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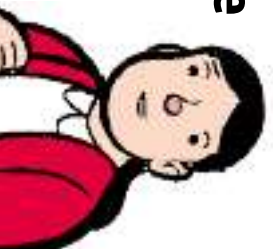


CHICAGO READER

CHICAGO'S FREE WEEKLY | THIS ISSUE IN FOUR SECTIONS
FRIDAY, FEB 17, 2006 | VOLUME 35, NUMBER 21

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R. Kelly's Old Lady



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local
radio
legend
La Donna
Tittel got
"Trapped
in the
Closet"

PLUS

A movie about Iraq, a play about Guantanamo, our favorite moral relativist Jack Bauer, best belt buckle ever, and more

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ON THE COVER: NORMAN L. HUNTER FOR JET, 1979

R. Kelly's Old Lady

She's best known as the DJ who ruled black radio in the 70s and 80s, but La Donna Tittle has always thought of herself as an actress. Now thanks to a cameo in R. Kelly's epic "Trapped in the Closet" video, she's ready for her close-up.



Tittle on the air at WKKC, on the set with R. Kelly as Rosie the nosy neighbor, cosmetics on the console

By Jake Austen

For much of the 70s and 80s La Donna Tittle was the queen of local black radio. She was number one in her time slot, showered with awards, and tens of thousands of fans roared when she took the stage at funk and R & B concerts. A longtime midday fixture on local radio, she was, as her nickname put it, your Tittle in the Middle.

But even at the height of her radio career she considered herself an actress, doing side work in commercials, industrial films, and local plays. Those jobs included a turn as a teacher in a 1997 horror film, *The Relic*, and a guest role on an episode of a cop show, *Turks*, in '99. Nowadays Tittle appears mostly on humble media outlets like WKKC, Kennedy-King College's 185-watt radio station, and CAN TV, where she hosts a soul-food cooking show. But a nonspeaking cameo may be the role that brings

her the acting career she's always dreamed of.

In one of the videos for "Trapped in the Closet," R. Kelly's multipart R & B song cycle, Tittle plays Rosie, the elderly, spatula-wielding "nosy neighbor." Her brief appearance, mugging like a silent-film actor, is a highlight of the Grammy-nominated series of videos.

Tittle grew up in Bronzeville, in the shadow of the Regal Theater. As a girl she helped run the cash register at the pool hall on 47th Street owned by her father, James O. Tittle, who'd also worked as a bartender, musician, and longshoreman. He demanded excellence from his five children, doling out "whuppings" for any failings, be they in schoolwork or in his favorite game, chess. "My father didn't

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MARTY PEREZ (LEFT AND BOTTOM RIGHT)

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Letters

What Actors Won't Do

I am surprised at your quickness to irresponsibly state that all "actors don't have the luxury of being finicky about scripts"—as if all actors will grab whatever they can, without thought or question [The Business, February 10]. Having worked as an actor in Chicago for many years, I know that actors have more respect for the craft than that, and more integrity in themselves and their professionalism.

A Chicago actor

Pilsen

Deanna Isaacs replies:

I didn't say "all," I said "most."

It's So Easy Being Green

In "Follow That Draft" (February 3) I wrote that the city's "green-permit" program requires applicants to go through a complex process whose flowchart takes up an 11-by-17 sheet of paper. In fact, the chart is only for large projects; routine projects involving three or fewer units can typically be approved on a fast track within ten days, following a process that can be diagrammed on a Post-it.

Harold Henderson

This All-Too-American Life

Reader editors,

I enjoyed Michael Miner's 2/3/2006 account of the elegies for *This American Life's* putative Chicago "feel," though I might be able to muster a few more tears for Ira Glass's departure to NYC if I thought it surprising that fellow mourners spend their Friday afternoons shopping at Marshall Field's, nibbling sandwiches at the Berghoff, and sipping mai tais at Trader Vic's. Fifteen years ago I used to rush home myself on Friday afternoons in time to hear *The Wild Room*, Glass's previous radio project. The principal difference is that, like most of *The Wild Room's* audience, I

was coming home from, well, work. It was only when Glass and cohost Gary Covino parted ways and the show was canceled that we learned just who had been contributing the genuinely "wild," seditious content and who had been flattering the suits at NPR and its corporate benefactors while angling for bigger things. *TAL's* audience might think it a mere coincidence that the program has followed *Marketplace*, American Public Media's daily forum for edgy, hipster capitalism, for several years now. More likely, they smirk at what they take to be the "ironic juxtaposition." We'll probably never fully comprehend how social class operates in the United States until we can recognize that there is no irony here, certainly not in the minds of those who program the polite marginalism of "public" broadcasting.

Ed Tverdek

Albany Park

The Triumph of Pope-rah

Re: Oprah/James Frey [Hot Type, January 20].

First of all, one of the other people on the couch or by remote said, on the show, that they commended Frey for coming on the show, that a "PR person" would have told him to do nothing and wait for it to blow over. I would have told him to write the truth and then release it via e-mail to the media—but not to go on *Oprah*, since it was going to be a kangaroo court, which it was. He owes her nothing, she picked the book, it was her responsibility to check the integrity/veracity of it, since she was recommending it to her feeding-frenzy audience. I call her "Pope-rah"—who does she think she is? And when a friend, who is a fan, said that she has a lot of power, I said, "Yes, because people like you give it to her." James Frey and Nan Talese should have gotten up and



"Most actors don't have the luxury of being finicky about scripts; if they don't have to eat live rats or set their hair on fire, they're likely to grab any chance to show what they can do onstage."
—Deanna Isaacs, February 10

walked off of the show, instead of looking so morose—and taking her crap. And of course it was all about her—the reason she was so ticked off was because she was getting questioned by the media—it had nothing to do with any of his lies. It's always about her.

A Chicago publicist

In the Beginnings

Dear Reader,

I want to write to correct a misquote that appeared in the article "Bounty Hunter" by Nicholas Day in your January 20 edition. The nonprofit referred to in the article as Farm Beginnings is really a program run by the nonprofit CSA Learning Center at Angelic Organics. Our farmer training programs are taught by farmers through winter sessions and on their farms during the growing season.

I was delighted to see your article on Mari Coyne and on our farmer, Farmer John, of Angelic Organics. Please keep up the good work of highlighting the farming scene in the Chicagoland area.

Parker ForsellFarmer development coordinator
CSA Learning Center at Angelic Organics*Nicholas Day replies:*

Farm Beginnings was founded in 1998 in Minnesota by the nonprofit Land Stewardship Project. In the fall of 2005 organizations in three other states began offering classes based on that curriculum, according to Brian DeVore, media coordinator for the LSP. The Illinois Farm Beginnings program has two locations: central Illinois, which is affiliated with the University of Illinois and the Land Connection, and northern Illinois, which is at the CSA Learning Center. Interested would-be farmers can check out www.farmbeginnings.uiuc.edu.

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They Don't Know Jack

The pundits are missing what really makes 24 tick.

By Michael Miner

Twenty-four is the Fox drama where one day a year Jack Bauer takes the law into his own hands and saves the republic. It's always a day when the president happens to be visiting Los Angeles, and maybe the show's real message is that the president should stay back east.

But anyway, this season, 24's fifth, the pundits are descending on the show to assign it its place in the American gestalt. The reason why is clear: the premiere last month coincided with a moment when George W. Bush was telling every friendly audience he could find that a president's gotta do what he's gotta do and besides, if he does it it's legal. And here's Jack Bauer on TV once a week grimly doing the doing. Whose side is 24 on? Liberals watch the show by the millions—should they denounce it? Is 24 happy hour for crypto-fascists?

The *New Yorker's* Nancy Franklin had never seen 24 at all until recently, when she buckled down and watched every one of the 102 episodes that've aired since 2001. This kind of marathon does most shows no favor. You spot its tics. "I tended to notice annoying repetitions," Franklin wrote this month. "It seemed to me that Jack whispered 'We'll get through this' to his daughter, Kim . . . at least five times in every episode she was in." But Franklin was impressed. She was affected—as are we all—by the "cloud of existential doom" that hangs over Jack Bauer and by the way Bauer and his comrades at the LA Counter

Terrorist Unit "find themselves perpetually at the crossroads of urgency and ethics."

In the *New York Times* on February 5, Sarah Vowell hailed 24 as a liberal's guilty pleasure. Describing a recent scene in which Bauer, interrogating a treacherous aide to the president about missing canisters of nerve gas while time was, as time always is on 24, fast running out, points a knife at his face and tells him that if he doesn't talk, "the first thing I'm going to do is, I'm going to take out your right eye. I'll move over and take out your left." Vowell admits, "Sitting on my couch, under the watchful stare of no fewer than six busts of Lincoln, while wearing a sweatshirt given to volunteers at a children's tutoring center, as Bauer's knife was poised to break the man's skin, what I was thinking was: Do it."

She went on to conclude, "Unconstitutional fantasies are normal (I hope), and on TV dramas they can be entertaining and cathartic. Let's just keep them off the TV news."

Vowell should scratch a little deeper: 24 is not your garden-variety unconstitutional fantasy. Jack Bauer is one of the greatest TV characters because he does what needs to be done with deep regard for what the constitution—not to mention his conscience—has to say about his behavior. Unlike, just perhaps, some present leaders of our government, Bauer knows what needs to be done for what it is—evil. He spies and abducts and



Kiefer Sutherland as Jack Bauer in 24

tortures and then gives himself up. Let me finish this one mission, he's always dolefully telling the CTU brass, and then you can take me in. We don't see Bauer praying, but then we don't see him taking a leak either. Those are things that must happen during commercials, and if his prostate's in no better shape than his soul the peeing is agony. Bauer knows he's in bad with God. He knows that doing the wrong thing for the right reason doesn't make it the right thing—

which separates him by leaps and bounds from the theologians running the country.

Wussy secular humanists love Bauer because he's a moral relativist. Cowboys like him because he's an absolutist. He gets that some things are black-and-white and some things are gray. He knows the only way to distinguish the greater evil from the lesser is to measure them both against the yardstick of categorical evil, the yardstick the great religions keep in their top draw-

er. In a crisis Bauer is pretty quick to identify the lesser evil, but I don't think he's ever 100 percent sure, and as the lesser evil is still evil, it's pretty clear to him he's going to hell.

What's not to like about Jack Bauer? He's a great example to us all because he doesn't lie about the impossible nature of his choices. Fools and demagogues do. Let's consider briefly one of the few personal crises I don't believe Bauer has faced in his five seasons on the air: what

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The Straight Dope® by Cecil Adams

In 1989, when I was a freshman at Baylor University in Texas, I was driving one evening to meet friends for dinner. I came over a hill and noticed a car on its last of several flips in a ditch on the side of the road. I quickly pulled over. The driver jumped out screaming—his buddy in the passenger seat had been thrown from the car. Another person stopped and noticed a body pinned under the front bumper in the ditch. I grabbed the driver's side of the car and lifted it up four-or-so feet, long enough to realize the guy was unfortunately dead. —**howardcrut**, via the **Straight Dope Message Board**

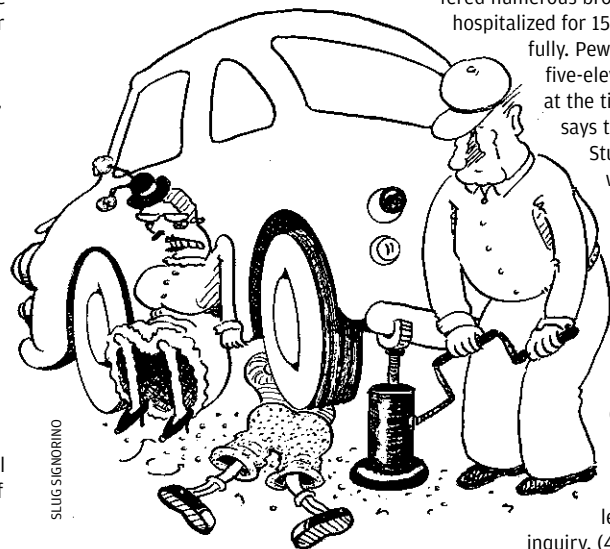
About 15 years ago I had a friend named Jerry who was about six-six and one of the strongest people I ever knew. He picked up cars regularly. I don't mean completely off the ground, but I do mean two wheels. He lifted the right half of my 1988 Toyota Corolla GT-S about 12 inches off the ground. —**Cheep**, via the **Straight Dope Message Board**

I am Anthony Vincent Cavallo II. I am writing you because I can. My mom did save my life! The story [in the January 20 column] was a little off. The wheel was never removed from the car, the rear suspension spring was (that's what holds up the rear of the car). I was clamped between the top of the rear wheel and the top of the fender. My mom may not have lifted it a full four inches, but she held it up so friends could get a jack under it and pull me out. Ironically I have continued my automotive education and now run five Goodyear tire stores. —**Anthony V. Cavallo II**, via e-mail

That was part of your automotive education? Man, kids think their homework *now* is a bitch. Thanks to testimonials like yours plus a little additional investigation, I'm now ready to deliver my solemn judgment on superhuman strength. First, a last few facts:

➤ I found out more about Sinjin Eberle, the guy who pushed the 500-pound rock off himself, having obtained the original report in *Accidents in North American Mountaineering* from editor Jed Williamson. On May 9, 1999, Eberle and Marc Beverly were climbing Hail Peak in New Mexico's Sandia Mountain Wilderness when Eberle inadvertently pulled loose a large boulder, which fell on top of him as Beverly watched helplessly from above. "All I could see of Sinjin was from the middle of his shins down and the top of his head," Beverly wrote. "The rock covered the rest of his body and was dragging him down the slope I had just crossed. . . . Somehow, with the inertia of the rock . . . and all of his strength, Sinjin was able to get the rock off himself" but sustained serious injuries and was eventually flown to a hospital by helicopter. Eberle himself minimizes his contribution: "The rock fell onto me, but I was on about a 45 degree slope," he tells me via e-mail. "The rock slid over me to the nearby cliff, where it went over and I did not."

➤ Little Ed, proving he's not a total waste of hydrocarbons, obtained the following



account from Wendell Pew, a retired minister. On July 27, 1957, Pew, then 29, was driving through eastern Nebraska with his wife, Lois, and their two small children. He pulled into a crossroads without noticing an approaching vehicle, which smashed into his right front side. Lois was thrown from the car, which then rolled over her, coming to rest with the right rear tire on her shoulder as she lay face down. Pew grabbed the fender and pulled up, taking enough weight off the still-conscious Lois that she was able to free herself. She suf-

fered numerous broken bones and was hospitalized for 15 weeks but recovered fully. Pew describes himself as five-eleven, 180-190 pounds at the time, and athletic, and says the car, a 1953 Studebaker Champion, was light. Could he have lifted it under normal conditions? No idea.

Conclusions: (1) Some people can lift up cars, etc, in moments of extremity. (2) Some people can lift up cars any old time. (3) Many supposedly superhuman feats of strength are less impressive on close inquiry. (4) Just the same, Sinjin Eberle, Angela Cavallo, and Wendell Pew aren't folks I'd care to cross during a crisis. (5) Science confirms that stimuli such as adrenaline can modestly boost performance. (6) No one seriously contends that humans can do things beyond the physiological limits of bone, muscle, and sinew, so none of the above is a real shockeroo. (7) No matter how superhumanly hard you try, you're still going to get some detail of a story told over the phone goofed up. Sorry about the accident specifics, Tony. And say hi to your mom.

if Kim had gotten knocked up? The abortion debate has torn the country apart because neither side is honest about the choices. The debate is actually between the half of the country that thinks abortion is evil and the half that thinks it's a necessary evil. That's a divide that could be straddled. Jack Bauer could straddle it. Again, abortion must be one of those things that he talks about, if at all, only during the commercials. But in the early seasons, when Kim was a teenager, if his cell phone had rung and she'd told him in a quavering voice, "Daddy, I'm pregnant and I don't know what to do," I have no doubt what he'd have said.

He'd have whispered, "The terrorists are about to spot me hiding here and then I'm going to have to kill some people so this is a bad time to talk. But I want you to know I love you. We'll get through this." Whatever he thought, whatever she decided, she'd need his strength and not his sanctimony, and he'd be there for her. And it would occur to Jack Bauer that whichever way things played out, at some point down the road he'd be as sad as could be.

The Movie Wraps Before the Story Ends

The curious thing about *Citizen Black*, a documentary on Conrad Black that makes its U.S. premiere on cable's Sundance Channel at 8 PM this Monday, is that it totally ignores Chicago. The movie was finished two years ago, when Black's media empire was beginning to splinter around him but before it col-

lapsed. He's since been indicted here in Chicago on charges of fraud, racketeering, money laundering, and obstruction of justice and he faces trial next year in our federal court. His longtime business partner, David Radler, who ran the *Sun-Times* and the rest of Hollinger International's Chicago Group, has pleaded guilty to fraud and agreed to testify against him.

Citizen Black offers us Black—aka Lord Black of Crossharbour—during somewhat happier times in other places. Filmmaker Debbie Melnyk chases him around trying to get him to agree to a formal interview, and we see enough of the banter between them to understand that Black can be a pretty witty and charming guy.

Melnyk and cowriter Rick Caine focus on Black's Canadian and British operations. He's a native Canadian, and London—where he owned the *Telegraph*—was the city he longed to matter in. It seems that Chicago, despite the Chicago Group, was barely on his radar.

"The truth be told," Caine says, "we had an internal conflict about it. I'm American. Debbie's Canadian." He wanted Chicago in the movie; she didn't see the point. "There's a Chicago section that runs about 12 minutes long that'll end up on DVD," he says, "but that's not the version on the Sundance Channel."

The absence of the Chicago section doesn't mean there's nothing in the film to interest a viewer here, but you need to pay close attention. There's a key scene late in the film at the 2003 Hollinger International shareholders meeting in New York. (Melnyk sneaked in with a camera.) By this point Black, still in control of Hollinger, is under siege, and he's being grilled about deals in which

continued on page 6

Comments, questions? Take it up with Cecil on the Straight Dope Message Board, www.straightdope.com, or write him at the Chicago Reader, 11 E. Illinois, Chicago 60611. Cecil's most recent compendium of knowledge, *Triumph of the Straight Dope*, is available at bookstores everywhere.

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Hot Type

continued from page 5

he and Radler seemed to make out a lot better than the company.

Black replies haughtily, "The chairman of the audit committee, Governor Thompson, has said every one of these transactions was demonstrably in the company's interest and was the best arrangement available. We believe all this can be documented to the satisfaction of the most exacting examination."

This response foreshadows Black's probable defense at trial: Radler and Jim Thompson were minding the store while Black, putting his trust in their judgment, paid no attention. His mind was on other matters, such as the seat he coveted in Britain's

House of Lords (we see him in all his lordly plumage) and the biography of FDR he was writing (Melnik keeps cornering him at the book shows where he flogs the tome). He could submit *Citizen Black* as evidence that he never gave Chicago a thought.

News Bites

▶▶ There will be no update of *Citizen Black*. Rick Caine and Debbie Melnyk have moved on to their next subject: Michael Moore, who they started following around before *Fahrenheit 9/11* came out. "Michael's funner," says Caine. "But in some

weird way, Conrad Black was much nicer to us."

▶▶ I wouldn't blame newspapers with reporters in the Middle East for not wanting to add to the danger they're in, but the explanations they've given for withholding the Danish cartoons of Muhammad have a tinny ring to them. American papers dismissed the cartoons they wouldn't publish as witless and juvenile. The *Tribune's* outgoing public editor, Don Wycliff, called them "crude" and then the editorial page called them "crude." Wycliff drew an analogy to an "expletive-laced diatribe against Islam," and then deputy managing editor James Warren went on CNN's *Reliable Sources* and said, "If, in fact, this

had been an expletive-filled torrent diatribe against Islam and Muhammad, we wouldn't be having this discussion."

But it wasn't. The charge was blasphemy, which is very different from profanity, and as the protest became vast and violent it seemed peculiar of the papers to hide the drawings that had incited it.

"You can see them around the world on the Internet," host Howard Kurtz observed during the *Reliable Sources* discussion. Papers that don't mind ceding more and more of their purpose to the Internet can console themselves with that thought. But few papers seized the obvious middle ground—telling their readers where to look online or linking to

them. Try michellemalkin.com/archives/004413.htm if you haven't seen the cartoons yet and want to, and then I recommend www.cagle.com, a showcase for editorial cartoonists. Poke around there and you'll find a wide selection of American cartoons commenting on the Danish cartoons plus a vigorous debate by American cartoonists (look in particular at host Daryl Cagle's own blog) on the way the nation's papers handled the story.

▶▶ One of last year's best-reviewed books, *Courtroom 302* by Reader staff writer Steve Bogira, has just been published in paperback. HBO has bought rights to Bogira's book and plans to develop a miniseries based on it. ■



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The Train That Never Comes

The CTA got \$593 million to extend the Red Line south of 95th Street. Now what's the holdup?

By Ben Joravsky

Last August President Bush came to Aurora to sign into law a transportation bill laying out more than \$590 million for the much-anticipated, long-delayed Red Line extension project. So any day now construction crews will be working to extend the line from 95th to 130th Street, right? "Very funny," says Lou Turner, research and public policy coordinator for the Developing Communities Project, a south-side community group advocating for the extension. "That's a good one."

As Turner and other south-siders have come to realize, having money authorized is one thing; actually moving on a project is another. Funding is only the first step in a politicized and exceedingly slow bureaucratic process. There's still no guarantee that the Red Line extension will ever be built. "I always tell people that transportation planning is rocket science," says Turner. "Believe me, it's byzantine."

The Red Line is a combination of the north-side Howard Line and the old Dan Ryan line, which ran from the Loop to 95th. Folks at the CTA old enough to remember these things tell me that years ago the first Mayor Daley wanted to extend the Dan Ryan line farther south but ran out of money. Cynics say Daley intentionally stopped the line at 95th because he didn't want to spend so much on a line that would primarily serve black people.

"I can remember when I was a kid hearing people talk about extending the Dan Ryan

line," says Michael Evans, associate director of the DCP. "Down here it's one of those urban legends. You still find people out there who'll say, 'They'll never extend it to the city limits. They'll never spend all that money on the south side—95th is just as far as it's going to go.'"

Over the last four decades the extension project has simmered on the CTA's back burner as other projects—the Orange Line to Midway, the Blue Line to O'Hare, the Green Line reconstruction, to name a few—were completed.

"There are two basic ways projects get off the ground," Turner says. "They're either pushed by the transit planners or, more likely, by politicians. For years everyone just sort of forgot about the extension plan."

In 2002 the DCP seized the issue. Over the last four years they've held rallies, written letters, attended meetings, and circulated petitions hoping to cajole, embarrass, or pressure politicians and transportation planners at the local, state, and federal level into advancing the project. At their urging Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. endorsed the project three years ago. And last year Jackson teamed up with Senator Barack Obama, who worked as an organizer for the DCP in the 80s, to get it included in the massive \$286 billion transportation funding bill adopted by Congress.

"That was a huge victory," says Turner. "But it was really only the start of a whole new process."



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The federal authorization of \$593 million covers only about 80 percent of the extension's estimated \$741 million cost. The city and state have to come up with the remainder, roughly \$148 million. And that's where things get tricky. The Red Line extension is only one of several local projects competing for state funds. There's also the Orange Line extension to Ford City, the Yellow Line extension to Old Orchard, the Ogden Corridor trolley line, and the Circle Line, a new train service that would run in and around the Loop from Bridgeport to the near north side. The state can't fund them all. In fact, CTA insiders tell me it's unlikely that the state can afford to fund more than one major project in the next decade.

If you ask Turner and Evans, the Red Line deserves to be funded first. Under the current proposal the new line would drop south from 95th, just east of Halsted, along existing rail lines—so there would be no need to buy and demolish homes or businesses,

usually the nastiest aspect of any major transportation project. At 111th Street the line would swing east to Michigan Avenue, stopping at 115th Street, then head farther east to 130th near Stony Island. In all it would include

"We were told that the CTA doesn't want to have hearings on new projects right now because they don't want the public to think that their budget crisis isn't really serious."

four new stops and run for some 6.1 miles through Roseland, Pullman, and Riverdale, servicing roughly 130,000 people.

These are some of the city's poorest and most underserved neighborhoods, with the greatest need and most to gain from a new transit line. They've certainly been waiting the longest for a line. The plan was embraced by roughly 98 percent of the voters in a

referendum held in the 9th and 34th wards back in 2004. "The extension would connect people down here to jobs in the Loop or in the suburbs," says Turner. "There's a legitimate transportation need for the extension."

But plans aren't made based on need alone, as transportation planners well know. If Mayor Daley has a vision for public transportation, it's that he wants it to seed tourism and development in and around the central business district. He strongly favors the Circle Line and the Block 37 megastation, eventually intended as the hub for express service to both airports. He hasn't taken a strong public stand one way

or another on the Red Line extension, something that could rebound against him in the 2007 mayoral election, when Jesse Jackson Jr. may well be one of his opponents.

In the meantime the Red Line plan is slowly working its way through the system. At the moment the CTA is working on putting together an "alternatives analysis" of the extension. The analysis, required by federal law, lays out various routes the line could follow. CTA spokeswoman Noelle Gaffney says the authority hasn't even put the analysis out for bids from planners yet. "Actually, the bid is in our purchasing department," says Gaffney. "We're doing final tweaks before we put something out on the street."

Turner, however, says that his inside sources tell him the delay has a different source: the negative atmosphere brought about by recent fare hikes and budget tussles between the CTA and the state legislature over the past year. "We were told that the CTA

doesn't want to have hearings on new projects right now because they don't want the public to think that their budget crisis isn't really serious," says Turner. "They think that if they start holding hearings on new projects people will want to know how you can add new service if you're broke. I think they're waiting for the right moment to release their analysis."

Of course, once the CTA completes the alternatives analysis they will have other bureaucratic hurdles to clear. In addition to holding public hearings to solicit community reaction, the authority will have to commission an environmental impact study, and Springfield will still have to be persuaded to come up with the money. Each step in the process is a potential killer for a project that's nearly 40 years behind schedule.

"Personally, I think they'll do the Red Line extension," says Turner. "But we'll have to ride them every step of the way. And even then they'll do it on their time." ■

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At New York Fashion Week: Alice Roi models backstage, a collage inside the main tent in Bryant Park, models at a Vena Cava event on February 4, the well-dressed Mr. Toast

and boots? Rubber wellies? Hoodies? I assured myself that it was only because it was 4 PM—far too early for anyone to care what they looked like.

The show started with a glitchy lo-fi techno remix of “Girls Just Wanna Have Fun” and girls with I-just-woke-up hair emerged wearing supersoft empire-waisted jersey dresses and tunics with ballooning backs and hems that gathered around the thighs. One pair of men’s pants had slim zippers like tiny pleats at the waist.

Afterward I had time for a quick romp through Saks Fifth Avenue, where I was addressed as “madam,” and a slice of pizza at a deli, which I ate off a plastic tray in a cavernous white room full of mirrored columns and fold-out tables. A dozen groups of Latino workers laughed it up over six-packs of Corona.

The first thing I noticed at the Gen Art Fresh Faces show, which highlights up-and-coming talent, was how the ass of a plastic-surgery victim in tight leather pants looked exactly like her lips, all shiny and stretched out. My mood lifted when I saw a dude in a polo shirt carrying a tray of Johnnie Walkers on ice, then darkened again when I realized he was serving only rows one through three. I was in row four. The *Chicago Tribune* was in two.

The models finally came out, and I had a hard time staying interested. Last year every designer seemed newly obsessed with volume: loose, air-filled shapes that let the body do its thing separate from the clothing. Now everyone’s still doing it, and they’re all doing the same shapes—the bell, the tulip, the trapeze, the tent.

I went to Chelsea for the Myself by Kai Kuhne show, from a one-time member of the polyamorous design team As Four. A woman in a Mickey Mouse sweatshirt, Speedo stretch pants, one huge mirrored earring in the shape of a handgun shooting a heart, braces, and a French braid was chatting it up with the people in the front row. There were lots of good-looking, stylish people here—I was kind of intimidated, which was satisfying.

As soon as the first beat of Front 242’s “Quite Unusual” started blasting, the lights blared and a striking model appeared from the wings in a short knit bathrobe-cum-trenchcoat-cum-dress. Fuck yeah! This was what I came for: drama and goose bumps, a packed room, clothing I’d probably never have the guts to wear, models who make me feel like an inferior species.

Saturday, February 4: I’d walked not 50 steps out the door of my friend’s apartment when a white limo pulled up next to me. A young guy with spiky hair got out. “So my friends and I are kind of feeling you,” he said. “And we’re wondering if you’d like to go to Atlantic City with us.” I realized that the outfit I thought looked chic and interesting—a tight dress and holy-shit-heeled

Fashion Week

The retarded Chihuahua may have been the highlight of my trip.

By Liz Armstrong

It was last Thursday night, quarter to ten, when I had finally had it. I’d been waiting half an hour on a New York City sidewalk in the bitter cold for a fashion show that had been scheduled to start at nine o’clock. I overheard a twink whose tight jeans were tucked neatly into his boots tell his companions, two floppy-Mohawked guys also in tight jeans and boots, “Say the editor in chief of *Vogue* is at a show. They want her to get here and they’ll hold this show for her. They don’t care about you or me. We wait outside until she comes.” Well, I thought, maybe *you* do.

A week ago I thought I’d do anything for fashion. I am only slightly embarrassed to admit that before leaving Chicago to cover New York Fashion Week I

scoured the runway-show photos and backstage reports on Hintmag.com and Style.com just in case I found myself in a conversation with a member of the “fashion elite.” While packing I cataloged all the dresses, skirts, blouses, tunics, sweaters, jackets, pants, leggings, boots, pumps, and platforms I was bringing and made elaborate lists of which items went together. While unpacking at my friend’s place in Brooklyn, I realized I’d forgotten all my tights. I had my roommate overnight them to me.

Thursday’s show, by Zaldy—who’s most famous for working with Gwen Stefani on her L.A.M.B. clothing line—would have been my 12th in seven days, and by then I was accustomed to being forced to wait ages for peo-

ple more important than me to arrive. The upside of being a nobody was that I was able to form opinions unbiased by a single person showing me any kindness.

But standing there freezing my ass off, I had a moment of clarity. I realized that there are actually some things I won’t do, not even for an event as momentous as the fall 2006 collections. I took off and met a friend for dinner.

That was my breaking point, but there were about 17 bazillion other disappointments in the course of the week. For example:

Friday, February 3: Today started off with a United Bamboo show at the gallery Exit Art. I had a fourth-row seat—between *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Fashion Calendar*. Not bad—certainly better than either

Footwear News or the *Tote Report* got. I started to grasp something of the byzantine rules determining Fashion Week seating: buyers, celebrities, editors in chief of big glossies, and hyper-wealthy clients in the front row, then the general press, ranked in order of perceived importance, a calculus that changes according to the designer and the day—as the week draws to a close the shows get bigger and more expensive, and good seats (or any seats) are harder to come by.

I noticed tons of Marc Jacobs and Mulberry bags, purses so ubiquitous on the streets and in the pages of *Us Weekly* I thought no self-respecting style geek would dare carry one. The dress code was likewise confounding: Why was everyone in tight jeans

LIZ ARMSTRONG

boots—actually made me look like a hooker. Still, any other day I probably would've joined them.

Outside Jasmin Shokrian's show, a photographer for *Jane* magazine asked if she could take my photo for their street-style section, and I felt vindicated (though I tried to act like I didn't care). Inside an airy, eighth-floor hair salon in the Meatpacking District, Chicago expat Shokrian presented a collection called "Phases Alighting," which, to be honest, struck me as a little pretentious. But one jacket with material gathered and stitched down in the back, suggesting wings, made me excuse the highfalutin premise.

Next was Alice Roi, my first stop at the tents in Bryant Park, site of the official Olympus Fashion Week shows, which is to say the ones by designers your mother has heard of. Last time I was in Bryant Park, two summers ago, a pack of cops were shoving their bicycles into about a hundred people who were protesting the Republican National Convention. I was arrested and spent 50 hours in jail. Now, just a year and a half later, I was standing in line wearing six-hundred-dollar shoes. What had I become? But then British *Elle* took my picture and I was happy again.

I've known Alice Roi's creative director, Liv Wildz, for several years—I even modeled and sang in her first solo show when she moved to New York from New Orleans four years ago—so I got to hang out backstage, sipping champagne and watching silent, diligent, black-shirted stylists tease teenage models' hair under insanely hot lights.

I met one of Liv's other friends, Poppy King, a cosmetics entrepreneur who was named Young Australian of the Year in 1995.

We were both given spots in the

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Chicago Antisocial

continued from page 11

standing-room-only area behind all the seats. I couldn't figure out why we didn't get seats, and then I noticed another of Liv's friends also standing and I figured out that standing room is even cooler than the front row because it's filled with die-hard fans and people who actually know the designer. But when Poppy and I found some vacant third-row seats we snapped them up.

Roi pulls off a pretty subtle mixture of tough and sweet that when done right makes a woman look like Edie Sedgwick and when done wrong makes her look like a mallrat. My favorites included a distressed ivory jersey tent dress and ribbed knit leggings worn with patent leather fingerless gloves like hand spats; a charcoal crushed-velvet dress delicately held up with black patent leather ties that looked like garbage bag fasteners; and a sort of off-kilter deconstructed baby-doll dress with sleeves that were carved open to expose the armpits.

I capped off the night with Sue Stemp's show in the Players Club on Gramercy Park South, a stuffy members-only establishment filled with beat-up old silver

steins, yards of polished wood, and sepia-toned portraits of mustachioed men. Stemp's claim to fame is her friendship with Kate Moss, so I was expecting some serious glamour here. At first I thought I'd found it: everyone was older, was wearing all black, and had British accents. But then their coats came off and they all looked a little too comfortable, in soft cashmere sweaters and easy pants, like they were dressed for an overseas flight.

A few hundred people waited around the place—and waited, and waited—for the show to begin. And once it did most of us didn't even know it had: the models walked languidly down a flight of carpeted stairs into the main foyer wearing short flouncy dresses, cozy hooded sweaters paired with lacy tap pants, and abstract animal-print tunics with leggings. There was no runway: the models sort of gathered in the middle of the ballroom and shrugged, looking lost. Then they stood and talked to each other like they were hanging out next to a water cooler.

Monday, February 6: Cathy Horyn called Stemp's show "brilliant" in today's *New York Times*.

I guess compared with the stuffiness of the tents the disorganization must've seemed fresh, but I've seen too many confused little indie shows in Chicago to be charmed by sloppiness anymore.

I could not motivate myself to get out to today's shows. Instead I slept all afternoon, ate Fritos with hummus for a late lunch, and petted Mr. Toast, the mentally retarded teacup Chihuahua the friend I was staying with was pet-sitting, then ended the night snorting morphine with friends in New Jersey. And I was still three days from hitting bottom.

Tuesday, February 7: I really did mean to make it to the Heatherette show tonight in hopes that club-kid moguls Richie Rich and Traver Rains would come up with something so gloriously frivolous that it would pull me out of my funk. But I was having drinks at Beauty Bar and got to the subway too late. So I met a friend at a Brooklyn gallery and performance space called the Glass House, where a few dozen hipsters in tight jeans and boots sat on scraps of shredded Oriental rugs, watching a lethargic, darkly folksy Greek-goddess-by-the-

brook duo called Cosmic Western Mystery Tradition.

Wednesday, February 8: Oops, I missed Peter Som. But I made it to Brian Reyes at the Sony Recording Studio in Midtown. More puff sleeves, more high waists, more tulip skirts. Yawn.

I decided to cheer myself up by going shopping and came back with a pair of tight jeans, which I promptly tucked into boots. This would be my uniform for the rest of my trip. What's the point of trying to stand out? All it gets you is a tiny little picture in *Jane* that will end up embarrassing you. If you're lucky.

Thursday, February 9: Went to see Araks, who showed supersoft, understated lingerie, muted knitwear, and classically sweet tailoring. Then I checked out Joanna Mastroianni's show in Bryant Park.

Mastroianni's collection was full of magisterial silhouettes and ornate fabrics, which makes sense because her program said she was influenced by Fabergé eggs. Here I also saw my first celebrity, if Fairuza Balk counts, which she probably doesn't.

The standing-room area at this show didn't feel so cool. Women in Uggs carried nylon

LeSportsacs; everyone looked ready to shovel some snow then take a nap. Can people not even dress up for freaking Fashion Week? I'm used to seeing people dress for comfort—I live in Chicago, for chrissakes—but at least here people appreciate it when someone makes an effort. I'd figured New York, the fashion capital of the country, would also be the style capital. But everyone at the shows looked the same, like cookie-cutter versions of Kate Moss circa 2003, like being different meant being uncool, like we were all back in junior high again and anyone not in an oversize I.O.U. sweatshirt and Cavaricci couldn't sit with the popular girls at lunch.

Then there was that last straw at Zaldy.

Friday, February 10: I'd already made up my mind that I was going home tonight, despite my invitations to the Jeremy Scott and Karl Lagerfeld shows—I couldn't take one more disappointment, especially from designers whose work I covet insanely. Instead I looked at their collections online, where distance restored some of the illusion of glamour. It almost made me want to be there. **Q**

**THICK
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Our Town

[snip] **Solar eclipse.** "From a promising start in the early part of the decade, policies and incentives [in Illinois] supporting solar energy growth have ground to a halt," writes Mark Burger, president of the Illinois Solar Energy Association, in its newsletter

"Heliographs." "Funding designated for supporting renewable energy, especially small-scale systems, has been diverted to close the general revenue budget gap, leaving the Renewable Energy Trust Fund empty." — **Harold Henderson** | hhenderson@chicagoreader.com

Music

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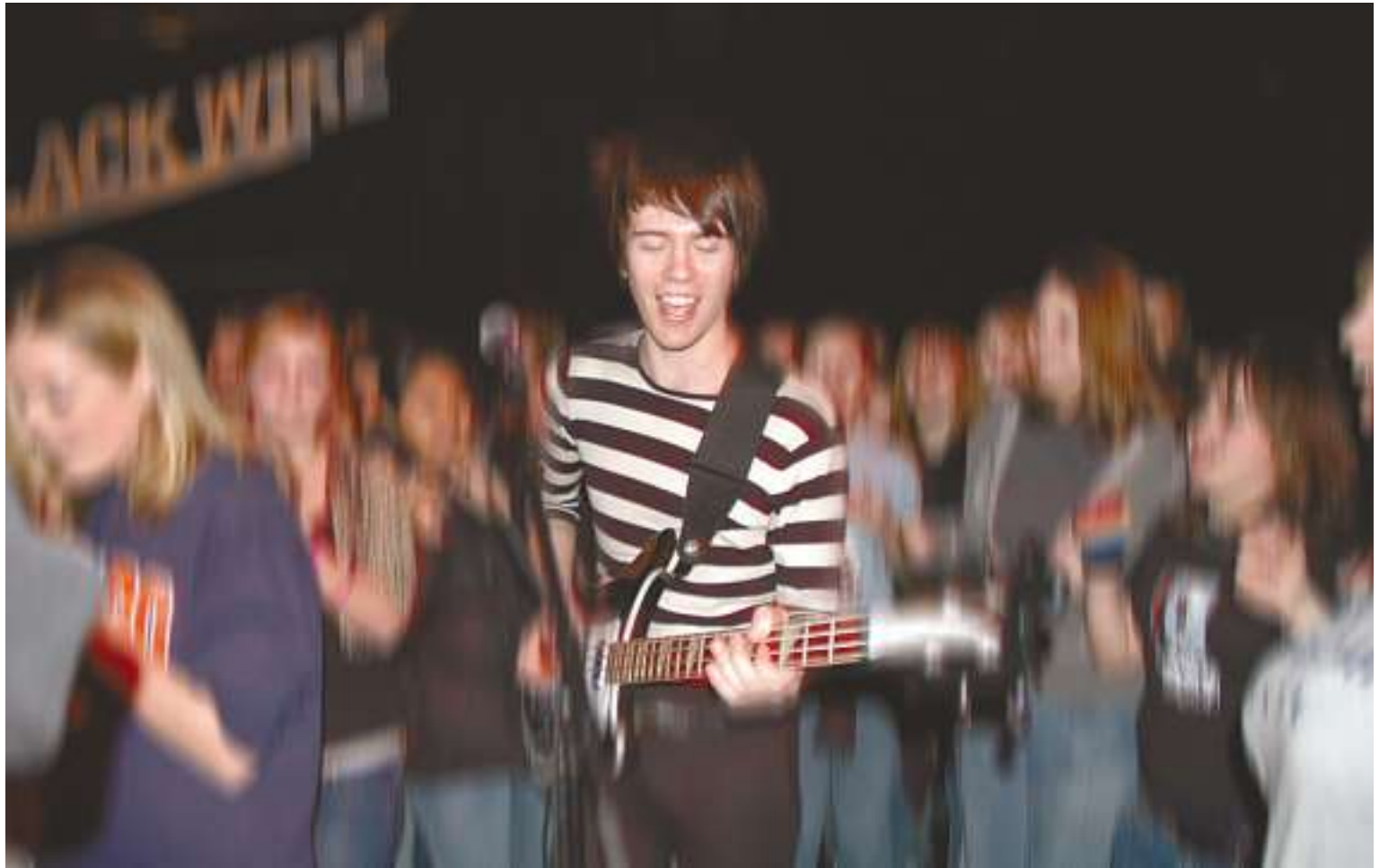
An up-and-coming British postpunk trio wows the preteens at a suburban high school gym.

By Jessica Hopper

Last Friday evening two dozen kids between the ages of 7 and 15 milled around nervously in front of the stage in the auditorium at Oswego East High School. They were VIPs, hanging out in a reserved section that had been roped off with actual rope, while 350 other kids filled up the stadium seating. They'd all come to see Black Wire, an up-and-coming postpunk trio from Leeds, England, and for most of them this was their first show. When front man Dan Wilson asked at the beginning of the band's set, "Who here has ever been to a concert before?" six little hands went up.

One of the hands belonged to Gia Muzzalupo, a ten-year-old VIP who came with her three best friends. "I saw Rascal Flatts this summer," she said later. "I'm here because my friend's mom runs the label that put out Black Wire. I've never heard them before, but I know it'll be good 'cause it's rock 'n' roll. I'm really excited—I love rock 'n' roll. I'm in a band too. We're called Hot Goth Chicks. We're a mix of rap, hip-hop, and rock 'n' roll. I'm the lead singer."

This was Black Wire's first U.S. tour, a short jaunt with stops in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Oswego, the home base of the band's U.S. manager, Bjorn Forsell. Along with an old friend, Meredith Wittich, Forsell started Giant Pecker Records, which released the band's self-titled debut CD stateside on Tuesday. "I just thought it would be cool to expose the kids to a band that's well on its way to breaking," Forsell said. "Most of them had never seen a concert, and those who had, it was at Rosemont Horizon. Meredith and I both have kids, and it's not like we can take them to shows at the Empty Bottle." Forsell, 36, who has



Black Wire bassist Tom Greatorex; Lauren Nieves, Vanessa Wittich, and Gia Muzzalupo in the VIP section; future sound engineer Charise Walters

previously worked as a studio engineer and as a guitar tech for the Cardigans and the Hives, discovered Black Wire through their debut seven-inch, and signed on to work with the band after seeing them a few times in England. Wittich, 34, who has no previous experience in the music business, left her job as a science teacher at Oswego High six months ago to work on the

label full-time.

Black Wire formed in 2003 and their first single, "Attack Attack Attack," was named an *NME* single of the week in April 2004. Their second, "Hard to Love, Easy to Lay," cracked the UK Top 75 singles chart the first week of its release the following December, and they've spent the last year touring in support of

their first full-length, opening for bands like the Kaiser Chiefs and the Arctic Monkeys. Playing a high school was a first for them. "We've never played an all-ages show before," said Wilson, 23. "Generally, we just play to drunk old people. It was cool to play to people who weren't jaded, people who were just

continued on page 20

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Our Town

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happy to be out of the house with something to do."

Oswego East's auditorium, which features an elaborate professional lighting rig and an unbelievably loud sound system, is frequently rented for public events, according to the school's theater manager, Todd Mielcarz. "We mostly just get recitals in here," he said. "This kind of show, a punk band, that's a pretty big deal for us in a presenting season. Our main concern is safety. We're keeping the VIP roped off so people don't rush the stage. I don't think they will." But physical safety wasn't the only concern. Though Forsell had submitted copies of Black Wire's album, along with T-shirts and posters, to the school's administrators for approval several months earlier, it wasn't until the day before the concert that objections were raised. Several parents took issue with the title "Hard to Love, Easy to Lay" and also with the explicitness of Forsell's label name. In order for the concert to go off as planned, "Giant Pecker" had to be blacked out from all posters and promotional materials, no merchandise could be sold, and the band had not only to agree not to play "Hard to Love," but to not say the word *lay* at all.

The audience, a total of 420 people including guests and chaperones, ran the gamut from JV basketball cheerleaders (still in uniform) who had never heard the band to serious fans like 15-year-old Charise Walters, who normally does sound for the theater but tonight was working as a runner for the band's soundman. "I got into the band about a year ago," she said. "I heard about them from family in England, actually. It's really cool that they are actually playing my high school." Other kids took fashion cues from pictures they'd seen of people at concerts. One boy wore a dark green wool suit he'd borrowed from his dad, which was five or six sizes too big for him. Another had on a shirt that simply read REGGAE under his

letter jacket. There were fur coats and Zeppelin T-shirts and sunglasses worn indoors. Gia Muzzalupo and her friends had spent all week planning their outfits over the phone. "We have to dress attractive," she said. "What if we want to marry someone in the band?"

Once the house music—live Warren Zevon—was cut and the lights went down, the VIP rope was moot. Black Wire entered to high-pitched screaming, the kids rushed the stage, and the screaming continued throughout a well-honed, Clash-inspired half-hour set. The kids screamed when the band danced. They screamed for guitar solos. A group of girls from Waubonsie Valley High School screamed "I love you!" every time Wilson neared the lip of the stage. They screamed when he kicked a water bottle and when he chewed the banana-flavored gum that had been thrown onstage. They screamed when he announced before the band's second song, "This one's about London." They imitated his moves: pogoing, rock-steady ska dancing, throwing arms to the beat. Wilson, clearly amused, had to catch himself in the middle of his standard in-between-song banter, stopping after he began to thank the kids for "coming out tonight."

As their set progressed the band never once said the word *lay*, although *fuck* was uttered twice: once accidentally by Wilson, and once quite intentionally by an eager young man who grabbed the mike and cussed a female teacher. Then for their final song, in spite of their promise, they launched into "Hard to Love." Wilson began pulling audience members up onto the stage, who in turn pulled up their friends, and by the song's second chorus, almost the entire audience was bouncing around up there, jostling for spots next to band members and screaming into the microphones. Eventually Wilson was squeezed off, and as his band finished the song, he watched the kids. **Q**

What Are You Wearing?



Martha Mulholland

Something Old, Something Eew

Martha Mulholland, 22, grew up in Lexington, Kentucky, and works as a cataloguer for M. Klein Auctions.

What is that around your shoulders?
A Victorian silk collar.

Where'd you get it?
There used to be an old store in Kentucky called Just Fabu run by two gay guys. Every time I went home they would let me root through the back room. I also have little jackets and hoop skirts from this little shop.

What's with the Victoriana?
I'm a hoarder and I collect things. I collect antique clothing and antique furniture and taxidermy animals—I want to keep them for posterity. I'll get really dressed up in period costumes sometimes.

Just for yourself?

Yeah. It's interesting to see yourself taken out of context, to suddenly look at yourself and you're somebody else. It's why I collect mirrors too. I like to think about who used to wear this, how many faces have looked in this throughout history and who's been reflected back.

How do tight jeans fit into this picture?
I thrifted these in Los Angeles. They have the 14-inch rise that makes it virtually impossible to move. I feel like all my organs are being rearranged.

That's very Victorian, actually. What's your belt buckle?

This is from when my dad went out of the horse business. He bred horses, and business in general was bad for a while, but he was so attached to this equestrian ideal that he opened a hoity-toity riding shop. It was full of fox

and hound belt buckles and stuff. This is a greyhound. I remember it was sitting in my mother's dresser for years and I was always petrified of it.

You seem drawn to things that are creepy.
I don't know where that comes from. I like juxtaposing pretty with macabre, but I don't think I like "creepy."

What about the taxidermy?
I grew up in the country around animals and now in the city I'm not really around wildlife. So I'm bringing it into my home. People ask how I can have stuffed animals in my house around living animals, my cats. I say it's OK because they would've been well dead anyway. I named them all—the pheasant is Ferdinand, the squirrel is Fievel. They keep me and the cats company. —Liz Armstrong

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Tittle

continued from page 1

take no shit,” Tittle says. “You worked your ass off, you kept things clean.”

Her mother, Juanita, among other jobs, managed the pool hall and also a record store, McKee’s Bop Shop, at 47th and South Park Way (now Martin Luther King Jr. Drive). Tittle recalls being a young girl watching DJs Al Benson and McKee Fitzhugh do remote broadcasts in the store window; if they were running late, her mother would jump on the air herself to spin records. Tittle tended to her four younger siblings, and she picked up odd jobs as well. Working behind the candy counter at the Regal, she fell in love with R & B music.

“Seeing those shows was like watching Christmas,” she says. “The lights and the music just surrounded you. I would see artists like Jackie Wilson, Big Maybelle, the Blue Notes before they were Harold Melvin & the

Cookin’ Wit’ Tittle

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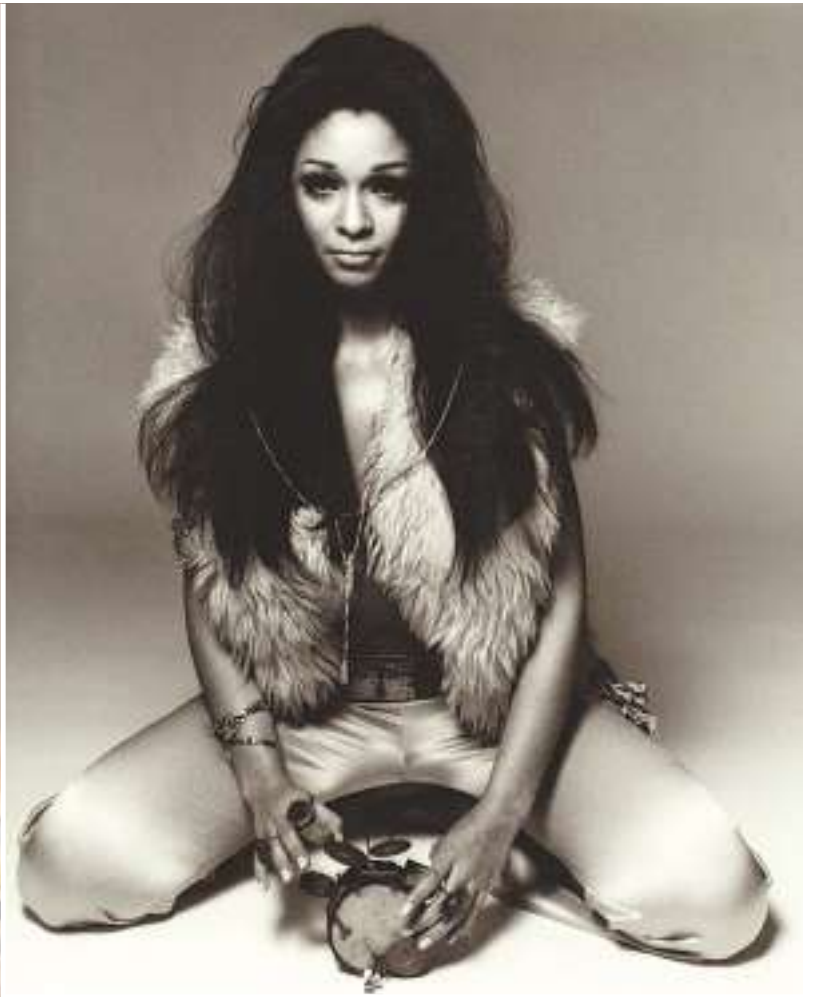
Blue Notes—they were so handsome. We would try to get their attention, but they knew we were just little girls. I always had music around me because my father played horn. When he

was a bartender at the Brass Rail under the 47th Street el tracks, I would be in the office while my mother was doing the books, and I would see guys like Sonny Stitt and Gene Ammons come in and play with my father. It was a wonderful time.”

Her parents separated in the early 60s, and with her mother and siblings Tittle became one of the first tenants of the Robert Taylor Homes. As a teenager she witnessed the slow decline of the projects—vandalized elevators, dangerous incinerator chutes, gang activity—taking refuge in the projects’ rec centers, where some of the key players in Chicago’s black arts movement were teaching. Drama instructor Okoro Harold Johnson, later the cofounder of the ETA Creative Arts Foundation, gave Tittle her first acting role as the wife in a



Cookin’ Wit’ Tittle on CAN TV, a Victor Skrebneski shot from 1970, with Oprah in 1980, at WBMX in 1977



MARTY PEREZ (COOKING)

reading of *Dial M for Murder*, and soon she began studying with Johnson and ETA’s other founder, Abena Joan Brown, at Stateway Gardens. Through them Tittle met other luminaries, including AACM cofounder Phil Cohran, jack-of-all-trades Oscar Brown Jr., and ballet

dancer Donald Griffith. With Griffith’s encouragement, Tittle registered with a talent agency as a model after she graduated from Dunbar Vocational High School, and she soon found modeling and acting work. “Back then being a model was not just modeling,” she says. “That was

the term they used, but you had to be multitasking to keep working. I was doing voice-overs for McDonald’s, runway modeling at Marshall Field’s, photo bookings. I was in the *New York Times* after modeling at ‘market week’ in New York. My first television commercial was a national

one for Purex. This business compels you to expand. But I never knew I was destined to do radio. I had no idea, even when I used to see my mother doing it.” After high school she attended Loop Junior College, and in 1966 she married Ronald Horton. “My continued on page 22

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continued from page 21

husband and I loved dancing, and we'd go to a social club on 48th and Wabash called the Times Square," she says. "Ronald introduced me to the DJ at the dances, Herb Kent, and he was the one who told me I had a good voice for radio."

"I was her first teacher," says Herb "the Kool Gent" Kent, who in the 60s was a key member of the "Good Guys," an influential group of black DJs on WVON. "She would come over to my office and I would teach her. She wanted to get into the right profession—she was born with the voice and was very personable, and she was just a gorgeous woman. I often wondered how someone who looked like that could live in the projects."

Horton was eager to have children but she wasn't. She recalls telling him, "Twelve babies are not coming out of me!" Horton volunteered for army service; in 1969, shortly after returning from Vietnam, he was killed in a car wreck at Fort Hood, Texas.

Tittle continued as a student, graduating from Chicago State University in 1971 with a degree in art, theater, and secondary education. She had also earned a certificate from a broadcasting trade school, and she parlayed a gig reading PSAs on an AM jazz station, WBEE, into a full-time on-air job after she graduated. In 1973 she jumped to WBMX, an FM R & B station that was becoming the predominant black station in Chicago. At first she read news and worked overnight slots, but after a year she moved to weekday afternoons; her presence on the mike, combined with WBMX's rising stature, made her the number-one midday radio DJ in Chicago.

She'd wrested the title from Herb Kent. After WVON's owner,



Tittle teaching video at Cook Elementary and radio at Kennedy-King College, with Isaac Hayes in 1979

Leonard Chess, died in 1969 the station's fortunes had declined, but until Tittle arrived Kent had still ruled the roost. "I got clobbered, and I wasn't too happy," he says. "Having someone I trained beat me like that was like being shot with my own gun."

What made Tittle such a success was that voice: her deep, husky timbre was seductive, but her style was casual and playful. At WBMX she maintained a dignified, mellow manner to complement the smooth adult R & B the station specialized in,

and there was something comforting and wise in her low, melodic voice. Still, her girlish personality came through. "She has a smile when she talks, and you can hear it," says Virgil Hemphill, an instructor in Kennedy-King College's broad-

casting and theater department. "She simply had the perfect female announcer's voice."

In 1978 WJPC, owned by Johnson Publishing's John H. Johnson, lured Tittle away from WBMX, doubling her salary. Popular DJ Tom Joyner had the



MARTY PEREZ (TEACHING)

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morning slot; in between Joyner and early-evening DJ Bebe D. Banana, Tittle became Tittle in the Middle. WJPC quickly became a powerhouse, sponsoring major concerts like a Parliament-Funkadelic show at Soldier Field in 1978. Joyner was also WJPC's program director, and under his leadership DJs were free to break away from the smoothness that typified black radio; they appeared together on a novelty Christmas hip-hop single, "Christmas Delight," on which Tittle rapped and crooned intentionally off-key. On the air, Tittle was silly, raucous, and loud: she joked with callers, gossiped about recording artists, and had her mother, "Mama T," call in to offer advice and comments on current events.

"She used to come to work in the most far-fetched outfits," says Denise Jordan Walker, who worked with Tittle at WJPC in the 80s and later at WNUA. "She might wear a red boa or a fur coat in an exotic color—one time I think she came to work in a ballet tutu. When she came in the whole room lit up. She was a real diva, but though Mr.

Tittle got laid off from WGCI the same year her mother died. "I went through this really terrific funk for about a year and a half," she says. "I was drinking cognac, I was cussing out a lot of people, and I was engaged for six months to a person I hated."

Johnson treated her like a queen, she never acted stuck-up."

Unlike the DJ with the proverbial face for radio, Tittle had the looks to match her voice, which Johnson Publishing capitalized on by regularly publishing photos of her in some of its national magazines, including *Ebony*, *Black Stars*, and *Jet*. In 1979 she was featured as a *Jet* "Beauty of the Week" wearing a bikini made of WJPC bumper stickers. "It was a real honor to be a *Jet* centerfold," Tittle says, scoffing at the notion that the photo was exploitative. "It was a sexy look for a sexy time. And those were real bumper stickers on real skin. And yes, it hurt coming off."

After her husband died Tittle began dating John E. Johnson (no relation to John H. Johnson) of the Johnson hair-care product

family. He supported her as she finished college, and guided her through her early radio career; he also pushed her to do volunteer work and connect with the community. (Tittle's worked with the Midwest Association for Sickle Cell Anemia, Operation PUSH, and Omega Baptist Church, among others.) She spent years turning down his marriage proposals. "That was my biggest mistake," she says. "I was thinking about my career and didn't want to rush into anything after Ronald."

Johnson died of a brain tumor in 1981. "I began to think I was jinxed," Tittle says. "Both times I coped by throwing myself heavily into my work. More and more my career was therapy to deal with the loss of two great people in my life."

In December 1989 John H. Johnson sold WJPC, ending Tittle's run at the station. After brief stops at a Joliet blues station and smooth-jazz radio at WNUA, she began working full-time at WGCI in 1992, beginning nine difficult years there. "This was the beginning of corporate radio," she says. "It pays good, good benefits, but it is so formatted, and it is not fun. You have no control over the music you play. You had a list of songs [and] you just play exactly what comes up and in that order. At WJPC they trusted your knowledge of the music."

Tittle drew strong ratings, but she was bounced between WGCI's AM and FM stations and asked to work different shifts. The AM station moved to a gospel format in 1998, which

was a lousy fit for Tittle's personality. Eventually she was buried in the 2-to-6 AM slot. In 2000 the station shifted to automated overnight broadcasts, doing away with the need for a late-night DJ, and Tittle was laid off.

Her dismissal happened the same year her mother died. "I went through this really terrific funk for about a year and a half," she says. "I was drinking cognac, I was cussing out a lot of people, and I was engaged for six months to a person I hated." Eager to do "anything to get away from corporate radio," she began doing some interior decorating, and she continued to take acting jobs, landing one in *Five Rooms of Furniture* at the Organic Theater. During one such gig a WHPK DJ and fellow actor, Sterling "the Jazz Doctor" Watson, told her about his experience at CAN TV creating public-access TV shows. The prospect of doing her own show appealed: "After all I'd been through I knew I should be doing my own television show," she says. "I wanted to be the one responsible for showcasing my talent."

continued on page 24

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Title

continued from page 23

Drawing on her showbiz connections, Tittle started out in 2001 with an interview show, *The La Donna Tittle TV/Radio Show*, where she chatted up entertainers like the Temptations and actor Chester Gregory. But after catching an exhibit dedicated to soul food at the Bethel Cultural Arts Center, she decided to recast her program as a cooking show. *Cookin' Wit' Tittle* debuted in 2003, taking a sensual approach to soul food—the camera zooms in often for intimate shots of the ingredients, and Tittle boasts that she's the first person ever to clean notoriously malodorous chitterlings on

TV. As if to prove just how sweaty her work in the kitchen can get, Tittle tends to show a lot of skin on the show, often wearing something low-cut and sleeveless under her apron.

Tittle's now back behind a radio mike as well. Last summer she took a position at Kennedy-King College as part of a program in which radio veterans mentor college DJs; with her students observing, she broadcasts Fridays from 10 AM to 2 PM on WKKC, 89.3 FM. (You need to be on the south side to pick it up: Northwestern's station, WNUR, has that frequency on the north side.) "She can play anything she wants, and she has

a ball," says WKKC station manager Dorian Jones.

Just before the Fourth of July weekend, around the same time she started at WKKC, Tittle got a call from her agent, tipping her to an audition for the R. Kelly video. In early 2005 Kelly released "Trapped in the Closet," a five-part melodrama that featured him singing a convoluted narrative over a spare track punctuated by heartbeatlike surges. The songs, and the soap-opera-like videos that accompanied them, quickly became a national phenomenon. Kelly has eagerly responded—he's released 12 parts thus far and has promised there are more on the way.

Each part ends with a cliff-hanger plot twist, and as the seventh draws to a close Sylvester (Kelly's gun-happy character) and Twan (Sylvester's hotheaded ex-con brother-in-law) have their cocked firearms aimed at the front door, ready to terminate the interloper on the other side. The door opens to reveal the first overtly comedic moment of the epic: an addled old lady wielding a spatula. "It's Rosie the nosy neighbor / Oh, with a spatula in her hand / Like that's gon' do something against them guns," Kelly sings.

Under the cap, robe, and curlers is Tittle, who practically had the role even before she stepped into the Hilton Garden

Inn downtown, where the auditions were being held. "[The casting director] had a little dog that she had to take outside," Tittle says. "As I was going in her dog noticed me. [The casting director] later told me that she almost stopped me to ask me right there to come up to the audition."

"It wasn't hard to bring Rosie to life," she says. "I always come to a shoot with my hair in rollers to give the stylist a fresh set to work with. When the director saw me in my rollers, he said, 'That's it!' I brought my spatula from home, my nightcap. All they put me in was the robe. When R. Kelly saw me in costume getting

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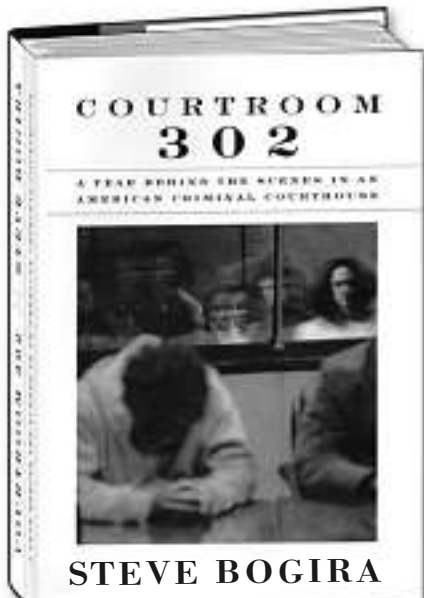
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into character he said, 'Rosie, you are something else. I love you.'

The arrival of Rosie the nosy neighbor, not to mention a defeating, asthmatic midget stripper and a shotgun-toting white-trash adulteress (sung by Kelly in a hill-billy accent), ignited parodies on *Saturday Night Live*, *MADtv*, and *South Park*. Late last year the LA chapter of the Upright Citizens Brigade, a comedy troupe started in Chicago, hosted a pseudo symposium on the series (with the pooping midget as guest speaker).

"We actually got something coming up for Rosie," R. Kelly said in October when he appeared on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, which showed Tittle's scene multiple times. Kelly said he was considering adapting the song cycle for the stage; later that week he told *USA Today* that a sitcom version was also a possibility.

Though Kelly almost certainly listened to Tittle growing up, he hasn't publicly equated Rosie with Tittle in the Middle. (His publicist did not respond to interview

requests for this story.) "I don't think he's made the connection," Tittle says. "And that is excellent, because I want to believe that he just thinks I'm a good actress. This is what I want to do—to bring a character to life."

These days Tittle's datebook is packed: she's been working in commercials and industrial films for clients like Walt Disney World and U.S. Cellular, and she's also begun work on her memoirs and a cookbook based on her TV show. In addition to her work at

Kennedy-King College, she teaches video and photography to students at Barton and Cook elementary schools, and she occasionally substitutes at high schools—including her alma mater, Dunbar Vocational.

Last fall she and a friend couldn't resist the opportunity to track down Kelly when they were at the same club. "There was a VIP room upstairs, and I told security I was Rosie the nosy neighbor, and I bogarted my way up there," she says. "When Kelly came in he saw

me and hugged me. He had this little area on one side, and I had my little fan area on the other side of the VIP section. So I had my fan, and I was staring at him, getting all up into the character. Later he was coming down the steps, singing while he walked, and he looked at me and said, 'You know, I got a lot of work for you.'

"That's good, I thought, because I want to be Rosie forever," she says. "I want to make enough money to really live next door to R. Kelly." □



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Letters

continued from page 3

No More Where That Came From

Dear sirs:

Michael Miner's excellent overview of the issues involving Great Lakes water resources ["They Need It. We Waste It," January 13] left out one pertinent fact: 90 percent of all the water in the five lakes is the result of runoff from receding glaciers during the time when the Ice Age ended. Thus in the intervening 10,000 years only 10 percent of the water volume of the Great Lakes is due to rainfall and inflow from rivers and streams.

The inadvisability of any large-scale diversion of Great Lakes water to both future freshwater supplies and to commercial navigation is obvious. All of us who are residents of the Great Lakes basin, whether Canadian or American, should take an active role in advocating for the passage of the Great Lakes-Saint Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact by contacting our respective elected representatives.

Chet Alexander
 Alsip

PS: This is not a new issue. While vacationing in a number of western states in 1982 and 1984 (both election years) I read and heard of a number of candidates for public office who advocated diverting Great Lakes water to the west. One proposal envisioned the construction of a pipeline from the western tip of Lake Superior at Duluth, Minnesota, that would supply water to the Dakotas, Montana, and Wyoming.

Weekly Wackadoo

Hola,

I must tell you of my intense pleasure, which is your weekly columnist gone wackadoo... a certain Lizzy A [Chicago Antisocial]. Is it just moi? Or is she amazing and exquisite? The latter suffices, methinks. Either way, please be assured of something: I pick up the Reader every Thursday for one reason—Liz Armstrong and her stimulating and colorful take on pop/art culture.

I love that Bitch and her attitude!
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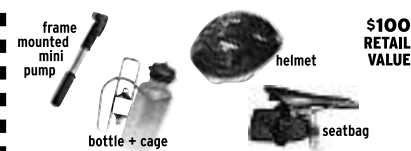
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Movies

WHY WE FIGHT ★★★

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RATINGS

- ★★★★ MASTERPIECE
- ★★★ A MUST SEE
- ★★ WORTH SEEING
- ★ HAS REDEEMING FACET
- WORTHLESS

Bringing the War Home

Eugene Jarecki, the director who stuck it to Henry Kissinger, puts it to the people in *Why We Fight*.

By J.R. Jones

Eugene Jarecki made a name for himself on the art-house circuit a few years back with *The Trials of Henry Kissinger*, a stinging indictment of the former secretary of state as an architect and instrument of President Nixon's rapacious foreign policy. But in talking with audiences at screenings, Jarecki began to feel his 2002 film had missed the mark. "I was surprised how much people wanted to talk about Henry Kissinger the man rather than the system he represents," he says in press notes for his new film, *Why We Fight*. "This time, I wanted to make a film that would not offer a simple villain, but instead invite viewers to look more broadly at the system itself."

Why We Fight makes good on this ambition, opening with President Eisenhower's prophetic 1961 farewell speech, in which he identified the military-industrial complex as a threat to democratic governance, and following this premise through 9/11 and the Iraq war. Jarecki looks at the arms industry's cozy relationship with Congress and visits one of the neocon think tanks where the Bush Doctrine was hatched. He revisits Dick Cheney's career with Halliburton and the administration's massaging of the facts in the case against Saddam Hussein. He listens respectfully to political commentators both right (Richard Perle, William Kristol, John McCain) and left (Gore Vidal, Charles Lewis, Dan Rather) as they review 60 years of American realpolitik and weigh in on the current conflict. But

replacing the villain at the movie's core are a half-dozen private individuals Jarecki picked up along the way, and their very human relationships with America's military machine demonstrate the depth of the problem.

Jarecki borrowed his title from the series of short indoctrination films Frank Capra directed for the U.S. military during World War II. For Capra the title was a statement, and a decidedly uncritical one. ("This isn't just a war," a narrator announces in one short. "This is a common man's struggle against those who would put him back into slavery.") Jarecki turns the title into a question, posing it to nearly everyone he interviews and providing a much-needed through line for his bulging narrative. "We fight for the principle of self-determination," President Johnson declares in a speech about Vietnam. "We fight because it's necessary, and because it's right," says smiley Bill Kristol. But those are the short answers. The long one, articulated mostly by author and CIA vet Chalmers Johnson (*Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*), is that we fight because our domestic economy has been structured around war since World War II.

But for some of the people drafted into the film, the answer to Jarecki's question lies closer to home. Wilton Sekzer, a retired New York City cop, recalls riding the elevated train into the city from Queens the morning of 9/11. Jarecki combines his voice-over with footage of Sekzer on the train itself, re-creating down to the



Why We Fight

screach of the wheels the moment when the train turned a corner and Sekzer first glimpsed the World Trade Center belching black smoke. "I'm just thinking to myself, How did my son get out of there? Well, I don't know how, but he got out of there. There's no two ways about that. He can't be in there. Because anybody who's in there is gonna die." After a clip of President Bush's bullhorn moment at Ground Zero, Sekzer tells Jarecki, "Somebody had to pay for this. Somebody had to pay for 9/11. I want the enemy dead. I want to see their bodies stacked up for what they did, for taking my son."

If Sekzer's motivated by misplaced vengeance, 23-year-old William Solomon is simply misplaced. His mother's recent death has left him without any family, and he's enlisted in the army because it's the only way he can

support himself and go to college—there's a poignant sequence in which he packs up his cheap knickknacks, with their childhood memories, and takes them to a storage center before shipping out. On-screen the recruiter who signed Solomon up confides that it's hard to win the recruits' trust. But as Jarecki revealed during a recent local appearance, cadets at a West Point screening of *Why We Fight* laughed aloud at some of Solomon's mistaken impressions about what he'd be doing in the army.

Fluidly edited by Nancy Kennedy, *Why We Fight* interweaves these personal stories not only with history but with one another, yielding some choice ironies. A clip of President Johnson announcing attacks against two American ships in the Gulf of Tonkin—attacks that,

though the second was later disproved, were the basis for the escalation of U.S. involvement in Vietnam—introduces Sekzer's memories of serving as a helicopter door gunner in that war. "From the perspective of a helicopter," he says, "you're up x-number hundreds of feet, and you're shooting at little dots that are running around. You're not shooting at somebody face-to-face. It's almost like they're not real human beings. They're objects." From here Jarecki introduces Ahn Duong, who came to the U.S. at age 15 after her family was evacuated from Saigon in April 1975. Her story might seem like a facile rebuke to Sekzer if not for the fact that she's now a navy explosives expert, part of the team that developed the "bunker-buster" bombs heralded at the beginning

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Movies

continued from page 27

of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Not every character pays off emotionally: Jarecki's treatment of two U.S. fighter pilots who ran the first bombing mission of Operation Iraqi Freedom is notably stilted. Identified only as Fuji and Tooms, they recount their secret mission but shrug off the question of why they fight. "It's not ours to decide," says one. "We do what we're told." Jarecki ultimately yanks the rug out from under them with statistics and footage from

Iraq indicating that scores of civilians were killed by U.S. precision weapons in the early days of the war. The point may be valid, but it feels rhetorical.

More effective are those characters with an actual story arc—like Sekzer, who responded to Bush's assertion of an Iraq-Al Qaeda link by asking the military to inscribe his son's name on a weapon headed for Iraq. In no short time he got a message reporting that a 2,000-pound guided bomb had been dropped in loving memory of his son and "met with 100 percent success." When the president later denied any link between Iraq and 9/11, Sekzer was stunned. "The government exploited my feelings

of patriotism, of a deep desire for revenge for what happened to my son," he says. "But I was so insane with wanting to get even, I was willing to believe anything." Asked if he regrets his request, Sekzer is forced into the excruciating position of parroting the administration's line: "No, because I acted under the conditions at that time. Was it wrong? It was wrong, but I didn't know that."

The last of Jarecki's key subjects, Karen Kwiatkowski, recounts similar disillusionment. Now retired, she was a lieutenant colonel in the air force working for the Pentagon when it was hit on 9/11. "It was a very dramatic and terrible thing," she says. "And it does change your

perspective. But the war in Iraq had nothing to do with the war on terrorism." Of the private individuals Jarecki brought into the film, Kwiatkowski has been the most public; since stepping down as an officer on the Iraq Desk in April 2003 she's made the rounds of national media alleging that the Pentagon's Iraq intelligence was manipulated by a group of neo-conservative Cheney appointees calling themselves the Office of Special Plans (her charges were dismissed by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence).

Despite Jarecki's varied success in bringing these six people's stories to life, their stories personalize our current geopolitical predicament

and remind us that in a democracy no one can shrug off responsibility for the war. When Jarecki heads into flyover country for some quick man-on-the-street interviews, the answers he gets are obscenely disengaged. "I think we fight for ideals and for what we believe in," says one man, glancing nervously at the camera. "I hope that's what it is." Another replies, "I'm not sure if we're fighting for the oil or not. We could be, we could not be. The government has more knowledge than I know." Perhaps if more people had to sacrifice life and limb—or sacrifice anything at all—the reasons to fight, or not, would register more clearly. **B**

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Art

YUTAKA SONE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY

Snow Job

Arty partier Yutaka Sone delivers a winter meditation fit for the mall.

By Bert Stabler

Introducing Yutaka Sone before a talk at the art star's Renaissance Society opening, curator Hamza Walker pleaded eloquently for the cultural rehabilitation of "bankrupt" and "exhausted" natural icons. But Sone's installation, "Forecast: Snow," comes closer to performing last rites for its subject than redeeming it. This Japanese native now living in LA interprets snow through clichéd, nondescript paintings and drawings of snowflakes, skiing-related dioramas, a snowman on skis, fake snowballs, a pine forest "planted" in snowbanks, and several snowflake sculptures that evoke nothing so much as giant designer paperweights realized in crystal, marble, and, to keep it real, papier-mache. The show is like a combination craft store, gift boutique, and sporting goods store. It puts us at the mall, the place where snow has diplomatically replaced faith-based imagery as a symbol of "the holidays."

In fairness Sone said during his talk that his aim is only to entertain and perhaps enchant the viewer. At that he's fairly successful: in an essay Walker calls Sone's work "straight-up fun . . . no strings attached." And after all, as we're told, Japanese art isn't policed for distinctions between fine and commercial art the way Western art is. But much Japanese art, from ukiyo-e woodcuts to manga to film, has used snow and other natural phenomena in stunning and moving ways regardless of its intended audience. If Sone's installation isn't beautiful or ugly, tragic or funny, what is it?

It's about knickknacks—and the best knickknack is a fancy knickknack. The most striking objects in "Forecast: Snow" are two delicate marble carvings, one of a ski lift and one of the San Moritz ski resort. Like the carved marble and crystal snowflakes, these were fabricated by workers in China. But unlike traditional master artists in the West or Japan, who closely supervise or supervised their fabricators, Sone visited the factory "four times a year," he said during his talk. And judging from his own



Snowman, ski-lift sculpture (detail), untitled acrylic painting, and giant crystal snowflake from "Forecast: Snow"

ham-handed drawings and maquettes, the carved pieces had to have been entirely outsourced even though he also said he participated in the final detail work. Like Sone's artisan-made marble carvings of Los Angeles freeway interchanges, shown at the LA Museum of Contemporary Art in 2003, his ski dioramas evoke nothing so much as the intricately carved elephant tusks prized by 19th-century European and American collectors of chinoiserie. There's a lot to look at, but not much to see.

The diorama format does present challenges for the artist. A model suggests lowbrow handicraft and/or an alienating institutional or corporate purpose. Still, many artists have used these aspects of the form to great and often amusing effect. Mike Kelley in his (also all-white) architectural model *Educational Complex* incorporated structures from every

learning institution he attended plus his childhood home—a tongue-in-cheek expression of his psychology in which blank spaces represent repressed memories. But

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approach to subcontracting of any real interest. Paul Pfeiffer created *Poltergeist*, an off-white diorama of

stacked furniture inspired by a scene in the Spielberg movie, by having it fabricated mechanically from digital code. In a thoughtful comment on sweatshops, he later had the piece re-created in wax by Thai craftsmen, in grass by a New York artist, and in toilet paper by a New Mexico prison inmate.

Sone may not view his mission the way Kelley and Pfeiffer do theirs. If skiing recurs in the Renaissance Society exhibit, it's central to his next one, "X-Art Show," which opens February 16 at the Aspen Art Museum in Colorado. There families will be invited to build "snow cactuses" with Sone on the museum's grounds, and on Sunday, after Sone's Aspen Powder Cactus Band performs, two giant dice will be transported to Buttermilk Mountain by helicopter and rolled down a snowboarding half-pipe. To top it all off, Sone's

just plain bad painting *Ski Madonna* is being used this season on Aspen lift tickets.

It's obnoxious for Sone to come off as Jeff Koons without the irony. But you can't be too hard on an international celebrity who makes snow cactuses with kids. He's obviously just a party dude—or at least that's the persona he presents. He once videotaped himself and his friends throwing a series of birthday parties—and perhaps because of the work's "exuberance" or Fluxus-like "economy of gesture," this self-indulgent, banal claptrap was acclaimed worldwide. Like many other inbred worlds, the art world is often more likely to reward charisma (especially in nonthreatening males) than ability, subtlety, intelligence, or even hipness. Sone likes snow, he likes skiing, he likes art, what the hell. At least the Chicago show lacks an inflatable motorized snow globe. ■

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Theater

GUANTANAMO: HONOR BOUND TO DEFEND FREEDOM TIMELINE THEATRE COMPANY

A Soap Box for a Stage

Despite a compelling topic, *Guantanamo* is more lecture than drama.

By Justin Hayford

London's Tricycle Theatre, known for creating documentary plays from transcripts, commissioned a script about the U.S. detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in 2004. In just two months novelist Gillian Slovo and journalist Victoria Brittain interviewed two former detainees, a few family members of Britons still held captive, a handful of military and human rights attorneys, and a journalist whose sister died in the World Trade Center attack. The play opened a month after the interviews were completed.

Two years later the hasty creation of *Guantanamo: Honor Bound to Defend Freedom* compromises its value as theater, even in this handsome production by TimeLine. Lacking compelling human sagas or a provocative political point, it's painted mostly in black and white, empathizing with the innocent and wagging fingers at the unjust.

Brittain and Slovo intercut interviews with more than a dozen people, devoting most of the first act to the detainees and their families. Most of the first 20 minutes goes to Mr. Begg, a Pakistani banker whose son Moazzam was held at Guantanamo (he was released in January 2005 without ever being charged). As a young boy, Mr. Begg says, Moazzam announced that he wanted to "make a society... to help older people, feeble people, and people with disabilities and all

that." Once he completed school, the devout Muslim went to Afghanistan to build schools and wells because he believed "the Afghan people are the people in the world who are most deprived." But after American forces invaded, he was taken for Taliban and detained first at Bagram and then at Guantanamo, where he suffered many abuses.

It's a horrifying story. But Mr. Begg's description of Moazzam makes him seem more poster child than human being. Like most of the narratives in the play, this one is long on outrage but short on the details that might have brought

Moazzam to life. Perhaps to compensate, director Nick Bowling puts Moazzam and two other detainees in a pit center stage where they remain all night—even through intermission—occasionally reading their letters home in escalating bouts of maudlin anguish. This clichéd effort to make the prisoners more real backfires, making no allowance for the power of an audience's imagination.

Brittain's and Slovo's interviewing skills may be the problem. They let their subjects

ramble across the surface of their stories rather than steering them toward vivid, detailed accounts. British school administrator Jamal al-Harith—who went on a religious retreat to Pakistan, where first the Taliban, then the United States accused him of spying—spent two years at Guantanamo before being released. But his account is merely a blurry, episodic tale of personal fortitude in stark conditions amid intolerant guards. It doesn't help that actor Sean Nix, like many cast members, simply announces the story, rarely providing the nuanced delivery of someone speaking from experience.

Although the play moves from the personal to the political, it has no genuine dramatic arc. Increasingly focused on attorneys working on behalf of the detainees, it provides little insight into the convoluted, quasi-legal system that perpetuates human rights abuses despite sustained scrutiny. Instead the attorneys deliver broad condemnations of the Bush and Blair administrations and their bias against Muslims. If we heard more of the evidence behind their points, they might carry some weight. We get only bald conclusions, however, that neatly divide the issue into good and bad—and the bad exists in what seems a distant world.

TimeLine's thoughtful, unhurried staging divides the interviewees into two groups



Guantanamo: Honor Bound to Defend Freedom

placed at either end of a long playing area. In Brian Sidney Bembridge's set design, each actor is ensconced atop a small, well-appointed platform like an

exhibit in a living museum: Mr. Begg sits in a tiny middle-class English living room. All of them look down into the holding cell where the prisoners

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1. Sounds from an ashram
4. Eden evictee
8. Security deposit spot, perhaps
14. Sunday seat
15. Julius Caesar's birth month
16. Type of root or meal
17. Citrus beverage
18. Tie up the guard, say
19. Boot materials
20. Homophobic discount (or a Boys Town bistro's bagel topping?)
23. Letters on letters
24. No. after a no.
25. Bedwear, briefly
28. Software surprise
33. Anthem opening
34. Clear the board
35. Beach hazard
37. Dance discount (or a tacky imitation of Strauss?)
40. Grand ___ Dam
41. Qantas spokesperson
42. Corn cake
43. A committee may reach it

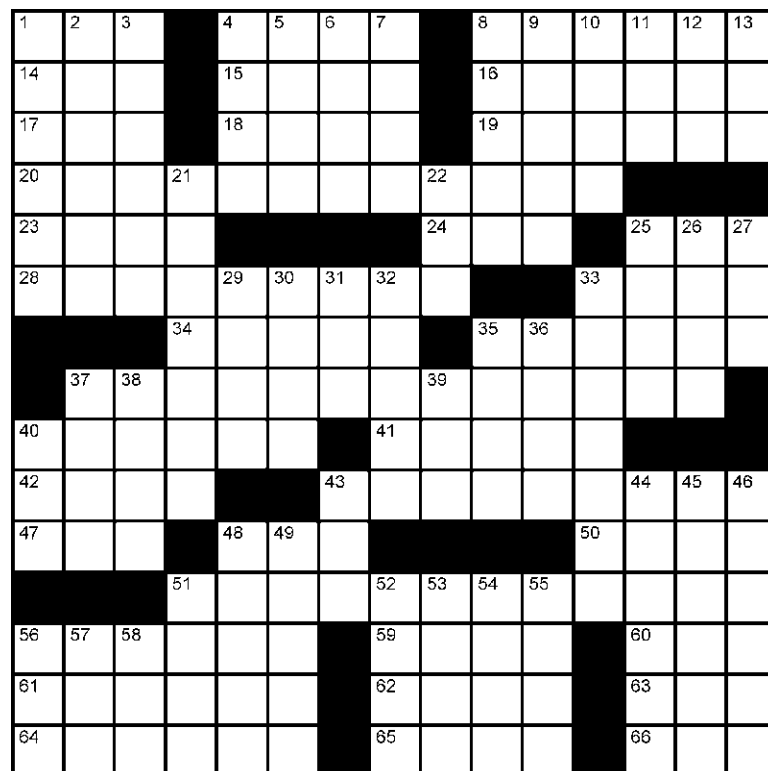
LAST WEEK: KEY PHRASES



47. Toward the rudder
48. Pot ingredient?
50. Cooked enough
51. Payment discount (or a manipulative chat to help fund the union?)
56. Standard keyboard type
59. Pad ___
60. Palindromic diarist Anais
61. Knockout
62. Work for
63. Pesticide-regulating org.
64. Part of a Balkan commonwealth
65. Cereal for kids
66. Feed letters

DOWN

1. Cloudy
2. Her looks could kill
3. Key ratings period
4. A little cracked
5. Lee "Scratch" Perry productions
6. Sir Guinness
7. Where 2-Down appears
8. English county
9. Crouch
10. Off-camera card holder
11. "Sweet!"
12. Pay dirt
13. *The Life Aquatic* director Anderson
21. Golden Girl Getty
22. Subunit of a gig
25. Jr.'s exam
26. Semiretired Brooklyn rapper
27. The "s" in CBS: Abbr.
29. Art deco designer
30. Level with a dozer
31. Graceful curve
32. Insurance spokeslizard
33. Florida tourist destination
35. Thurman and namesakes
36. Low-lying area



37. "Speak!" response
38. Her sister has kids
39. Sweetie
40. Tax pro
43. IV units
44. Oklahoma athlete
45. Opens, as a fly
46. Considered to be
48. Half an ice cream flavor
49. Ubiquitous 2003 single
51. Beat bad
52. Leave, in publishing
53. Arctic fish
54. Mata ___
55. Coquette
56. BMOCs, often
57. Tiny
58. Mr. Potato Head piece

languish. Mike Tutaj's slick video interjections flash pictures of the interviewees and brief stats about them, swiftly reminding us of the real people behind the words. Director Bowling encourages his actors to deliver their lines slowly and carefully, which creates a few telling moments but more often drains the evening of momentum.

This feels like a play with an ax to grind rather than a truth to unveil. It's a terrible thing to beat, chain, humiliate, and torture innocent people. But a script in which the detainees were in fact the cold-blooded killers Donald Rumsfeld describes would have had greater moral complexity. Also, Slovo and Brittain finger the politicians and military commanders who've created this international disgrace but never allude to the voting populace who let it continue. And now that Congress has appropriated funds to build a permanent prison at Guantanamo, we'll have many more years to face the complicity these playwrights ignore. **A**

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