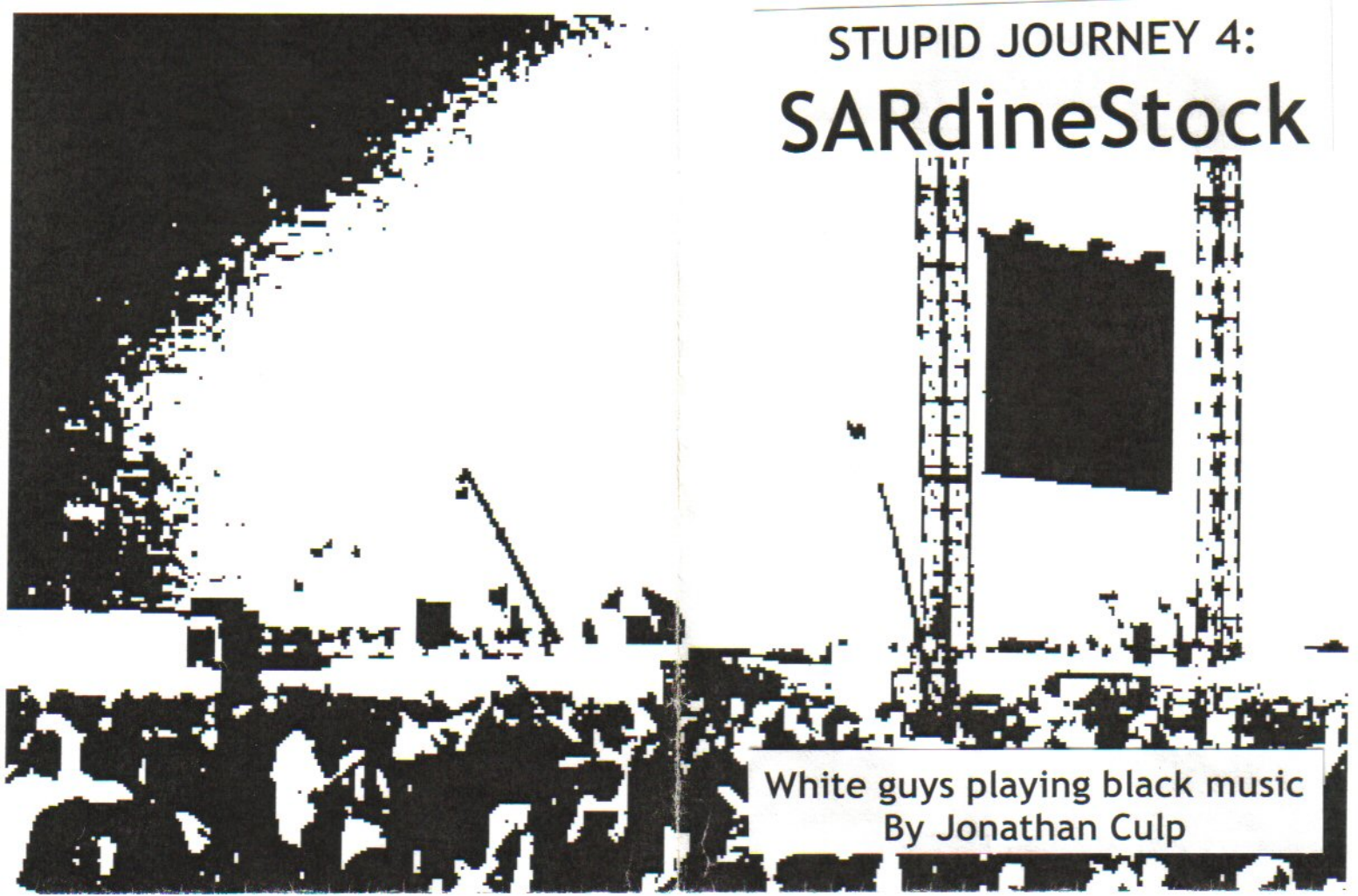


STUPID JOURNEY 4:

SARdineStock

White guys playing black music

By Jonathan Culp

STUPID JOURNEY 4: SARDINESTOCK
By Jonathan Culp

By the grace of
Satan Macnuggit Popular Arts
3584 John Street, Vineland Station
Ontario, Canada L0R 2E0
jonathan@satanmacnuggit.com
www.satanmacnuggit.com

2004

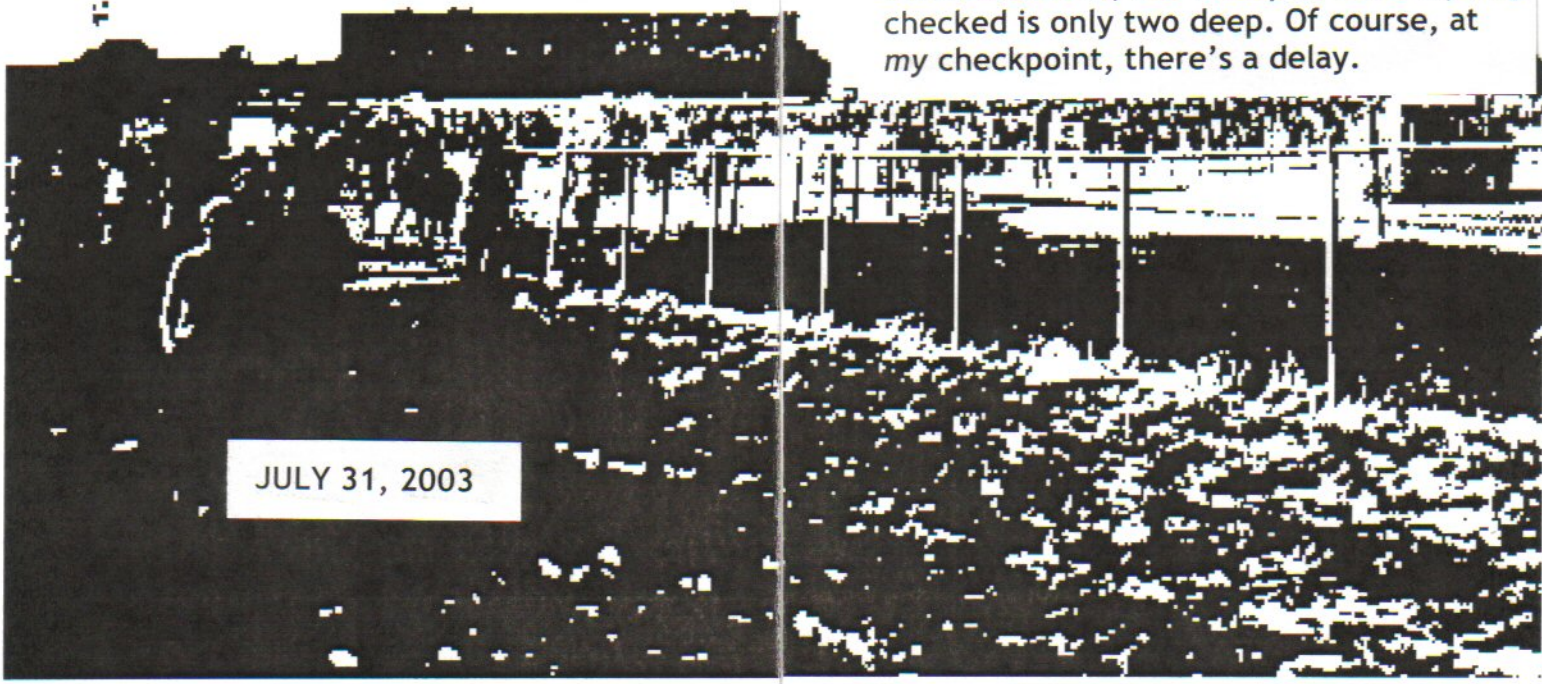
PROLOGUE

Once again, The Stupid Journey takes a detour!

- rather than travel across country or province, Jonnie travels across town!
- economical - ONE DAY of action!
- the 'journey' in question here is more cultural than geographic - into the strange and compellingly fucked up world of mega-rock concerts and 'benefit' politics
- all the background pix were stolen from some poor sap's web site! Sorry!

Without further ado - let us rock and roll!

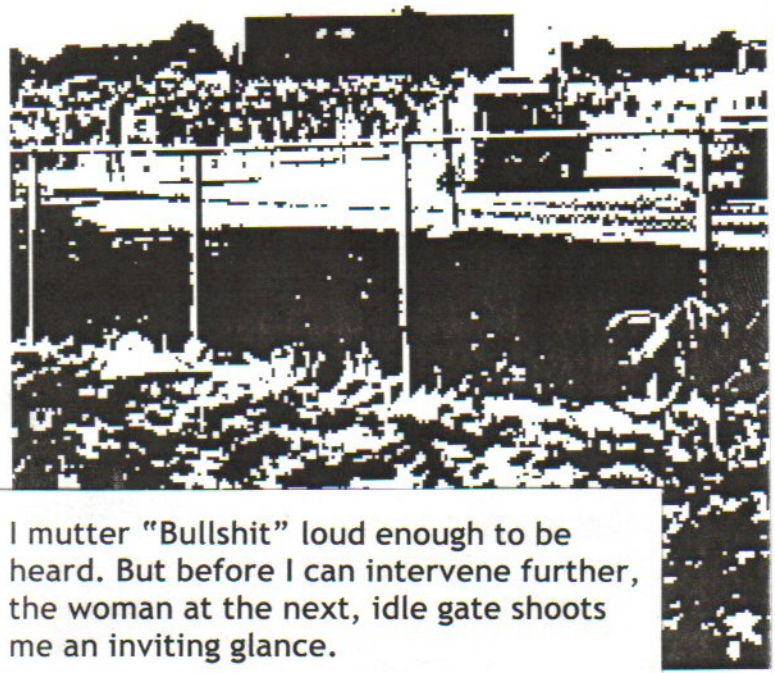
JC



It seems impossible that a vast empty space like this could exist in the city of Toronto. It's taking me forever just to walk from the sidewalk to the gate. A huge and growing crowd is milling forward with and behind me, but up ahead, with a line of security checkpoints receding in both directions, the lineup to have my bag checked is only two deep. Of course, at *my* checkpoint, there's a delay.

I woke up in a panic at 9:30, after I swore that I would get up early to beat the masses. Expecting maximum cram on the subway, I instead found a less-than-rush-hour, moderate crowd, though it was easy to tell demographically that, yes, all these kids were going to the same place as me. And so were the many citizens which we could eventually see out the window, hiking their way up the closed Allan Expressway. Pedestrians on a highway are like glimpses of a welcome apocalypse. Exciting enough to make me optimistic that this overblown, overhyped event - the Toronto SARS benefit concert, or SARSstock as the pundits would have it - will actually be a useful, if gimpy, disruption.

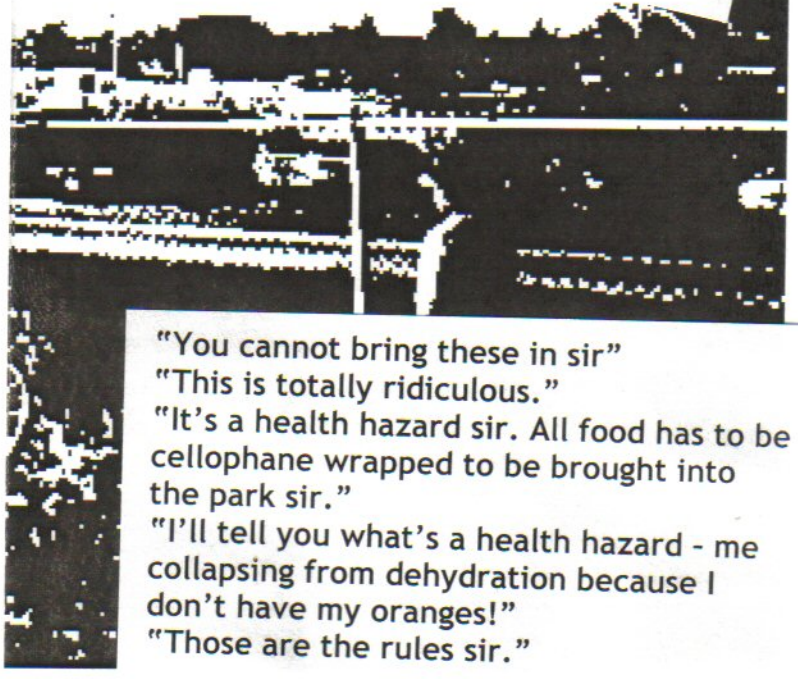
"You can't take those in."
"Why?"
"There's no fruit or vegetables allowed."
"It's three fucking oranges!"
"I'm sorry. I can't let you through."
"Let me talk to your superior."
"Hey! Over here!"



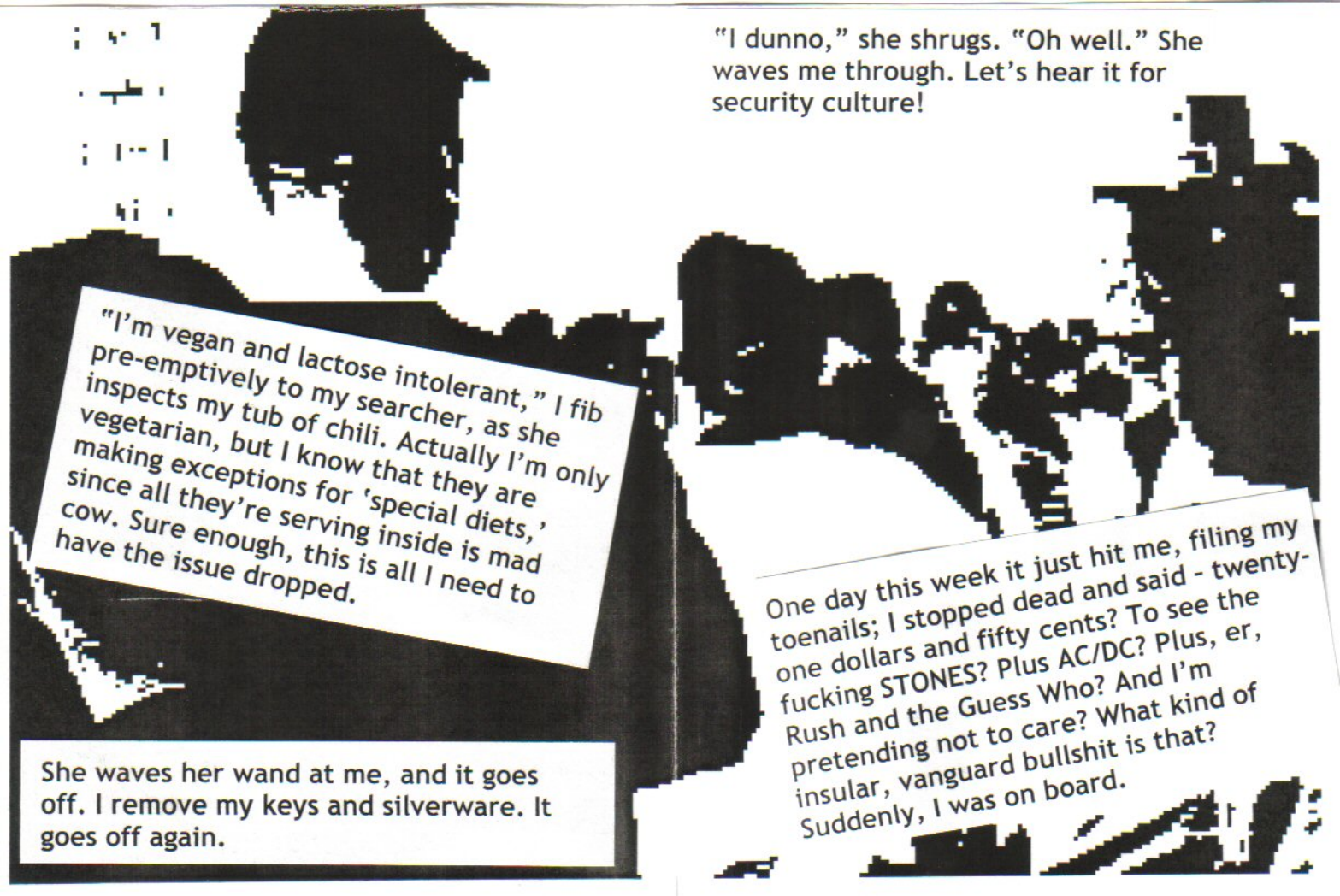
I mutter "Bullshit" loud enough to be heard. But before I can intervene further, the woman at the next, idle gate shoots me an inviting glance.

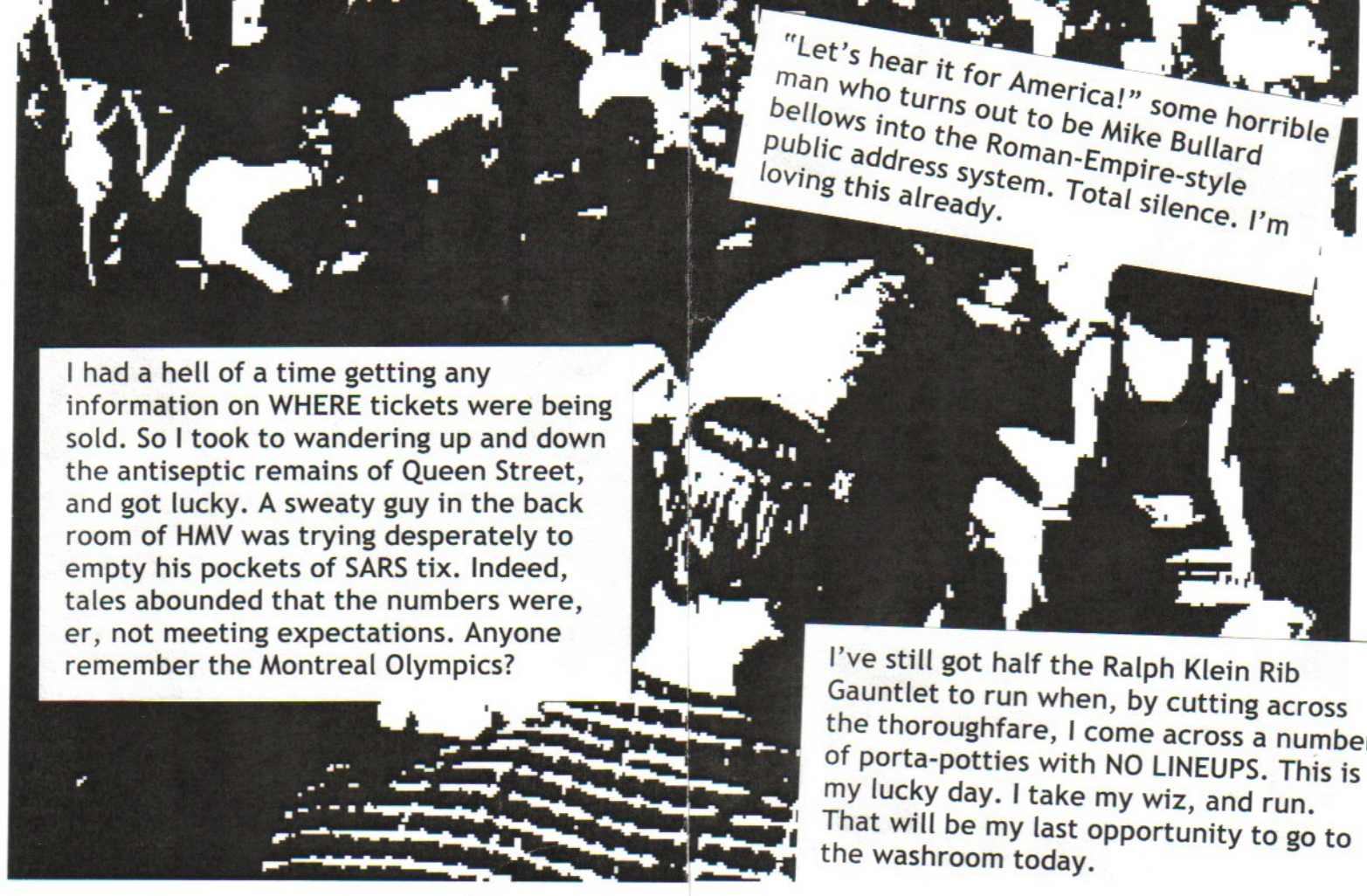
It was only a week ago that I suddenly gave a damn. I was entirely sympathetic with my hipster friends who viewed the whole thing as a decadent joke. The spectacle of arch-Liberal dervish Dennis Mills commandeering a bunch of bourgeois musicians to 'save' Toronto's economy and reputation and Chinese restaurants, was not too convincing. Meanwhile, senile asshole Mel Lastman remained strapped into the seat of power, wriggling occasionally to the embarrassment of the men behind the curtain. With this (well-obscured) backdrop, how could anyone expect anything more than beef and circuses?

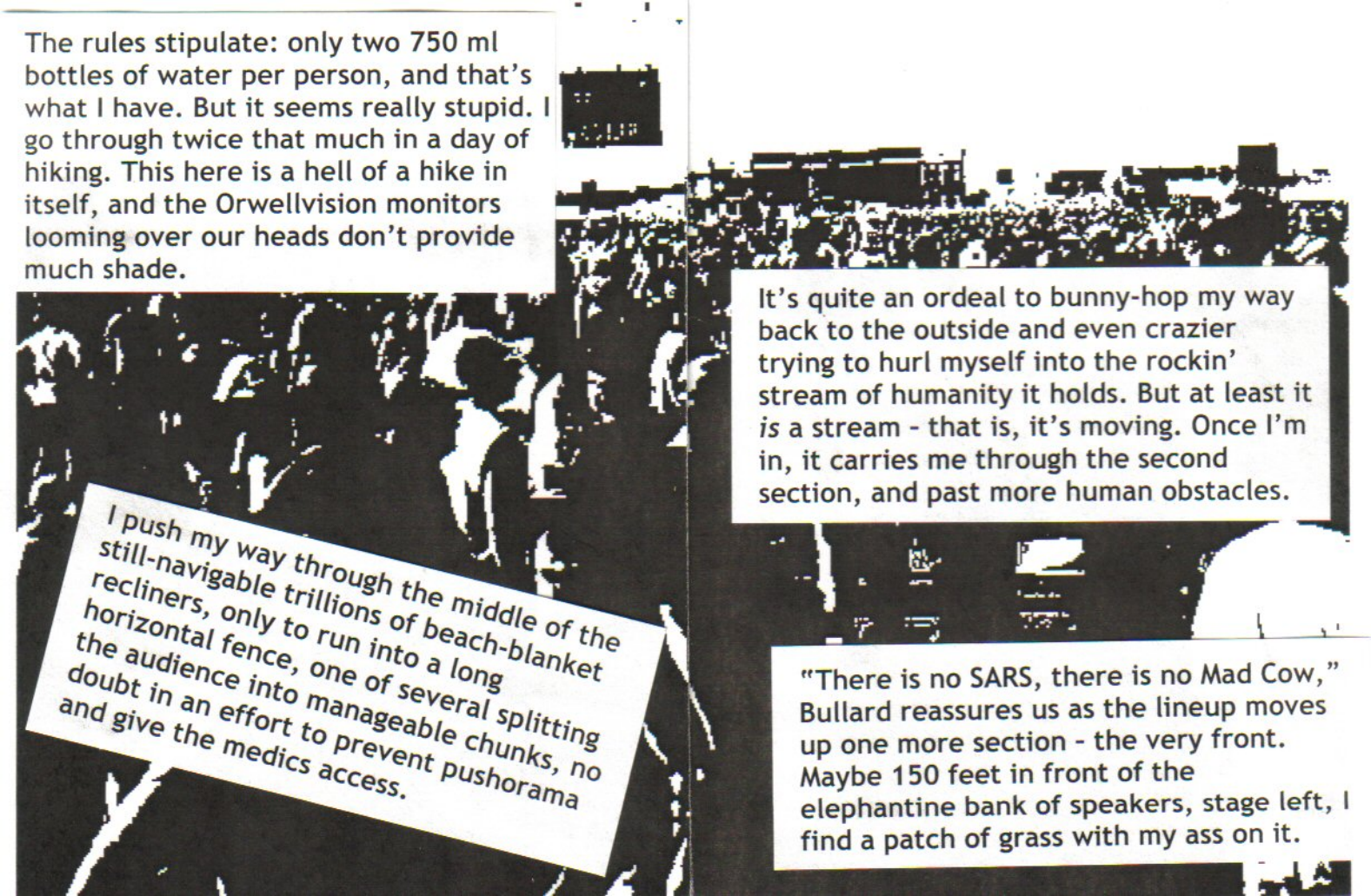
As security snoops through my belongings, Mr. Superior finally shows up to placate orange boy.



"You cannot bring these in sir"
"This is totally ridiculous."
"It's a health hazard sir. All food has to be cellophane wrapped to be brought into the park sir."
"I'll tell you what's a health hazard - me collapsing from dehydration because I don't have my oranges!"
"Those are the rules sir."


"I'm vegan and lactose intolerant," I fib pre-emptively to my searcher, as she inspects my tub of chili. Actually I'm only vegetarian, but I know that they are making exceptions for 'special diets,' since all they're serving inside is mad cow. Sure enough, this is all I need to have the issue dropped.
She waves her wand at me, and it goes off. I remove my keys and silverware. It goes off again.
"I dunno," she shrugs. "Oh well." She waves me through. Let's hear it for security culture!
One day this week it just hit me, filing my toenails; I stopped dead and said - twenty-one dollars and fifty cents? To see the fucking STONES? Plus AC/DC? Plus, er, Rush and the Guess Who? And I'm pretending not to care? What kind of insular, vanguard bullshit is that? Suddenly, I was on board.


"Let's hear it for America!" some horrible man who turns out to be Mike Bullard bellows into the Roman-Empire-style public address system. Total silence. I'm loving this already.
I had a hell of a time getting any information on WHERE tickets were being sold. So I took to wandering up and down the antiseptic remains of Queen Street, and got lucky. A sweaty guy in the back room of HMV was trying desperately to empty his pockets of SARS tix. Indeed, tales abounded that the numbers were, er, not meeting expectations. Anyone remember the Montreal Olympics?
I've still got half the Ralph Klein Rib Gauntlet to run when, by cutting across the thoroughfare, I come across a number of porta-potties with NO LINEUPS. This is my lucky day. I take my wiz, and run. That will be my last opportunity to go to the washroom today.



The rules stipulate: only two 750 ml bottles of water per person, and that's what I have. But it seems really stupid. I go through twice that much in a day of hiking. This here is a hell of a hike in itself, and the Orwellvision monitors looming over our heads don't provide much shade.

I push my way through the middle of the still-navigable trillions of beach-blanket recliners, only to run into a long horizontal fence, one of several splitting the audience into manageable chunks, no doubt in an effort to prevent pushorama and give the medics access.

It's quite an ordeal to bunny-hop my way back to the outside and even crazier trying to hurl myself into the rockin' stream of humanity it holds. But at least it *is* a stream - that is, it's moving. Once I'm in, it carries me through the second section, and past more human obstacles.

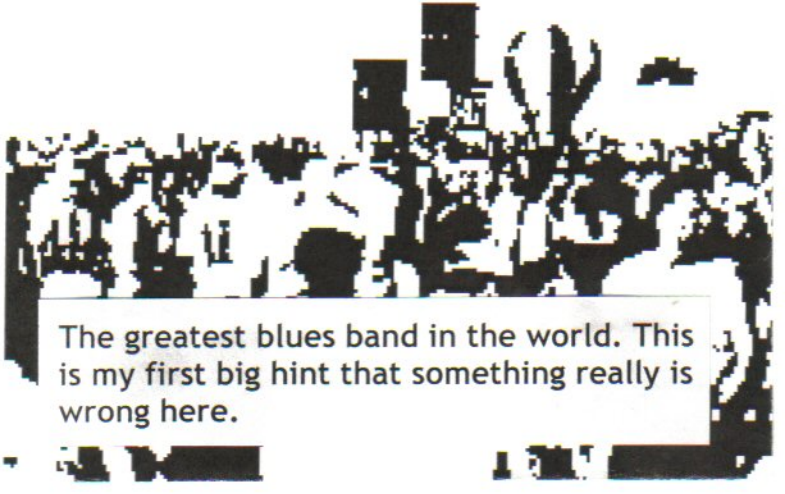
"There is no SARS, there is no Mad Cow," Bullard reassures us as the lineup moves up one more section - the very front. Maybe 150 feet in front of the elephantine bank of speakers, stage left, I find a patch of grass with my ass on it.

Still trying to convince us he really is an asshole, Bullard trots out Captain Michel Poirier to cheerlead for the Skyhawks. Nearby, a security guard doesn't know where the water is. He advises his victim to walk backwards - "You might make it back for the Stones." The guy in front of me has tales of walking a mile for his water, and is he ever angry about it. As the day wears on, I will become increasingly sensitive to the intensity and enthusiasm of this guy's anger. Will it be redirected at me?

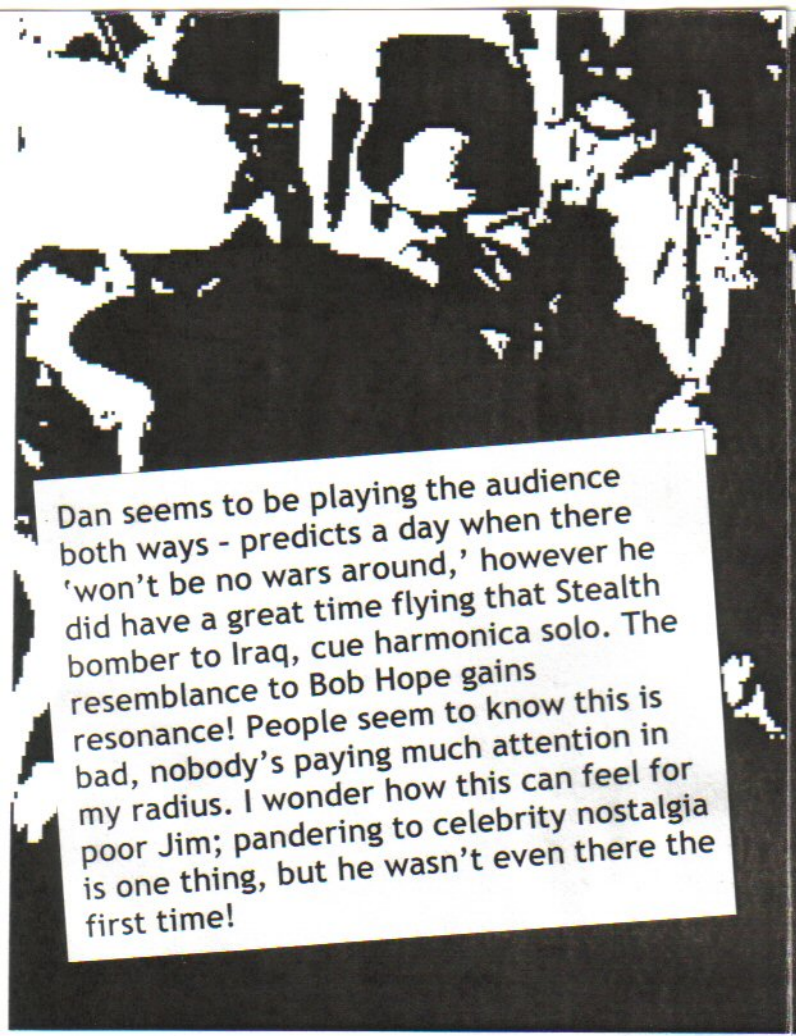
Right now I'm sufficiently cocky to stay seated and zip-lipped for the duration of O Canada. Nobody cares.

Some goofball guy feels compelled to announce to the crowd that Toronto has the best strip clubs in the world. Wave that flag!

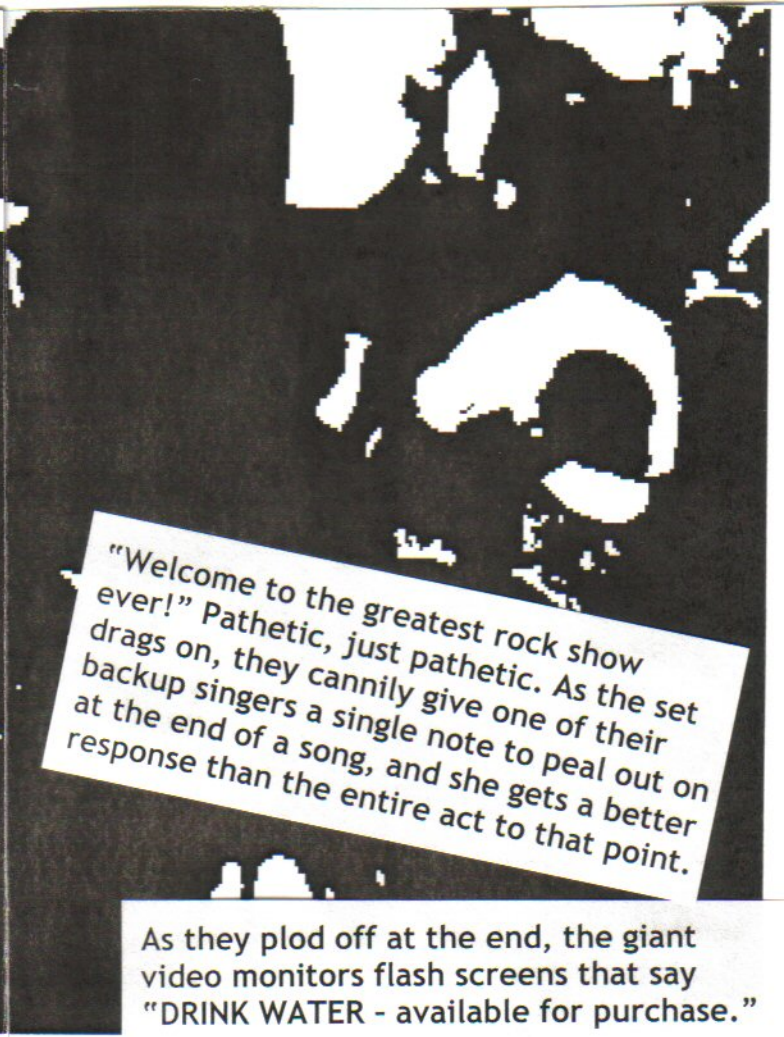
Now Bullard is introducing "the greatest blues band in the world" - and I swear nobody on stage has any clue of the racial insult when Mr. Dan Aykroyd totters out, paired off with the perpetually inadequate Jim Belushi, bellowing along with their brassy ensemble.



The greatest blues band in the world. This is my first big hint that something really is wrong here.

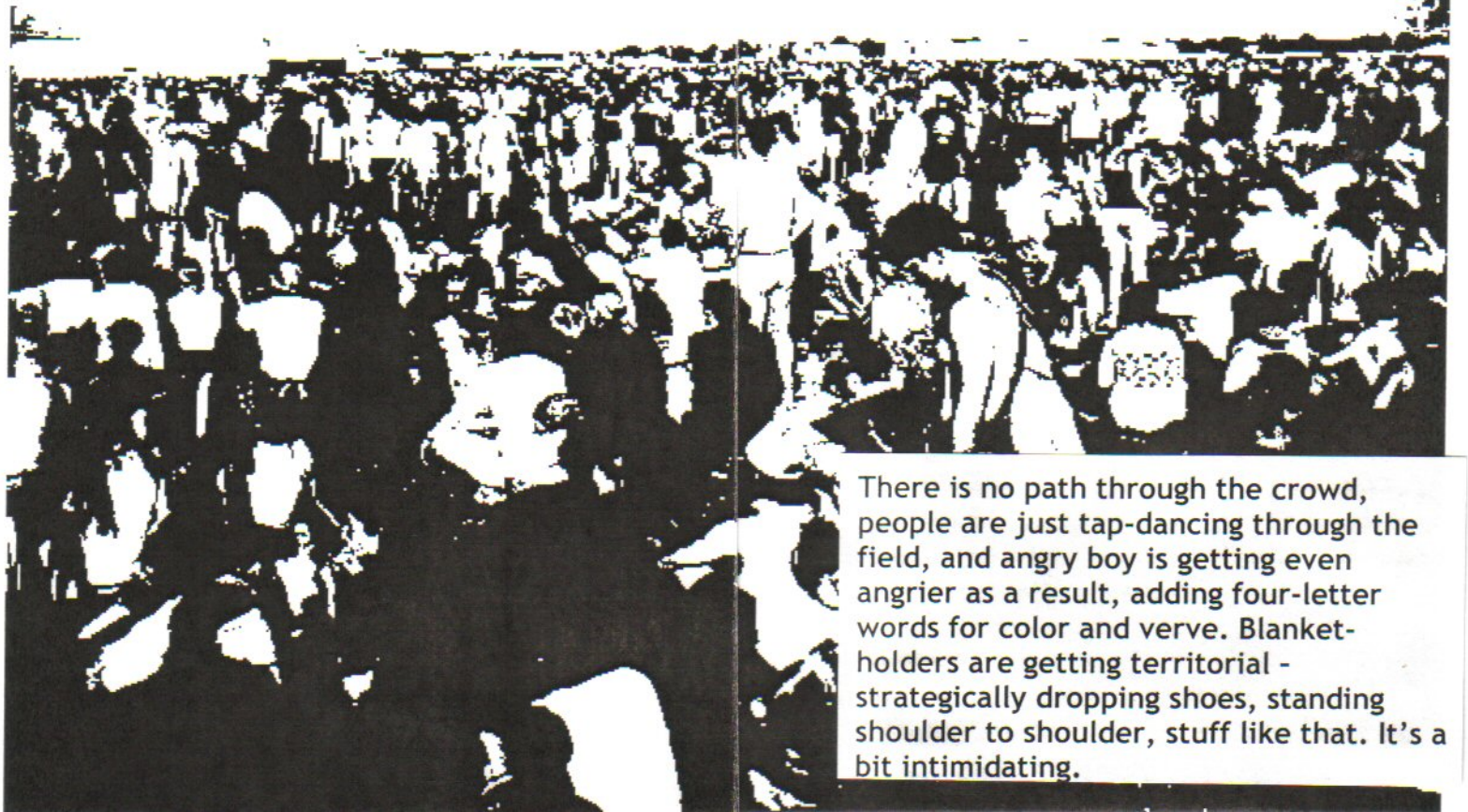


Dan seems to be playing the audience both ways - predicts a day when there 'won't be no wars around,' however he did have a great time flying that Stealth bomber to Iraq, cue harmonica solo. The resemblance to Bob Hope gains resonance! People seem to know this is bad, nobody's paying much attention in my radius. I wonder how this can feel for poor Jim; pandering to celebrity nostalgia is one thing, but he wasn't even there the first time!



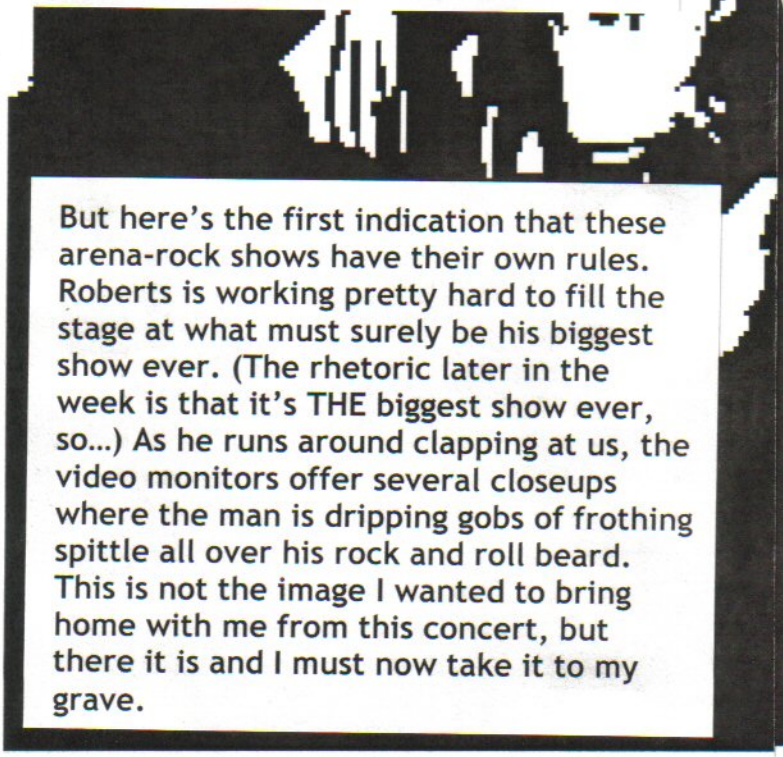
"Welcome to the greatest rock show ever!" Pathetic, just pathetic. As the set drags on, they cannily give one of their backup singers a single note to peal out on at the end of a song, and she gets a better response than the entire act to that point.

As they plod off at the end, the giant video monitors flash screens that say "DRINK WATER - available for purchase."



There is no path through the crowd, people are just tap-dancing through the field, and angry boy is getting even angrier as a result, adding four-letter words for color and verve. Blanket-holders are getting territorial - strategically dropping shoes, standing shoulder to shoulder, stuff like that. It's a bit intimidating.

Sam Roberts - the name means nothing to me, so imagine my surprise when I recognize two songs that had been played on the radio. Grossly overplayed on the radio, in fact; but catchy they were, and they sounded pretty good on stage too.



But here's the first indication that these arena-rock shows have their own rules. Roberts is working pretty hard to fill the stage at what must surely be his biggest show ever. (The rhetoric later in the week is that it's THE biggest show ever, so...) As he runs around clapping at us, the video monitors offer several closeups where the man is dripping gobs of frothing spittle all over his rock and roll beard. This is not the image I wanted to bring home with me from this concert, but there it is and I must now take it to my grave.

After three bouncy numbers, Sam announces a fourth, then the man behind the curtain suddenly shows him the door and he bolts. The guys behind me aren't impressed: "That's right, kick the good guy off and give us Sass Jordan."

Sass will have to wait for Kathleen Edwards, another Dream of a Lifetime winner staring down more people than she's played to in her prior career. For this modest radio folkie, however, the gut reaction is a nagging self-deprecation shtick that achieves overkill and hangs around for more. She then attempts communion by repeating the line "I wanna get high" twice. She is definitely, stubbornly out of her element - which, since the cries of "Show us your tits!" have by now begun, is no harsh judgment.

Bullard does some slobbering about tits himself having reclaimed the mike, but balks, kinda, at the "Timberlake is a FAG" sign. "I can't say that on TV," he demurs; and at that very moment, the camera crew throws it up on the monitors for all to see, between boob shots. I wonder: WHO is operating the video switcher? They are promising to ruin my day.

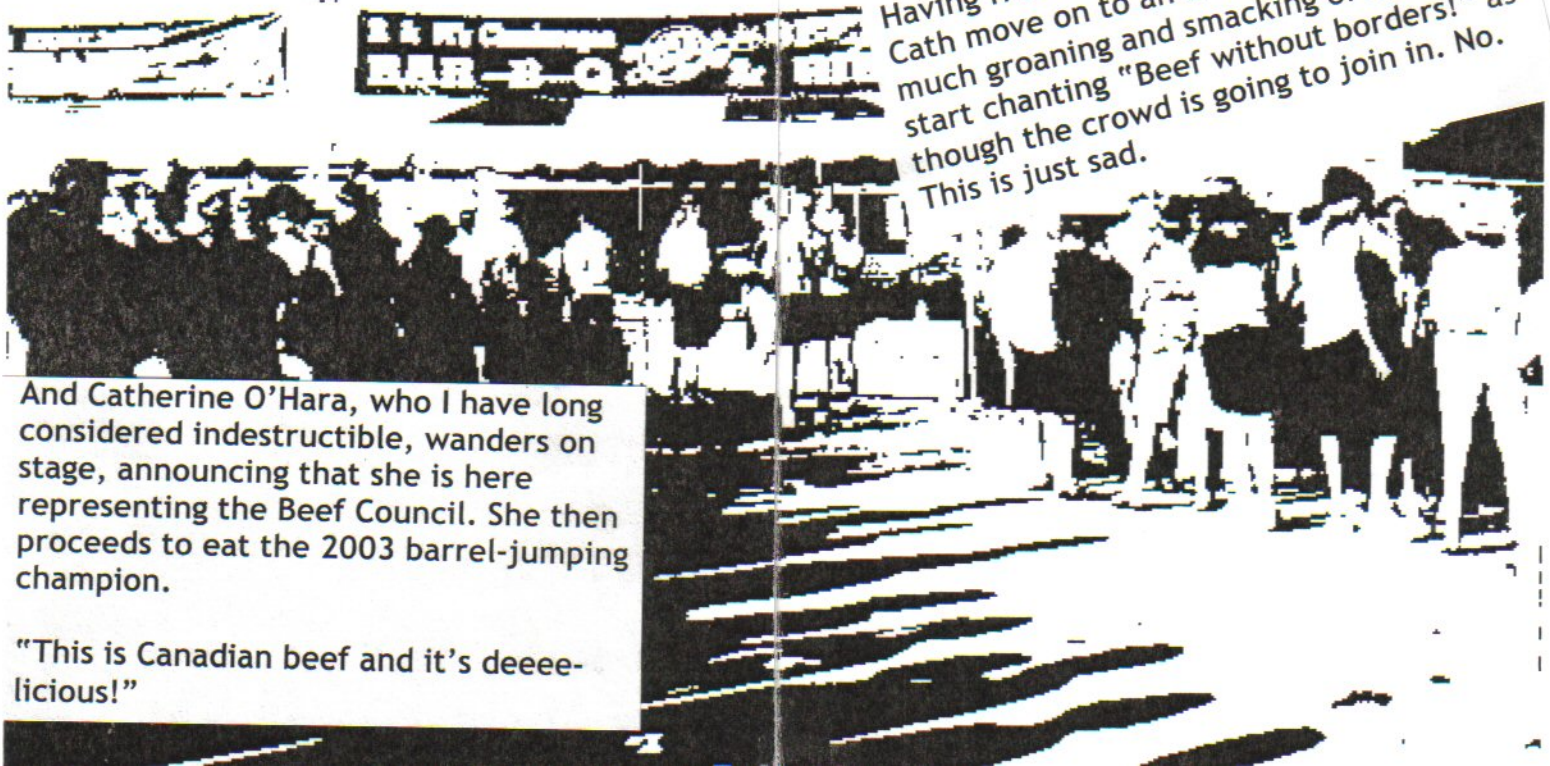
Next is a Quebecois band I don't know, thrown to the wolves in a half-remembered ritual of national unity. There is no nice way to say it. They certainly aren't any good, and they get nothing in return.

Angry boy is now lending his Y Chromosome to his equally angry girlfriend, who is taking it out on the next guys over - she berates them for invading 'their' space. This just seems unrealistic given the volume of bodies that are now spilling into our section; soon we'll all have to stand. But that doesn't stop Anger from lying flat on his back and snarling 'Get the fuck out!' at his neighbours, over and over again. This could turn into a brawl.

But the Angry Duo are interrupted, at around 2 pm, by the folks a couple rows up, who are gathered around the collapsed body of their friend and yelling for a medic. When none materializes, others join in, lending much loud pleading and waving of arms. It takes over 5 minutes for help to arrive.

Is this heat stroke? It's hot as fuck. Holy, they're taking her out on a stretcher. By now everyone is starting to clamber claustrophobically, jousting each other for elbow room.

"How does it feel to be making history?" we are asked by the resurgent Dan Aykroyd. Everyone tells me he's a great guy. What is he doing.



Having finished the Alberta beef, Dan and Cath move on to an Ontario carcass, with much groaning and smacking of lips. They start chanting "Beef without borders!" as though the crowd is going to join in. No. This is just sad.

And Catherine O'Hara, who I have long considered indestructible, wanders on stage, announcing that she is here representing the Beef Council. She then proceeds to eat the 2003 barrel-jumping champion.

"This is Canadian beef and it's deeee-licious!"

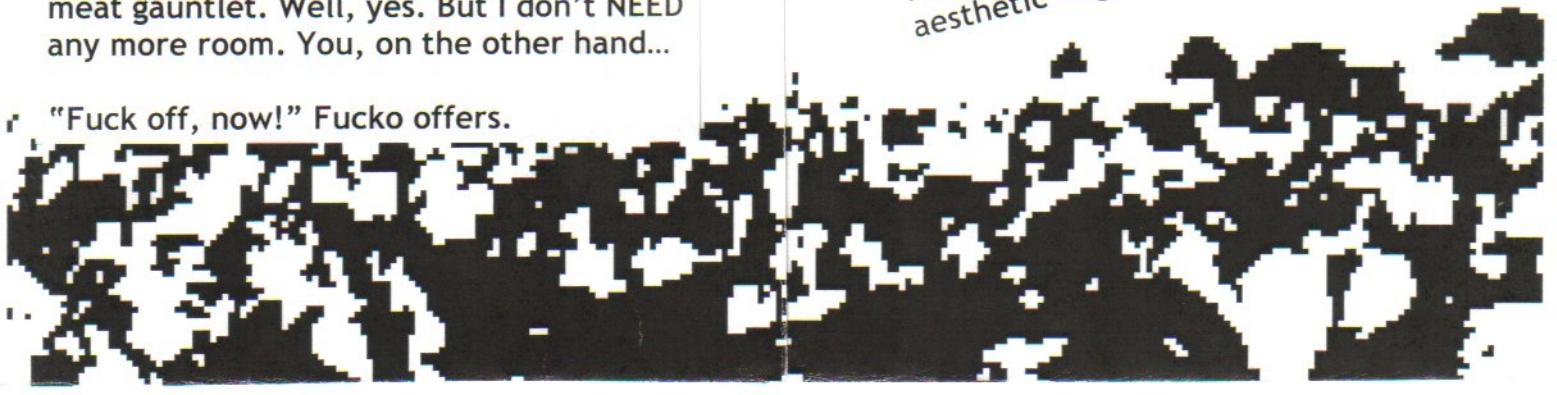
All I remember about the Tea Party set is Fucko (formerly Angry Boy only by now that doesn't quite capture it) expending WAY too much energy and invective getting me to move my empty chili bag, which has apparently crept within their land claim.

Yes, my food is gone - it was gone at 1. It sure was good. But now, how will I survive? I am determined not to move. And my allotted litre of water is going fast.

"There's lots of room back there," girlfriend insists, nodding toward the meat gauntlet. Well, yes. But I don't NEED any more room. You, on the other hand...

"Fuck off, now!" Fucko offers.

After some people also fail to rouse the crowd, waving large flags and shrieking "NO BORDERS" (the second part of that chant is "No nations," assholes), the Flaming Lips emerge with their strategic goofy spectacle - a mob of people in huge funny costumes dancing around amidst the band. This fits the scale while really falling a ways outside the megashow aesthetic - again, this is not an insult.

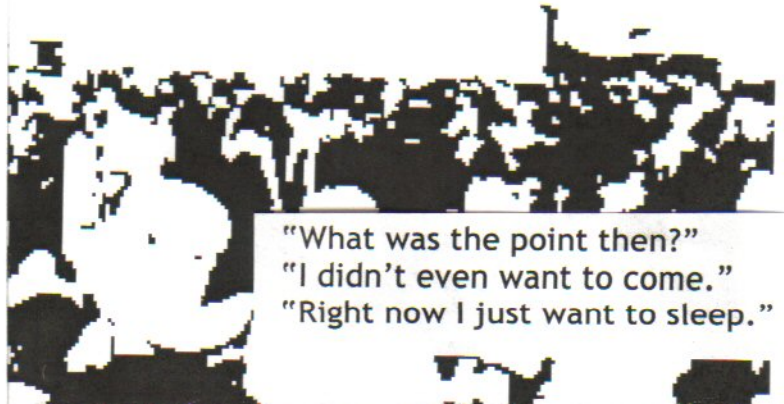


They had a bunch of large balloons floating around the stage. A woman dressed as a skunk tried to push hers out to the audience, but it always floated back at her, providing an amusing focus for my attention.

The music, hmm, the music. It is cute and nice, melodic 'new wave' from a band I've always heard about and never paid much attention to. However it seems to be all top end - toooo much string synth - and I can't always tell the songs apart. Also the beardy guy on lead is not so endearing when he starts acting out arena games himself - lots of exaggerated posturing and Kenny Loggins-like seal clapping.

Some guy comes and stands right on my dick - I mean RIGHT in front of me. When I sidle over as best I can, he sits down. Good thing he didn't try this trick on Fucko, from whom I am now inclined to take a couple lessons; in my dreams, ha.

Meanwhile, the posse directly behind me is arguing over whether to move.

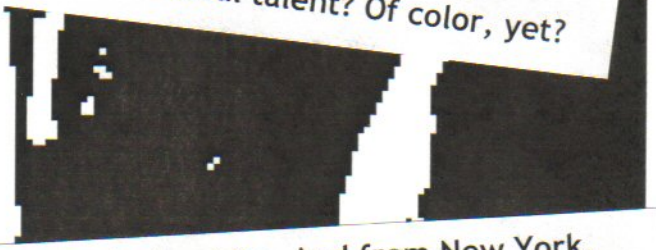


They beat it. As soon as they do, I hurl myself into the breach - and suddenly I don't just have ample leg room, I've got a fine parcel of distance between me and the Fucko twins. So the fact that I'm almost passing out doesn't matter so much. "ONE BOTTLE AN HOUR" the monitors command - and remember, they only let us bring two.

Sass Jordan, our next performer, is pretty insufferable with her big-fish showbiz baloney. Why oh why must all Canadian woman rock stars fall into the same bellowing nasal vibrato shtick? I do believe I spotted a drum solo there too.

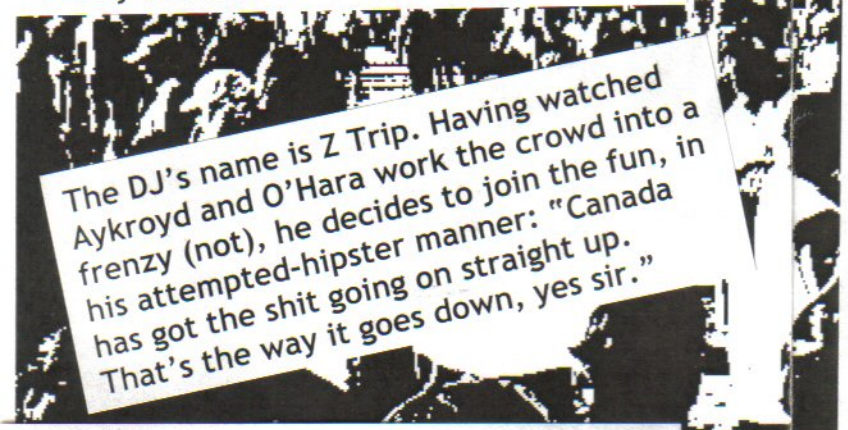
And then out comes Sass's special guest Jeff Healey - another white blues guy, this one something of a local guitar legend. And you know what - he kicks the set's ass around the block. AMP GAIN! Cutting through the Can Pop crap. Baby that is rock and roll.

With that jolt, I can almost forget if not forgive the dastardly meshugas of the Belushi-Aykroyd band (they're actually called Have Love Will Travel, but you won't catch me typing THAT again). And I'm excited to see that they have a DJ coming up for a between-band set. Perhaps some local talent? Of color, yet?



Except he's white. And from New York. Oh well. Lots of fantastic white DJ's out there. And since boosterism has bequeathed us Sass Jordan on this day, I think about tempering my disgust that they are shafting one genre where Toronto really does have some action. But then the guy starts to spin.

And what does he spin? "Mercedes Benz" with a rhythm track. Or how about "Smells Like Teen Spirit" backed by "Funky Drummer?" In its entirety!

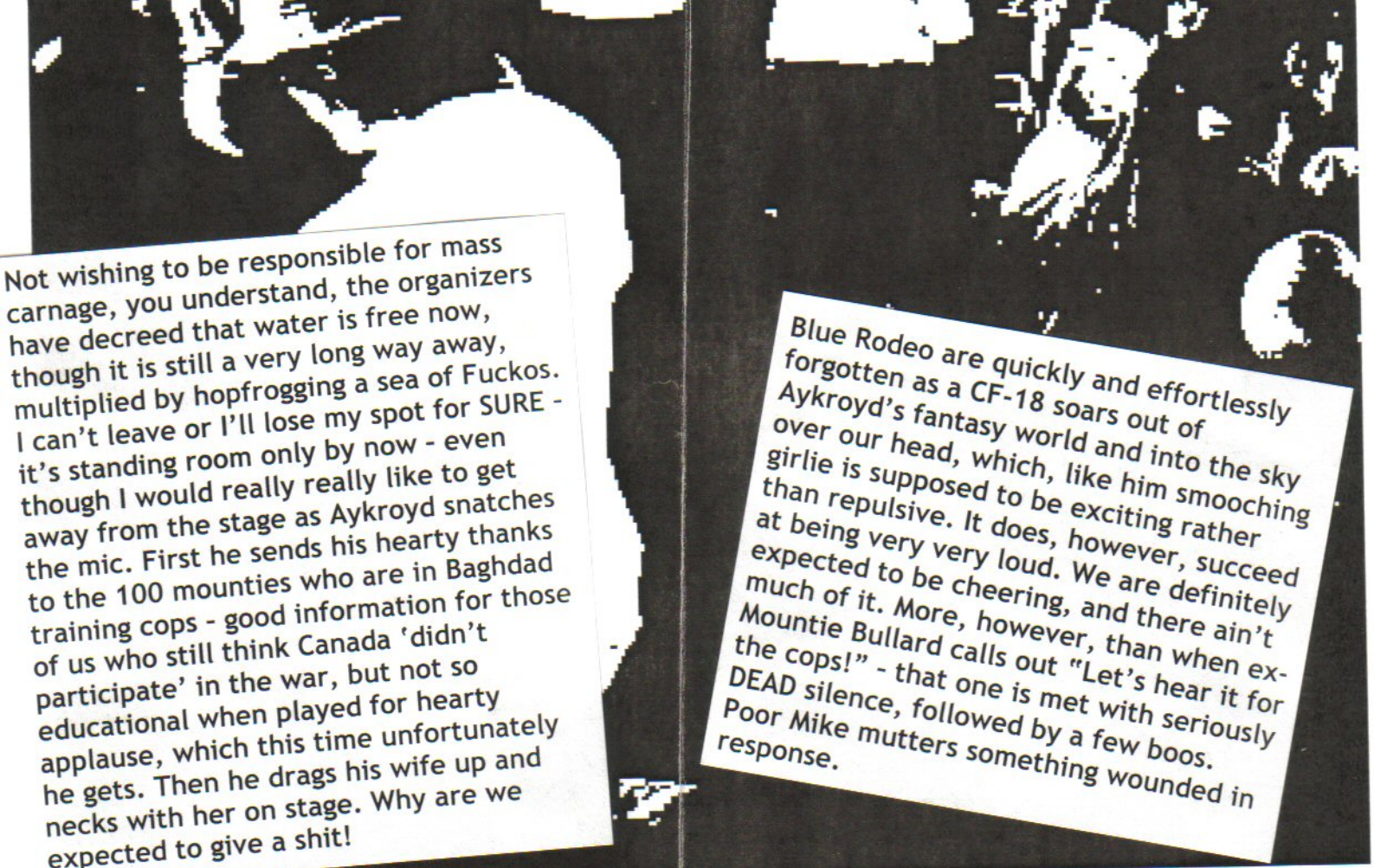


The DJ's name is Z Trip. Having watched Aykroyd and O'Hara work the crowd into a frenzy (not), he decides to join the fun, in his attempted-hipster manner: "Canada has got the shit going on straight up. That's the way it goes down, yes sir."

Very soon - the set times are getting hatcheted like crazy - the tepid turntablist gives way to the Isley Brothers. Wow, what a relief - black music played by BLACK MUSICIANS! Playing all their great songs too - It's Your Thing from 1969...That Lady from 1973...Shout from 1959...hmmm. Do I find myself, all of a sudden, at an OLDIES show? I start to tally the ages of the upcoming performers.

I admit that it is kind of nice to see these old shucks claiming these great songs as their own. I wonder whether they're going to play Twist and Shout, which they also wrote...hey wait. Twist and Shout. It suddenly dawns on me that Twist and Shout would have been written as a sequel to Shout to capitalize on a current dance craze - like the Trashmen's "Bird '65" or something. And then it was turned into something entirely new and different by the march of history, aka The Beatles. Another white band that played black music. Reminding us that the problem isn't necessarily white bands that play black music. I do believe the real problem must be white bands who SUCK.

Fifteen minutes later, the Isleys practically drop their instruments in following their orders to get the hell off stage. And then the fucking pseudo-Q107 Jive Bunny Z Trip comes back for more.



Not wishing to be responsible for mass carnage, you understand, the organizers have decreed that water is free now, though it is still a very long way away, multiplied by hopfrogging a sea of Fuckos. I can't leave or I'll lose my spot for SURE - it's standing room only by now - even though I would really really like to get away from the stage as Aykroyd snatches the mic. First he sends his hearty thanks to the 100 mounties who are in Baghdad training cops - good information for those of us who still think Canada 'didn't participate' in the war, but not so educational when played for hearty applause, which this time unfortunately he gets. Then he drags his wife up and necks with her on stage. Why are we expected to give a shit!

Blue Rodeo are quickly and effortlessly forgotten as a CF-18 soars out of Aykroyd's fantasy world and into the sky over our head, which, like him smooching girlie is supposed to be exciting rather than repulsive. It does, however, succeed at being very very loud. We are definitely expected to be cheering, and there ain't much of it. More, however, than when ex-Mountie Bullard calls out "Let's hear it for the cops!" - that one is met with seriously DEAD silence, followed by a few boos. Poor Mike mutters something wounded in response.

The slope steepens even more when - following an inexplicable second set of rhythm-and-Belushi, during which I reclaim my seat on the ground and read some Raymond Williams - Bullard announces the imminent set by Justin Timberlake. The crowd is clearly out for this glamorous popboy's blood. The guy rejoins with, "Before you get too cocky, remember, Loverboy are from Canada." Gee, I guess that means they won't be playing tonight - given the drift of the lineup I was starting to wonder...

By the end of his first song, I definitely feel more compassion for Timberlake than for the City of Toronto. He looks pretty miserable, boos and bottles flying his way with unrelenting, overflowing venom. His between-song response was pretty well handled...first he did the showbiz routine, with lots of gracious gratitude and demurring to the mighty Stones. Then he added something about how the SARS crisis shows how people can take whatever life dishes out and just...and then he gives the audience the finger.

And I KNOW it's another white guy on black tracks, but since he is also pegged by the fucko legions as "faggot," I'm not gonna lump him with Belushi. This is corporate pop, but as such it sure beats Sass Jordan. I can't remember how the songs went, but since I'm now fully in his corner, I observe that he and his band do at least have a sense of rhythm - and are at least YOUNG. I weep for the nation when, amid an incessant parade of old and older farts, it's the young fart that catches shit.

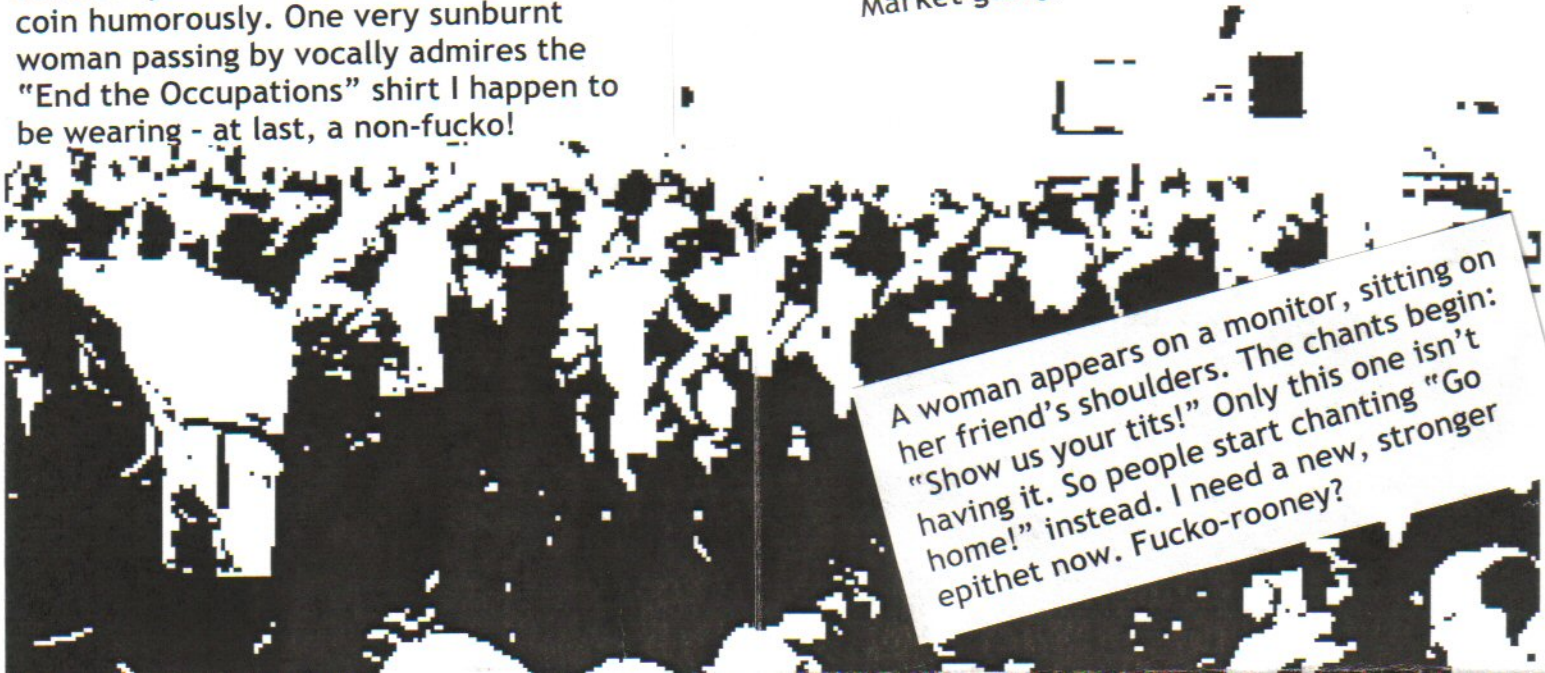
But I will admit: Timberlake makes a lousy human beat box.

In a bitterly anti-retro mood now that the crowd has shown its colors (and tits - kill the fucking video switcher!) I am shocked when the Guess Who's first song, "Hand Me Down Love," absolutely kicks ass! The sound is thick, the melody is gorgeous, and the performance is a bunch of old guys who never dreamed they'd play to an audience like this again. Later on Burton Cummings gets to be more than a bit much with his piano-mauling and Randy Bachman-chumming (like anyone believes it for a second), and the gamut of more familiar songs raises that retro stink again. But "Hand Me Down Love" remains. It will go on my next mix tape.

Having achieved a surfeit of retro music, we are then invited to welcome retro filmmaker Norman Jewison. Presenting, oh my fucking god, his newly-minted "Tribute to Toronto" video! So what makes Toronto great, Norm? Well, we've got mounties singing the national anthem...some VERY retro tokens of fashionable multiculturalism...aerial shots of tall buildings...and, of course, loads and loads of celebrities, prominently featuring...Norman Jewison. Yup, everything that makes Toronto great. Has the man no shame? Back to Bayview! Back I say!

During the dyspepsia of aural Don Mills that is Rush, (somebody please, rip off black music quick! And I don't mean the "rap" on Roll the Bones!) a new and exciting Fucko next door nearly clobbers a prick who gets a little too enthusiastic about moving up. Others nearby are trying the same thing. "Getting crowded!" somebody observes. "Sardinestock," I coin humorously. One very sunburnt woman passing by vocally admires the "End the Occupations" shirt I happen to be wearing - at last, a non-fucko!

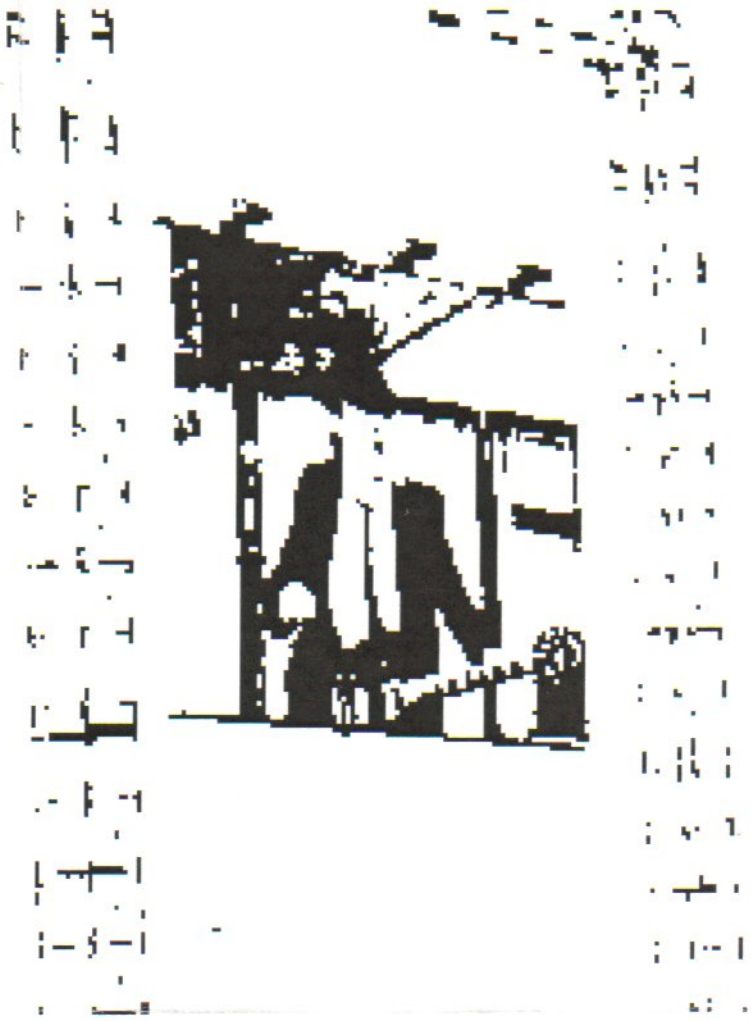
Somewhere around "Tom Sawyer" it occurs to me that this would be a really great place for a terrorist attack - kaboom, half the GTA plus the entire oldies circuit in one go. Too bad Poindexter never got his Terrorist Futures Market going, I'd have made a fortune.

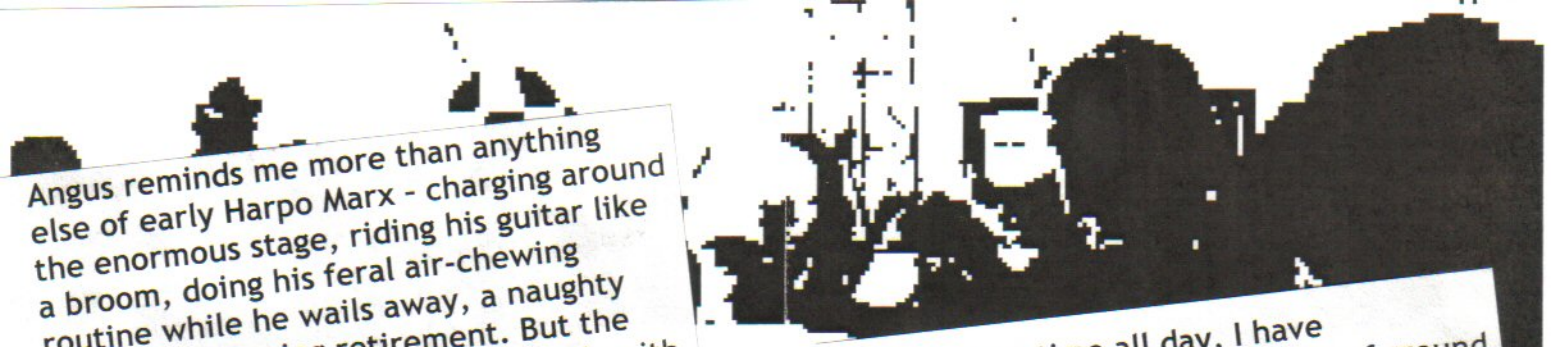


A woman appears on a monitor, sitting on her friend's shoulders. The chants begin: "Show us your tits!" Only this one isn't having it. So people start chanting "Go home!" instead. I need a new, stronger epithet now. Fucko-rooney?

It only remains to wait for the locals to clear the stage for AC/DC, and when they arrive suddenly I understand what artist-audience interaction is supposed to be. These people are in tune with the crowd! A buncha candidly blokish dudes who must surely be fiftysomething by now, burlesquing teenage sex craziness so obsessively and energetically that the women love it as much as the men - there's no detectable enjoyment gap in gender OR age here.

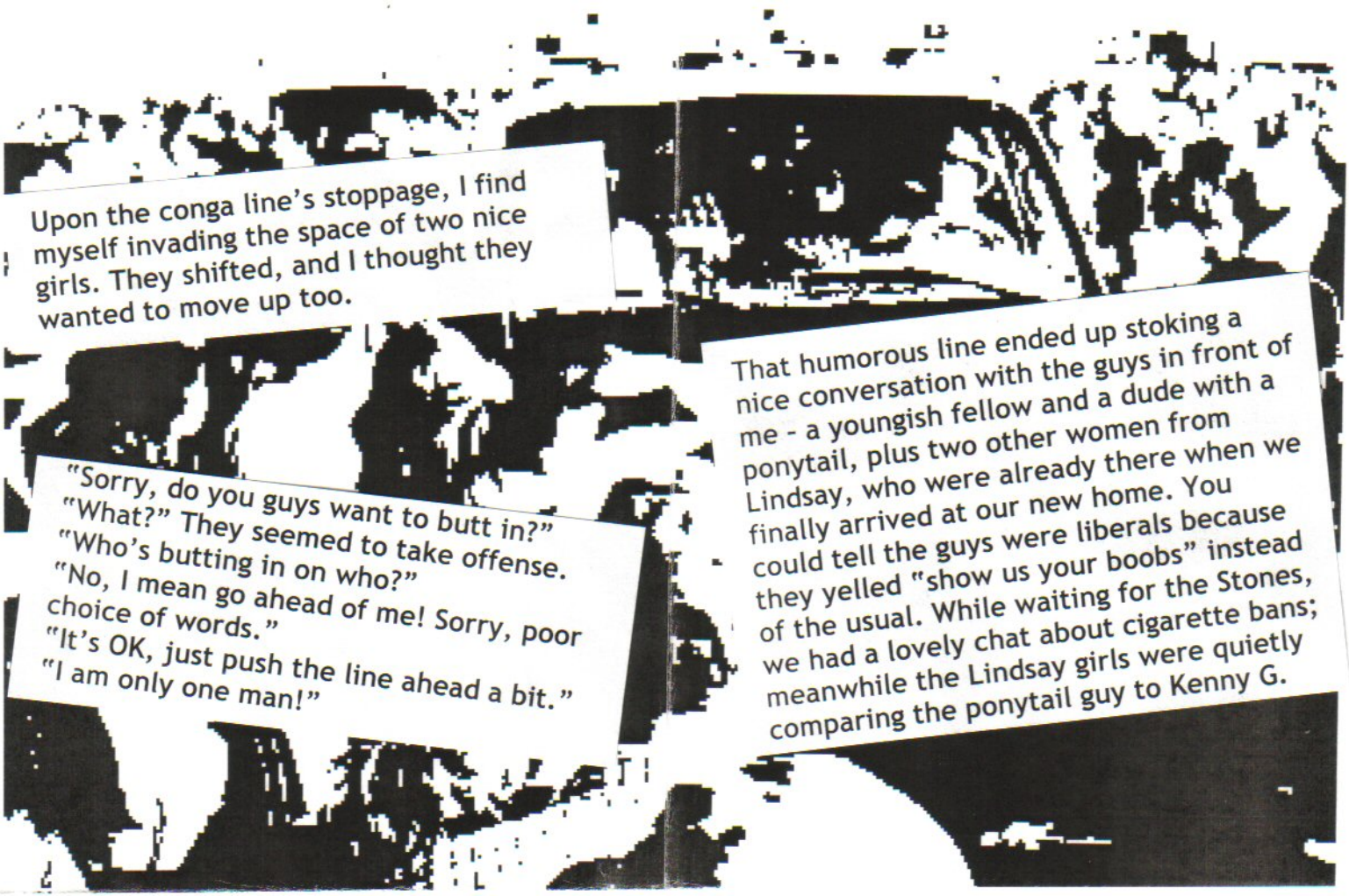
I do find that all their hits get a little redundant, musically anyway, when played back to back, as opposed to leaping out of the radio at odd intervals. But the music isn't even the point. The point is Angus Young.

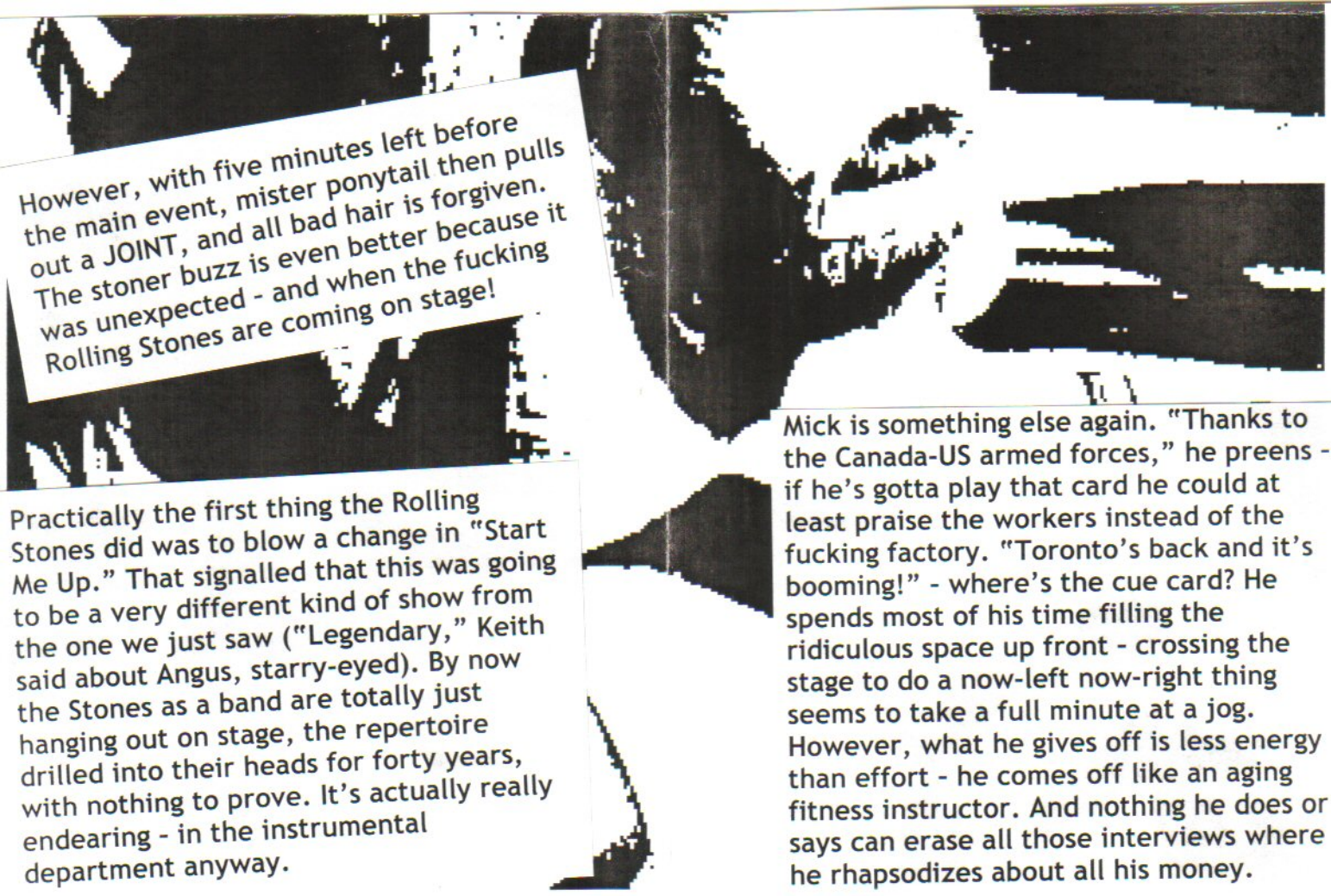




Angus reminds me more than anything else of early Harpo Marx - charging around the enormous stage, riding his guitar like a broom, doing his feral air-chewing routine while he wails away, a naughty school boy nearing retirement. But the most incredible thing is how he deals with the escalating "Show us your tits" brigade. First, he shows us HIS tits. Later, he turns his guitar into a mock schlong between Brian Johnson's legs, thus levelling the playing field, seriously. Then he engages in an extended, elaborate strip tease setpiece, ending with him pulling down his drawers to reveal a set of maple leaf undies. There is little doubt in my mind that this is all a calculated and brilliant set of tactics to check the audience's asshole tendencies, WITHOUT wrecking the party or getting prudish, a feat deserving of sainthood.

For the first time all day, I have consciously moved from my spot of ground and started to push up further. Not too far, but right up to the vicinity of a secondary mosh pit. The pit decorum is about B+ in these parts. The surfers aren't kicking their damn boots around too enthusiastically, I only get my glasses knocked off once, and none of the woman surfers seem to be groped - I was concerned, believe me. With this under my belt, I latch onto a convoy moving in even further, exploiting the mild post-AC/DC exodus (!) so that I am now almost in front of the stage, maybe half the section back, still quite a ways away but everything's relative.


Upon the conga line's stoppage, I find myself invading the space of two nice girls. They shifted, and I thought they wanted to move up too.
"Sorry, do you guys want to butt in?"
"What?" They seemed to take offense.
"Who's butting in on who?"
"No, I mean go ahead of me! Sorry, poor choice of words."
"It's OK, just push the line ahead a bit."
"I am only one man!"
That humorous line ended up stoking a nice conversation with the guys in front of me - a youngish fellow and a dude with a ponytail, plus two other women from Lindsay, who were already there when we finally arrived at our new home. You could tell the guys were liberals because they yelled "show us your boobs" instead of the usual. While waiting for the Stones, we had a lovely chat about cigarette bans; meanwhile the Lindsay girls were quietly comparing the ponytail guy to Kenny G.

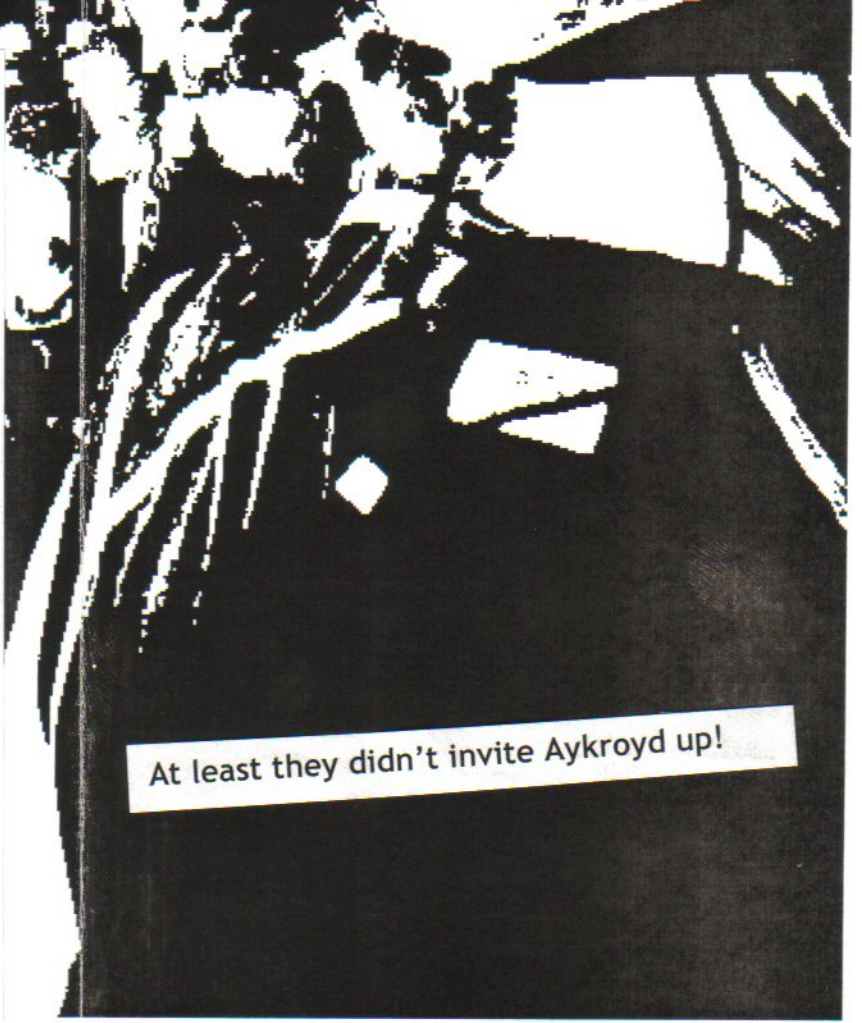


However, with five minutes left before the main event, mister ponytail then pulls out a JOINT, and all bad hair is forgiven. The stoner buzz is even better because it was unexpected - and when the fucking Rolling Stones are coming on stage!

Practically the first thing the Rolling Stones did was to blow a change in "Start Me Up." That signalled that this was going to be a very different kind of show from the one we just saw ("Legendary," Keith said about Angus, starry-eyed). By now the Stones as a band are totally just hanging out on stage, the repertoire drilled into their heads for forty years, with nothing to prove. It's actually really endearing - in the instrumental department anyway.

Mick is something else again. "Thanks to the Canada-US armed forces," he preens - if he's gotta play that card he could at least praise the workers instead of the fucking factory. "Toronto's back and it's booming!" - where's the cue card? He spends most of his time filling the ridiculous space up front - crossing the stage to do a now-left now-right thing seems to take a full minute at a jog. However, what he gives off is less energy than effort - he comes off like an aging fitness instructor. And nothing he does or says can erase all those interviews where he rhapsodizes about all his money.

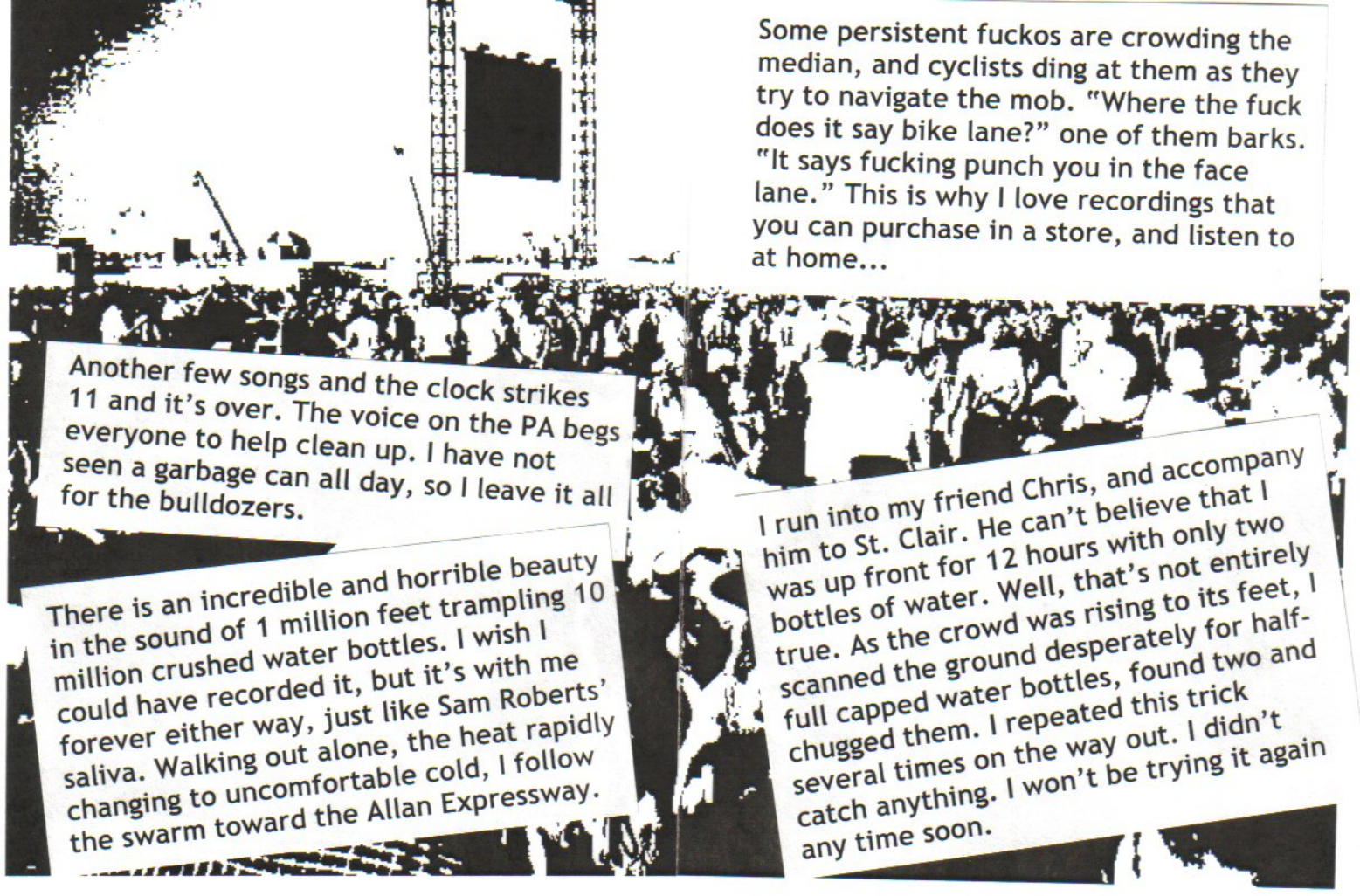
Then, however, comes a dramatic and extremely tense moment, during "Miss You" - which, as the Stones' disco anthem, I thought was a perfect complement to the day's racial fuckery in the first place. Then, suddenly, out popped...Justin Timberlake! And he started singing it with Mick as a duet. This was a pretty stunning show of solidarity, an act of bravery seen nowhere else in the set, and you could hear the Fucko Forces mulling it over as it happened. Do we BOO? The STONES? There was this agonizing lull. And then something snapped, and someone decided, yes! we do boo the STONES. And so the hooting began and the water bottles flew as before. On the monitors you could see Timberlake flipping the bird again, plus Keith muscling forward to have angry words with the aggressors in the front row. At the end of the song, the boos continued, which you could tell the old boys were not accustomed to. This was a thrilling, galvanizing rock and roll moment.



At least they didn't invite Aykroyd up!

To get rid of the boos, Mick plods through an "I don't know about you, but I'm having a pretty good time tonight. Are you having a good time?" And, yes, it worked; the crowd cheered and then they were back on track. For a while anyway; then came time for Keith's turn in the spotlight. As if to wreak revenge on the Justin-haters, the man gave forth with an eerily awful, jazzed-out rendition of The Nearness of You. The yobs near me, not huge jazz fans, started booing KEITH; this was truly sacrilege, and as such thrilling in its way too, and educational; even the Stones are trapped in their musical box by the demands of their audience. Keith once again responded aggressively, this time by completely bollixing the words to Happy.

Before long Mick is back for Sympathy for the Devil, in which one line gives the proof of everything that has gone wrong with this guy. Mick's evident contempt for his audience has expressed itself as lazy phrasing for at least 25 years, but "Just as every cop is a cwiminal" also implies a contempt for the song itself - like he can't identify with (or sell) the sentiment any more. So he trivializes it, mocks it, places himself above it with that horrible mocking lisp. This makes quite a contrast to a line in The Nearness of You, which Keith customized so that it read, "I feel yuz close beside me." That grammatical transgression shows a common touch that may well never die - kind of like Keith himself, who in his advancing decrepitude is starting to resemble your thumb after you've been in the bath for too long. One more reason to be thankful for my decision to attend - one of these geezers really are going to keel over pretty soon.

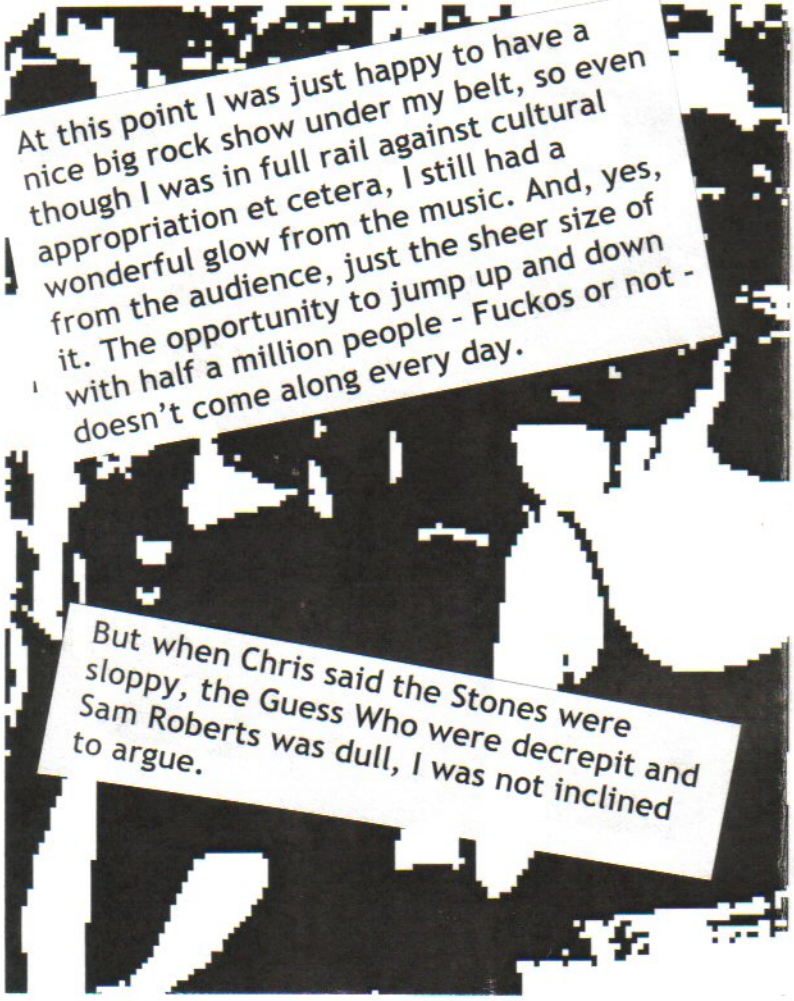


Some persistent fuckos are crowding the median, and cyclists ding at them as they try to navigate the mob. "Where the fuck does it say bike lane?" one of them barks. "It says fucking punch you in the face lane." This is why I love recordings that you can purchase in a store, and listen to at home...

Another few songs and the clock strikes 11 and it's over. The voice on the PA begs everyone to help clean up. I have not seen a garbage can all day, so I leave it all for the bulldozers.

There is an incredible and horrible beauty in the sound of 1 million feet trampling 10 million crushed water bottles. I wish I could have recorded it, but it's with me forever either way, just like Sam Roberts' saliva. Walking out alone, the heat rapidly changing to uncomfortable cold, I follow the swarm toward the Allan Expressway.

I run into my friend Chris, and accompany him to St. Clair. He can't believe that I was up front for 12 hours with only two bottles of water. Well, that's not entirely true. As the crowd was rising to its feet, I scanned the ground desperately for half-full capped water bottles, found two and chugged them. I repeated this trick several times on the way out. I didn't catch anything. I won't be trying it again any time soon.



In the concert's wake, there were unreasonable volumes of discussion and debate around the relative merits of the concert. This gave me many opportunities to re-examine the problematic politics, uncertain musical moments and pathetic boosterism that characterized Sardinestock.

And you know what? At 11:05 pm on Thursday, July 31, I turned on the CBC and saw the video footage of Mick singing "Start Me Up." And damn if it didn't start me up. Suddenly in my mother's TV room, I was seized with the uncontrollable urge to dance again. To dance like Mick, no less.

So I did!