

so much style that it's wasted ...

artsweek

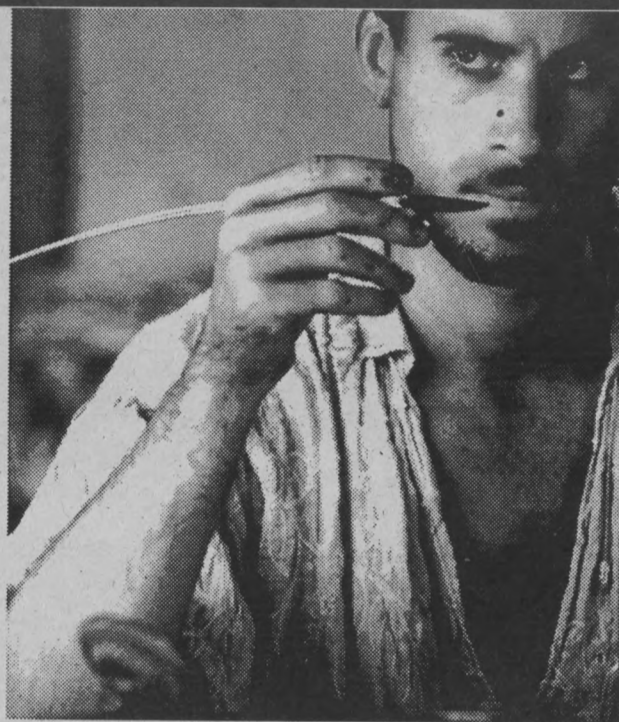
BRAYN SIRJUNZ
REPORT

THE SOCIOLOGICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF
A LESBIAN SLAYER ON "BUFFY"

"SLAM" "DEJA VU"
+ "THE FACULTY" REVIEWED! P. 7A

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GALLERY 1434



THE MOTHER OF ALL FILM REVIEWS ISSUE

HERE,
ARTS WEEK LOOKS AT
"SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE."

BY TAMI MNOIAN
Artsweek Editor

After seeing "Shakespeare in Love," director John Madden's latest and greatest contribution to fine cinema, there is one question left wandering in my mind: Was William Shakespeare really that good-looking?

Perhaps, perhaps not, and it seems that the casting of Joseph Fiennes as the lusty playwright is an effort to romanticize the character of William Shakespeare — one of the greatest romantics on Earth. Is this possible? As Will Shakespeare, Fiennes is clever and witty, a gambler of sorts, a bit eccentric, and did I mention good-looking? He embodies all the qualities one would expect a literary genius to have.

This film is like Shakespeare behind the scenes. We find young Will as a struggling writer banished from his wife and children, trying to survive the gritty world of 16th-century

English theater.

The story begins with a lovelorn Shakespeare experiencing a serious case of writer's block. He says the play is locked within his brain, and the task is to unlock it and put the words on paper. Shakespeare's muse is the Lady Viola, played by Gwyneth Paltrow, and he proceeds to write one of the greatest love stories of all time.

Shakespeare writes the play as he lives it, and how appropriate that Will Shakespeare should know such an enduring love — could anyone write such a story if they had not experienced something similar?

However, there is no historical evidence to prove this story true. But the imagination can only do so much; it is the realness of the experience that Shakespeare was able to capture so perfectly — and how the filmmakers were able to portray it on film — that qualifies the film's veracity. Shakespeare and the Lady Viola experience a love immortalized by time and envied by all. Can it be any more sappy?

Screenwriters Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard somewhat closely maintain the language of 16th-century England, adding credibility to a difficult task. They wrote dialogue for one of the greatest dialogue writers of the English language. Many times I found myself thinking, yeah, Shakespeare would have said something like that. "Shakespeare in Love" makes language beautiful, because this is what Shakespeare did. Above all, he was a poet.

Fiennes and Paltrow are a tasty pair in this film. They both have a knack for these period pieces. Fiennes is somewhat of a newcomer to the Hollywood scene, and I just hope that in the months to come we don't find him smeared over every magazine and print publication, experiencing a distorted kind of 15 minutes until the overexposure bell rings, and Fiennes becomes just another Matt Damon or Ben Affleck, who incidentally is in this film, with a small but significant part. Let us hope he is the wiser.

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BRAYNSIRJUNZ REPORT:
CONVERSATIONS, LISTS AND PROPS.

"If you gimme some gin / I'll even eat a dog's brain ..."

— Buschwick Bill, "Chuckie"

"Cuz hip-hop plus glocks / equals Scott La Rock, Tupac and Biggie Smalls / I guess y'all niggaz brawl / cuz of lack of protocol"

— Ras Kass, "Music of Business"

"You don't cook, you don't clean, you don't fuck, you ..."

— RZA (as Bobby Digital), "Domestic Violence"

12/31/98, 11:55 p.m.

"Oh shit, please don't let your horse chew my ass off!" I thought as the onslaught of 5-0 in riot gear proceeded to gallop their steeds toward New Year's revelers at Union Square, San Francisco. Cries of pain mixed with inundated liquid courage filled the area as people jumped off of balconies, ran from the gestapo in blue, bravely fought senseless fights and flipped over cars.

Happy Xmas and merry New Year to the whole world. In a truthful sense, it was a reflection of everything wrong about our civilization. The acts of stupidity, machismo and opportunistic behavior were a reflected facet of our innate characteristics, revealing the reasons why the Unabomber put in work. Anyhow, after spotting some kid resembling Eminem decked in Fubu freestyling about how many freaks he pulls, I shoved him in front of the brigade of cops as a diversion to escape. Thanx a lot, G, I owe you one, and you've officially earned your ghetto pass.

Over the break, I enjoyed a sojourn with my boy in a San Francisco strip club called the Centerfold, a huge strippers' amusement park filled with extravagant rooms, dark lighting and sultry vixens. As I sat down in the aftermath of having my face shoved between two silicon enhanced sculptures, a beautiful shortie named Crystal approached to solicit a lapdance. We then began to converse ...
Yknow that the Pharcyde and Heiroglyphics did a few new songs together? After running into Pep Love during the New Year's, he confirmed that both crews have done more than a few songs together for a possible upcoming project.

Phat Lip's not in the group anymore, right?

On the contrary, he is back in the group. I haven't heard anything yet, but it should be pretty interesting.

That's sooo tight.
Yknow that Kurupt, Ras Kass, Canibus and Killab Priest are forming a group called the Four Horsemen? Oh yeah, your G-string's coming off, baby.

Forget that, tell me more.
Well, my man Josh was telling me that Kool Keith's upcoming solo project may be called The Black Elvis. There's about 16 tracks, and from what I hear it's supposed to be bugged. Can't expect any less from Kool Keith though. Baby anyhow, bow about we ...

No, fuck that, any more info?
Well, peep the following news that's amusing about ninety-nine, although it's only been a few weeks since the year changed.

- 1) Tired-assed hip-hop/rock fusion songs. First, every single act has a DJ, whether it be Sugar Ray or Jimmy Ray or whatever fucking Ray. But now Blondie has a comeback song that features Inspektah Deck, U-God, Mobb Deep and Coolio!?!? Shouldn't Mrs. Harry stay retired, kick it in Coke haven and stay paid by KRS-1?
- 2) DMX's latest album cover. Two words: Negro, please!
- 3) Juvenile's annoying country ass.
- 4) Over-hyped albums by veteran artists. Sorry fans, but no matter how much you liked their old shit, Meth and Redman's new joints weren't that bomb.
- 5) Prince's "1999" has re-entered the Billboard charts positioned at number 40. Oh, the bliss of sheep like predictability ...
- 6) The realization that I've returned to the den of imbeciles.

The moment I passed by a house party rocking "Gimme dat nut," with 500 white girls lip-synching the words.

- 7) Rock stations with double standards. Many of them ignore rap music (some even publicly diss), but yet fervently saturate the airwaves with The Beastie Boys. Very ironic, as "Intergalactic" and "Body Movin'" (both which are nothing short of rap/hip-hop

See A-DOUBLE, p.6A

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LIVE BANDS MOST WEDNESDAYS AND THURSDAYS

IT TAKES A NATION OF MILLIONS TO HOLD ME BACK:

AN ASSESSMENT OF
THE POTENTIAL SOCIOPOLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF A LESBIAN SLAYER.

By DJ FATKID
Ninja Assassin

It's time to give "Buffy: The Vampire Slayer" the props it deserves. It is classified and sold as a teen melodrama, but it easily cleans house when compared to the "reality-based" (narf!) institutions of Adolescent Insult such as "Beverly Hills, 90210" or "Felicity."

Of course, "Buffy" (or, as the in-crowd abbreviates, "Slayer") is a few steps to the left of reality (to quote some background dialogue from the season premiere, "Wow, this year could be awesome if there weren't so many mysterious deaths!"), but this in itself enables it to transcend its genre. "Slayer" revels in the none-too-subtly drawn simile between the angst of being a hunter of the undead and the angst of being a high school student. Is the high drama of slaying perhaps a bit silly? Well, did it ever occur to you that high school is, too? (If it did, good. If it didn't, immediately cease reading this, you are far too well-adjusted to appreciate it.) Thus, a show as conceptually powerful as "Slayer" has the potential of making the display of female-to-female attraction in the 11/17/98 episode into the most radical statement ever in a teen-oriented series.

As of this season, the show has two vampire slayers: Buffy and Faith. Buffy's the show's protagonist and a fairly typical teen-female lead: stylish, charismatic, pouty but never depressed, hormonal. (OK, granted, she has more spine than, say, Katie Holmes. Or your average DP walker. But I digress.) Sassy material. Faith settled into a totally atypical role, even for a temporary character: bitter, paranoid, mostly asexual, dressed like Sporty Spice. Riot Grrrl-meets-Outdoor Life. She had, until the 11/17 episode, an intimate but platonic friendship with Buffy.

It's not the first time a lesbian interest has been portrayed on a small-screen show with a teen demographic. But it is the first time, to the best of my knowledge, that it has involved a main character and a recurring supporter. The modern moral climate has altered enough that this isn't shocking; the material's been done by others. Joss Whedon, the show's creator, was showing something more commendable than bravery: honesty. Even Ricky from "My So-Called Life" was treated within the show as "The Gay Guy." Heretofore, every teen show that's tackled the topic has done so with the video analogue of the "I'm not homophobic, I had a gay friend once" argument.

Anyone who's watched the 11/17 "Slayer" without shutting down all higher brain functions figured out that Faith's angry reaction to Buffy and Angel's tryst was not really on the grounds that Angel was a vampire. Faith's anti-boy creed from earlier in that episode, her obsession with being a Spartan and some vague flirting from previous episodes help hammer out through the analogy — again, subtlety is not the show's strong point.

Yet, seeing as there was no tearful coming-out scene, it would seem that "Slayer" is treating the attraction like a natural consequence of Faith and Buffy's relationship as people. (Whedon was crafty enough to drop hints that Buffy is attracted back. The most elegant display of this occurred in an episode in October. Early in the episode, Faith states, "Slaying always makes me hungry and horny." Towards the end, after winning a fight, she turns to Buffy and asks: "Are you hungry?" To which Buffy replies, "Oh yeah." Oh yeah.) Faith is another human, not a lesbian in their midst. (To those of you who are thinking, "Well, she could be bi, too," can stop now. "Bi" hasn't got the same literary kick.)

Yet in subsequent episodes, this attraction hasn't been played on. That in itself is the great humanizing factor: lesbian attraction is given no more importance than the rest of "Buffy's So-Called Gothic Life." Homosexual attraction is no more meaningful and no less arbitrary than heterosexual attraction. In life, it is neither a curse nor a high horse; so it is with "Slayer." Sexuality, homo or hetero, is just another turd in the teenage shitpile.

The plot twist's short-term impact is obvious: it set the benchmark for incorporating sexuality into a TV narrative. How Whedon chooses to run with this will affect its potential impact on the American cultural scene. It cannot be ignored (well, it can be, but it would be a mark of very poor writing) under the principle that if a rifle is present in the first scene, someone better get shot with it in the third.

The worst outcome would be the frequently utilized one: to bring the situation to a head and have Buffy duck out with a statement along the lines of, "I'm sorry, I'm straight, but can we still be friends?" This has the condescension and smacks of a certain judgement of Faith's sexual orientation as "wrong." Marginally better would be if she actually hooked up with Faith and ducked out. It would indicate that "normal" girl wouldn't like being in a lesbian relationship, but at least there would be the subtext of "you won't know 'til you try it," and less condemnation of Faith. Unfortunately, this would also appeal to the fratboy mentality of "all lesbians are straight underneath and just need a good penis."

Also better, but not ideal, would be for Buffy and Faith to end up in a real relationship. While this eliminates the stigma against homosexuality, it would very easily take over the entire show. While a serious show could be made around the issues of being an open lesbian in high school, the delicate balance within the show would be entirely skewed toward the sexuality issue. "Slayer" would become either lesbian melodrama, or else fall into the "Xena" trap and become a stage on which to watch the Dyke Parade.

The most socially powerful would be to attempt to maintain ambivalence. The easy way to do this would be to go exactly as the show was going before the reintroduction of Angel: have Buffy and Faith flirt with each other while Buffy leads her life. But Whedon is the kind of writer who, in the brilliant season premiere, shows Buffy saving a group of teens from Hell's Factory and fighting off the guards with a stylized hammer and sickle. Thus, the more difficult approach would be to set up Angel and Faith as the two poles between whom Buffy is pulled. Have her not commit to either; if the situation must have a resolution, it should happen in a way that does not necessitate a choice on Buffy's part (i.e., kill one of them). That's the only way "Slayer" can keep sexuality in perspective, without making a moral stand.

The immediate effect of this would be to smack viewers of both genders, and make them rethink a number of things about the show. Sarah Michelle Gellar would no longer be a passive drool-object, and she would be much further distanced from the dominant feminine ideal. Although the very fact that she kills vampires forces viewers of both genders to humanize her (de-pacifies her to males, de-glamorizes her to females), she still plays into a patriarchal role by snogging with Angel after every slaying session. With Faith in the picture, suddenly men aren't able to play the dreamy romantic game they've been taught since birth.

In the long term, it could have effects on teenagers' approaches to their own sexuality. Faith's defining characteristics transcend "dykedom," allowing her to potentially be a gay character without being The Gay Character. At the very least, this could teach a lesson to other writers in the same genre. If it does (possibly even if it doesn't), there will be a shift in how lesbians are regarded. This is not an exaggeration; one of the guiding principles of this column is "never underestimate the naiveté and malleability of the teenage mind." With a sympathetic, non-martyrized, non-caricaturized homosexual female TV character, it stands

See BUFFY, p.6A



ISLA VISTA THEATRE

"SIMPLY BRILLIANT!"

Jay Carr, THE BOSTON GLOBE

PLEASANTVILLE

"AN END-OF-MILLENNIUM 'WIZARD OF OZ,' DESTINED TO BECOME A CLASSIC."

Judy Gerrit, THE TORONTO STAR

"ONE OF THIS YEAR'S SURE OSCAR CONTENDERS."

Roger Ebert, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES



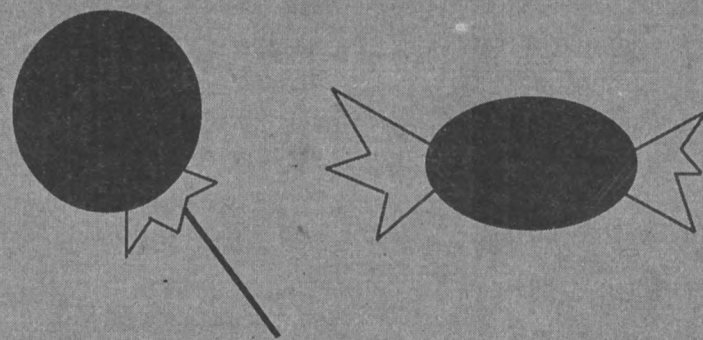
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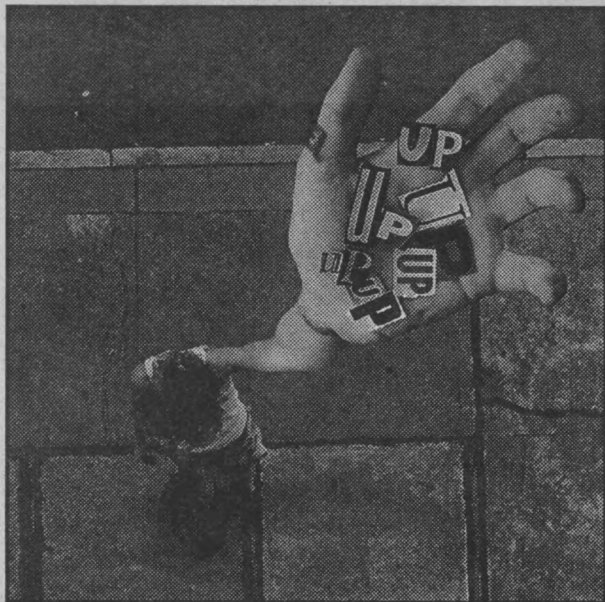
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Ani DiFranco / *Up Up Up ...* / Righteous Babe

Indie-folk-rock-entrepreneur-diva-extraordinaire Ani DiFranco shows the world once again why owning your own record label is the way to go. Get this ... you can do whatever the hell you want, and there are no slimy suits there to fuck it all up!

Last year DiFranco unfairly received a great deal of flack for putting out "Little Plastic Castle," an album many critics dismissed as a weak attempt at crossover success in mainstream markets.

Up Up Up ... is both a return and a departure for DiFranco. Perhaps in response to the critics or perhaps because she damn well pleases, *Up Up Up ...* brings back DiFranco's classic storytelling arrangements, which much of her career has been built upon. The main difference in this album is a greater reliance upon studio magic, the likes of which folk-rock divas generally try to avoid. This is by no means an over-produced work, but then again three-track harmonies and fuzz-box vocals are certainly not the picture of campfire folk music ... then again, neither is DiFranco.

— To be quite honest Robert Hanson has hate and disdain for almost every person he has the displeasure of coming into contact with!

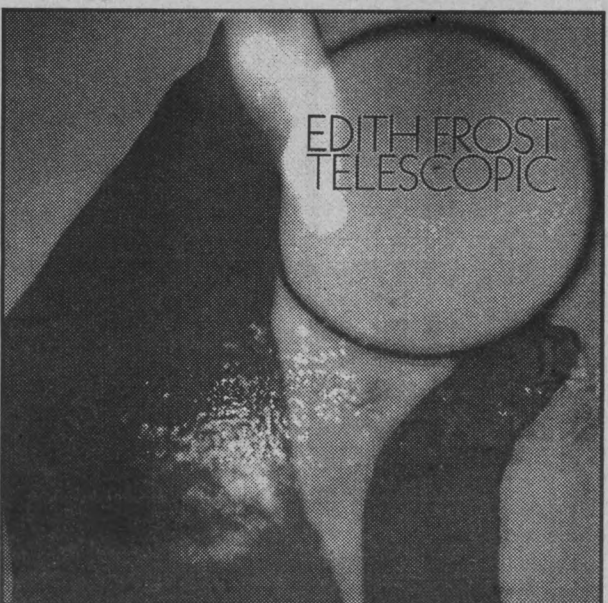


The Anonymous / *Greek and Gold EP* / Goodvibe Records

Over the Christmas break I went to New York, where I was lucky enough to run into DMX and Puff Daddy. I played the new EP from the Anonymous for them, and thanks to my tape recorder I was able to record our conversation about it.

Me: This first song is called "When We Were Kings."
 Puff Daddy: That's a nice Italian piano intro! Are they on the mafioso tip or what?
 Me: That's a violin, and no there's no hint of any mafia stylings.
 PD: (After the bass and drums kick in.) Ahhhh ... I would have flipped that beat and made it jiggy! I can't tap dance to this!
 DMX: PLUS THE LYRICS ARE SOFT!! WHERE MY THUGS, AT, YO?!
 Me: Calm down guys, let's check the next song. ... This one's called "Green and Gold."
 PD: Da Lox went gold, but I went like four times platinum. Take that Take that, haaaa ...
 Me: I don't think that's the point ...
 DMX: I ALWAYS ACT CRAZY SON!! RUFF RIDAS!!
 Me: Um, OK. (Change songs.) ... This one is called "Dedicated."
 DMX: WHERE THE RAPPAS AT, DOG?!

Me: It's a DJ track.
 PD: Is that Funkmaster Flex?
 Me: No, it's DJ Drez and DJ Mark Luv.
 PD: Are they on Hot 97?
 Me: No, they're from the West ...
 PD and DMX: (Interrupting.) SKIP IT THEN!!
 Me: These two songs upcoming are the posse cuts, called "Cool Fantastic I and II."
 PD: I didn't hear Ma\$e on there!
 Me: So?
 PD: I make sure Ma\$e is on EVERY posse cut!
 DMX: TI O-DADDY, I AIN'T ON THERE EITHER! AND NEITHER IS JAY-Z OR BIG PUN!
 Me: You guys don't understand, this guest list is like a who's who of the West coast underground! Jizzm, Awol One, Medusa, Iriscience, Tony Da Skitzo, Divine Styler, Living Legends ...
 DMX: YO DUNN-DUNN AIN'T NONE OF THEM IN THE RUFF RIDAS CLIQ! GET AT ME DOG!
 PD: Yeah, and none of them were on "All About the Benjamins" or at my birthday party! I bet I never even been in one of their videos!
 DMX: PLUS THERE AIN'T ONE MENTION OF THUGS, HOES, OR KRYSTAL! WHAT THE DILLY, YO?!
 PD: I had all kinds of Krystal at my birthday party.
 Me: Well, guys, I guess different people just like different things, 'cause I thought it was an excellent album.
 DMX: YO I GOTTA GO, I GOTTA RECORD ANOTHER ALBUM TO CAPITALIZE ON MY TEMPORARY POPULARITY! WHAT WHAT?!
 PD: I gotta bounce too, I'm gonna be in the new N-Sync video getting filmed today. I thought I told you that we won't stop!
 Me: All right fellas, thanks for the help ...
 — Trey Clark might be making this up, but he might not.



Edith Frost / *Telescopic* / Drag City

What we have here is a beautiful album that I've enjoyed more with each listen. At a time when there are more than several bands working with a sound that's a little bit country and a little bit indie rock, Frost is definitely one of the best songwriters of the bunch.

The greatest things about this album, though, are the arrangements — tempos range from mid- to downright deliberate, and are contrasted with a mix of loud and/or acoustic guitars, pedal steel, fiddle, accordion, or whatever. Every song works perfectly as its own distinct entity. Frost's voice can be either chilling or forgiving; and there are moments that are just downright spooky (in the most seductive way.)

Of course, if you put a group of wonderful songs in a row, usually you'll have a wonderful album.

— Josh Miller knows what he's talking about

Various Artists / *Cue's Hip Hop Shop Volume One* / Dogday

After being subjected to the infectious hook of "What what what what what" (multiply that by 30) of Noreaga's "Super Thug," I felt compelled to write him a letter of appraisal. After all, despite the numerous times formulaic Queensbridge emcees made me regurgitate material similar to Betty Crockett pancake mix, Noreaga somehow pulled the right strings and won this skeptic's heart.

Following several e-mail transactions, N.O.R.E. and I became best of chums, as we both saw what we had to offer for each other. I learned the power of transforming a word into a mesmerizing entity to incite riots and hospital bed fluctuations, not to mention the ways of finding the thug in me. For N.O.R.E., my sensibilities led to his realization of a world beyond his narrow confinement of New York hip-hop.

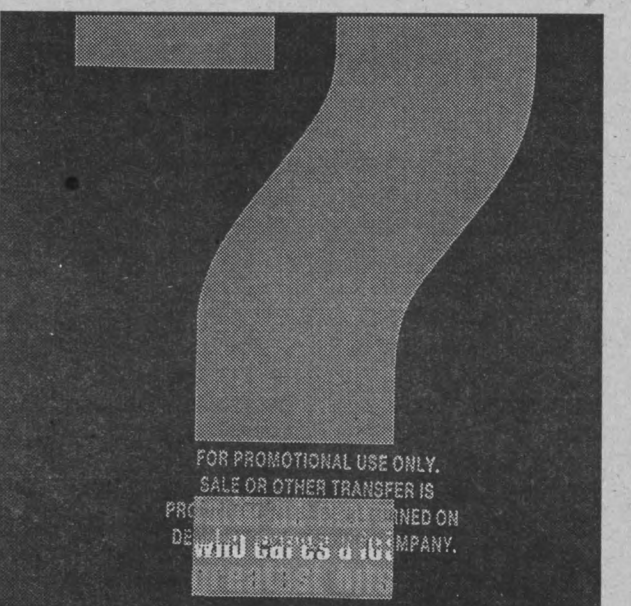
"Thanx to you," he wrote, "I ain't feelin' most of the fake-assed shit out there dun! Whut!"



In a recent e-mail, he even gave me his view on Cue's Hip Hop Shop Volume One, a compilation of Bay Area emcees and turntablists. Here's a transcript ...

Dear A-Double,
 What's crackin', god? I wanted to let you know about this album I swooped up on after I beat down this niggub bootleggin' my shit. It's called Cue's Hip Hop Shop Volume One, and it's on some West Coast shit you told me about. Y'know, like them lyrical nigguz out there. It's put together by DJ Cue, and I think he's one of them cats from the Space Travellers. I'm mad surprised it be outta Dogday Records, cuz them muthafuckaz be puttin' out 11/5 and some other wack fools. Naaw but yo, this compilation be John Blaze like White Castle, kid! John Blaze, word up! Ain't no jiggy shit either, just straight up hip-hop shit. This Rasco niggub's nice, god! Also, these cats Double Life are blazin' hot, you sure they ain't from Queens, cuz I want to replace Capone with these cats. Sacred Hoop be on some lyrical drama shit, the beats are mad catchy, too. Live Humans be, like, on some space shit that's too smart for me since I ain't graduated high school. Most of the album be, like, placing emphasis on muthfuckaz scratching, which is cool, knowmean? Rob Swift and Roc Raida are blazin', knowmean? I ain't thinkin' that every track is cool for repeated listens, and that Big Dame niggub is wack, crazy wack. But on the real, son, I ain't mad at this album god, word up! Peace out kid, I gots to go peep Party of Five.
 Thug Love,
 Nore

— A-Double



Faith No More / *Who Cares A Lot? The Greatest Hits* / Slash/Reprise

You mean they like had songs after "Epic?" Yeah ... in fact they had three other albums.

Here is a band that has certainly gotten the short end of the stick. Faith No More have been bestowed the dubious honor of forever being known as a "transition band," forming the glue, if you will, between late '80s hair bands and the rock gods of Seattle. One day they were everybody's little "cutting-edge" darlings, and literally the next they were an '80s metal band that nobody wanted to touch.

This album, as one might guess, serves as a nice sampling of the greatest hits that you know and love and the greatest hits you've probably never heard before. What really sticks out is the fact that FNM have consistently made cutting-edge rock that from their onset until their last album existed far outside the unusual commercial clichés.

— Robert Hanson is sick and tired of reviewing Greatest Hits albums and wishes that the music industry would stop insulting the public with the terribly banal acts that they continuously thrust upon us!

OUR DAMNATION *or*

THE EFFECTS OF MTV ON CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING, AS INVESTIGATED IN PAUL DEVLIN'S "SLAMNATION: THE SPORT OF SPOKEN WORD."

BY JENNIFER RAUB
Artsweek Editor

Paul Devlin's "SlamNation" — the film that so poorly documents a spoken-word competition throughout the United States in 1996 — perhaps would have been more aptly titled "Road Rules: The Poetry Episodes." Combining poor film quality (videotape, rather), unnecessarily shaking, swinging camera movement and quick, jolting editing, "SlamNation" reads more as a sad reflection of the damage MTV has wrought upon contemporary filming styles.

It seems as though several filmmakers make the assumption that in order to be "hip" or "trendy," if not just downright accessible to the ADD-conditioned mind patterns of America's youth, one must never allow a particular picture to last for more than five seconds. However, when watching a film one cannot change the channel, and so from here SlamNation first fails in making a film incredibly hard (if not impossible) to watch.

The next terrible assumption that has been made (and this extends to many realms of society and not just that of filmmaking) is that viewers will be bored if the filmmakers don't shroud "old-fashioned" topics in modern day veils of fun. Therefore, using this device as its second faulty premise, "SlamNation" sets out to show us the "sport" and "high energy" of spoken word. However, the high energy of "slamming" (a rather lame pretense I'll remark on later) should not be treated as a Mountain Dew commercial, although I'm sure some ad executive will see this film at some point and decide that the next extreme sport — "slamming" — is sure to be a hit with the MTV-addled, Hilfigered, Puffy-sized youth of America.

The aesthetics of this movie — which, if done more intelligently, might have saved the film from its terribly low-budget feel — are not the only faulty premises of the movie. First of all, who cares about "slamming"? This sounds like a rather asinine question, but in all honesty, I am not sure why I should care about "slamming." Devlin begins his film on this shaky foundation — that first off, we do indeed care about mostly unknown poets and their ability to dramatically speak words in the English language.

If I can raise my voice and dramatically shout "The devil ..." while followed quickly by a softer, rhyming, pseudo-Beatnik "does not live in my basement," couldn't anyone do it? The sad truth is, I think anyone with an acting class in their background and a bit of wit collected along the years could do a huge chunk of what is represented in "SlamNation" — the only real exception being Saul Williams, who manages, within the context of a fairly poor movie, to



RECITATIONS. *or* Team New York City (Mums da Schemer, Saul Williams, Jessica Care Moore and Beau Sia) at the National Poetry Slam in Portland, Oregon.

shine as someone who is actually quite good at his craft.

Which is just the problem in "SlamNation": Devlin underestimates his audience as having little or no intelligence. Because of the film's format, Devlin never really allows us to see any of the poetry for more than five minutes before we are whisked off to hearing these spoken-word competitors talk about their lives in more "personal" settings. Perhaps if Devlin had concentrated on a few excellent spoken-word performers and had allowed us to see the evolution of their work — and validated it more than just calling it a "sport" — "SlamNation" could have been an interesting, compelling look at modern-day poetry. However, combined with screen text on exactly what "slamming" is and a jazzy, hip-hop soundtrack (way too reminiscent of US3's "Cantaloop (Flip Fantasia)" track back in 1993), Devlin approaches his film as though his viewers and his subjects are complete and total idiots, their minds made numb by the constant "pop"-washing of television.

What is interesting about spoken word is the poetry, and by never allowing us to pay full attention to what is indeed the supposed main subject of the film, Devlin's film remains material for, at best, late night MTV.

"SlamNation" will show Thursday, Jan. 14, at 7 p.m. in Campbell Hall. \$5 students; \$6 general. For information, call A&S Lat 893-3535.

Deja Vu

1998'S MOST OVER-LOOKED FILM.
(ACCORDING TO ARTSWEEEK'S MOST DILIGENT FILM CRITIC.)

BY JOHN FISKE
Whole Lotta Man

Every year has its handful of unknown films. I don't mean independent films that still receive a fair amount of exposure, like this year's "Life is Beautiful" and "Happiness," but films that miss everybody's radar. Surely enough has been said about the experiential "Saving Private Ryan," this year's best film, but in a close second is 1998's most overlooked film, Henry Jaglom's "Deja Vu."

Gene Siskel wrote that Jaglom was the only living director who consistently makes better films with each successive one. (Siskel said this in 1995 for Jaglom's last film, the wonderful, witty "Last Summer in the Hamptons," itself better than his previous "Venice/Venice.") Still holding true, "Deja Vu" is Jaglom's best film to date.

Surprisingly, "Deja Vu" is not a film from the fringe, like this year's other unknowns, "Six String Samurai" and "Bang." In fact it is quite an idealistic romance; its most outrageous conceit is placing its tale of fated love in a practical and realistic world, complete with fiancées and geographic separation.

On her way through Europe, a woman (the great Victoria Foyt, still aging like wine) meets an artist (Stephen Dillane, from last year's unknown "Welcome to Sarajevo"): They understand their connection and admit that it is love, but what can they do? She is engaged and works in America, and he lives in England. What ensues is the most magical film I have ever seen.

How certain plot points such as a mysterious woman with a tale of lost love, one pin and a painting of lovers at the Eiffel Tower came together still lose me, but thrill me all the more.

A short list of today's great auteurs should now include Jaglom, who has the most subtle yet identifiable vision. To watch his films is to be a voyeur. He has such a natural and unobtrusive camera, and he gets such perfectly realistic performances from all of his actors that you could just as well be sneaking a peek at real life ("Venice/Venice" plays with this theme). Though it doesn't sound like much, ask anyone who's seen one of his films.

The film is dedicated by Jaglom to his own star-crossed love, his wife and lead actress Foyt. Why she stars in only his films will never make any sense to me. She is a fine actress, and though I'm sure my pleas will fall on ears too eager to nominate Meryl Streep for another Academy Award, she has given one of the year's top-five performances.

"Deja Vu" is also host to a couple of other great performances, starting first with Dillane's smitten painter. Mention should also go to the great Vanessa Redgrave and, whatever their names are, an older bickering couple with respective fetishes for reading and Mars bars.

Countless films will slip through the cracks this year, and given its modest personality, "Deja Vu" seems destined to be one of them. If you get a chance, don't let it slip away.

The Faculty

IT'S A MOVIE
DIG IT.

BY DJ FATKID
Ninja Assassin

Kevin Williamson, I will bear your children. Somehow. "The Faculty" had just about everything anyone with depth would spit on: total corporate buyout from day one; media hype blitz six months before it came out; pop-star-come-actor front and center on all the posters; a teen-scream flick at the high-water mark of the genre's resurgence; a plot that has been done plenty of times before; Elijah Wood; a director who's in a slump (and a writer who's due for one). And really, it's only the last two that dare exceed expectation: Roberto Rodriguez's camerawork is beautiful, and the character quirks and dialogue from Williamson are so engaging that he could've written them in a remake of "Ghandi," and I would have seen it.

But first the problems. Tommy Hilfiger does, indeed, own this movie, for which I call down the Geek Firestorm upon him. The flags become less ubiquitous after the opening scenes, but it bugs, especially with the edginess of the characters. The fortunate part is, I can't see Hilfiger making any money off this movie; the kind of people to whom it would really appeal would sooner wear chicken wire. And yes, Usher is used as a selling point ... but his character is completely peripheral.

As for the genre, it is here that the movie fails the worst. It tries to be more of a sci-fi thriller than an actual screamer, which is disappointing because when Rodriguez does horror scenes, he does them brilliantly. The early scene after the faculty meeting is beautiful, with the camera not flinching at some well-done shock effects. The problem is, this is the only scene of that caliber in the movie. The plot, too, is standard sci-fi thriller fare, but in classic Kevin Williamson style, every source he ripped off is acknowledged in the dialogue ("... when did Casey turn into Sigourney Weaver?").

Elijah Wood is, of course, a ninny. But, as Casey, at least he is playing a ninny. The first time you see Casey, he is getting his nose broken. The second time is as he is getting run crotch-first into a flagpole. Two of the other six protagonists are also near the top of the list for the last characters I expected to be leads: Sheckley (who I would label the indie rocker if I wasn't positive Roberto Rodriguez has no idea what an indie rocker is) is a bitter sci-fi geek, while Zeke (Josh Harnett) is (so hot! — ed.) the rebel genius and, oh yeah, drug dealer. Beautiful casting choices for faculty include Robert Patrick ("Terminator 2," "Double Dragon: the Movie") as the coach, Bebe "Dr. Lillith Crane" Neuwirth as the principal and Jon Stewart as the evil bio teacher (the only thing funnier than Jon Stewart is *evil* Jon Stewart).

There is also massive underlying cynicism in this movie as well, that will appeal to everyone who barely survived high school. Moral ground just doesn't matter in this film. The fate of Mary Beth (Laura Harris), the only character who is "normal" and nice to everyone, is testament to this.

There is also the moral ambiguity of rampant speed — sorry, "skat" — use (which is another criticism: the drug lab in the movie seemed more than ample for speed manufacture. Why the cop out with caffeine pills?), as well as what I think may be the first usage of the term "tweaking" in a mainstream movie.

At the end, the real message is "nothing ever changes"; in the final shot, you will notice a different kid being run crotch-first into the flagpole. The only time people are nice to one another is while under alien control, putting a new twist on Jason Dean's eternal truism, "The

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A-DOUBLE

Continued from p.2A

songs) continue to be accepted by the mainstream as less intimidating offerings of their worst nightmare: urban vernacular.

8) The fact that sitting in the bathroom possibly provided their visual source for acts involving friction.

No joke, the Twilight Zone had descended. On Wednesday, 01/13/99, Library first floor bathroom, I noticed the gentleman in a neighboring stall kneeling while gazing at me from under the dividing wall. His pants and boxers were around his ankles, and he made repeated futile attempts to avoid detection as I looked to identify his facial features. For the homie for whom I provided brief ecstasy like a soft porn French movie: I'm kinda flattered, but for fuck's sake, wash your fucking hands!!

9) Left Eye (TLC fame) shall be recording a solo album, in which she sings and rappy raps.

By the way, KRS-One, recently appointed as the new vice president of A&R at Warner Bros., signed her.

10) Oh yeah, TLC has a new song out from their album "Fan Mail."

No doubt they'll get mad fan mail saying "Y'all should retire, beeyotch!"

11) Speaking of retirement, my peeps DJ Lion and Erik Solo retired last Monday from KCSB 91.9's list of hip-hop lineups.

Biggups for putting in work for 600 years. We will miss those fools, but the BraynSir-junz are not strictly confined to radio, so be on the look out ...

Be on the look out for music, music and mo' music next week. Fuck y'all, peace.

BUFFY

Continued from p.3A

almost to reason that it will muddy the waters as to which characters the male viewer should identify with, since there would suddenly be no sexual grounds on which to identify with Angel.

Perhaps the signals are being exaggerated. To paraphrase one frequent viewer, "The show appeals to both genders. Girls can watch it and obsess about what Buffy's wearing and what's happening with and who's hooking up with who. Guys can watch and go, 'Dude! Buffy kicks ass!' Does Joss Wheedon even know he has a powerful tool for mind-manipulation? Does he know that there is a possibility for "Slayer" to move lesbianhood out of the transgressive and out of the closet? But if not, then Faith ... you go, girl!"

DJ Fatkid is a rebel!

FACULTY

Continued from p.5A

only place different social types can get along is in heaven."

So if you occasionally dream of taking a potshot at the homecoming queen, or just want to see a bunch of teens snort industrial quantities of crank, this movie will make you track down Mr. Williamson with the inseminatory purposes.

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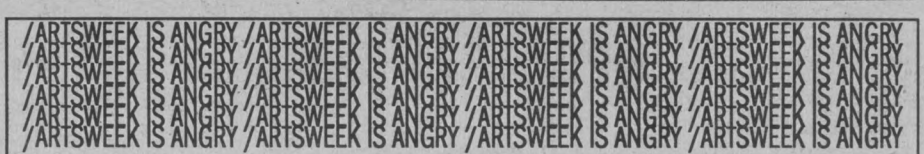
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What's Cooking?

You'll find out in the *Weekend Connection*, in Friday's Daily Nexus!



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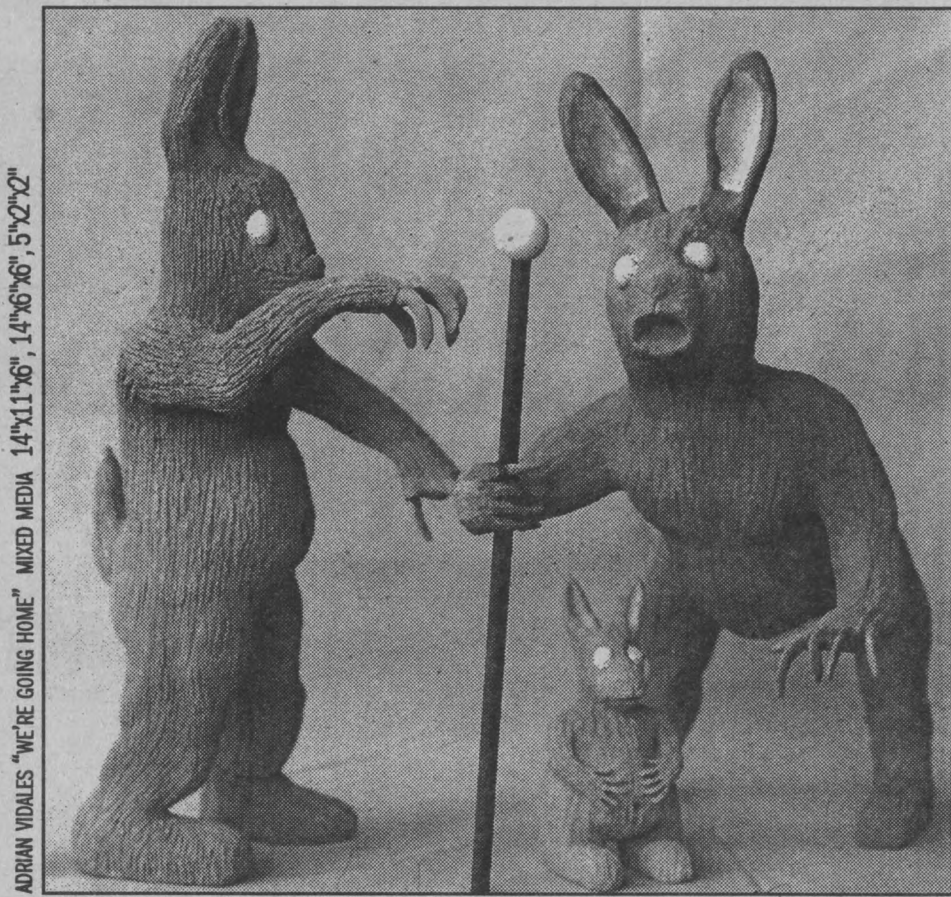
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HEIRARCHY AMONGST THE EVIL BUNNIES

IT'S NOT A SHORT STORY, AND ADRIAN VIDALES IS DEFINITELY NOT STOLID.

BY TAMI MNOIAN
Artsweek Editor

Gallery 1434, classroom-turned-art gallery, exhibits each week a new batch of work from UCSB's latest talent. Opening next Tuesday is the work of Adrian Vidales, a senior honors art studio major. Included in his show are a series of paintings and photographs. Your loyal companions here at *Artsweek* compiled a list of five questions to ask this budding young artist. Read on for some insight into the creative brain of Adrian Vidales, and hopefully these answers will provoke enough of your curiosity to make you see his work for yourself.

Let's start off with an easy one. What motivates you creatively/spiritually?

I would answer everything around me. I pay attention to everything that I find interesting and beautiful under different states of mind. I pay attention to details. Right now Santa Barbara motivates me, but I grab my ideas from whatever my surroundings may be.

Using the medium of your choice, how would you visually represent God?

I don't know if I believe in a god, but one time I studied this light that shines on my wall. There's a poster of the Beatles, and then just a white wall. It's a blue light with an interesting design. In my interpretation of the light as a shape in a

painting, I would say that God is that shape, a light, an emission shining on things.

Favorite incense?

I would have to say the one that's in our bathroom. It's a black cat labeled pussy.

This is Rob's question: "If you were to happen upon some fresh roadkill, a deer for example, what would you do with it?"

I have a truck, so I would pick it up and carry it off. I'd take it home, do some drawings, photos, dissect it. I'm interested in anatomy. I'd keep it in good condition, maybe make a rug out of its hide. I am interested in dead animals. I tried to shoot a seagull, but beach seagulls are more clever than the ones here around town.

Whose work inspires you?

I really like Giacometti. He does mostly bronze sculptures of very elongated figures. His paintings and drawings are very similar to his sculpting style. It's distinct, rough, but enough is there. It's very nice work. I like the surrealism movement, Magritte and Dali, but currently, I don't know. I like going to galleries where there is more fresh, new work by people I don't know.

Vidales hopes, in the future, to continue his art as well as teach. (We just hope he doesn't bring the dead animal corpses to class.) His work and the work of junior College of Creative Studies student Emily Potts can be seen at Gallery 1434 beginning Tuesday, Jan. 19, and through Jan. 22.

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YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE
BY LINDA C. BLACK

Check the day's rating. 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

Aries (March 21-April 19)—Today is a 7—You're lucky, so you might as well push for what you want next. You could run into a setback, but don't let that stop you. Once you get around that temporary condition, you'll be off and running again. You start out well, and your overall outcome looks like it's going to be successful, so take any hassles in stride.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)—Today is a 6—Today you could be tempted to take a financial risk, which is unusual for you. A case of buyer's remorse could crop up, but if you've done your homework, you should be able to make a good assessment. Don't panic because you're buying something more expensive than usual. If it's going to last longer, it really is a good investment.

Gemini (May 21-June 21)—Today is a 6—Your best teachers today are people you know well, including your spouse and dearest friend. You don't want anyone privy to how much you don't know, but today, let people in on that deep, dark secret. Talk about things you don't understand and let others coach you for a change. You'll find it relaxing, once you get into it.

Cancer (June 22-July 22)—Today is a 5—The worst is over, and now all you have to do is clean up the mess. You don't have to do it all by yourself, either. Get a co-worker to help you. Guilt is a pretty effective means for doing that, and you're an expert at gaining sympathy. If that doesn't seem to work, just come right out and ask.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)—Today is a 7—The work you've done lately is bringing you attention. Make sure you look sharp. People with money and power are giving you the once over, and you may not realize when they're watching. It's always best to assume somebody's looking. There's nothing to worry about, though. You'll have a great time today, and that's the best way to audition.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)—Today is a 6—What's going on at your place? It could be a lot of fun, but it looks like there's also a mess involved, and that's a little irritating. You might be getting antsy to straighten things up, and that's good. You'll push the others on your team into getting their stuff in order, too.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)—Today is a 6—You can still do a little more homework before you launch your next project, but you'd better hurry. By tomorrow, you should have whatever it is well under way. You're being drawn in that direction by unseen forces, so you don't have to worry about what it's going to be. That should become obvious relatively soon.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)—Today is a 6—Looks like a raise is possible, or a better job offer. You don't have to sit and wait for it, either. You can put on a little pressure, if you know where to push. You probably do, too. If you're like most Scorpios, you've been thinking about this for quite some time. Go ahead and play that ace you've been holding.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)—Today is a 7—You should be able to get farther today than you've ever gone before. You're doing well on your own, but you need a little extra boost to go over the top. You'll get that from someone near and dear to you, perhaps a close family member. If you can get that person onto your side, you've got the whole game won.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)—Today is a 6—Somebody's leaning over your shoulder, watching your every move. Make sure you're looking good, minding your manners and saying only nice things. If you're a true Capricorn, you balk at deferring to people who think they're important. This time, however, it'd be wise to watch your P's and Q's. The walls have ears.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)—Today is a 7—You and your team are red hot today. You will have some minor difficulties concerning finances, but you'll bounce right over them. As you and your friends share ideas, you'll be coming up with better ones all the time. Keep the banter flowing. But the game you're playing does have rules. Use them to help you stay on track.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)—Today is a 6—You're lucky today, but that doesn't mean everything is going to go easily. In fact, you could take a direct hit. A person you respect and admire is rather upset right now, and might take it out on you without even meaning to. If that happens, don't take it seriously. It probably has nothing to do with you. Just roll with the blow.

Today's Birthday (Jan. 14). Your secrets could be revealed this year, but that's OK. They'll be revealed to you first, so you'll have time to put things right. There's plenty of money in February, but be careful. It's not really a fixed income yet. Hide as much as you can away for your future security, especially in March. In April you'll have to pay obligations and, of course, taxes. That could also work out all right. You might even get some back. August looks good for financial dealings, and October's a good time to go for that promotion you've been thinking about. Tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth in December.

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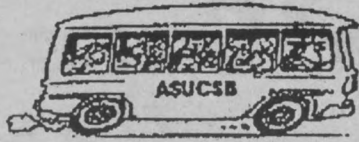
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