

You say goodbye and I say hello.

# Artsweek

Inside: the Clap Ben Lee Bis...vie Preview Summer Album Special



## Summer Movie Mayhem

Artsweek gives you the lowdown on seven hot summer movies

Attention art house movie crowd: Get out while you still can. The summer movie season is here and it's taking no prisoners (witness "The Lost World"'s jillion-dollar gross last weekend). Here at Artsweek we've decided to give you a brief rundown of some of the movies that will be assaulting the multiplexes in the upcoming months.

**"Con Air"** (June 6): Nicolas Cage battles a receding hairline and escaped convicts aboard a hijacked airplane. Judging from the previews, this movie has more explosions, crashes, and noise than a really good episode of "Matt Houston." Also starring John Cusack and John Malkovich. Odds are this one won't end with Cusack holding a boom box blasting Peter Gabriel.

**"Batman and Robin"** (June 20): This one has Dr. Ross teaming up with that bad actor from "Circle of Friends" and that wonderful actress from "The



Batpeople (from L to R): Alicia Silverstone, George Clooney and Chris O'Donnell

Crush" to thwart the plans of a pair of supervillains played by the star of "Hercules Goes Bananas" and Mrs. Mia Wallace. **"My Best Friend's Wedding"** (June 27): Julia "my career is in serious

trouble" Roberts stars in this romantic comedy that looks to be the hot "chick flick" of summer. This one has Roberts trying to break up the wedding of her best friend (Dermot Mulroney) and his bride to be

(Cameron Diaz). Poor guy has Julia Roberts and Cameron Diaz fighting over him, boy you gotta really feel sorry for him.

See MOVIE p.3A

## Hmmm ... Hot!

Artsweek tells you what to listen to this summer



Radiohead: They've cheered up

I've seen the new releases for this summer, and man are they HOT!! (sizzle, sizzle) ((hmmm bop))

I know you all are eagerly waiting in anticipation of Amy Grant's new album *Behind the Eyes*, which comes out Sept. 9, but in the meantime here are some other releases you might look into checking out.

See HOT p.3A

**A**fter listening to the music of the Australian Ben Lee, my inferiority complex kicks in. At age 18, he has recorded two stellar solo albums, toured the world, and had his pick from hundreds if not thousands of alterna-groupies. I, on the other hand, have an in-depth understanding of the Media Dependency Theory from taking Comm 89.

Before I demean myself any further, here is the transcript of my interview with Mr. Lee, who recently released *Something to Remember Me By* on Grand Royal.

**Artsweek: How would you compare this new album to your first album, Grandpaw Would?**

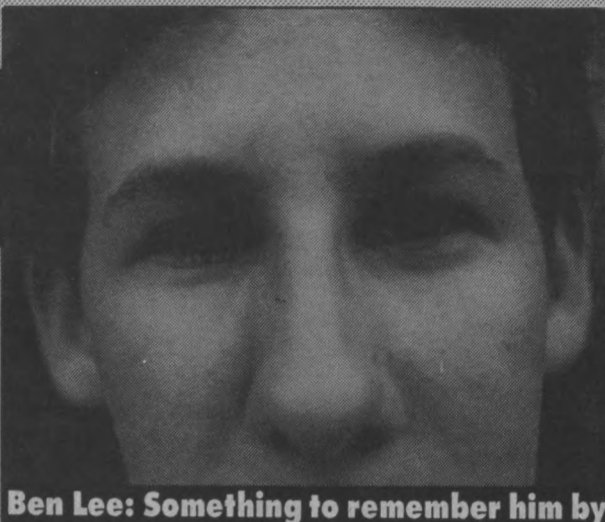
**Ben Lee:** I wouldn't. That's in the past.

**What do you think are the standout tracks on *Something to Remember Me By*?**

They all stand out for a different reason. Like when I listen to "Ketchum," I don't think it's musically something I've dealt with before. Also, whenever I bring in someone to play with me it's fun; it always stands out for that reason. When I listen to the song I'll think of the people who came in and when we hung out and recorded.

# Ben

Ben Alkaly talks



**Ben Lee: Something to remember him by**

**What are your goals for this album? Do you want to become "Ben Lee — Superstar"?**

Well, I'm already focused on the next one. This record is basically a consolidation. It's about me proving myself a bit more to people who maybe thought what I do doesn't hold up. I'm going out now and I'm playing and it's better, and people are more ex-

cited about what I'm doing. But yeah, the next record, I want people levitating.

**You're touring the "Heartland of America" right now. What are your impressions of that part of our great land?**

I find a lot of what people would call "backwards." A lot of the raw human spirit, things that are not influenced by external societal issues, you know what I mean? It's very raw and human and ugly sometimes, but it's still interesting.

**And how about yourself? You make a number of drug and alcohol references on the new album. What are your thoughts on underage use?**

You can deal with things as you like. I sort of believe on people deciding on their own. It's risky. A lot of people don't have the emotional maturity. It's like guns, or driving cars. I don't encourage anyone.

**Now that you've gotten this album out of the way, do you have any college plans?**

Yeah, I'm going about a year from now.

**When I saw you play at McCabes Guitar Shop in L.A. a few months ago, you made a reference to the Wu-Tang Clan. Does this mean you're a rap fan?**

I just like Wu-Tang. Wu-Tang is perfect, that's all you need to know. I want them to represent.

While you were taking your SAT, ACT and Achievement tests, the members of Bis, who are younger than you, were putting together DIY records in the hopes of one day becoming, like, rock stars.

They've dreamed of having sellout arena tours, hobnobbing with the rich and famous, having hundreds, no thousands of groupies and being, like, mobbed. Yeah, that's it, being mobbed. In fact, the youngest member of the Glasgow (uh, that's Scotland to you mate) trio, 18-year-old John Disco, knew that one day if he was famous he would have to be ushered out a back entrance due to bishmania.

They may not be as big as the Whopper, but with killer "teen-c power" tunes, they sure are doing their best to get there. And of course being backed by the Beastie Boys-run Grand Royal record label state-side can do nothing other than help the spirited bunch, which also includes 19-year-old Mada Rin and 20-year-old Sci-Fi Steven.

**Artsweek** spoke with John Disco, of whom the announcer at the beginning of their album *The New Transistor Heroes* says, "All hail the disco king / gaze in wonderment of his skanking ability but don't stare too long, his disco feet can hypnotize / Hear him say 'Travolta ain't got nothing on me.'"

**Artsweek: So what do you think the novelty is being in a teen band?**

**John Disco:** I don't know, I don't get the whole thing. I mean obviously I've never been in any other sort of band. I'm enjoying it. I don't feel like we're any different because we're teenagers or anything.

**Do you think people have tried to take advantage of you because of your age?**

Yeah. Definitely. ... There are various people in the press who think they have reason to slag us off 'cos we're young or whatever. I think out of all the bands that I know, I think we're really sussed [sorted out], and to say we're naive is really stupid because we've, like, negotiated our deals ourselves, which nobody sees. Everyone just sees the fact that we're young.

**Didn't you have lawyers or did your parents help you out?**

No, we didn't. My dad was really into it, but I just thought no. ... We got a manager and a lawyer to work out the really shitty details. We just basically stated what we wanted of the record company and the lawyer did the negotiating.

**Why did you sign to Grand Royal?**

I think we always had these dreams of signing to Grand Royal. It's one of these labels when you're young you feel a connection to. ... I think they've got some really good artists, like the Beastie Boys. It's all, like, in place and it seems really right, ya' know.

Musically we are quite diverse. Being on Grand Royal, they're more sensitive to us. They're not just gonna [go for] a chart

Glasgow and not being from that kind of background.

**What did they warn you about?**

Just that we might get trampled or that we might get crushed or that we might never come out again.

**Like Beatlemania or something?**

Yeah, I mean ... at the in-store we had to leave out the back door and they were like we don't want you to go in there 'cos

wanted to do. ... You should go out and do something exciting, and we went out and did something we wanted to do and we actually made money out of it. People should use that kind of useful energy throughout their life. ... It's not [just for] teenagers, it's just an ideology or whatever.

**Would you be stoked if you broke America?**

Oh yeah. I'd love to be popular anywhere in the world. ... The whole thing in Britain is they're so British. They expect bands to go break America and [in] America you can't get anywhere with a strictly British sound. Breaking America, it's truly hard especially when you're not mainstream-sounding, 'cos we're not really pop-based it would take a lot of really hard work, but it would be great.

**Would you want to do Lollapalooza?**  
We've been asked but I think we turned it down.

**Do you think American music is more exciting than British?**

I think anything's more exciting than Britain. I mean Britain's got its great bands, like its got the Prodigy, but this whole thing about trying to be like other British bands — there's so much retro music activity in Britain. Lots of bands sound the same, and there's a really bad attitude in the press as well. We get a really bad attitude from other bands as well.

**Really?**  
Yeah, we get slagged off all the time by other bands in Britain for being like these kids that can play the guitar. We're just tired of hearing that shit. You know Britain may [have been] a priority two or three years ago but we like America. ... It'd be neat to go back to Britain after doing well in America and it's just like, "What do you think of that?"

# None of Your Bis

Jolie Lash gets down to Bis-ness with the kid rock stars



L-R: mada rin, sci-fi steven and john disco

hit or whatever. They're understanding. **And you feel they understand you?**

Yeah. I mean you, like, look at their roster; they've got Ben Lee, Luscious Jackson. ... We [feel like] a real part of the family 'cos we're all fans of all these bands.

**So are you guys big in Japan?**

We can't really avoid the fact that we are actually. ... We're not in any way cocky about it. We're quite happy about it actually. ...

In Japan we did in-stores and one of the in-stores was virtually a gig. ... [We] were being warned for our safety ... and that's weird when you get told that, being from

you might get injured or you might get people injured — people were falling over each other and it's like "aaahh."

**When you were younger, and you wanted to be a pop star, did you ever think that you'd have to deal with that kind of stuff?**

Yeah I did actually. ... We've always been very ambitious.

**What is your motto, "the teen-c nation" all about?**

Um, well it basically started off as a mentality.

**Is it a private joke kind of a thing?**

Well no, ... It's a mentality that we have that we just kind of let go and do what we

## One Last Contest

Win posters, stickers and CDs. Just answer this question: Who do you think would win a Greco-Roman wrestling match between Adam West and George Clooney, and why? Bring your answer to the Nexus under Storke to collect. Or call us at 893-2691. Or e-mail us at [Nexus@mcl.ucsb.edu](mailto:Nexus@mcl.ucsb.edu)

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Kenickie / *At the Club* / Warner Brothers

Sometimes it seems the British music press feels guilty about only hyping testosterone-driven brit boy bands, so they put some bra-less girls on the



be elastica.

Hell, *At the Club's* good enough for radio, but then again, so are the Spice Girls.

—Jolie Lash likes the Spice Girls

The Charlatans / *Tellin' Stories* / MCA

Amid the invasion of the current crop of British bands comes this new release from relative senior citizens the Charlatans (*Tellin' Stories* is their fifth album).

The sound is far from old and tired, however. The album exudes freshness and spirit in the face of tragedy. The band's keyboard player, Rob Collins, was killed in a car accident during the recording of the album. Collins plays on much of the album, his trademark style being an integral part of the Charlatans' sound.

With Martin Duffy of Primal Scream recruited to fill the gap, the Charlatans soldiered on and have come up with *Tellin' Stories*, a masterful work that refuses to be put down.

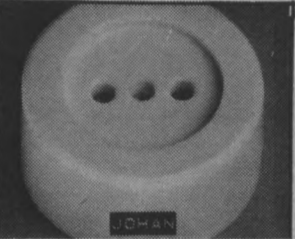
The Charlatans are, with this evidence, still very much a force to be reckoned with on the British music scene, and deserve

to ride high on the wave of acceptance of all things U.K. In fact, the rest could do worse than to learn a thing or two from some old masters.

—William Banks is not from London

Johan / *Johan* / spinART

When you pick up a copy of Johan's newest whimsical pop music en-



deavor, the first thing you're sure to wonder is what the heck is on the front cover. Is it some sort of European Lego? Is it a contemporary nuevo art sculpture fresh out of the Play-Doh Fun Factory? Is it some sort of electrical plug? It is a homage to Oakland-based hip-hop supergroup Souls of Mischief (minus the straight mouth)?

Turn it over and the back cover picture offers even more brain play. Oh yeah, play the album while the right side of your brain is being stimulated by the

pictures — the left side will appreciate it as well.

—Naz Escobar is not his real name

Linoleum / *Dissent* / DGC Records

Caroline Finch sings like a supermodel who just ate a piece of celery. She's got this throaty, smoke-infused vocal style that comes from the pit of her stomach — a style that uses all of the energy the celery provides to strain her vocals out.

But oh, what vocals they are. They have a dreamy kind of drugged-out hypnotic state to them that makes you feel like your brain is just Jell-O. Guitarist Paul Jones keeps the ethereal heavenly daze going by providing a broodingly melodic backdrop to Finch's vocals.

Although much of the album is a treat, something like peanut butter on celery, when you take the peanut butter off it's just a watery vegetable with strings that get stuck in your teeth.

—Tojonylie, a mutation of two opposite-gendered beings that currently reign over *Artsweek*, eats celery daily.

Blink-182 / *Dude Ranch* / Cargo Music

What do you get when you mix punk bands like NOFX and Unwritten Law with the likes of Adam Sandler and the "Star Wars" trilogy? Blink-182's newest album, *Dude Ranch*.

San Diego punkers Mark Hoppus, Tom DeLonge and Scott Raynor, who are known collectively as Blink-182, are about to release a follow-up album to their 1994 debut *Cheshire Cat*. With *Dude Ranch*, Blink-182's members are destined to be the newest kings of the Southern California boardsport punk-rock scene.

By combining humorous lyrics with powerful punk guitar chords on songs like "Dick Lips" and "Degenerate," Blink-182 is able to repeat the successful formula it created with its first album and avoid the dreaded sophomore jinx, producing a great new punk album worthy of purchasing.

—Sam Garza -183

Summertime / *Pure Juice* / Maverick

OK, here's some advice: If you want to be big pop stars, have your band get cool haircuts.

Since last time *Artsweek* checked in on Summertime, both bassist Misha Paris and guitarist/singer Tim Cullen got new

do's. Great hair, an album full of infectious, better-than-average pop songs, and a little help from a label called Maverick are really gonna help this lil' local quartet hit the big time.

*Pure Juice* is not ground-breaking, but it doesn't present itself as such. It's just a collection of chirpy little pop tunes that are bound to make campers happy, or at least the next Dishwalla.

—Jolie Lash is not the next Dishwalla

Henchmyn / *Two Thumbs Down* / Studio 15

Henchmyn's brand of ska embraces everything that your mother told you ska is supposed to be — from Adam Korn's hyper-reggae guitar strings to Vinnie Lucido's pogo-stick vocal acrobatics — it's in there. But the difference is that it makes you believe.

You'll believe that eight guys can get together and have a great time playing music on their own terms. While the 14 tracks on *Two Thumbs Down* are thoughtful, lively and well-produced, what makes this CD worthwhile is its ability to make you forget how good it is by putting a smile on your face.

—Scummy B. likes heavy metal music

Continued from p.1A

June 10

G Love & Special Sauce / *Yeah, It's That Easy* / Epic  
Jimmie's Chicken Shack / *Pushing the Salmonella Envelope* / Rocket  
k.d. lang / *Drag* / Warner Brothers  
Michael Rose / *Dance Wicked and Dub Wicked* / Heartbeat  
Jah Wobble / *William Blake* / Thirsty Ear

June 17

10,000 Maniacs / *Love Among the Ruins* / Geffen  
Blink 182 / *Dude Ranch* / MCA  
Jon Bon Jovi / *Destination Anywhere* / Mercury  
Patti LaBelle / *Flame* / MCA  
The Lightning Seeds / *Dizzy Heights* / Epic  
Mansun / *Attack of the Grey Lantern* / Epic  
No, this four-piece, northern British, sarcastic, rock 'n' roll band is not re-

lated to that scary guy in jail or Marilyn either. They've got sneering vocals and their loud guitars come from a short, blond guy fond of dressing in Vegas lounge gear, complete with Elvis glasses.

Megadeath / *Cryptic Writings* / Capitol  
The Seahorses / no title available / Geffen  
Zion Train / *Single Minded/Alive* / China

June 24

Julian Cope / *Interpreter* / Cooking Vinyl  
Del Amitri / *Some Other Sucker's Paradise* / A&M  
En Vogue / *EV3* / East West  
Friends of Dean Martinez / *Retrograde* / Subpop  
Radiohead / *O.K. Computer* / Capitol

Probably the most anticipated release of the summer from Thom Yorke and company (next to Prodigy, of course). They are supposed to have cheered up for this release too!

Ween / *The Mollusk* / Elektra

July 1

Blues Traveler / *Straight On Till Morning* / A&M  
Monaco / *Music For Pleasure* / Polydor  
Prodigy / *Law of The Land* / Maverick

July 8

Various Artists / *Disco Queens: The 70's Disco Queens* / Rhino  
Various Artists / *Disco Queens: The 80's Disco Queens* / Rhino

July 15

Big Back Forty / *Bested* / Polydor  
Eric Matthews / *The Lateness of the Hour* / Subpop  
The Mommyheads / no title available / Geffen

August 12

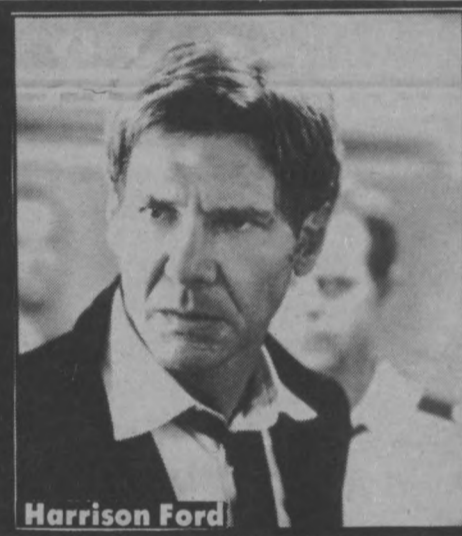
Lighthouse Family / *Ocean Drive* / A&M  
Figdish / *When Shove Goes Back to Push* / Polydor

Continued from p.1A

"Face/Off" (June 27): Despite rumors, this film isn't about a movement to have Tori Spelling's face removed. Instead it's a high-powered action vehicle starring two of the planet's coolest actors (John Travolta and Nicolas Cage). Travolta plays an FBI agent who literally swaps faces with Cage's terrorist (don't ask). The action comes to us courtesy of Hong Kong master of mayhem John Woo. Woo is to action films what Ron Jeremy is to porno films: a misunderstood genius.

"Men In Black" (July 2): Warning, this film isn't about Johnny Cash and Bob Dole. This sci-fi flick has Tommy Lee Jones and Will Smith as well-dressed immigration agents tracking a string of intergalactic activity. And I thought the Mexican border patrol had it rough.

"Air Force One" (July



Harrison Ford

25): Harrison Ford stars as the president of the United States. Do you really need more incentive than that?

"Copland" (August 1): Perennial meathead Sylvester Stallone takes a pay cut bigger than his ego to star in James Magnold's low-budget film about police corruption in a small New Jersey town. Will Sly

score a Travolta-esque comeback? If Johnny can go from starring in "Look Who's Talking Now" to getting \$20 million a picture based on the strength of one movie, I'd say damn near anything is possible.

—Patrick Reardon likes

*The Big Picture*

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## Great Classics & Today's Best New Rock

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# Battery Acid Blues

Keir DuBois is back after a failed solo attempt

Sometimes sabbaticals can be anything but vacations. I apologize to the few readers of this column for missing last week, but it just couldn't be helped, and evidently more serious things have gone on within the Clap in the last two weeks. Apparently, there were several things that piled up on the members of the band that caused a collective identity crisis on our part, and we decided that the best way to ride out the problems was to spend time away from each other for a while.

We'd just finished a small four-date tour of the Bay area, and that was, to put it euphemistically, rather interesting. We had one show on the street in San Francisco, opening for a street bluesman whose major claim to fame was his ability to converse with the passers-by in various languages. These people were duly impressed, but that was only because they didn't take the time to notice that this guy's language skills were 60 percent genuine and 40 percent total bullshit; much of what he said in any language other than English was nonsense syllables that sounded, to the untrained ear, quite similar to the rest of the legitimate syntax.

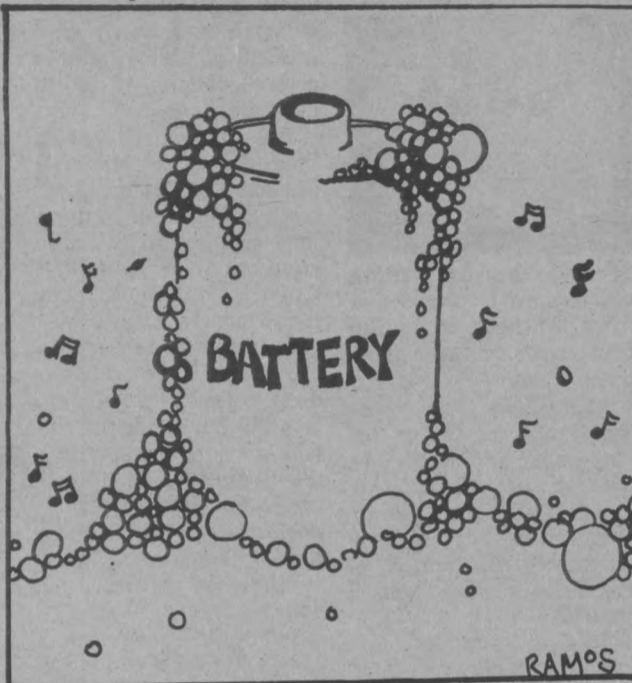
We were impressed at first as well, but we soon began to have a little fun with the old guy, since he only let us play a three-song set in addition to continually interrupting our songs to promote his own. When we objected he chastised us, saying we spoiled white kids had no idea how rough it was on the street and that it's not all for one. Naturally, we decided to show him the sense of humor that the suburbs breed; we got one of the audience members to ask the bluesman to speak Latin. The polymath's Latin was almost nonexistent, and it didn't help that the interrogator we found was a Berkeley classics professor. Our bluesman benefactor was so angry with us by then that we had to hotfoot it across the wharf to avoid the things he began throwing at us.

Our other shows were a little more successful. Catering to our growing (and previously unknown) fan base in sunny Pleasanton, we played at the Amador High prom, which would have been a great show if our drummer Kevin hadn't pulled the fire alarm.

This was our one major problem. Kevin's two main goals in life were (a) to be a drummer, and if that didn't work, well, there was always plan (b) terrorism, which he seemed to have a perverse attraction to. At first we thought it was cool that he could create small plastic ex-

plosives in the eraser heads on pencils, but this whole fire alarm thing was a bit much — I mean, it's one thing to talk about blowing up one's school, but Kev took this a little too seriously, especially since we were far from his school, and since the dance was held in San Francisco's Golden Gate Club, we weren't at a school at all, so there was absolutely no excuse for this kind of behavior, even though under different circumstances it would be completely understandable.

The other two shows were in Modesto. These went well, but that was only because the support we were able to drum up was about 30 friends and friends of friends, since our promoter had unfortunately been on a serious



alcohol binge the night before, and so was completely blotto when he was supposed to be advertising us. The result was that the crowds in the audience for the two shows were exactly the same people. I've never dropped acid before, but the resulting heavy dose of déjà vu that we got the second night was pretty damn trippy.

The sticky points between the band came to a head on the way home, while we ate at the In-n-Out in Kettleman City, quite possibly one of the most desolate places in this great state of ours. We were all in favor of dumping poor deranged Kevin, but we also knew that if he had no

drumming outlet, he'd probably defect to the Michigan Militia and turn that movement on its ear for his own maniacal purposes.

Another issue was Adam's singing, as in he didn't want to, despite constant adulation from a never-ending stream of beautiful young women. We recruited our friend Laurel for vocals, and she's very talented, but she immediately took issue with the band's name. That was no surprise; almost every woman who knew of our name despised it. The real shocker was when Laurel refused to sing our only hit, the song that we simply must play at every show because it's the only famous Clap song, and if she won't sing "Your Mama's a Ho," then she's too good for this band and should take her act somewhere that it could flourish.

She did have a good point, though. Our name is a public-relations albatross, and so we thought we should brainstorm a new one. This proved difficult, though, since every name that passed our criteria of "good" (meaning the mere speaking of the words made us convulse with laughter) was just as dirty as the Clap. Still, talking about this stuff wasn't getting us anywhere, since by now all of our egos were way too big to accommodate each other, so we all decided to part ways for a while.

My brother Bryn and I woke up at 3 a.m. that morning, hijacked our tattered van, and drove back to 'Frisco with all of our road money. Sure, this was a horrible thing to do, but he'd just seen "Trainspotting" and I'd just read *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* for the umpteenth time, and both of us were still ridiculously inebriated, so we had no qualms at all about ditching Kev and Adam.

We were crossing the Bay Bridge into Oakland when Bryn suddenly pulled a .357 Magnum and demanded all of the money and to be let off the van right now. "Now?" I said, drunkenly eyeing the gun. "We're on the bridge, you dolt!"

"I don't care!" he yelled over the traffic, his face flushed with alcohol and lack of sleep. "Stop the van and let me off, or I swear to Elvis I'll shoot!"

At this point, I didn't care if he was my brother or Kevin's terrorist prodigy. I let him off right there, which just happened to be in the middle of the bridge on Treasure Island. Two weeks later he arrived home in I.V. in a crate stamped "U.S. NAVY."

Adam and Kevin hitchhiked their way back here in a car full of gorgeous girls, who later dumped Kev in Isla Vista after he hot-wired their bikinis and drove Adam all the way to Cabo San Lucas. I bet he was singing all the way, but I didn't hear from him for a month.

I ended up back in Pleasanton at a friend's house, putting the finishing touches on a batch of new Clap songs I'd stolen, preparing them for my impending solo career, which took two rather unspectacular months to wither and die, after which I pleaded with the others to revive the band (jump-started now for a second time), and when they finally agreed, we began planning our next assault on the world, which we knew would make us superstars again.

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