

At Long Last...

The Cobra's Nose

Vol. 35

Did You Hear about the Gay Hot Potato?

August 29, 2002

The Cobra's Notes...

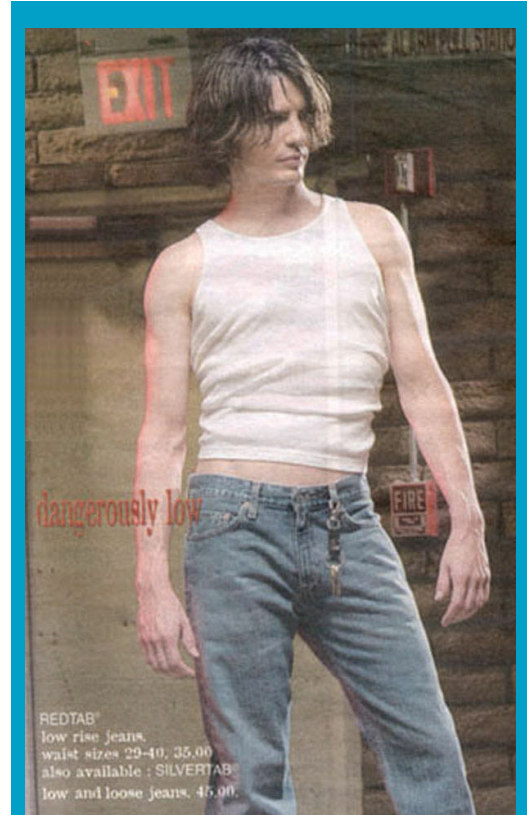
You may well ask, "Why a new *Nose* after all this time?" I may well answer, "Are you kidding? Have you *seen* my nose?" but that wouldn't be particularly helpful. Unless it led to a grant for rhinoplasty, which I would welcome. Or you know what? Liposuction would be better.

One reason is the e-mail I got in June. The missive was from The Man after I sent him a lengthy and generally unpopular evaluation of my favorite movies of 2001 (it was also timely). The e-letter read in part:

Yeah!!! I've been waiting for some new Cobra reading. Brings back a sense of normalcy in an otherwise f'd up world. It's like the planets fell out of alignment or something: Economy goes in the toilet, 9/11, economy goes further into the toilet, Cobra's untimely departure, leading to another slide in the economy and Cosmodemonic's shareholders are irate, not a drop of rain in 8 months, Cobra updates stop coming, clearly triggering unrest between India and Pakistan, 110 degrees in May, news of the approaching dismemberment of Cosmodemonic... Makes 'ya head spin.

Well. How could I resist the compliment of being grouped with drought, rumors of war, and economic catastrophe? Do associations get any grander? Even if I am the Cobra, I am only human.

Now, most of the crises above are familiar to all, but a few might require some explanation. For one, "Cobra's untimely departure." This is still a painful subject for me, and one with a history that would require more space than I have here to properly explicate. I'll just cut to the chase: after I was fired, we (my three accusers—Muffin, that Unholy Blond Stick of an ex-boss, and my nominee for Mr. Accounting Fraud 2003—their lawyer, the invaluable Amy Magsamen, and myself) appeared before a wise and mild-mannered judge at the Arizona Department of Economic Security. We questioned one another (except for Amy, who didn't have any questions, got bored, and studied her pilot's manual), then made our statements. The Right Honorable Judge found me credible and them full of it. Cosmodemonic appealed, and was smacked down even more firmly. They are allowed to appeal again, but unless they produce film of me actually pistol whipping a client (which I have never been filmed doing), I can't see them winning that round either. (cont. on page 6)



Partick & His Dangerous Pants

(Although I wasn't paid for the above ad, I am eager to sell out and think you will find my price quite reasonable.)

I Want You to Want Me

(But No Longer Need You to Need Me)

A couple months ago, I got a call from the Amazing Amy inviting me to meet her and this person named Craig at Backstage Café. I'd heard about Craig a few times, and figured he was worth a look. Actually, that Craig was worth a look was the bulk of what I had heard about him, and it proved to be true—pretty face, no conversation. This would be perfectly fine under most circumstances, but as Backstage Café was hosting a local comedy night a little more distraction would have been welcome.

There are a bunch of quotable quips about the difficulty of comedy ("comedy isn't pretty," "dying is easy, comedy is hard," etc). So I'm not going to come down on a bunch of amateurs. Even if Amy confided to me that their material arrived in her e-mailbox a few days before. Even if they did count among their number an eighth grade English teacher who sang song parodies, a cancer survivor who tried to extort laughs by tying them to her chances of recovery, and a guy who seemed to be gunning for the title of the Rip Taylor of Central

Arizona. And even if their acts never quite achieved funny, no matter how many times I hissed at our waitress, "Another one of these, please."

At least two thirds of the small audience that night was comprised of these comics, so mostly they did the stand-up version of preaching to the choir. Amy was having none of it, however, and when the opportunity came for audience participation she didn't let the toadies have all the fun. So before the bewigged lady in the front row could respond to the question, "What do you do for a living?" (she finally answered, "Madam!" Ha ha!), Amy called out, "NOTHING!"

"I didn't ask you," said Rip.

"Ask me next!" said Amy.

It was probably the most supportive heckling ever.

(cont. on page 4)

My Big Fat Spidey Ohana

The surprise summer movie hit *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* tells the story of Toula—a frumpy, old-maid-at-thirty Greek-American woman determined to change her life. To her family, she is this close to being a lost cause. Her father plots to send her away to Greece in an attempt to conceal her true age and marry her off to an unsuspecting Greek, but tells her younger brother he has plenty of time to find a wife. Her "breeder of Greek eaters" sister bullies her from the pulpit of motherhood. But Toula's mother unexpectedly backs her plan to take some classes at the community college.

Toula is astounded that her mom would defy the head of the house. "The men may be the head of the house," Mom tartly replies, "but the women are the neck and they can turn the head anyway they want."

Toula makes herself over, a process that involves a change of wardrobe, a girdle, and lots of plucking. In her new school incarnation, she banishes the ghost of the "swarthy six year old with sideburns" that haunts her elementary school memories, ditches the homemade lunches of moussaka, and ingratiate herself with the blondest, WASPy-est girls in the student union. Emboldened by her success on campus, she dares flirt with a dreamboat schoolteacher she first glimpsed whilst working in her family's restaurant. Eventually, Toula's family becomes aware of her affair; and she is delighted to discover her boyfriend, Ian, is able to withstand their scrutiny. Thus, having forayed into the bland, white bread and bundt cakes world of middle America—and nabbing a native for a fiancée—Toula begins phase two of her transformation.

In this part of the movie, Toula re-claims, or rather, is re-claimed by her culture. The preparations for Toula's big, fat, Greek wedding are entirely co-opted by her family, from the venue to the Greek flagged invitations that misidentify her future mother-in-law as "Harry." On the eve of her wedding, Toula's crazy (and that's not crazy like eccentric or wacky, but crazy like insane) grandmother places a nuptial crown of twigs and faded blossoms upon the bride-to-be's head. Together, Toula, her mother, and her grandmother admire the effect in a mirror, forming a pretty tableau of Grecian womanhood, and foretelling Toula's future.

It's a bit surprising to see Toula submit to her Greek-American heritage after all her griping about it; but then she goes on to convert Ian's clan. This isn't a bad thing. If you have Greek-American associations, you will know that they can be a real blessing in your life. On the other hand, Ian's pallid ethnicity—whatever it is—seems a curse. His parent's house is impeccable, silent, and cold, as are his parents. His (only?) friend is bent and acerbic, and keeps trying to fix Ian up with interchangeable twinkies. Ian himself is a vegetarian, a concept his future in-laws cannot get their minds around. "I'll make lamb," his aunt-to-be volunteers.

In the end, after multiple shots of ouzo, everybody is one big fat happy

family. For instance, Ian's mom seems to have become reconciled to being known as Harry, and his friend is caught eyeing a bridesmaid. Her father presents the happy couple with the deed to a house, and everybody dances. *Opa! Opa!*

The moral of this story is clear: *conform*. *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* stands in warm contrast to the last batch of films I wrote about, in which unusual, unwise, or non-conformist characters are ground into powder by the larger society. (Those movies, by the way, are *AI: Artificial Intelligence*, *Cast Away*, *The House of Mirth*, *Ghost World*, *Mulholland Drive*, and *Angel Eyes*, and the article in question can be found at <http://www.thecobrasnose.com/xxarchive/2001blinddate-movies.pdf>). Toula wanted to change her life, and she did, radically. But what she changed it into was not radical at all. Sure, she took an unusual route. The women in her family did not enroll in college—but let's face it, if your mom signs onto a plan, how likely is it to rock the boat? She gets a different job, switching from seating hostess at the family restaurant to travel agent—but the agency is also a family business, owned by her aunt. She is affianced to a non-Greek, an unheard of thing to do—but then he converts and is baptized into the Greek Orthodox Church. Then she marries him and lives happily ever after, right next door to her parents, breeding Greek eaters.

MBFGW has been called a Cinderella story, both in terms of its plot and its popular triumph. To take the last part first, the most recent tally I read put its grosses at about \$45 million dollars. This

doesn't seem like much of a bonanza compared to the likes of *Spider-Man's* \$114 million opening weekend take, but since *MBFGW* only cost about \$3 million to produce, it has been spectacularly successful on its own terms. The making of the film has a mini-legend behind it. The movie is based on a one-woman play by Nia Vardalos, who reportedly based the story on her own life. The play was seen by Rita Wilson, who in the role of Fairy Godmother, instigated film production. Wilson even insisted that the relatively unknown and un-lithe Vardalos star as Toula. The official reason behind Wilson's attraction to the play is her own Greek-American heritage, but it's hard to ignore her role as consort to one of the biggest movie stars of our age—Tom Hanks, purported embodiment of the decent, normal, average American. Plotwise, there is a Cinderella resonance in the narrative arc of a serving drudge who becomes a lovely married woman. But where Cinderella got a leg up from a supernatural being and was elevated to an exceptional position, Toula tapped inner resources that enabled her to become a fairly typical denizen of her community. So rather than the Cinderella message of patient goodness finally, fabulously paying off, *Wedding* is an ode to culturalization.

Listen, I'm not knocking it. Things do tend to go better if you're pretty (see the before and after photos) and socially acceptable. If the prevailing group eats sandwiches instead of something that sounds like "moose ka-ka," get yourself a sandwich. Likewise, if you are part of the colorless friends and family of the groom section (and outnumbered twenty-to-one by festive ethnic types), best to drink the wine and join the party. In any case, schmooze like crazy and maybe you will (cont. on page 5)



"The Kids Are Alright" was written in 1965 by a twenty year old Pete Townshend. The Who was already distinguishing itself on the London scene with energetic, even violent displays of maximum R&B, but the song describes a quieter process of self-selection. There is a pause after the song's ringing opening chord, followed by the discrete assertion, "I don't mind."

The instruments kick back in and the lyric specifies,

"...other guys dancing with my girl," but the separation of the first and second parts of the line suggest that the singer's absence of jealousy is only one example of what he doesn't mind. Similarly isolated are "That's fine" from the second line, "Sometimes" and "Bells chime" from the first and second lines from the second verse, respectively.

*I don't mind other guys dancing with my girl
That's fine, I know them all pretty well...*

*Sometimes, I feel I gotta get away
Bells chime, I know I gotta get away*

The dramatic thrust of the song is contained in those words and fragments, taking the singer from philosophical detachment to acceptance, even approval of a particular situation; then from occasional stirrings to the dawning (bells are chiming, wake up!) of an ambition not shared by the singer's peers. He doesn't mind other guys dancing with his girl because she is ballast and he's "gotta get away." He feels, he knows, if he doesn't leave, he'll go out of his mind. He's just not breaking up with one particular female, he's divorcing his neighborhood, his childhood. No hard feelings, mind you—"Better leave her behind with the kids, they're alright/ The kids are alright."

And that's all they'll ever be—alright. Not rich or famous, successful or superb—alright. So while Townshend currently occupies offices that overlook his old haunts, he is light years away from them in a practical sense.

In 1966, the same year "The Kids are Alright" was released on *The Who Sings My Generation*, Bryan Holland was born in Southern California. Although the case can be made for many successful pop artists' superior intellect, few are as elaborately credentialed as Holland. Having been valedictorian of his high school class (which earned him the nickname "Dexter"), he graduated from the pre-med program at USC, and went on to get a doctorate in molecular biology. He and his high school friend Greg Kiesel (possessor of a BA in finance from Long Beach State) taught themselves to play the guitar and bass, respectively, and founded the band Manic Subcidal in 1984 after being denied access to a Social Distortion concert. That band evolved into The Offspring, with drummer Ron Welty (who has a degree in electronics) being the final addition to the line-up. Their third album *Smash* broke out as the best selling record on an independent label ever, selling between four and nine million copies, depending on which source you believe. Together, Dexter and "Greg K" formed their own label, Nitro Records. A few years ago, Holland testified before Congress about the notoriously corrupt and thieving practices of the major labels.

Sometime in the midst of these accomplishments, singer/lyricist Holland visited his old neighborhood in Garden Grove. There, he contemplated the fates of the kids he grew up with. "...this one had a nervous breakdown; another guy got killed in a driving accident," he said in an interview. "You grow up in America, and [you're supposed to] have such a bright future. And it's really not that way."

THE KIDS ARE...

T h a t
epiphany
led to the
song "The
K i d s

Aren't Alright" on The Offspring's 1998 album *Americana*, and it is a sequel of sorts to Townshend's composition. In it, the singer has returned and finds the street where he lived in shambles.



*Now the neighborhood's
cracked and torn
The kids are grown up,
but their lives are worn
How can one little street
swallow so many lives?*

It isn't a metaphysical question. The kids fashioned their own lives, then wore roughly, then wore them out. The song's second verse is a litany of self-imposed catastrophes, "chances thrown." The kids could have been alright, but they blew it. Holland is unsentimental about cause and effect. *Americana*, for example, includes the songs "Walla Walla," which taunts an inept thief on his way to the Big House, and "Why Don't You Get a Job?," which is self-explanatory. But "The Kids Aren't Alright" is emotional; just because the consequences are logical doesn't mean they can't break the heart.

Which brings us back to The Who. They were about as rich and famous, successful and superb as a rock band could [\(cont. on page 6\)](#)

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

by Peter Townshend

I don't mind other guys dancing with my girl
That's fine, I know them all pretty well
But I know sometimes I must get out in the light
Better leave her behind with the kids, they're alright
The kids are alright

Sometimes, I feel I gotta get away
Bells chime, I know I gotta get away
And I know if I don't, I'll go out of my mind
Better leave her behind with the kids, they're alright
The kids are alright

I know if I go things would be a lot better for her
I had things planned, but her folks wouldn't let her

I don't mind other guys dancing with my girl
That's fine, I know them all pretty well
But I know sometimes I must get out in the light
Better leave her behind with the kids, they're alright
The kids are alright

Sometimes, I feel I gotta get away
Bells chime, I know I gotta get away
And I know if I don't, I'll go out of my mind
Better leave her behind with the kids, they're alright
The kids are alright

(cont. from page 1) Soon after that exchange, we headed for the swanker pastures of AZ88, but I've never gotten that "NOTHING!" out of my mind. As some of you may know, I've been without regular employment for some months now, and I'm running out of euphemisms for my rootless state (I'm down to "jobless loser" and "I suck"). I lack the bravado to pull off a "NOTHING!" and even when I have a temporary position, I am too chagrined to admit to it when Amy introduces me to another one of her buns-of-steel, thriving business owner type friends. So I beg off and say, "I'm sorry, I'd rather not talk about my job."

"That's okay," they say. "I was only trying to be polite." Then they turn on their heel and walk away.

Well, at least they tried.

For the past few weeks, I have been receptionisting in Tempe for Cosmo Homes. The building is nice and the people (for the most part) are nice—even the nutty anal ones that make me do the same unholy paperwork over and over and over and...where was I? Oh, yes. The assignment was only supposed to be for a few days, as the pay was low and the company supposedly already on the hunt for a replacement receptionist. After a few days, the Director of Operations asked if I would like to apply for the job. Thinking it was better than a kick in the head, I filled out an application. Then, for a few weeks, nothing more was said about my prospects. Then, resumes sent in response to the receptionist job advertised in the *Arizona Republic* and on the internet began to fill the fax tray. This is what's known in the business world as a "hint."

I was distraught. What kind of person doesn't get a job as a receptionist? Especially if his or her (let's face it, her) predecessor was chronically late, sluttily dressed, and borderline alcoholic? And that was the evaluation from people who seemed to like her. As usual, I went wining and crying to my hero and role model Pat Lang for help. She gave me excellent advice about asking why I wasn't considered for the job, which I will almost certainly not take because I am such a weenie. I asked her if she would be willing to write a reference for me, as quite a few of the resumes came with them. She told me, "I will write anything you want, but I will not help you find work as a receptionist."

That led to a dark night of the soul, and remembrance of an incident from the bus stop.

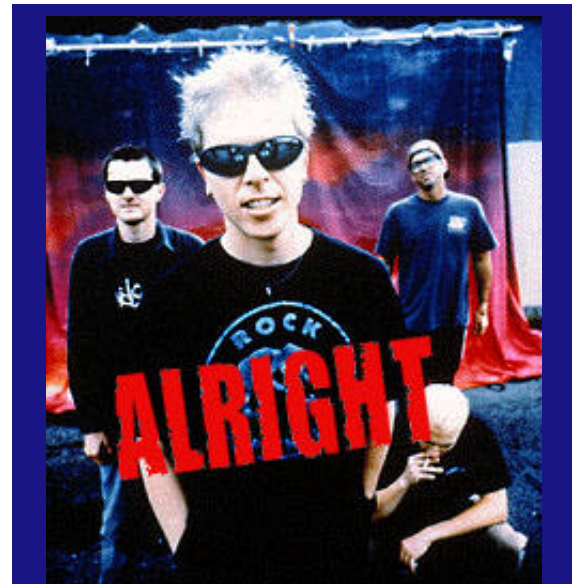
The bus stop is where I go at lunch to read. It is noisy and hot and smells of exhaust, in short, a nice break from the office. Because mass transit has never really caught on in the Valley I usually have the shelter to myself. Once, however, I shared it with a chatty young woman, I'd say in her early twenties, who noticed what I was reading and then would not shut up. To her credit, she spoke clearly and knowledgeably about the popular book scene before she started in on her illegitimate kids, their shiftless father, and the new guy friend she hoped to rope into taking her camping. That's when I took a good hard look at her, and not to be uncharitable, she was...not attractive. She was nearly spherical, had prickly-heat pimples all over her convex neck, and gaps of at least a quarter inch between all of her teeth. Her clothes were dirty, as was her mullet. And yet, I thought, somebody impregnated this person, and probably did it more recently than my last date. What the heck is up with that?

I posed this question to my sister Lauren (Pat was on vacation). She said, "Would you want to date the guy who knocked her up?"

I went back and forth, but overall, it didn't seem like a very good idea. I mean, I wasn't even interested in dating Craig and what were the odds that that guy looked as good as Craig?

"So what's your beef?" she said.

So no beef. Maybe a few sour grapes, but no beef. Maybe it's not the worst thing in the world not to be wanted by someone you do not want, whether suitor or employer. Since this dawned on me, I've collected resumes from the tray, then surreptitiously faxed my own. I write this now on the Cosmo Homes computer on Cosmo Homes's dime, and as quickly as possible because I found their ad for this job in the paper and it said they wanted to fill it "IMMEDIATELY." I may be a jobless loser and I may suck, but since I learned I wouldn't be the receptionist for Cosmo Homes, I've been happy every day.



THE KIDS AREN'T ALRIGHT by The Offspring

When we were young
the future was so bright
The old neighborhood was so alive
And every kid on the whole damn street
Was gonna make it big and not be beat

Now the neighborhood's cracked and torn
The kids are grown up but their lives are worn
How can one little street
Swallow so many lives?

Chances thrown, nothing's free
Longing for what used to be
Still it's hard, hard to see
Fragile lives, shattered dreams

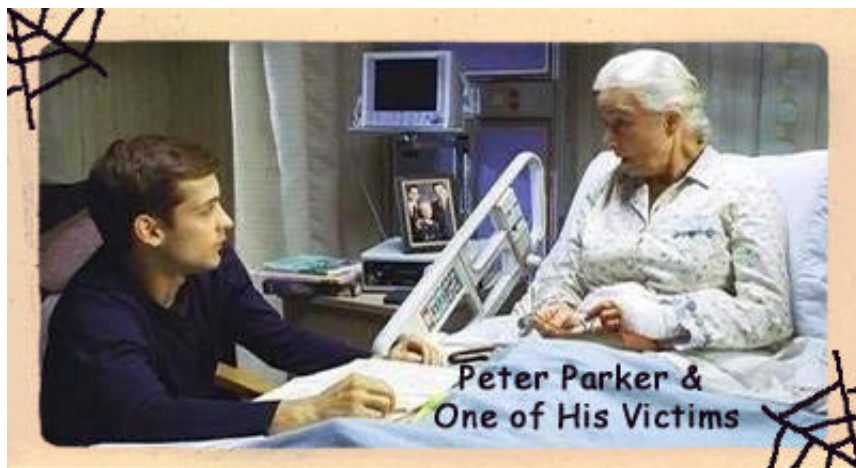
Jamie had a chance, well she really did
Instead she dropped out
And had a couple of kids
Mark still lives at home cause he's got no job
He just plays guitar and smokes a lot of pot
Jay committed suicide, Brandon OD'd and died
What the hell is going on?
The cruelest dream, reality

Chances thrown, nothing's free
Longing for what used to be
Still it's hard, hard to see
Fragile lives, shattered dreams

(cont. from page 2) be granted a place at the cool kid's table. That's why the naming-renaming motif is so interesting. First, there is the Harriet/Harry business of the invitations, which Toula's family (initially) and Ian's family (finally) thinks is no big deal. The name "Toula" is actually a diminution of her proper first name, Fotoula. In marriage, she takes Ian's surname, Miller. In his wedding toast, Toula's father stretches to make a connection between the name Miller and the Greek word for apple. His family name, Portokalos, means "orange" in Greek, and so he says, the families are not so different—they are, in fact, all fruit. In short, personal identity comes in a distant second to membership in a group.

In an age and culture where so many individuals and small groups shrilly demand unfettered acceptance into the mainstream, the assimilationist message of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* seems sensible and correct. Meanwhile, in the aforementioned *Spider-Man*, Peter Parker comes to realize that in standing out, he can never fit in. Like Toula, he was a natural born geek who blossomed, and was finally noticed by the really really good looking object of his affections. Somewhat like Toula, who saved Ian from his pathetic background, Peter rescues Mary Jane from would-be assailants and other villains.

Unlike Toula, however, his transformation was accidental rather than intentional, and resulted in freakish attributes and abilities. He is so fast, for instance, that he can detect his secret love Mary Jane's danger of slipping on her way to the popular kids' table in the cafeteria, then catch her and all the items on her tray before she hits the floor. He is thrilled by his new powers and uses them frivolously. Far from wanting to pass as a regular citizen, he designs his new look for maximum distinction. He is also very specific about his new name—The Human Spider—and miffed when it isn't respected.



Peter abandons trivial behavior when it contributes to the death of his Uncle Ben. As he dies, the only father Peter has ever known tells him, "With great power comes great responsibility," and that becomes Spider-Man's credo. Peter/Spider-Man soon learns, however, that another consequence of great power is great peril to those closest to him. By the end of the movie, Peter's mentor, his best friend, his uncle and aunt, and the only girl he has ever loved have all been grievously harmed or killed as a result of his identity as Super-Man. He will spend the rest of his life as an outsider, trying to combat evil whilst flack from the battle rains all over good. "Not everyone is meant to make a difference," he says. "But for me, the choice to lead an ordinary life is no longer an option."

So there's a movie about a girl who finds joy in becoming like everybody she knows, and there's a guy who becomes a superhero and abandons all hope of normalcy and happiness. In the middle are *Lilo & Stitch*.

Lilo & Stitch is the strangest Disney feature cartoon in a long while, pos-

sibly ever. Gone are the songs by Alan Menken, Elton John, and (*shudder*) Phil Collins, banished by those of The King himself—Elvis Presley. A recent austerity campaign in the animation departments resulted in a free and funky look for *L&S*, from the water color backgrounds to the characters (some seem virtually lifted from *Winnie the Pooh* and *Mulan*, and the costumes are simply drawn—the number of stripes on Nani's bikini, for instance, were reduced from eight to three in pre-production). Furthermore, the traditional cell animation is augmented by photo of Elvis and a clip of the fifties monster flick *Tarantula*.

The story of an escaped genetically engineered monster who escapes to earth and uses a little girl as a human shield is not exactly traditional Disney, either. Clearly the marketing department didn't know what to do with the film; the advertising consisted of other Disney characters eyeing the odd blue creature with disgust and scorn. Now, you'd expect that sort of thing from the cast of *The Lion King*—monarchical governments tend to engender a certain amount of snobbery—but, jeez, I thought Belle was supposed to be *nice*. The whole seemed to have one message: Stitch would never, ever be seated with the popular Disney characters.

To his credit, Stitch seems not to mind and flashes a big sociopathic grin in the posters. He is a monster, after all. But Lilo is a little girl with weird ideas, dorky clothes, and no money for Barbies. The rejection she faces is reminiscent of what Stitch faced in the movie's previews, but being human, she feels the snub. Like when Lilo's peers sneak off during her imaginative disquisition about why her homemade doll doesn't look like theirs. She throws it to the ground and stomps away. A few steps later, however, she returns and gathers the doll in her arms, giving it a big conciliatory hug. After all, until she meets Stitch, it's the only friend she has.

And in the beginning, Stitch only sticks by her because intergalactic bounty hunters will kill him if he doesn't. Stitch is a destructive jerk by nature. Designed to wreak havoc on large cities, he is at a loss when he finds himself on a sleepy Hawaiian island. He finds petty vandalism diverting but ultimately unfulfilling, and feels pangs of helpless desolation. "What must it be like," his creator (and would-be destroyer) muses, "to have no higher purpose?"

Lilo (a Hawaiian word for "lost") does sense a higher purpose, beginning with natural law. Her first dialogue in the movie is an explanation that she had to buy peanut butter because she couldn't feed the fish she subsidizes a tuna sandwich. "I'd be an abomination!" she says. Curiously, in part because when was the last time you heard the word "abomination" in a kids' movie, Stitch is called an abomination, not only because he is a lab created monster, but because he has no sense of decorum. When Lilo bites somebody, she is remorseful and apologizes. When Stitch does, he cackles with glee. ("Does this look infected to you?" both of their victims ask.)

Lilo is also a believer in "*ohana*." "'*Ohana*' means family," Lilo explains, "and family means nobody gets left behind. Or forgotten." It's a sentiment that Lilo and her teenaged sister/guardian Nani, as orphans, feel keenly. Stitch doesn't remember a family, but is moved by a story book image of a solitary Ugly Duckling crying out "I'm lost!", then on the next page being joined by others like him. Stitch develops a sort of cargo cult attitude toward the image, and enacts it with the hope of attracting a family of his own. This pagan ceremony recalls Lilo's activities with a handful of dolls made of spoons and a book entitled *Practical Voodoo*. "My friends need to be punished," she says. But when Stitch leaves with her copy of *The Ugly Duckling*, Lilo views the scene as another abandonment. "But I'll remember you," she says. "I remember everybody."

(cont. on page 6)

(cont. from page 5) Lilo's already fractured family is headed toward a final blow at the hands of an MIB social worker named Cobra Bubbles. Nani tries hard, but is overwhelmed by the sudden responsibility of parenthood to a sister who, in misreading visual cues, insists to Bubbles that she is disciplined real good! Five times a day! With bricks and a pillowcase! The presence of an ill tempered, "evil koala" looking thing (even one trying to become a model citizen) and his two alien stalkers is more than Lilo and Nani's fragile home can stand. Literally, as it turns out—their place is leveled in a battle between Stitch, his mad scientist creator Dr. Jumba Jookiba, and a cross dressing EPA weenie type named Pleakley who believes mosquitoes are an endangered species.



Having obliterated the house, the survivors create a new one from scratch—starting with the inhabitants. Over the course of the movie, Stitch is converted to the concepts of *ohana* and the rule of law. When the Grand Councilwoman of the universe swoops down to collect Stitch, she is surprised to see him peaceably submit to his deportation, and even

more so to hear him declare that he has a name that he would prefer she use henceforward. Then she is nearly bowled over to hear his request to say goodbye to Lilo and Nani. "This is my family," he explains. "I found it all on my own. It is little, and broken, but still good. Yeah, still good."

Cobra Bubbles does a little legal maneuvering ("Aliens are all about rules," he says), and persuades the Councilwoman to exile Stitch to earth rather than a lonely asteroid. She also washes her hands of Jookiba and Pleakley, effectively stranding them. So, the aliens convert their defunct spaceship into a wing of the home they help Lilo, Nani, and Nani's hopeful suitor

David rebuild. In contrast to Ian and Toula Miller becoming subsidies of her family and Peter Parker's self-imposed aloofness, the family at the end of *Lilo & Stitch* cobbles itself together and makes something unique. Far from being an "all you need is love" sap-fest, the alliance of humans and aliens depends on order and utilitarianism as much as affection. Their family is like the hula group in which Stitch joins Lilo—attractive and fun to be sure, but you have to learn the steps and keep in line.

(cont. from page 1) During my times of trial, I asked my spiritual advisor and mother, Mom, if it would be all right to wish for the utter and immediate destruction of Cosmodemonic. She said that would be a bad idea, but to pray that God's will be done would be permissible. That sounded like a pretty neat loophole, so I prayed for that instead.

Which led to "news of the approaching dismemberment of Cosmodemonic." Now, this is karma writ large and a warning to the people of earth: Do not *mess* with Cobra. Soon after my dismissal, my former office was systematically destroyed by bitter executives higher up on the Cosmodemonic food chain. I feel awful for my friends who got caught in the backlash, but since they are all intelligent, capable people destined for better things I don't worry for them. Cosmodemonic *has* retained the likes of Pus, Muffin, and Blond Stick. I would normally say they deserve each other, but as that would be spiteful, I'll just go with "God's will be done" again.

In June, India and Pakistan decided not to annihilate one another. At least not for the time being.

In July, we got rain.

In August, a new *Cobra's Nose*.

In September, will the planets get back in alignment?

Well, God's will be done.

Sharon C. McGovern
Editor/ Publisher/ Cobra-in-Chief

Contact Cobra (and please do, I appreciated all the Christmas cards)

thecobrasnose@yahoo.com

I'll mention you next time, Lee, jeez.

(cont. from page 3) could be, and as troubled. I don't know how if Townshend's school friends turned out alright, but the band was a mess. Between Townshend's rages and drummer Keith Moon's gleeful destructiveness, they annihilated so much equipment that the band didn't see a profit for years, and as a group they ran up additional bills by laying waste to countless hotel rooms and back stages. Drug and alcohol abuse was a continual problem for the band, leading to infighting and tragedy. In 1970, Moon accidentally killed his friend and chauffeur whilst under the influence, and died of an overdose in 1978. A year later, eleven fans were crushed to death in a stampede at a concert in Cincinnati. The band members managed to survive the 80s and 90s without too much incident and quite a number of triumphs. Two months ago, however, a day before a Who reunion tour was scheduled to begin, Entwistle was found in his Las Vegas hotel room, dead of a cocaine related heart attack.

To have one of the most accomplished musicians in rock history die in such a way and at such a late date is both sad and unseemly. The man was pushing sixty—he should have known better, and done better. He threw his chances, too. In fact, of four extraordinarily talented lads from Shepherd's Bush who had the world at their feet, two died well before retirement age, and it's a marvel another (Townshend) has survived to this point. To quote The Offspring's staccato question, "What the hell is going on?" Perhaps the best answer is theirs, too: they ran headlong into "the cruelest dream, reality."

The Offspring are acclaimed and popular. Their career has so far been unmarred by death or scandal. They are well rounded and stable. No matter what happens with their next album, there is no apparent reason why they should not land on their feet. But for all their talent and smarts, they have been stuck from the beginning with a single label for their music, and not even an original one: retro-punk.

The Who has always been a high wire act. They lived and played like there was no tomorrow, and finally, for two of them there wasn't. Now, Townshend has an executive position with a publishing firm, an interest in boating, and a young girlfriend. Now, singer Roger Daltrey keeps busy with different singing gigs and appearances in B-movies and television. But in the beginning, the band had only music and no security net. They redefined what music sounded like and looked like, and what albums could be. They became legends because they knew there's more to life than alright.