would taste pretty good right now...." Obviously he wasn't going to divulge any more info until I made with the food. I flicked some popcorn into the water and they rapidly disappeared into his eager mouth.

"What I was getting at is that there was a phrenologist involved with the penal system in the 1800's.

⁶ That goes for octopus porn as well. Thank you somethingawful.

Remember that Cesare Lombroso felt that there were 'born criminals' and that one could recognize them by the shape of their face. Well, this one particular phrenologist set about to make a composite sketch of what a criminal would look like. He superimposed increasing numbers of criminal countenances onto one another. To his chagrin, he discovered that instead of arriving at a stereotypically 'criminal-like' face, the image staring back at him was much more attractive. Enter sociobiology.

"Psychologists have tested young babies – which can not possibly have been culturally influenced yet – by showing them images of people's faces. The images are first rated for their attractiveness by some adults and then the same images are shown to babies. They've proven again and again that babies look at images of people rated as more attractive longer than they gaze at images of people that scored lower on the attractiveness scale."

I knew exactly what Mussolini was talking about. There was a specific name for it, but I thought of it as the "greyification of faces." As more and more evidence builds up, it appears humans look for particular things in the faces of their mates. Men, apparently, are looking for women with diminutive chins, large eyes, full lips, and a slight nose, while women look for men with strong jaws and prominent brow ridges. Both sexes search for highly symmetric faces...like Denzel Washington, for example.

Something that had struck me for years, but which I haven't read anything about, was the strong correlation between the way Greys – aliens seen by self-professed abductees – look and the exaggerated facial characteristics that human males search for in

mates. I suspect that Whitley Strieber has picked up on this remarkable similarity in appearance, for in his book *Majestic*, he describes the emotional results of a dream-like encounter between an alien force and an individual:

He sat up. She was young, and so beautiful he all but cried out from the pain of seeing her. There was recognition, shocked, confusing. He loved this woman as if he had always known her – as indeed he had. She was mother, daughter, lover, the betrayed woman within us all. She was the one in whose lap we lie when we are babies and when we die.

When a boy on the battlefield calls for his mother, it is she who comes. She is why we make love so often. No matter how deeply we penetrate the bodies of our loves we never reach her.

Our eternal striving for her has brought the whole human race out of our loins.

While alien lore has been associated with various religious experiences and texts, it's also nice to see the connection being made between classical tales of faerie abductions, changelings, and the concept of faeries in general. Far from being groundbreaking, this idea was dealt with indirectly by Terry Pratchett in *Lords and Ladies*. To risk ruining a wonderful book, in

The Descent of Kate Moss a confrontation

between a witch and the Queen of the Elves, the Queen's glamour fell for a moment, and the witch saw:

...an almost triangular face, a tiny mouth, the nose hardly existing at all, but the eyes larger than human eyes....

I can't help but wonder if there is a deep-seated (dare I say instinctual) reason people have been seeing the same things for thousands of years. Perhaps our deepest, more basic biological longings are surfacing in the minds of the abductees and faeriephiles. It's hard to say, but the implications are interesting.

All throughout the world one can see the evidence of these desires surfacing in everyday life and art. Particularly in animated art. Bugs Bunny, with his exaggerated round eyes is as much an example of our interest in big eyed cute things as the Japanese anime is. If anything, anime is an even better example, as Japanese anime is often associated with sexual content. What drives the Japanese to draw women that look like Kate Moss? More importantly, what makes the public like a model that looks like a character from animated kiddie porn? I'd rather not think it's the culture, thank you very much.

I nodded my head to Mussolini. I hadn't thought of Kate Moss as the embodiment of what human males were hardwired to look for, facially, but he was right.

"Preaching to the choir, my friend. If I remember her measurements correctly, she also has something close to the 0.7 waist/hip ratio that human males look for in mates."

Mussolini swished his fins and agreed, "Yeah. It's 0.657, if you want to know. And since women with a 0.7 ratio have an easier time conceiving and giving birth, I'm not surprised that every Playboy centerfold has had very close to a 0.7 ratio. Mmmmm....Himaliscious.

A chill went down my spine, thinking about Mussolini's potential dating activities again.

"While I agree with you on sociobiology, there are those that don't...and for a number of reasons. As I see it, the loudest detractors demand more experimen-

tal proof, not because what has come to light is weak, but because the implications are disturbing."

"Disturbing in what way?"

"To use your phrenology example, around the time Darwin hit the scene in the late 1800's, all of a sudden Social Darwinism came to the rescue of the status quo. The poor and underclass were where they were supposed to be because they had bad heredity. Cream rises to the top and all that bullshit. Christ, that kind of thinking has stuck with us all the way through Ayn Rand's repackaged Aristotle she was arrogant enough to call Objectivism."

At the mention of Rand's name Mussolini became visibly agitated and raced around the tank. "That crazy bitch never took human biology into account when thinking about her philosophy."

"That's kinda my point. We've left Social Darwinism behind as a silly idea, but now we're replacing it with the more powerful combination of molecular and sociobiology. Let's say that Edward Wilson and all the other modern sociobiologists are right and humans are driven by species specific behaviors. What does that say about us? Where's our ability to choose who and what we are to become?"

"It's impossible to separate the social and political implications from the objective examination of the theory that our behavior is strongly influenced by our genes. Look at this, for example."

I removed a printout from BBC's online news site from my backpack and stuck it up to the tank for him to read. "Researchers claim to have identified a single gene responsible for making abused children turn out to be abusive parents."

While Mussolini read the news snippet, I followed along, reading through the back. Evidentially, researchers from King's College in London found that low levels of monoamine oxides A in the brain strongly correlated to individuals with strong tendencies toward antisocial behavior. Of the 442 individuals studied, 12% of them had the defective gene and were mistreated as children. Those same 12% were responsible for 44% of the violent crime in the study group.

While low levels of MAOA couldn't be said to cause violent crime, it certainly seemed to increase

one's chances of being a criminal if they were first maltreated. It sounded like a form of imprinting to me, but the fact that the study didn't show up in a journal yet made me suspicious of the data. Only time would tell.

Mussolini whistled as he finished reading the piece. I'd heard him do it before, but damned if I couldn't figure out how a fish could whistle. "I don't understand the problem? Why don't humans breed these traits out? Seems straight-forward enough to me. Hell, you've seen celestial goldfish, you know what a breeding program can do."

"Well, mainly it comes down to personal freedom," I explained. "Who's going to decide what people should have children and what people shouldn't? Americans, particularly, would not be too enthusiastic with this plan. Besides, if humans are so driven by instinct as you think, there's no way humans would voluntarily allow a controlling force to determine whether they can pass their genes on or not. Eugenics is pretty much a dirty word, at least in this country⁷."

"Some of my best friends are the result of selective breeding," Mussolini said as he raced around the tank in an agitated state.

"Friends, I might add, which you've eaten!"

I pointed to the small black stencils of fish which had been painted onto the upper edge of his tank. In the time I'd known him, he had devoured 74 fish. His first attack on other fish came several years ago, just after I'd learned he could talk. I was interested to see how small schooling fish would behave around a larger fish, so I purchased 14 neon tetras and plopped them into the tank with Mussolini. He was ecstatic to have visitors and was showing them around the tank, telling them the history of this plant or where that rock had come from. Content that the newbies were in good hands, I left. Less than an hour later, there wasn't a tetra to be seen and I swear I heard Mussolini mumble, "Oh, I couldn't eat another bite."

So over a period of years I watched this monstrous creature befriend other fish, only to eventually eat them. In some cases, he would suck them into his

mouth, chew off their fins, and spit them back out to suffer.

Unabashed, Mussolini looked at me with those ridiculous eyes. "It's true," he said, bumping his nose against the glass and looking up as best he could, trying to see the marks I'd make. "I have eaten many, many of my friends. I'm not proud of it...Truth be known, I feel very bad about it, but what was I supposed to do?"

Unbelievable. A melancholy predator.⁸

"Well, you could have not eaten them, for one."

Mussolini shook his head back and forth. "No way. There's no way I could have resisted the urge to eat them. My genes say eat, so I ate. I ate, and ate, and ate. I'd do it again, given the chance." "This is exactly what I think some critics of sociobiology fear. If we are only what our genes are, why should we expect individuals to live up to a higher standard than they might naturally be inclined to achieve? Let people's morality be at the lowest energy state for them, as though we're atoms returning to ground level. What is, should be? I don't find that a very uplifting code of ethics. Where does reason enter into the picture?"

Undulating in mid water, Mussolini was very still, in a twitchy sort of way. "Call me a Luciferian if you like, but reason just gets in the way of our biological needs. It makes no sense to fight drives that have been in place for thousands upon thousands of years. After all, they've gotten us this far. As for ethics, I find it very telling that those European zoologists that did all the work on imprinting and releaser mechanisms called themselves 'ethologists'; 'Ethics' has its roots in the word 'ethos,' after all."

With that, Mussolini turned his back on me and began to scoop marbles off the bottom, humming snippets of Wagner's Ring Cycle.

Next week, part two: in which the authors have a chat with the Prolix

⁷ Now it is, anyway. Prior to the Nazi's giving eugenics a bad name (mainly Josef Mengele), eugenics was quite respected.

⁸ <http://www.csh.rit.edu/~diablo/predator/>

My Girl

By matthew denker

She's staring me right in the eyes. She's just begging for me to come and get her. She has all her clothes on and already I can feel my excitement growing with anticipation of what's to come. Soon she's in nothing but a tiny pair of see-through panties. It's irresistible. How did I ever get her like this? With little more than a flick of my finger, she's completely naked: spread wide and begging for me to come join her. It's hard to imagine not joining her. Her skin

is so smooth, and I can't help but notice her hand resting on her waiting thigh. Moments later, she has puckered her lips and is ready to blow me a big kiss. "My ultimate fantasy is one in which I'm a slave girl in ancient Rome..." she says to me. She can be my slave girl any time she wants. In no time I'm all over her, and again, I can't help to think how I landed a girl as gorgeous as Victoria. Oh yeah, \$8.99 in debit at Sol's, how quickly I forgot.

COME JOIN US!

Sunday, February 2nd

"Buy Tons of Shit" Day

Are you one of the millions of Americans who find interpersonal relationships frustrating, dull, and meaningless?

Is your money burning a hole in your pocket this very instant?

Hate it that your deity just doesn't share?

Are you tired of giving your hard-earned money to some "non-profit" religious organization that's just going to help support some homeless person's drug addiction or priest's pedophilia?

Do you feel like many billions around the world who find their relationships with "stuff" to be simple, fulfilling, and true?!?

Then join RIT's newest club, I. M. M. D. (It's My Money, Dammit!) and nurture your desire to buy tons of shit you don't need!

Reel Endings, or “I’m ready for my castration, Mr. Deville”

By Peter Lazarski

I used to fancy myself a bit of an actor. I am a graphic design student here at RIT (at least I play one on tv), and I have only been in student productions. During my freshman year I got myself into a good few student films... you may know me from a film called ‘Drobo’, directed by Kevin Balamut and Bob Rutan. In this lovely cinematic I played the lead role, a bald-faced kleptomaniac who was subject to the mysterious will and whim of a glow-worm named Alexander Drobo. This was my finest achievement as an actor thus far. You, my fine reader, may be thinking to yourself, “If ‘Drobo’ was your finest work, what was your most foul?” (if said reader is not actually thinking this, play along with me for a while). I can summarily and wholeheartedly say that my strangest acting experience was during my co-starring role in the film ‘Reel Endings’.

Have you ever heard about those optimistic folks who want to break into the acting world by starring in pornographic films? They reason that they are just working their way up the ladder, from rags to riches, sex to stardom I guess. In retrospect I find myself somewhere within this group. Let me lay down some facts to begin with. The film ‘Reel Endings’ involved no sexual acts, or depictions of such. It was my first time acting in a student film, and would have been my last if I was not in such a good mood at the time.

In my sophomore year of high school my friend John Lemon came to me with a proposition. “I know some girls who are making a film. I was going to act for them and they need another guy. Do you want to help out?” Sure, I say. It sounded like an interesting idea. Want to be in a film? Yeah, cool, another way for me to fan my ego’s fire. I agreed to meet John at his house, within the next day or so, so we could talk with the girls he mentioned and get this film thing rolling. They lived in an apartment nearby John, and I lived close to John. It was a comfortable arrangement.

John and I walked over to the girls apartment. They were film students at Syracuse University studying under a ROTC program (I fail to recall their names. I will refer to them as AMY and BETH). They were kind enough; AMY, who would be directing the feature, made conversation about how she had done some

filming for a nature documentary. Neat, I thought, I like watching those. Soon we sat down in the living room with copies of the script to go over the task at hand. AMY and BETH described the setting of the film: a bathroom in a movie theatre. We would be filming in one of the college’s bathrooms, they told us. They were going for the ‘bathroom look’ apparently. I started thumbing through the script to see what I was going to be saying... I was a bit worried about remembering complicated lines. For ease of reading, I will refer to my character in the film as PETE, and John’s character as JOHN. Those are not the real character names; I forgot them. Some things are better to forget. So I was reading through the script. There was plenty of vulgarity, and it seems PETE and JOHN were having an altercation in the theatre bathroom. The point that my brain fell out of my nose and into my lap was when I saw a line in the script that read something like this:

“JOHN takes out a broken cd and cuts PETE’s dick off...”

Now, shake the guilty stick at me for being closed minded, but I do not think I would have tell this to any guy twice because I failed to get a reaction the first time. John was going to castrate me with a broken cd. I told AMY that I was not comfortable revealing my naughty bits on film, but she reassured me, saying we would achieve the desired effect with the old “smoke and mirrors” routine. Fine and fine. I can deal with that. Then my mind started to probe deeper into the action at hand... castrated by a broken cd, dick cut off by a compact disk. If you have ever picked up a broken cd, not only would you notice that your hand was not sliced open, but also that the cd is not sharp at all. Maybe if you worked at it you might be able to inflict a heinous scratch, but if you were to try and classify a cd shard as a sharp weapon I would be inclined to classify you an ass. I addressed my grievance with AMY, but the cd was intrinsic to her artistic vision. We would film the next day.

John and I met AMY and BETH again at their place, and they drove us all to our destination: an SU bathroom. Allow me to tell you, the realism of the set design was impeccable. After AMY and BETH got the

lights and cameras set up (BETH would be filming) we got down to the deed. PETE would be standing in front of a urinal (urinating) when JOHN walks in to the bathroom with malicious intent. PETE then heckles JOHN, wondering what the fuck he is doing here. JOHN proceeds to advance towards PETE, despite the latter's vocal objections that he (JOHN) is a fucking freak and should get the fuck away. JOHN further closes the gap between he and PETE as PETE rapidly tries to cease excretion. A flash of silver as JOHN removes a dagger sharp shard of cd and raises it high. Swipe. Castration by compact disk.

I do not know what was funnier about this part of the film... that I had just been castrated by a cd, that we used a turkey baster to spray stage blood on the urinal wall for the 'blood splat' effect, or my extreme lack of an extreme reaction. "Oh geez" may have been the phrase used to express my disappointment with my newly found lack of a penis. As you might imagine, cut off a man's dick and you will probably get his attention. PETE becomes the mouse, apologizing to JOHN for any injustice he may have inflicted upon him. JOHN herds PETE towards the wall, meanwhile administering a verbal thrashing. JOHN thoroughly emphasizes that the tables have turned and it is PETE's turn to suffer. By now I have a good deal of stage blood on me, the red, corn syrup based kind that is ok to eat. There was a healthy dollop administered to my crotch, as well as to my hands, which had been searching my loins for my phantom member. Blood was getting everywhere, from spilled puddles to bloody shoeprints. Whenever the blood on my hands might dry to the degree where it becomes tacky, more would be applied to maintain the necessary viscosity and visual texture. It had to be shiny and wet.

By now PETE is on the floor against the wall and JOHN hovers over him menacingly. After a few more "you were mean to me now I am mean to you"s, JOHN slashes PETE's throat with his razor edged disc. For this we used a simple Halloween makeup prosthetic of a large gash and even more stage blood. AMY more or less poured the better amount of the gallon of it on my neck and chest. By now I looked like I had left the house that morning and forgot to put my skin on. At this point, adding even more mirth to the situation, someone walked into the bathroom. I really felt bad for the guy, I mean its not every day you head into the old

W.C. to find a very bloody man on the floor, accompanied by three people who seem to regard as nothing irregular. Fortunately, AMY and BETH knew him, and he caught on pretty quickly with the cameras and lights being present. AMY then decided to put a sign on the door to deter future visitors.

The rest of the filming was pretty plain. PETE lay dead on the floor and the magnitude of JOHN's actions catches up with him. JOHN undergoes a bit of panic, washes up and departs the scene. The filming was over, and now we had to clean up the gross quantity of blood on the floor, and on my person. I cleaned up pretty well, but the white shirt I had worn became pink after being washed. Surprisingly (and thankfully), no emotional stains remained.

I eventually got a copy of the film. I still remember my dad asking how it went and asking to see the movie when I get my hands on it. I still have not shown him. Admittedly, I am embarrassed that he would be watching me curse like it's going out of style, not to mention the penis bit. I prefer to think that a father should never have to witness his son's castration, real or not. Maybe that is just me. I still have the video, and I have shown it occasionally to people I either like or dislike enough. I have no carousels of vacation slides yet, so I need to make due with what I have. Without a question, 'Reel Endings' was one of the strangest things I have ever done (ranking high on my list along with occasional bouts of dendrophilia and idol worship). Aside from the weirdness of the film, I did learn some handy lessons about filming. One lesson I limped away from 'Reel Endings' with was that however long a film is intended to be you can expect it to take at least ninety six times longer than that to film it (perhaps longer). 'Reel Endings,' something like a five minute short, took over eight hours to record. Having experienced this, I sympathize with alien abductees who report the phenomena of "lost time".

Regardless of the oddness of the situation involved, I regard 'Reel Endings' as a prize and asset. Not only does it make every other film I have been in look like an Oscar contender, but nothing is better than asking somebody, "Hey, would you like to see my castration? I have it on tape."

Untitled

By Michael Sauder

Hot mama baby!
you're the rock of my life!
I ain't got no rabies,
and I really don't bite!

the girls aren't a-comin,
so what should we do?
I'm sick of not lovin,
but their period is due

my wallet is empty,
my heart is bare
the rules are exempting,
don't keep things fair

If I keep on searching
perhaps I'll get some luck,
or in the shadows lurking,
girls with teeth of a buck.

The skirts are really short,
doing their best to tease,
but for me, a dork,
there is nothing to appease.

The game has it's way,
certain things are done,
but how can I sway,
when she's already won?

the surface is all scratched,
marred by the days
but underneath is unscathed,
the wonders of my ways.

P o e t r y

Empty

By Michael Sauder

it is gone
what is life without it

the gut
empty, twisting in on itself

the mind
blank, chaotic, weak

a glimmer
started, yet quickly squashed

one time
only, never to happen again

life
void, empty, aimless

time
seemingly eternal, without reason

SUBMIT TO

GDT

AND TAKE
THE NEXT
STEP IN
PRIMATE
EVOLUTION

gdt@hellskitchen.org

What is this magazine?

This is Gracies Dinnertime Theatre, a magazine of satire, literature, poetry and art. We publish out of Rochester, NY but we have readers around the globe. We exist as a medium for your expression and invite you to contribute.

Anyone is welcome to submit.

gdt@hellskitchen.org

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Publisher: C. Diablo

Editors:

Dan Conley
Gary Hoffmann
Peter Lazarski

Layout:

Adam Fletcher

Writers:

Kjoen Thomas
Hanna Thomas
Matthew Denker

Visuals:

Nicole Killian

Contributors:

Michael Sauder
Dave Fetzer

Printer Daemons:

Ed Brannan
Jon Byrd
Mike Fisher
Peter Gravelle
Chris Muller
Ray Wallace

Musical Inspiration:

Al Simone playing his necktie accompanied
by Stan on banjo

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Contact us at gdt@hellskitchen.org or by regular mail at:

Gracies Dinnertime Theatre
92 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, NY 14623-5604