

PHONY IN MOTION

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PHONY
MAGAZINE
Issue No. 51

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Watching people sitting on seats and trying not to acknowledge the smell of pee or shit or vomit from the night before on the concrete of the station. The heat lamps turn off about every five seconds and don't do shit in terms of keeping you warm. If you don't get there on time, it's a 22 minute wait with delays. Time to get on, music plays from a speaker in the back. Homeless people slumped over in their seats. Students on their phones. I'm standing there, watching. Out of the corner of my eye I see a woman, I hear her making noises. Maybe she's taking a shit, maybe she's masturbating (holla), maybe she's in pain. I can't be curious, but I am, and I look up from the AI fruit island video on my phone. In the corner, I watch as this woman struggles. She's fighting, she's grunting, and then, plink. Out it flies. Her IUD hits the floor and she picks it up, stuffing it in her pocket. A trophy of her efforts. I move down the car as I try to get the image out of my head. As I walk, a woman starts yelling at a man. "This ain't shit!" She's yelling, holding the blue pill in her hand. The guy starts getting his money out of his pocket. I'm stuck. Not again. The woman looks up, and instead of ripping the fuck out of me like most tweakers, she smiles. "You can go, baby," She says, and lets me by. Sweet relief. She keeps yelling as I try to find a seat. But all of them are taken by a myriad of drunk freshmen on their way to the city to go clubbing. Just as I admit defeat, the train stops. The doors open. I take my shot at freedom and run. The fresh air engulfs me, and I am free again. #Winning.

**WAAAAH!!! WAAAAH!!!! I CAN'T TAKE THIS BUS
LINE ALL THE WAY FROM SAINT ANTHONY PARK ST. PAUL**



**TO THE SOUTHDALE
TRANSIT CENTER IN EDINA!!!!**

**FUCK YEAH!!! I CAN TAKE THIS BUS
ALL THE WAY FROM ST. ANTHONY PARK ST. PAUL**



**TO THE SOUTHDALE
TRANSIT CENTER IN EDINA!!!!**

One time when I was riding the bus, I looked across from me and the guy sitting there was eating a pint of Ben and Jerry's with his bare hands. I haven't been the same since.

Metro Transit Love Story

Some people meet in class, others at a coffee shop. My story is not too different from any other. I met the love of my life at the bus stop. It was the morning of June 14th and I had gotten to my stop extra early. I knew it was the first day of the B line and was expecting there to be delays, but if this new bus was all it had been chalked up to be it would make a much faster and easier commute to my job. As I waited, I mindlessly scrolled through pinterest, not so much to find any type of inspiration, but rather to have something to do. Suddenly a homeless guy, running full force and yelling about the rapture, crashed into my arms knocking my phone and tote bag to the ground in his mad rush. As I scrambled to collect the contents of my bag and steady myself, I heard the sound of the stopping bus and people scuttering in and out. I looked up from my things, and that's when I saw him. He was the most beautiful being I had ever laid my eyes on. I tried to say something but I couldn't seem to get the words out. In my attempt to gather my thoughts and the last of my items from the ground, I was too slow and the bus drove away. The next day I was sure to get to the bus stop early and carried my backpack, zipped up, with my phone tucked tightly into my pocket. I was not going to take any chances of missing my opportunity to catch another glimpse of the one who had haunted my mind since the day before. Again, at the same time, there he was, glistening in the early summer sun. As I rode to work I couldn't stop staring, just taking in the beauty that was before me, but again I couldn't say anything. I just rode in silence with butterflies in my stomach. This went on for the next few weeks. No talking, just traded glances and the best bus rides of my life. Finally, a month to the day we first met, I decided it was time to make a move. What is the worst that could happen? I'd just have to see him every day on my commute to work. (gulp). It didn't matter. I had been crushing too hard. I just had to get it over with or else I'd regret it the rest of my life. That morning, the bus was unusually full. I stood pressed between some regulars and the bus window, but at least I was next to him. As the bus lurched forward, I stumbled at the sudden movement grabbing onto him in my attempt not to fall. He was strong and stable and I blushed at our touch. I decided there was no better time than now to tell him how I feel. I leaned in close to him and told him everything. Told him what all the glances across the past month really meant. He didn't say anything, but I could tell by his quiet hum that he felt the same way. Now, every morning, I arrive at the bus stop early and wait to see him. We spend the whole commute together, talking and laughing and loving. Just me and my love, Metro Transit B line bus.

"So, whaddya think, Tom? It's a beaut, ain't it?"

I give him a grin. I just bought a new car, and my best bud Tommy is a huge car nut. I figured I'd have him over, since I knew he'd love checking it out.

"Fuck man. Yeah. How long have you had him?"

"Ah not long. You wanna check out the interior?"

Tom perks up, giving me a look like he's doing something taboo. I can't help but chuckle a bit. It's funny how into this he is. I open the driver's side door and motion inside. He slowly steps over and looks inside.

"Mmmm. Fuck man, is that leather?"

"You know it. Nothing but the best for me."

Tom makes a little noise. Something between a moan and a grunt. It's a little odd but he's been excited about seeing the car for a while now, so I brush it off. He gets in and slowly lowers himself into the seat.

"Ohhhhhh FUCK!"

Tom shivers like someone just stuck an icicle up his ass. Now, I like cars as much as the next guy, but this is a little ridiculous.

"Christ, Tommy. I-It's just a car."

"SHUT UP Jim. Just... Shut up a second."

I watch as he slowly slides his hands across the steering wheel, being sure to touch every inch. He won't stop moaning. Finally, he gives the wheel a slap and grunts.

"Fuck... Can I take him for a ride Jim?"

"Uhhh... Ok, sure Tom. Let me just get in."

"NO! No. Just me and him."

"You know what Tommy, sure. I don't want to be around you when you're like this anyway."

He lets out a sultry moan as he slams the door shut on me. There's about a minute of silence before the car turns on. When it does, I hear a guttural yell erupt from Tommy. About a minute later the car turns off and he gets out.

"Um. You okay Tom?"

"Yeah man. Of course. Thanks for letting me check it out. Cool car. Wanna go watch the game?"

"Y-Yeah sure."

He didn't even ride the damn thing. Geeze... Men and their cars!

Introduction

Hey! Welcome to my blog. The name's Jake. I'm a little bit of a homebody, but I want to go out, get out of my comfort zone, and try new things. So to keep me accountable, I started this blog about my journeys. But everyone's done a travel blog about their favorite destinations, so instead, I'll be writing this blog about my favorite modes of transport. Hopefully it can serve as a handy guide to those of you who are also learning to get around!

Walking

I decided to start with just a walk around my block. Went fine. Felt like walking. Got mugged once but he didn't have Venmo so it didn't work out. Hoping to try something exciting tomorrow.

Bus

Totally bussing!!! Haha. actually the bus driver was driving like 10 miles over the speed limit and kept muttering about "bet she's making out with that guy from marketing" so I didn't enjoy it that much. Might try a different route next time.

Light Rail

Really fast but a guy tried to sell me drugs. Beginning to feel discouraged about this whole thing.

Astral Projection

The right injection will bring you places you've never been before. Holy shit dude. I think I found the mother tortoise.

Apology

Hey sorry about that last one guys. I don't know what came over me.

Cycling

You ever see those Calvin and Hobbes comics where the bicycle tries to kill the kid? Imagine that but the bicycle has teeth and a chainsaw and just got laid off.

Car

Broke and decided to try renting a car for a while. Great sex but parking is expensive as shit.

Light Rail (Round 2)

Sorry for not updating in a while. I tried the light rail again. Didn't know the guy who sold me drugs last time switched routes so it took me forever to find him. Getting back home was a nightmare. Wouldn't recommend.

Update

Finally decided to return the car today. Beautiful machinery but it was just too much of a temptation for me. Stay safe out there guys.

Bus (Round 2)

Yeah this went pretty well I guess. Bus driver kept muttering about her husband and the guy from marketing but she wasn't road raging about it. Might stick to this I think. Probably won't update for a while unless I find something new.

Those elevators you can take that bring you to the empty tunnels near the Earth's core where a mile in the surface can be traveled in five minutes

Okay I didn't know this was a thing but the guy from the light rail told me about it and turns out it's legit. You can access them from any elevator if you input the Konami code. You just have to watch out for the wailing sinew but they won't attack you if you use Axe. I'm not sure the government wants you to know about this but they don't want you to know about hitching rides on mail vans either so I don't think it matters.

An in-flight safety video appears onscreen.

"Welcome, and thank you for choosing us to be your flight for this evening. We have some safety information to go over before we can take off, so please be patient while we help to make your flight as safe and comfortable as can be. Remember to keep your seatbelt fastened at all times while the seatbelt light is on. I don't really know why we have to do that given that seatbelts aren't real though. They're just holograms created by the birds to make us think we're safe."

The video cuts out before coming back on again.

"Apologies for the technical difficulties. We assure you that everything is completely normal and continuing as usual. Anyways, in the event of a loss of cabin pressure, oxygen masks will drop from the ceiling. Place the mask over your face, and note that oxygen is flowing. Remember to put on your own mask before helping others."

"Aaaand cut. That should be it for today."

...

"Look, I can't do this Jake."

"Come on man. We've gone over this. We're just shooting a video. Easy as that."

"No. No fucking way you make me do this. These are good people Jake. They don't know about the birds."

"The birds aren't real Hank."

"Oh so now you're telling me that birds aren't real? That's a fucking lie and you know it. I know the truth Jake. The government—"

"Jesus Christ, man. Get over it. I was talking about your stupid airplane birds. Aren't you supposed to be on meds for that?"

"The meds have toxoplasmosis in them, Jake. They make me less afraid of birds so they can get me. And now you're trying to keep the truth from all of these innocent people. Putting your poison in their minds."

"It's a fucking plane, Hank. It carries people from wherever the fuck to god knows wherever else."

"Big Bird can't stop me."

"What?"

"Big Bird can't stop me from revealing the truth."

"Hank. Hank, think about this."

Hank grabs the camera and runs. He begins to record his truth.

"Dude, come on!"

"This is it. This is finally it. I've been working at this airport for 17 years and I'm ready to reveal the truth. I need you to understand, but while this might sound crazy, everything I'm about to tell you is the truth. Once you're awakened to it there's no going back. They aren't telling you something."

...They aren't telling you about the planes. I didn't believe it at first. You probably won't either, but it'll make sense. It'll all make sense. The planes. The planes... are birds.

Let me explain. I used to be an engineer. Used to work on planes, but then I learned something huge. Planes are actually giant birds that the government disguises as planes so that they can live among us. I don't know how many planes. I don't know if it's all planes. All I know is that they use their technology, and their weird plane magic to disguise the giant birds... as planes. Why are they doing this? I'm not completely sure. I think it's so the birds can hunt the giant worms. The worms are trains now but they're cool. I actually met a train once. Chill dude. The worms used to live in the deserts before Dracula made the oceans with his giant fucking creature that makes oceans. Satan was also there I think. Anyway, that's besides the point. The point is this: Don't fucking trust planes. I can't be sure, but I think Godzilla is in on this somehow. I was stationed overseas, cause I used to do Air Force back in the day. The guys there had a word for the giant plane birds. They called them Organic—

The door suddenly opens. Hank stands up and goes silent.

“Hey Hank.”

“Hey Jake.”

“I was just about to finish telling them about the giant magic birds.”

“You mean dragons?”

...

...

...

...

...

“What?”

When this young reporter was pulled into the editor's office, the paper was hungry for a story. The editor said my previous article on the board's offshore accounts was too "sticking it to the man" for them. I crossed my legs, tilted my head, and closed Tuesdays with Morrie. "We think your talents are better suited elsewhere," he said before continuing, "We're going to have to let your position evolve." They needed me somewhere else. I pondered these questions over a spliff in his office. He grew exponentially dissatisfied, for what I assume was because I wouldn't share, so I ignored him as I stared into the framed family portrait on his desk, my gaze narrowing onto his wife's breasts. A story was out there, but where? My chain of thought was cut off when he slammed the portrait face-down and yelled that I leave at once. And with a tip of the hat, and the spin of the trenchcoat, this hungry reporter set off for a story.

The first item on my bucket-list was to find means of transportation. When I went to the rental shop they told me my card had been declined. Strange. Even the hookers had taken it without issue. I debated using my own car, a Blue 2015 Subaru, but I came to my senses when I realized my interviewees would think I'd be coming to or from pottery class. I decided public transport as the best option for the duration of this report. I chose the Light Rail headed to North Minneapolis. After a long and smelly trip, I lit a cigarette and headed onward in search of my story, and before long a strange wise old man started a dialogue. He looked sick.

"You like cigarettes, don't you?"

"What's it to you, cracky?"

"I've got a special kind of cigarette dipped in acid."

"Acid? Nice try. It would've dissolved."

"This kind of acid is special. It makes you feel gooood. S'called a John Lennon"

"That guy from the thing right?"

"Yup. Whatdya say?"

"How much."

"You see these retail for about one fifty, but for you...I say seventy five--"

"DEAL!"

I paid him in full and he took off without a word. I tucked the weird cigarette behind my ear and waited for inspiration that apparently wasn't coming. For christ sake I was going to lose my job! I needed to simultaneously calm down and wake up. So I decided on lighting my special cigarette. At once my mind grew! Of course! The Light Rail had gotten me where I needed to go, but not to what! And so I waited at the closest bus stop.

Soon the bus came. I badged my journalism license at the driver and rushed through the crowded bus. Not long after a young pregnant woman asked if she could have my seat. "Sorry lady," I said, "my journalistic integrity is much more important than your vagina monster," to which she scoffed. More importantly however, the exchange struck a chord in me, so I lit a cigarette.

Where can I find a lead? Aha! The people! Of course!

When I reached the filter I decided to question her—about what, I cannot recall—but as I turned my head to address her she'd gotten off the bus entirely, never to be seen again. I wallowed in my lack of closure for some time before realizing this was a school bus and there were children all around me. I took the next red light's opportunity to leave through the emergency exit. When I did an alarm blared and the kids started acting like children, all hootin' and hollerin'. What has America come to? Crossing the road I froze to address the bus. "Damn you! You better pray nobody reads the paper! I'll have you shut down by Thursday!"

In my rage I reasoned to keep trucking ahead in search of my story. I tried waving down a taxi, but they didn't stop for my kind and it was also not 1987. Decidedly I knew I wasn't going to spend daylight waiting for the off chance somebody gives me a ride. "Fuck it," I thought, "I'm just going to get into somebody's car, come what may." At the next red light I hurriedly jumped into a man's Prius. Coincidentally he turned out to be an Uber driver. But it didn't start with that. It was more "What the hell are you doing in my car?" and "The salvation army's over there!" and "I have a gun." Luckily this reporter has a silver tongue and fistful of quarters, so after some playful back and forth he agreed to drop me off if I got out of his car. "Where the hell do you wanna go?" he asked. I sat with this question for a beat, and he stared at me through the rear view with dark squinted eyes. . .

"Take me to where the story is," I responded.

"Yeah, okay buddy...how about the airport."

Of course! It'd been in front of me this entire time. I just needed a character in my story to tell it! I nodded my head vigorously, and although his eyes swapped from anger to concern, twenty minutes later I was at the MSP Airport. At once I emptied my pockets of the loose change I'd been carrying and threw him a fistful of quarters. A sharp clatter shot through the car. They bounced off the window, into the seat crevices, and onto the face of his baby daughter, who I had not previously noticed. He was mad. Tough luck kid. Next time don't get in the way of me supporting a small business.

I entered the lobby of the airport and found the lines to be much too long for my liking. After all, to keep somebody in the media waiting like this is like keeping a surgeon in the waiting room. Luckily Spirit Airline's line consisted of a single couple bickering about whether South Carolina counted as a vacation. As they bickered I found an opening.

"I'd like a one-way plane ticket please," I said to the ticketing agent
"Where to?"

"I don't know. I'm searching for a story. The American Dream, perhaps. Whose to say? I'm a writer. But more specifically a journalist."

"Yeah. Uhm. Well," he typed one finger at a time on his computer, "we've got a flight en route to Vegas leaving in half an hou—"

"WONDERFUL. What gate?"

"That'd be gate 6."

"Where do I sign?"

"Sign what?"

"It's a figure of speech. I'm a writer. Just send the bill to my boss."

I took off for security without another word. It did occur to me that I had lost my shoes somewhere along the way. My best guess is I threw them at the children on the bus. I panicked. The TSA was telling everyone to take off their shoes. "Give me your shoes!" I screamed at an elderly woman in line. She looked at me like I had just screamed at her. Alas I chose to run as fast as I could through the checkpoint. I ran a 5 minute mile in high school.

I laid low in the women's restroom for some time before boarding my plane. If you know anything about flying, it's that active service members board first, and as a member of the media, I too was on active duty.

It felt like ages before we got into the air. But before we did, the intercom announced that this was his first official flight as a registered pilot. I paid it no mind. There were not, however, any miniature iPads that play Family Guy onboard, and I got bored very easily. I opened a magazine that some guy had shot a load into, and quickly closed it.

When the flight attendant asked if I wanted any refreshments, I asked for three whiskeys on the rocks. When she asked how I'd be paying, I told her the man in seat 3A was my boss and would cover the bill. Little did I know he was a student studying abroad from Laos who spoke no English. Welcome to America dickhead.

When the plane landed I quickly rose and darted for the exit. I played a few rounds of slots in the terminal, then went outside and embraced the cool breeze of funk and cigarettes. A taxi was out of the question. Luckily the Bang Bus™ was parked outside, and after I climbed in to a few laughs they offered me a deal — no pay, but a drop-off at whatever bar I wanted once they had what they called "film." "Sure," I said. The lovely woman and I engaged in what the literate folk call foreplay, but to her dismay I kept at it for a very long time. I asked if she'd ever loved anybody. An awkward silence ensued. The moment I found my break I opened the car door and rolled out onto the street like a log.

I brushed myself off and surveyed my surroundings. I was on the Vegas Strip. To my left was the Eiffel tower, and to my right the statue of liberty. Below that statue of liberty was a hot dog vendor arguing with life-sized Elmo about whose corner it was. I took the opportunity to take his hot-dog cart into the heart of Vegas.

I spent hours riding around looking for the American Dream and occasionally running over a prostitute. Perhaps the American Dream is a story I'll never find, funded by an expense account I don't have, on transport I stole, in a city built on the promise of degeneracy. I've lived these thirty-eight years convinced I deserve to find it, and that everybody else is obligated to get me there. But I'll never arrive. I'll just keep moving and call it journalism. Especially now, as a couple of teenagers are approaching wearing ski masks.

- Jack Klein

When Sumbod^y
(ON THE METRO TRANSIT GREEN LINE)
Steal Yoe Weed



Phony Magazine Presents

Hayden's

THE BEST BUS RIDE TO MADISON WISCONSIN EVER.

Right on the eve of Spring Break this year, March 6th, 2026, one of my roommates Mason and I boarded a Flix-Bus heading to Madison, Wisconsin to visit some friends that attend UW Madison, which is a university in Madison, Wisconsin — in case you haven't heard of it. This is a tale of excitement, humor, romance and thrills, and the best part is that it is all 100% true. Not even kidding.

Waking up in my Prospect Park apartment complex (which one is it? Don't ask — it doesn't have a name. No, it's not the QUAD) at like 4:45 AM, I got all packed and had a cup of coffee. I think. I don't totally remember. Anyways, I had to wake up Mason so we wouldn't be late cause he was just so sleepy! Awww! Anyways we took the Metro Transit's E-Line to the bus station downtown, and boarded the FlixBus pretty soon after. This was a bus headed all the way from Minneapolis to Chicago, which is a trip I was really glad I was not doing. I've taken that route to Milwaukee and it really does get old after the 6th hour of being there.

Once we were on the bus Mason insisted on sitting next to me even though his assigned seat was across the aisle. Now, I've had my share of experiences of people sitting in the wrong seat and causing some uncomfortable situations, but I guess Mason's need for great conversation and snuggles with yours truly was more important than any fear he had of the other folks that would board the bus. For the record, there were sadly no snuggles.

So here we are driving to St. Paul, and I'm telling Mason about my great movie idea about a homeless man who is gifted a harmonica by a mysterious guy in a limousine who then goes on to become a world-famous blues harmonicaist and singer, and he's not impressed.

I'm like, "would you watch that movie"

And he's like "that sounds stupid. No I would not"

And I'm all like "ok well, screw you then. You're not getting on the special thanks part of the credits."

I didn't actually say that last part but that would've been cool if I had wouldn't it?

This is like one of those times you're in the shower going over arguments you've had throughout the day and coming up with better comebacks, wishing you had said them in the moment. At that moment I probably just said ok, like the subordinate little chud I really am.

Now we've reached the St. Paul Union Depot spot. Say what you want about St. Paul, but the city itself... really does SUCK.

I'm just kidding, I've actually grown to like a lot of it, although there's still some really shitty parts, but that's mostly on the Green Line, and here we were at Union Depot, the Shangri-La of the midwest. And just as the holy and enlightened inhabit that legendary city in the Himalayas, we had our own share of bodhisattvas joining us on that ride. As the St. Paul riders came on the bus, an older african-American man (which one could reasonably refer to as "unc") eventually came to the seats Mason and I were sitting in and said that we were in his seat. So, with an air of malaise, Mason got up and moved across the aisle and I took Mason's seat. My new neighbor wanted the window, naturally.

Behind us sat a larger old black man who laid across two seats and the entire time just kept moaning "ohhhh shit.... Oh fuck..." like every five minutes or so. The guy sitting next to me had a tall bottle of Mountain Dew, a bald head and wore some spectacles. I didn't say all that much to him at the start, he just told me that he was headed to Chicago and he was from St. Paul. The guy sitting next to Mason on the other side had been asleep the entire time, so he didn't have anyone else to talk to, so we just spoke about what we were gonna do in Madison and told tales primarily about our time in high school... and some earlier education too actually. Like for example Mason told me this story about how his 2nd grade teacher targeted him so hard in class she eventually said sorry to his mom years later about it. Mason was like

"how the fuck do you have actual beef with an eight year old? I was fucking eight years old! I couldn't do shit! You're like 60, lady! What the fuck?!"

Throughout all this fruitful discussion, the guy sitting next to me kept leaning over and slapping his fist into his palm over and over again. It seemed like he was seriously tweaking out. He went on like that for a while. Every once in a while he'd elbow me accidentally and mutter something at me but the next actual time I said any words to him was when I was buying Eric Clapton tickets for the show in Milwaukee next semester. I had to buy handicapped tickets because my dad is anticipating being in a wheelchair at that point due to his upcoming knee replacement surgery.

Anyways, the guy next to me kept leaning over and eventually was like "what's that"

And I was like "I'm buying Eric Clapton tickets for his show in Milwaukee"

Then he's like "who's that"

And I'm like "he's a famous guitarist. He's really good, they actually call him the god of guitar"

And then he's like "oh. Cool."

Now, at one point the feller next to me asks me out of the blue if I like to gamble.

I told him I'd only been to the casino a couple of times and he asked "where at?"

I said I'd gone to Mystic Lake and Treasure Island Hotel and Casino. I'm from Wisconsin originally and they hate fun there so you have to be 21 in order to gamble. Kind of Orwellian, not going to lie. He asked me what I liked to play and I said I really only played video roulette there and this upset him.

"Video roulette? Shit! You gotta play blackjack. You ever play blackjack?"

"Yeah, I've played blackjack, never at the casino though."

Mason joined in, "the buy-ins at the casino were way too much money. They were like 15 bucks to play."

"What day did you guys go?"

"Saturday, I think both times."

"Well shit! That's your problem. You've gotta go weekdays. Week days are when they'll let you play for like five bucks. You gotta go weekdays! Shit!"

"Oh okay. We'll do that. We just went when we had friends visiting."

“Yeah, you gotta go weekdays.”

After this dialogue on gaming, my neighbor began to speak on his time of living in Atlanta, Georgia in which us two sheltered suburbanites heard the legend of the greatest nightclub on God’s green earth: Magic City, Atlanta. This is also the part when I began to pick up a bit more info on this guy’s life. We somehow got on the topic of eating baloney and he was telling us of a time that he had a comedy show in Magic City. He spoke of Magic City like it was an actual portion of the town, but also like it was a strip club (and after doing some investigating on the bus, we realized he was just talking about a famous strip club in Atlanta). I actually learned his name was Mack during this part. So, Mack told us a bit more about his life and Atlanta. He’d been a comic for quite a few years, and said he really used to go crazy at Magic City when he was younger.

“The good old days?” I asked.

“The good old— aw fuck you!” Mack yelled. “The good old days! Aw, fuck you! Nah, you’re a funny two, though.”

Driving along interstate-94, Mason and I learned some further interesting factoids about Magic City. Apparently there was a famous stripper named “Good Head” that used to dance at the strip club, and was known for being a favorite of both Shaquille O’Neal and Kobe Bryant’s.

“How’d she get the name ‘Good Head’?” I asked.

“How’d she get the name’?! You’re messing with me right?” Mack exclaimed. I shrugged.

Mack also told us of this insane story where he went to a cookout and everyone was really hyping it up. “They said to me, ‘Hey Mack! You’re gonna love this, we’ve got the best barbecue in the city’, so I was pretty excited. Then they give me a plate and it’s fucking barbequed baloney. What the FUCK?! Baloney!? What the fuck!? Yuck!”

“Hey, I think baloney’s pretty good,” Mason interjected.

“You’re telling me that when you’re going to a barbeque and tell you to get all excited and then they pull out a plate full of barbequed baloney, you’d be excited?”

“I mean, I’d try it. It’s probably pretty good,” I said.

“Yeah, well it actually was pretty good,” Mack replied. “But imagine you were invited to a cookout and some asshole brings out fuckin’ baloney? What the fuck? I never fucking eat fucking baloney.”

After this the conversation sort of fizzled out a little bit with ole Mack, so Mason and I started talking about something on our own.

“You know sometimes when I’d be with my girlfriend she’d be like ‘I’m sooo hungry!’ and all that, so then I’d be like ‘Okay, well where do you wanna go eat?’ and then she’s like ‘uhhh... I don’t know.... :)’ and then I’m like—”

“OH FUCK.....oh SHIT....” moaned the guy behind Mack. Mack turned around out of concern and asked him if he was alright.

“FUCK..... Uhhhh...shit...”

Mason and I looked at each other and tried not to laugh and then just kept going on with the story.

“So yeah, well I was like ‘let’s just go to McDonalds’ and she’s like ‘ewwww!’ But honestly if I’m paying for the dinner and she doesn’t really care where we eat I’ll just take her to get the \$5 meal deal there, cause at least that’s cheap. But that would probably make eating her out taste a lot worse because of all of the fried food.”

“Hey, what’re you guys talking about?!” asked Mack.

“Uhh.... well I was just telling this story about my girlfriend and eating food,” Mason explained.

Mack sat there attentively waiting for more. Giving in, Mason said “Ok, well basically I was just saying that when your girlfriend doesn’t know where to go, you should just take her to McDonald’s and get her the \$5 meal deal because it is cheap. Although, it would probably make eating box a lot less enjoyable due to her eating a lot of fried food.”

Then came the greatest box-munching joke I have ever heard.

“Oh yeah, I loooooove how this McDonald’s tastes!” said Mack as formed his hand into a finger-blasting position and kept licking his fingers. “Oh, yeah, That’s good. Two more of those chicken nuggets please!”

Mason and I laughed at this but at the same time I was thinking “what the hell is wrong with this guy?”

Mason then joined in and said “Uh.... I think she’ll have the apple slices!”

Mack then did the box munching action again, and was like “Mmm, yeah these apple slices are good, keep ‘em coming!”

Now, I don’t think Mason really understood everything that Mack said, because every time Mack would say something about eating out box he’d say “right??” to Mason, and he’d just smile and nod. Mack also asked us at some point what kind of music we listened to. I told him I liked mostly just rock music (I didn’t feel like really getting into it).

Mason was even less descriptive and told him “I don’t really know what you’d call it...I just like chill music, you know?”

I don’t think Mack really knew.

I asked him what kind of music he liked and he said “Motown... old school... that sort of stuff.”

“OH, Motown Brown!” Mason interjected.

“What?” Mack asked.

“Yeah, you know... Motown Brown!”

“What is Motown Brown?!” I asked Mason.

“He’s the guy from Detroiters! You know the one that Sam and Tim have to drive from Detroit back to his house and it takes forever...”

“Oh yeah, he lives in Lake Orion and it’s like an hour drive to get there,” I confirmed. “Why in the world would you think that’s what Mack is referring to here? Motown is a genre, it’s like soul from Detroit.”

“Well, I don’t friggin know. I’ve only ever heard it from Detroiters.”

“Anyways,” I said to Mack, “What kind of old school you talking?”

“I’m a big Run-DMC guy. I don’t like that new rap too much,” Mack explained.

“It’s too hard for you?” I asked.

“Yeah, I don’t like that gangster shit too much. I like some of it though, I can get down to it sometimes.”

We stopped at a McDonald’s in the Wisconsin Dells (if you’ve taken this bus route, you definitely know which one I’m talking about), and Mack was getting a little skittish and was getting up to go get something to eat. I told him that we were only stopping to pick some people up and weren’t actually getting out to eat. I quelled Mack for the time being, but his tummy was most definitely rumbling and probably needed some fresh air too. Eventually we got to our actual lunch location which was a Holiday/Hardee’s in Menominee, WI (home of UW-STOUT!) When in doubt, GO TO STOUT, is what my dad always says). Before we got off, Mack asked me if I drank or smoked ever. I said I drink but I don’t really smoke.

Then he motioned to his Mountain Dew bottle and whispered to me, “Well, if you want some, this is VODKA.”

I was like “are you serious?”

“Shiiiet! Yes!”

Unfortunately I had to decline the FlixBus drank, but he asked Mason the same, who also declined.

We all got off the bus and walked into the Holiday. Mason and I walked around a little bit and found some super overpriced spicy candy (it was like 9 DOLLARS BRO. HOLY SHIT!!). I bought a Yoohoo, the classic chocolate drink. One of the self-checkouts wasn’t working very well, so there was a really long friggin’ line to get checked out. One of the other “uncs” on the bus was having a pretty good time here and he kept messing with the people in line and the cashiers. You love to see the old folks enjoying their travels...

Once we got on the bus Mason told me he saw Mack in the Hardee’s downing sugar packets without actually eating anything. What a freak dude. Kinda cool though. Kind of “aura” (if you know what I mean!).

Mack got on the bus and he was like “what’d you two get?”

I was like “I got a YOOOO-HOOO baby!”

Mack laughed and repeated “YOO-HOO BABY!!!”

I felt like I earned 20 Mack points there. As the bus started to move again, we heard another “OH.....fuck...SHIT....FUCK....” but we eventually got back to talking and Mack told us of his time working at a Johnny Rocket’s in Atlanta when he was younger.

Mason asked if Good Head ever visited the dining establishment, and Mack replied “No, but shit, I would’ve kept working there if there were girls like Good Head in there! DAMN, those girls were fine!”

Our traveling companion then went on to talk about how they used to make coca-cola with real cocaine, but it was kind of slurred and I don’t think Mason had any idea what he was talking about and thought he was talking about how they served coke the old fashioned way like with pumps in those old diners.

I sort of picked up on that and said to Mack while rubbing the side of my nose, “yeah, the (snort) coke was made the ‘old fashioned’ way” and nudged him with my elbow.

“Shit! Nah they didn’t ever give us cocaine at Johnny Rockets. I would’ve maybe worked there longer if they had that coke!”

“What, you guys didn’t ever go skiing at Johnny Rockets? It didn’t ever snow there?”

“No, but damn I wish it did there!” This made Mack laugh a lot.

I would now like to give my friends James & Scott from Milwaukee a shout out for educating me about “8-ball” and “snow”. I could’ve never made these cocaine references without you. Keeping up with the drug topics, we somehow got to talking about how the NAZIs in WWII used to drug up their soldiers to make them really good at fighting. I told Mack about how during WWII due to trade embargoes Coca-Cola couldn’t sell to Germany, so the Germans invented Fanta as an alternative.

“Shit! Even the Führer himself couldn’t get any damn cocaine in his drink!” Mack said. “You ever see how coked up he was though? In those videos of him his hand’s always twitching and shit.”

Whatever cred I earned with Mack from those coke references was totally lost as he started quizzing Mason and I on famous black comedians. Man, I did not know any of these. Us two white boys from the suburbs were really outmatched here. I can’t even remember what any of these guys’ names were, but I was really outclassed.

They probably weren't even niche at all, but in our defense most of the time when I looked them up they died like twenty years ago, so it's not crazy we didn't know them. Mack eventually got a call from his daughter who talked with him for a while.

"Yeah, the ride's going fine, I'm next to these two white boys who don't know any comedians I've been listing. They're funny though, but they don't know much", Mack told his daughter.

"Well, do they know Conan?" she asked him.

"YES, I know Conan..." I said, ashamed.

"Of course you guys know CONAN..." he said.

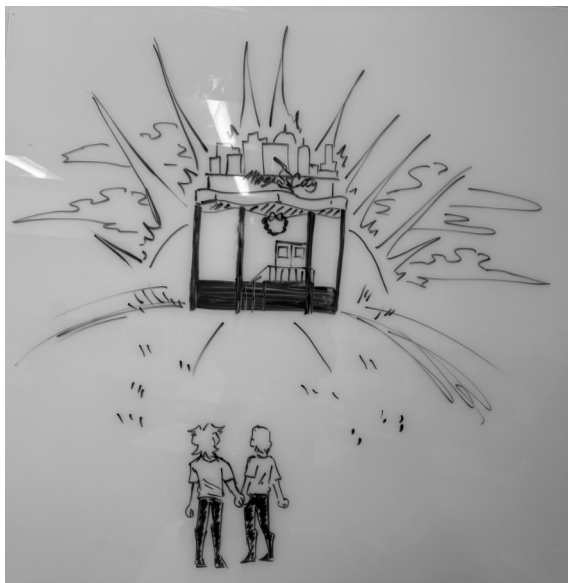
Sadly, we eventually had to arrive in Madison. As we pulled into the bustling city, Mack started giving us daps. I earned back some cred when I properly dapped him up, and MASON DIDN'T! LOSER!!! Mack then asked for my phone number, and I gave him it, not totally knowing when we'd ever contact each other. I bade a bittersweet farewell to our new friend and wishing him a good rest of the trip to Chicago, we walked up the aisle to exit the bus. Standing outside the UW-Madison Gordon Dining and Event Center where the people going to the "Harvard of the Midwest" ate and had events, I began to reflect on my journey and the many valuable bits of knowledge I acquired over the trip, and some of life's deepest questions came to me in this short moment.

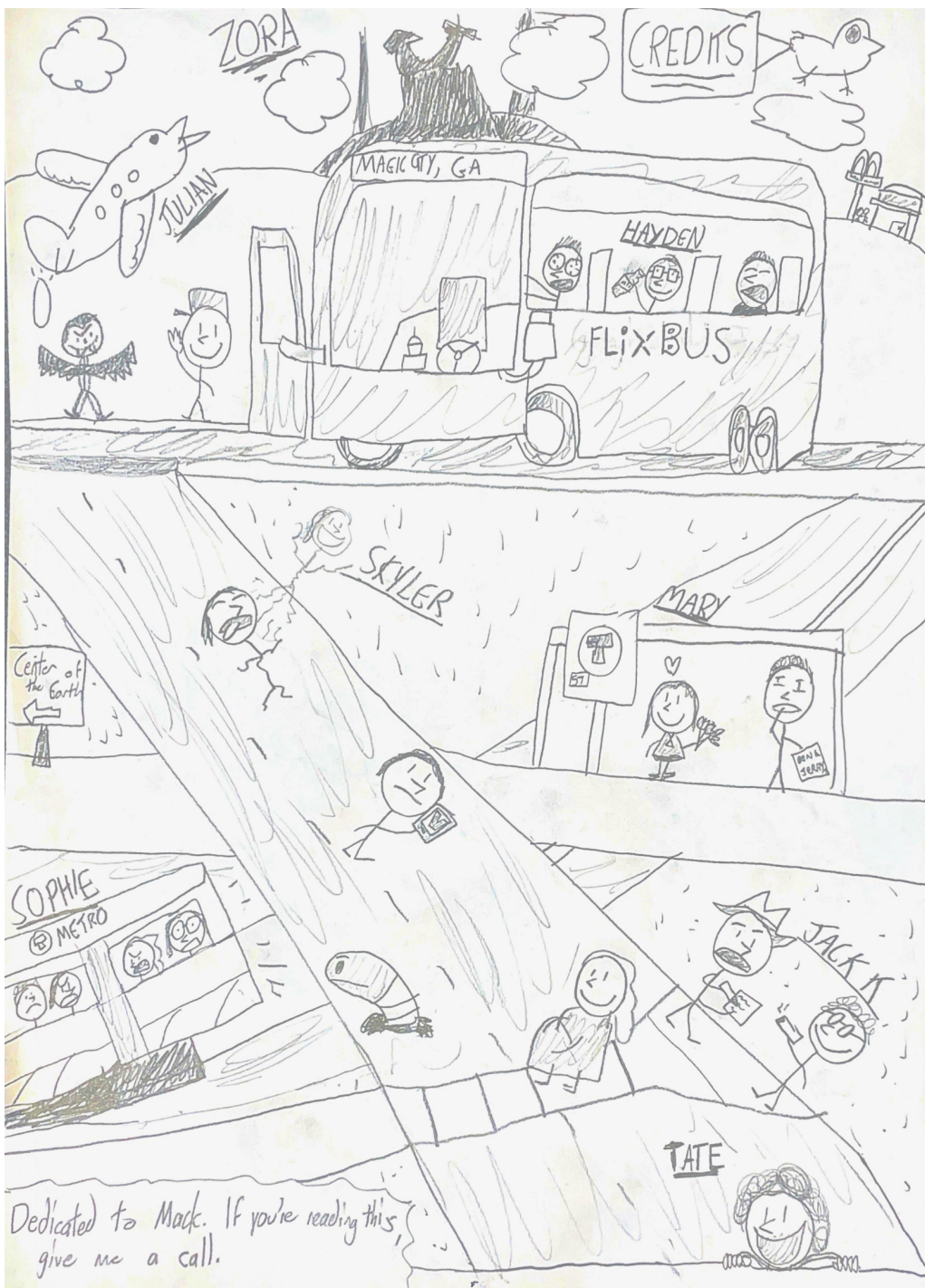
Would I ever visit Magic City, Atlanta? Do the McDonald's \$5 dollar value meals actually make cunnilingus more enjoyable? How did Good Head earn her name? Do the sugar packets in the Menomonie Hardee's taste good? What day of the week should you visit the casino? Why didn't Mason like my movie idea?

After gazing at the sky dreamily, I said to my travel companion, "Come on Mason, let's go see our friends and then go to the National Mustard Museum in Middleton, Wisconsin! Come on! Let's go!"

And as we walked away from the bus stop... it's almost as if I caught an ethereal voice speaking to me, saying "OHHHH...FUCKK..... ohhhh..... SHIT...."

Waylan Johnston





Dedicated to Mack. If you're reading this,
give me a call.