

MIAMI
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with her. Ate dinner and drank Moët with some lucky guys who happened to be staying at the same hotel (Hotel Nash) as Jay-Z's entourage. Went clubbing at V Lounge with VIP admittance. Dished the previous fellas and chilled with Jay-Z's entourage. Deduced the reason for their presence in Miami was to film the video "Big Pimpin'," the latest Hype Williams production. Were invited to the video shoot.

Day 2 - Monday. Missed the video shoot due to our inability to wake up at 9 a.m. Went to the beach. Went to the "Big Pimpin'" wrap party at the Tides Hotel. Hung out with the Roc-a-Fella clique. Arrived at the nightclub Level with Jay-Z's crew. Sat VIP, drank Cristal and danced to the best music. Met Tennessee Titans' Jevon Kearse and Milwaukee Bucks' Ray Allen. Also met Trick Daddy and Too Short. Stayed at the Delano Hotel.

Day 3 - Tuesday. Went shopping all day at the Aventura Mall. Recuperated. Went to Groovejet, which was horribly fratty and Spring Break-infested. Stuffed our faces at the late-night joint Wolfie's, recommended by Miami police.

Day 4 - Wednesday. Bought a great bottle of tanning accelerator for \$10. Went to the beach all day and got burned. Went to Allen Iverson's Party at the All Star Café. Sat VIP, drank loads of Hennessy. Left to chill at the Delano with Jay-Z, who was surprisingly blasting Dave Matthews on his stereo. Went back to Iverson's party, nearly touching him from a foot away. Met some big-baller (millionaires) who told us they'd fly us out to the Bahamas. Ended the

night watching television and drinking Moët in Jay-Z's bungalow at the Delano.

Day 5 - Thursday. Went on a lunch date while friends ate out with the millionaires. Had plane tickets bought. Went to Club 609, sat VIP, drank shots and danced to great music.

Day 6 - Friday. Went to airport. While waiting for flight, met Dark Child, the production group responsible for Destiny's Child's "Say My Name," Whitney Houston's "It's Not Right, but It's Okay" and other Mary J. Blige and Brandy hits. Hung out with the guys on the flight. Arrived in Nassau. Were shown around town and met locals. Ate dinner at the Atlantis Resort, a half-billion dollar miniature planet with casinos, aquariums and luxury suites. Chilled with Dark Child, watched the sunrise in a huge hot tub and slept two hours at the Crystal Palace Hotel.

Day 7 - Saturday. Moved to the Atlantis after hotel checkout and pampered ourselves in a hotel suite there. Ate ice cream, walked around Nassau, and flew back to Miami, where we were treated to a lavish Japanese dinner, then made the trip home to Atlanta.

If there's any question to the validity of this story, there are plenty of restaurant, club and hotel mementos, pictures and the accounts of my fellow Tar Heels, who saw me partying my heart out in Miami - my paradise during the shortest week of my life.

Miami offers the extravagant life for the takers, which only the right make-the-most-of-it attitude will grant. The nightlife, the highlife; it's all a state of mind waiting to be grasped by its residents and tourists. It's up to you.

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SAN FRANCISCO
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"Structure and Surface: Contemporary Japanese Textiles."

In the next room three parallel white canvases titled "White Painting" hang opposite a bright blue canvas in a room of mid-century works. And another wide doorway leads into a gallery of more realistic paintings including some that border on photography.

The walls change monthly according to what works the museum has acquired and what temporary exhibits the curators have brought in. "The Museum has made a number of stellar acquisitions in the past two years, including 14 works from Robert Rauschenberg, 22 Ellsworth Kelly works and a number of extraordinary contemporary acquisitions including Chris Ofili's 'Princess of the Posse,'" Silva said.

Even those who don't follow the art scene might have heard Ofili's name recently for his dung-covered interpretive painting of the Virgin Mary, which led to an attempt by New York City's mayor to withdraw funding from the museum that hosted the "offensive" work.

Rauschenberg, author of the aforementioned "White Painting," doesn't hold such a glamorous name, but the story of his art hits closer to home. The acclaimed artist hails from Black Mountain, N.C.

Past another gallery full of more of

the North Carolina artist's work, a wood floor hallway leads into slightly smaller rooms. As a group of viewers looked at the black-and-white photographs that adorned the walls Friday, Dr. Virginia Bria explained that SFMOMA was one of the first museums to begin collecting photography in the 1920s.

Bria is a docent, part of the museum's large educational team, and was giving a tour of SFMOMA's large permanent photography exhibit.

"(In the early part of the century) the photographers start playing with the media, start manipulating it and that's when we began thinking of photography as art," Bria said.

The permanent exhibit displays only 100 of the more than 10,000 photographs that SFMOMA owns, but one could spend hours looking at the detailed, moving documentaries of modern life.

Of course, that wouldn't leave much time to explore the sculpture galleries or displays of media art.

SFMOMA would take days to examine in its entirety, but Silva said it takes a lot of works to display over a century of art - a time period that includes a number of mediums and masterworks.

"The diversity reflects the purview of the Museum," she said. "In other words, to collect and exhibit a wide range of art that can reflect the broad span of modern and contemporary art."

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It's All 'Taulk': A New Yorker's Confession



DAVID POVILL
DUTY CALLS

I was born and raised in New York. My parents both hail from Brooklyn. We "taulk" about taking a "wauk" down the block to get some "caffee." I curse. Specifically, I say "f--in'" a lot. Southerners hate me. I'm a New Yorker.

But I have a dirty secret. I'm not really a New Yorker. I'm from "upstate" New York. For those of you unfamiliar with the area, being from upstate New York and calling yourself a New Yorker is pretty much the same as being from Florida and calling yourself a Southerner.

So I'm ashamed. When people ask me where I'm from, I say, "New Yauk." When they ask, "Where in New York?" I usually say something like, "Just outside the city, up the river a little ways."

When they again ask, "Where?" I mumble, inaudibly, "Upstate." When they ask, "What was that?" I scream, "Upstate, you nosy bastard!" then punch them in the neck and run away like a girl.

Upstater just don't command respect the way city kids do. You don't look around and decide to lock your

doors when driving through upstate. Hell, you don't even have to lock your door when you live in upstate. So, I guess it's fair to say that I'm something of a "country mouse."

So when I had to take a trip into the big bad city over Spring Break, I was admittedly a little scared. I mean, to paraphrase one of the great social philosophers of our time, John Rocker, "Crackheads and junkies and queers, oh my!"

But my journalistic duty dragged me through the gritty streets of New York to witness a gritty street drama about some gritty street urchins trying to make it in the gritty city. In other words, the paper sent me to go see

the musical "Rent." (Ah, the perks of being a pseudo-journalist.)

So off I went, a petrified country mouse armed only with his street smarts, a subway map and a spastic colon to protect myself and my sweet country mousette. Down the urine-soaked tunnels of the subways I crept, until my train arrived, which I then warily boarded. Not sure of what dangers awaited me, I said a silent prayer (the Shemah, if you must know) and opened my eyes.

What I saw was quite a shock. All around me were (Gasp!) ... college kids. Friendly ones, at that. They were from a school in Virginia and were doing some sort of mission in New York, spreading the word of Jesus or whatever religion they were. I wasn't really paying much attention. They could have been Satan worshippers, for all I know. I was just happy they didn't try to rape me.

Thankfully, the subway ride was rape-free, and I got off at Times Square, where my girlfriend and I parted ways with our new friends, who were off to travel around the city and impale babies with spikes, or some-

thing like that. Again, I wasn't paying much attention.

But I was relieved. I had braved the worst and come out alive. I had a new admiration and respect for the city. I was ready to enjoy a free show!

To make a long story short, "Rent" was amazing. (By the way, if you go to see it, be sure to get the Peanut M&M's. They're delicious!)

After seeing the show, I felt as though I was ready to face any freaks that might befall me. If they bothered me, I'd just sing my way to safety. Unfortunately, the subway ride home was fairly uneventful, as was the rest of my trip to the city, so I was unable to put my recent street education to use.

But now that I'm safely back in good ol' North Cack, with a sweet tea in my hand as I kick back and watch Carolina spank Stanford like a dominatrix does to a perverted old man in an oversized diaper, I have to admit, you can take the boy out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the boy.

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SEATTLE
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In the year 2000, grunge has immortalized itself in the nation's cultural consciousness. Nirvana's "On a Plain" has found its way into the loudspeakers blasting out over the kiddie fairgrounds next to the Space Needle. There's a photo of the group in an exhibit at the Seattle Museum of Art.

And Seattle's rep for rock has even spawned a capitalist venture. Ex-Microsoft mogul Paul Allen was inspired enough to found the Experience Music Project, an interactive music museum to open mid-year.

Looming over the Seattle Center, the under-construction museum looks something like a melted stained glass window. The project, which "celebrates and explores creativity and innovation in American popular music as exemplified by rock 'n' roll," is dedicated to the memory of Jimi Hendrix.

So Seattle's musical past has earned its place in the American pop culture canon. But what about its future?

I headed to scenester neighborhood Capitol Hill to get the scoop on Seattle 2000. "Everybody's in a band, everyone plays an instrument," the employees of hip used clothing store Buffalo Exchange told me. No surprises there.

More surprisingly, the legacy of grunge has far from loosened its hold on the Northwest. In the week of Feb. 20, for example, the new Mudhoney album was No. 3 in Seattle-area record sales. The debut from ex-Soundgarden frontman Chris Cornell took the eleventh spot. And the Foo Fighters, with ex-Nirvana member Dave Grohl, placed at No. 7.

But the No. 1 spot - perhaps most indicative of the state that Seattle music

is in these days - went to Seattle indie rock heavyweights Modest Mouse.

An Urban Outfitters employee verified my suspicions when I asked for her input. "Indie is big, indie rock," she said.

Between Seattle and its southern neighbor, Olympia, the Northwest is churning out hit indie acts faster than you can say Superchunk. Home to indie labels Kill Rock Stars, K Records and Yo Yo Records and bands like Sleater-Kinney and Beat Happening, Olympia serves as ground zero for the Northwest's indie scene.

But Seattle has its own contenders. Relative newcomers Death Cab for Cutie, Pedro the Lion and Juno are on their way up the indie ladder. And the city has Sub Pop Records, which has been setting the Seattle stage since 1990 as the label home to Nirvana, Soundgarden and Mudhoney. Now, it's home to indie old-timers Sunny Day Real Estate and Love As Laughter.

Throw Seattle pseudo-metal sensation the Murder City Devils onto Sub Pop's artist roster, and you've got a pretty volatile mix of rock power.

Sub Pop's wittily named retail outlet, the Sub Pop Mega Mart, is a ratty hole-in-the-wall in Seattle's famous Pike Place Market. I ask the counter guy for his input on what's up in the city these days.

"You mean like, next big thing?" he asks. It's a loaded question.

Seattle's chances to spawn another groundbreaking movement like grunge are slim. But the city probably doesn't need another "big thing," its place in musical history is made. And its current resident bands seem OK with escaping MTV notoriety, if only for the moment.

Now, if only Seattle's clubs weren't off-limits to the unfortunately underage.

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NEW YORK
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received a Tony award for best score in 1996.

The critically acclaimed play masterfully weaves the lives of a strikingly true-to-life cast of characters.

Through the narration of the lead role, Mark, an aspiring filmmaker, the unique stories of Mark's ex-girlfriend, ex-roommate, best friend and roommate all come to life, touching the hearts of audience members.

Pope's character, Roger, for example, is Mark's present roommate. He's a musician struggling to write "one great song" before falling prey to HIV and eventually full-blown AIDS as he sings in one of the show's most stirring songs, "Glory."

Roger also struggles with a seemingly doomed relationship with Mimi, a heroin addict and erotic dancer with a heart of gold.

The story is obviously not sugar-coated. It is a love story, but only among the many hardships and losses faced in New York City. Many characters are dealing with HIV, drug-addiction and homelessness.

Pope fell ill last week and couldn't perform in the show this reporter had the chance to see over Spring Break. An understudy played Roger's part in his place.

But the performance still noticeably touched the audience. Many people reached for a tissue during "Glory," which is only the second song of the play, and the tissues continued to appear as many more tear-jerking scenes followed.

What is so striking about the play is that it is definitively modern but also classic. The characters, while based on

those of "La Boheme," are crafted with such meticulous care that you feel you truly know all of them within one act.

So deep are the characters and so moving is the music that often a single scene will leave the audience choked up for minutes on end.

But the beauty of the show is the realism. It's not all AIDS and dying, but it's also not all smiles and jokes.

"It's a period piece, really. It was written in 1994, so it's really about people living in 1994," Pope said of the play. "There's been a lot of progress since then, specifically with AZT and other AIDS medications."

Pope said the play was essentially about love, human relationships and survival in a very harsh world.

When asked to sum up "Rent" in his own words Pope said, "It's about a group of friends trying to make it in life and figure out what's really important." "And what they find is that love is what counts - love for themselves and each other," he said.

"Jonathan Larson wrote a really incredible piece of work. It's wonderful to be part of it."

Larson, who toiled over "Rent" for two years before it opened off-Broadway in 1996, was unfortunately never able to see his masterpiece completed.

In a tragic twist of fate, Larson died a week before the show opened, at the age of 35. He was not alive to receive his three Tonys and numerous other treasured theater awards.

"People think that it's sad that (Larson) won't get to see his own great accomplishment, but I think he sees it," Pope said. "His spirit will live on in the show."

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