

Apocalicks Mao

(icey)
 soft hands on quiet flesh
 the world eating itself
 eternal regurgitation
 bile denial—
 honey girls attracting
 swarms of eyes
 the wind slapping your face
 a young child's monstrous clap
 jaundice fear in your
 too close breath
 trumpeting the air in mighty triumph
 existence explained by
 the successful tragedy
 of the titanic
 possible death
 flowers taking pictures us
 everywhere
 wide angle
 waves of metal teeth
 licking at our legs
 cats lapping up milk
 the malady is absorbed
 people burning flames
 drowning waves
 eating hunger
 barooching elephants
 night swallowing you up in
 one gradual thunder
 twinkie souls
 day colliding much
 too fast with you

one hand manipulates the others
 (i see)

—Chris Singler

Allure

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Notes From the Underground: Part Two

Andrews Howell

London Correspondent

As soon as I cleared customs, I noticed that London is a busy town. They zip around in their little four-bangers like they'll be in physical pain if they don't get to point "B" before the rest of London. Back in Mexico they were all in a hurry too, but they just enjoyed speeding. Londoners have a psychological need to place every single one of their cohorts.

One of those double decker buses took me to Victoria Station, where I grabbed a cab for Bayswater. I rode with my eyes closed and my seatbelt secure. In the roundabouts that govern most of the traffic in London, I kept expecting to see Charlton Heston pass our cab in a Roman Chariot. I was glad it was not me driving.

In our cab, I tried to talk to the driver about the cold, damp English weather. That was when I realized that Americans have a ton of misconceptions about the English; the most important being the idea that people in England speak English the American ear has been lulled into laziness by smooth talkers like Peter Jennings and Joan London, people who enunciate each syllable so concisely that one can comprehend with minimal concentration. That fast talking English cab driver did not speak any language I knew.

In the hotel lobby, I realized that during the tourist season there were more foreigners in this town than there were Native Londoners. Good! That would help me fit in. Jet lag struck, and I crashed until evening.

I awoke, remembering that Bruno, the Killer, had been sent to kill. I knew I was in London the moment I stepped off that 767 from Philadelphia. Bruno was that good, one of the finest assassins America had created. Time was running.

I knew Bruno, I knew exactly where he would spend his leisure time.

"Take me to the Red Light District," I told the cab driver. "Red Light District?"

"Yeah you know, whores, sexshops, that sort of thing."

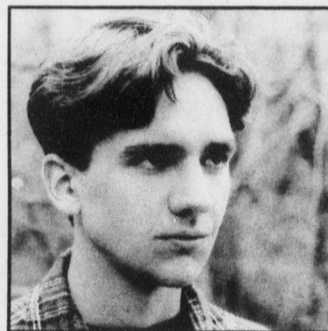
He laughed, "You mean Soho." Soho. The chief told me to have a drink there.

"Do you know a bar called

'The Best Little Horse House In Soho'?"

"It's a pub," the cabbie corrected me. Right."

We have nothing in America that compared to a pub. A pub is more than a place to drink. In a pub you sit in old comfy furniture, eat "chips," which we call French Fries, and meet all sorts of interesting people. When I left the airport, I thought that the English



Howell
 C.I.A. Operative

were cold and introverted, but I threw out that idea when I sat in the Horse House. Pubs are warm, classy places where the conversation is better than the food, but not quite as good as the beer.

From my seat in the corner, I could see all the exits and the entire clientele of the pub. I sipped a Guinness. Thick, heady, creamy stuff; Guinness is real beer. A small grey man stood in front of a "beau-peep" slot machine. Every so often I heard change jingle into the tray. The old guy left his game and walked to my booth real casually. He sat across from me.

"John Farley?" he said.

"The same," I said, reaching up my sleeve. The dagger lives there.

"Relax." His accent was not American, but it was not really English either. "I'm David West. Chief sent me to show you around this metropolis." He spoke from the side of his mouth, his teeth were all crooked.

"You English?" I asked.

"Good lord no. Canadian." He smiled. Great. Canadian.

"You're awfully young," he noticed.

"You're awfully Canadian," I replied.

"He laughed, unrolling a newspaper. It's headline read: 'Commerce Chairperson Dies.' 'Your Pal Bruno.'"

I skimmed the article. "Did people Actually believe this guy slipped in spilled tea?"

"Well they marked the time of death at around 4 P.M."

I gave him a "what are you babbling about?" look.

"Tea time."

Oh.

"I see Bruno, every day," he said in the same way someone would say, "I brush my teeth everyday." He smiled again.

"He's dangerous. He knows you follow him," he said, putting the accent on the last syllable. "He goes into a little strip place down here at 11:00 P.M. every night." He pointed and winked. "El Sharpo."

"Take me there."

"Alright," he said, "but don't expect me to go in."

"Don't worry."

West split and I stood in front of a small door that unlike many other on the street, was not framed by neon lights. That made me worry. A shapely girl with a messy face stepped from the doorway. She was like any of the short skirted whores who stood in doorways of massage parlors, video shops, and adult book stores in this neighborhood.

"Want to see a live dance show? Two drinks, two pounds," she grinned.

"Sounds like a deal," I said.

Down in a waiting room, really a sofa in a dark cubicle, I waited for the next show to start. Another girl sat next to me, close.

"This is a personalized show, Love. You have to tell me what you want."

"Information." I pulled out a picture of Bruno.

Suddenly a door swung open and a huge black man came from a room where throbbing music shook the lights. Another happy costumer I figured.

"You got 200 pounds?" he asked politely.

"Why?" This was trouble. This stunk.

"Let me rephrase. I'm a kick boxer, now you got 200 pounds?"

I stood. He reached for my windpipe.

I had not even seen a naked girl yet,

Andy Howell is a Junior currently studying through Guilford's abroad program in London.