



Spring Break Forever

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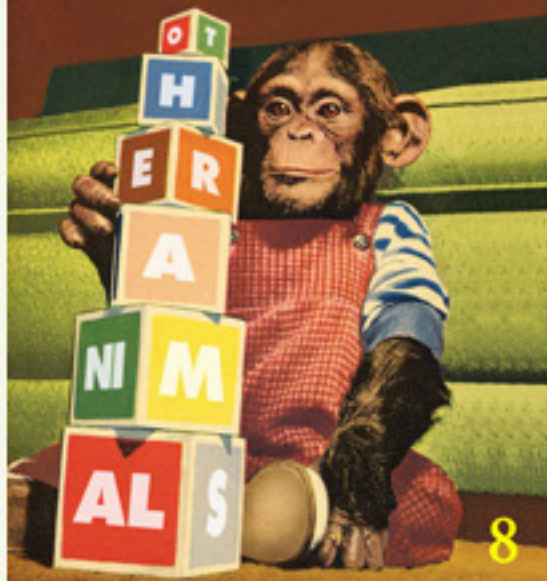
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THIS IS THE
GOSSIP
ISSUE

SMASHED AND
ABANDONED



She found her

**THE EXPLOSIVE
CONFRONTATION**

HOW HE CHEATED AND
DIED LIKE A CREEP



GUESS
WHOP

BOTOXED
AGAIN!

SEX, DRUGS,
AND RUSSIA NOW!



LA BOMBITA!



THE NEW INQUIRY, 3



ARGUING THE WEB

Spring Break Forever

FREE SUPPLEMENT

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Introduction

by SARAH NICOLE PRICKETT

No Carries, no Samanthas, no Charlottes, no Mirandas

*My skin is tan, my hair fine
My hips invite you, my mouth like wine
Whose little girl am I? Anyone who has money to buy
What do they call me? My name is Sweet Thing
My name is Sweet Thing*

—Nina Simone, “Four Women”

IN MOST WORLDS, there are four kinds of girls. Depending when and where and what in the West you’re watching, you can choose with whom to ID. You can be: Meg, Jo, Beth, or Amy (*Little Women*); Dorothy, Sophia, Rose, or Blanche (*Golden Girls*); Stacey, Kristy, Mary Anne, or Claudia (*The Babysitter’s Club*); Sarah, Nancy, Rochelle,

or Bonnie (*The Craft*); Carrie, Miranda, Charlotte, or Samantha (*Sex and the City*); Hannah, Marnie, Shoshanna, or Jessa (*Girls*); Spencer, Emily, Hannah, or Aria (*Pretty Little Liars*).

Enlightenment feminism never tires of the quirkily individuated quartet. We want to believe in this matrix. We hope to feel that making different choices—what to do with our bodies, our hair—will free us and set us apart. In fact, it is *having* different choices that makes one girl different from the next. In (my) reality, most babes have such like-minded like-feathered besties that no cab driver, looking in the rear view mirror, can tell any real differences between us.

Spring Breakers—directed by Harmony Korine and starring Vanessa Hudgens as

Brit, Ashley Benson as Candy, Rachel Korine as Cotty, Selena Gomez as Faith—is a story not of a girl group, but of a gang. Take the “all for one, one for all” motto of *Foxfire*, make it all for money, and bang, Korine’s fifth film implodes a century of fabulist four-somes. All four girls wear Starburst-hued bikinis, drive Vespas, drink beer. Three of them want the same thing, i.e. penis. Only the super-Christian, semi-naive Faith stands apart, and is—not coincidentally—the first to fall apart. When just two girls are left, we can’t tell them apart.

This is one of the many strange accuracies of *Spring Breakers*. Already the most written-about cultural product of 2013, it’s a movie seemingly made to beg the subtext. Its char-

acters, which also include the .gif-ready, Riff-Raff-inspired Alien (James Franco) and his inscrutable rival (Gucci Mane), are ciphers you cannot erase. You can only draw meanings. The meanings, mostly, are not comfortable. They’re not even that fun. Still, it’s hard to blame any interpretation on the director, Korine being a rad anti-ideologue who hasn’t read a book in a decade.

Instead we turn to our own desires. *Breakers* fires blanks at us; we fill them in. The un-individualism of Korine’s foursome is perhaps exactly what allows us to have unique, wide-ranging perspectives on their world. Or perhaps it’s his world, or it’s ours.

Roll with us, all of us, as we remember *Spring Breakers*. ■





Bikini, Kill

by AYESHA A. SIDDIQI

Don't hate the slayer, hate the game

HARMONY KORINE'S CAMERA crooks one finger at your tongue, beckoning you to follow it along the bodies of its four stars. Its opening scenes feature both guys and girls dancing and drinking in pure abandon on a hyper saturated Florida beach, but linger on the (mostly white) girls. Their breasts, slick with Bud-spray, move in time to Skrillex. The flat planes of their bellies tan in the sun, while their mouths grip long popsicles (oral fixation is a recurring motif). Later, the camera closes in on its protagonists and the curves of their thighs, their bra cups.

The movie operates on a standard tenet of our culture: girl-flesh as measure of fun. The success of a party, whether Carnival in Brazil,

Mardi Gras in New Orleans, or Spring Break in Florida, is judged by how many pairs of tits are exposed. Nothing else adequately proves you're having a good time than baring your chest in ecstatic investment in the moment. Female nudity is an accessory du fete. It signals celebration for no other sake than celebration: As holiday décor goes, boobs don't signify anything beyond "wooo!" A bodily integrity compromised by the public's sense of entitlement to it is one of the more notorious aspects of patriarchy. And the bodies of Brit, Candy, Cotty, and Faith—seen almost exclusively in bikinis—are also on display.

But as James Franco's *Alien* observes, these girls are special. They're powerful in spite of

sex not because of it. In a rare departure from movie violence against women, the injury Cotty sustains is gender-neutral; Alien digs the bullet out of her arm as he would for a man. Faith, the religious ingénue of the four, bristles at Alien's attention to her pretty face, then buses home solo rather than tolerate a minute more on his terms. When the girls ride through town on scooters in just bikinis, they are simply in spring break's uniform. When they hang out in a gas station parking lot at night in bikinis, or when Cotty writhes and strips teasingly on the floor at a kegger, they are challenging space by denying its threat.

These girls not only demand public space while (almost) naked—they own it. In scenes that echo theaters of masculinity and its accompanying sexual violence, not a sin-

gle allusion is made to the possibility of that violence. Ignoring rape culture could have been naïve, but in the Skittle-lit world of the movie it was a power move. By not acknowledging the threat of their surroundings, they situate themselves as the threat. Refreshingly, their bodies aren't a vulnerability. The girls' indifference to their nakedness, more than their consciousness of it, keeps the film from being merely pornographic.

They wear their sexuality like their candy necklaces and stuffed-animal backpacks, with a casual wryness. Even before spring break, sexuality is a grenade tossed blithely back and forth. Grinning to Brit, Candy pantomimes giving a blowjob in class. In the dorm hallways, the four sing "I am getting so hot I wanna take my clothes off" in breathy staccato. They mime taking sloppy bites from

between each other's legs. They arch themselves upside down between the hallway walls—fully framed by their space, pushing against its boundaries. But within the film's starkly black/white race politics, the four leads' bodies are distinguished from the black female bodies that perform for men.

Black strippers decorate the background of Alien and Archie's (Gucci Mane) confrontation. Thick black women undulate naked on top of Archie, representing his power—not the women's. Their presence is at the behest of the men, and their silent acquiescence leaves them mute props. When Brit and Candy rush Archie's mansion—massacring every black male in sight—those same women crouch fearfully in the shower where they had been rubbing each other as Archie directed from his bath. If *Spring Breakers* showcases the thrill of reclaiming patriarchy's sexualization, then it's an agency extended only to white girls. In contrast to Archie's rule over the black women around them, Alien simply serves to reflect the four leads' electric force.

He posts their bail but his paternalism dies in Candy and Brit's orbit. *Spring Breakers* obsesses over juxtapositions, none more salient than the one between the girls' bodies and the sound of guns cocking. A theme Candy especially relishes in. Her hand regularly poses as a gun, shooting at her friends, at herself. Candy, Brit, and Alien have a swimming-pool threesome, but the two girls share an intimacy independent from him. They touch each other constantly, affectionately, and in one of the most satisfying scenes I have ever experienced in a theater, have their guns fel-

lated in tandem.

The gender-flipped fellatio gratifies because it follows a first act dedicated to the male gazey ogling often found between a male filmmaker and beautiful, barely clothed, young actresses. The camera sticks to their bodies so unabashedly we notice not only smooth youth, but also ourselves staring at it. This double consciousness turns itself back onto us when Alien submits to Brit and Candy's gun penises—when that gaze, the same lasciviousness Alien employed, is mocked for how blind it was to the girls' true selves. As Britt and Candy's giggling play turns into a steel-nerve demand that he get on his knees there is a moment when, with their guns in his mouth, Alien seems to see these girls for the first time. His fear and trepidation dissolve into enthusiasm. He sucks hard, inviting both their guns deeper into his mouth eager to please. Alien recognizes Britt and Candy's authority without resenting it. Brit and Candy don't just exercise power, they receive grateful subjects. All hail the new feminist world order—spring break forever y'all.

Whether walking around at night with skin exposed or demanding authority while in that same state of undress, the girls delegitimize patriarchal privilege. Korine's band of heroines saunters in front of the camera but give its gaze as much control over them as they give Alien.

That is how a film staring four young women in bikinis subverts the trope of female bodies as sites of experience for others. *Spring Breakers* pumps you with a full erection only to laugh at your boner later.. ■



Booty Camp

by ELIZABETH GREENWOOD

A former KIDS kid laments bad girl banality

I WAS ONCE a 12-year-old aspiring juvenile delinquent in a rust belt New England town, and the movie *KIDS* was my Talmud. Alone NC-17 VHS circulated between latch-key households, and my miscreant friends and I dissected, studied, and memorized the ringer tees, blunt rolling, and gruff sex talk of the impossibly exotic Manhattan creatures with rabbinical fervor. We were *KIDS* scholars. Harmony Korine's screenplay inspired me to seek out turnstiles to hop (and places with turnstiles, in general), insouciant hook-ups to boast of, and pools in which to skinny dip. In my pubescent reality, I mostly just defected from homeroom, huffed my friend's asthma inhaler, and spirited Wet n' Wild

lipliner from CVS in the pocket of my JNCO jeans. The scared-straight lesson of HIV and wasted potential was lost on me. *KIDS* was a thrilling and deranged escape.

But 18 years later, Korine is depriving the aspiring juvenile delinquents of America a similarly misguided affectation with *Spring Breakers*. But it's not Korine's fault. Kids who have grown up with the world wide web and Snapchatting their naughty bits to one another will find this film familiar. The tragedy is not the bumping, the grinding, the tits and ass, the bikinis and handcuffs, the caricatures of hip hop thuggery, the girls gone bad. The tragedy of this film is that it's boring. Teens, rather than being introduced to novel trou-

ble-making, will simply recognize the familiar: *Grand Theft Auto*-style ballistics, booty shorts, and threesomes ripped from *Jersey Shore*. Disney princesses flaunting their middle-finger attitudes, just as Lindsay Lohan has done for a decade.

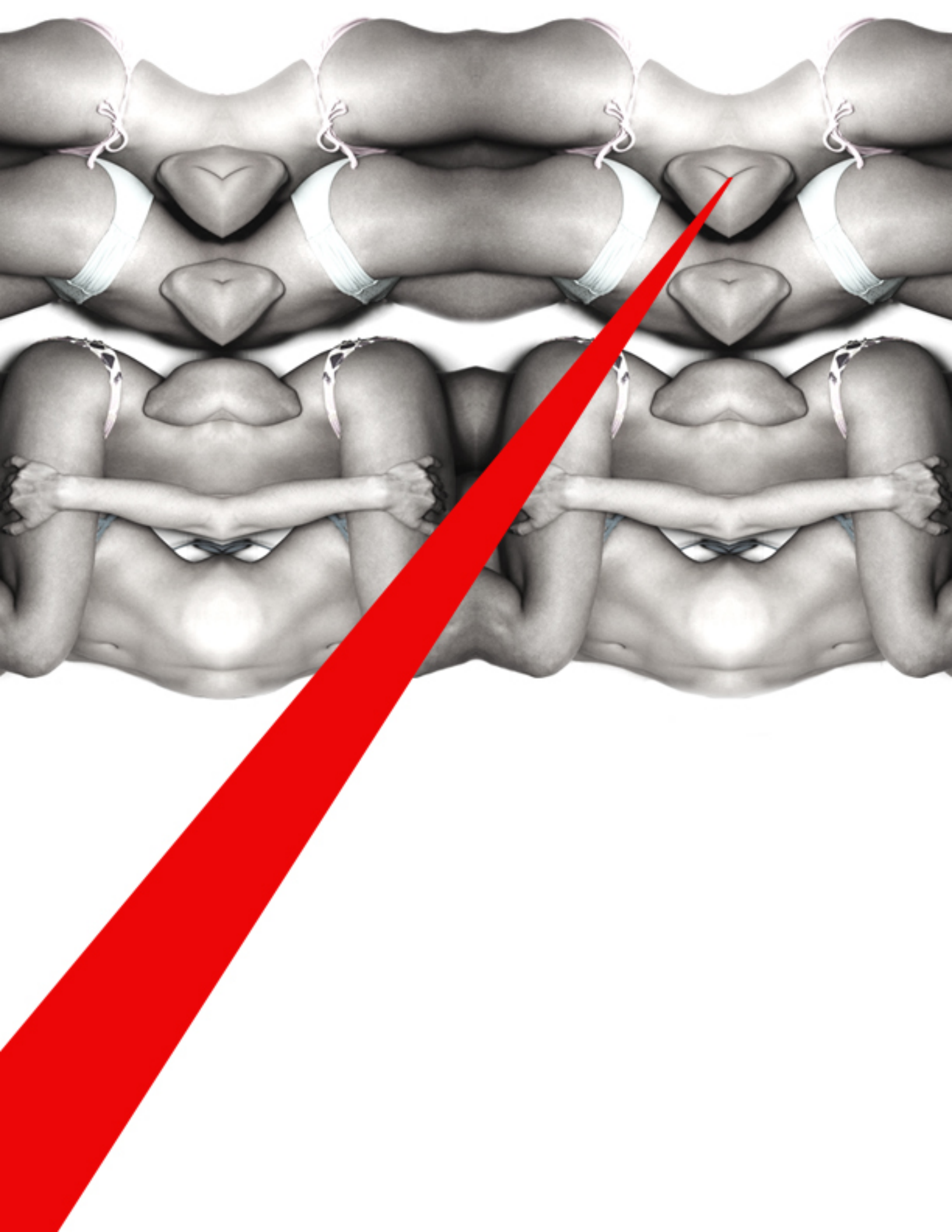
In *KIDS*, Larry Clark cast unknowns Rosario Dawson and Chloë Sevigny for maximum verisimilitude of downtown-and-dirty New York. Korine does the inverse, plonking teen idols Vanessa Hudgens and Selena Gomez into the roles of blowjob-simulating, pelvis-thrusting, coke-snorting lubricious harlots. The contrast is meant to be shocking, but it's just one of the ham-fisted and wholly banal juxtapositions throughout the film: A girl calling grandma to say what an amazing time she's having over montages of beer funnel debauchery, the innocent white kid beach party fun cut into the menacing black strip club, the girls ballerina twirling to a Britney ballad in balaclavas. These contrasts don't make one clutch one's pearls, or voyeuristically get off on being offended. The dualisms are too obvious. One craves an asthma inhaler to huff.

A bright-ish part of the film is James Franco's Riff Raff-inspired rapper Alien. Franco's southern drawl sounds like Forrest Gump with a mouthful of bologna, and his reprise of "Sprayng Brayke" repeats like a chilidog belch. What I would have loved to have seen, however, was the *Hearts of Darkness*-style documentary of the story behind *Spring Breakers*: The song lyric boot camp the young extras endured to memorize and chant Alien's rap lyrics; the shame they surely felt when they kept messing up; the chafing



that must have occurred from so many hours spent in cheap swimwear; the madness that descended upon the editing room after the thousandth voiceover of "Sprang Brayke, betches!"

In other words, something earthy and naughty for pert scoundrels to emulate, rather than a bizarre fantasy from the green glow of Internet porn. In other words, something to give the kids some inspiration. ■



The Real Beach Lives of Miami

by CORD JEFFERSON

A young boy's depraved journey into the heart of heterosexuality

IN MY FRESHMAN year at a small, centuries-old university on the East Coast, I had either the good fortune or the good sense to befriend a German pothead I'll call Burke. Burke was a diligent student who later transferred to the London School of Economics, but that year, when out of class, he was all id. He smoked weed nearly constantly, and cheated on his girlfriend back in Hamburg only a little less. His laugh reached registers so high it resembled a pig's squeal, and his English was imperfect, so sometimes he would say things like, "My favorite movie is *The Mattress*, with Keanu Reeves."

Being around Burke was interesting and fun even within the confines of our college's

verdant, sleepy fastness, its population diverse with WASPs and lacrosse players from every state on the Eastern seaboard. So it took no thought whatsoever to reply in the affirmative when he invited me and several of our mutual friends to have spring break in Miami, where his parents owned a condo in South Beach. Though I'd never been to Florida, at the age of 19, sun and models and Cubans and nightclubs all seemed necessary antidotes to the doldrums I'd developed as a callow, spoiled kid who thought himself far above the commonness of *college*.

"What are we going to do down there?" I asked Burke a few nights before we left. My right knee bounced with anticipation.

“Whatever we want,” he said, exhaling a gray ribbon of weed smoke. “You’ll see.”



The reality of Miami proved less neon, less sexy, less everything than our fantasies. First, we didn’t do whatever we wanted. Several of us were underage and without fake IDs, making getting into the glamorous, grown-up clubs on the shoreline impossible. Secondly, it turned out that South Beach was not a very popular locale for college spring breakers. It was expensive, there were old people everywhere, and in most restaurants it was even verboten to come in shirtless.

Rather than the all-out, 24-hour hedonism we’d imagined, most of our days were spent drinking a poorly mixed concoction of vodka, Sprite, and orange juice on the beach before stumbling back to the condo to drink more and shoot fireworks off the balcony. We’d aim bottle rockets at the ocean, black and twinkling in the moonlight, and watch them fly for a few seconds before exploding with a tiny, insignificant *pop*.

I can’t remember whose idea it was, but it doesn’t matter for our purposes here anyway. It came to us while devouring boats of sashimi and nursing our sunburns with big glasses of cold Asahi: “Let’s, like, do a real spring break place tomorrow night.” Everyone nodded his head in agreement. After three full days of relative calm in South Beach, we decided that the next night, our final night in Miami, we’d

drive to Fort Lauderdale and go to one of the all-ages clubs we’d been told were lousy with college kids who’d come to Florida not to sip pints of Japanese ale over sushi, but to drink blue shots out of plastic test tubes and kiss each other.

Since sitting down to write this, I’ve tried Googling to remember which club we ended up at that next night. Alas, I can’t recall. I can only remember three things: 1. It was huge, filled with so many people it seemed more like a sports stadium, and the dance floor its field. 2. During the rising action of particular songs, most of which were techno or some variation of techno, lights slowly lowered from the ceiling above the dance floor until they were dangling just overhead. At the songs’ crescendos, the lights would move rapidly on a motorized track from one side of the room to the other, swirling around in an epileptic frenzy and casting angular shards of red and purple light onto the faces and hips of the bodies below. And 3. It was the first time I’d ever seen men interacting with women in a way that made me feel nervous.

Ladies in lingerie, hanging from trapezes above a bar abutting the entrance, greeted me upside-down. They dangled by the backs of their knees looking bored while a club staffer shot toilet paper at them with a glorified leaf blower, the result of which was a sort of erratic mummification. Atop another bar that ran down the left wall of the cavernous space, a woman was on her hands and knees with her jeans around her ankles, exposing her thong. Her eyes were closed and she lurched slowly back and forth with the beat of the

music, like a human rocking horse. Beneath her sat a man on a barstool who was slowly plucking ice cubes from his glass and rubbing them on her pussy and ass. He was nonchalant about it, bearing the expression of a man signing a rent check or deciding what he wanted for lunch, and in front of him a half moon of young guys had gathered to stare.

I'd already had enough by the time the wet t-shirt contest came about, the beginning of which was introduced by an emcee who enticed spectators to "come up front and smell the rot." Everyone in the club was invited to watch, but those willing to plunk down \$100 were given a spray bottle and a front-row seat from which to hose down the contestants, some of whom were drunk enough they were having a hard time standing. When the spray-streams of water failed to make the girls' shirts translucent quickly enough, men threw beer and whole glasses of water. Some guys reached out to grab the women. When one girl slipped while trying to make way for another contestant, the emcee pointed at her and screamed, "Someone's gonna be a sloppy fuck tonight!" The club broke out in peals of laughter.

I had seen some porn before that night, and I'd been to a strip club. But both of those



experiences seemed contractual: Women were paid, handsomely in some instances, to perform in ways that highlighted their sexuality. What happened to girls in that club on spring break, however—the intentional degradation, the beer hurling—seemed far more sinister.



It's been years since I last went on college spring break, and I've since seen far worse things, equally misogynistic things, other women doing strange things in nightclubs for money (at a burlesque show in New York once, I watched a lady squat under a spotlight, urinate into a cup, and then drink the piss). But nothing has filled me with same kind of pit-of-the-stomach angst as I had that night in Fort Lauderdale—until I saw *Spring Breakers*.

Like a woman taking her clothes off on a stage, which looks like exploitation to some and empowerment to others, *Spring Breakers* resembles different things depending on who's watching, and many have hated what they saw. Some have deemed Harmony Korine's Disneyfied pop poem a racist glorification of drugs and crime. But the preeminent

critique seems to be that the film is sexist. BuzzFeed's Kate Aurthur wrote, "I had a pit in my stomach as I watched *Spring Breakers* ... I was afraid the entire time one of the girls would get raped." In her *Guardian* review, Heather Long even posits that *Spring Breakers* contributes to America's deep and intractable rape culture. "It's a film that tells young women that the 'time of their life' is getting drunk and exposing themselves to guys," Long writes. "And we wonder why we have problems with rape culture."

I'm going to venture a guess that Heather Long has never been on spring break in Fort Lauderdale or Key West or Cancun or any of the other places American college students throng in mid-March in order to get debauched. If she had, perhaps she would know that to accuse *Spring Breakers* of propagating rape culture is tantamount to accusing *Platoon* of propagating war.

Indeed, the opening scene of the film depicts close-up, slow-motion shots of women in various states of undress, women arching their backs on the ground underneath men dumping beer on their faces, women getting groped, women getting the foam from beer bong shot across their bare breasts. Later, amid numerous shots of women's barely covered butts, James Franco's character, Alien, shouts to a crowd of adoring fans that life is about just two things: bikinis and big booties. It's grotesque, though not because of the nudity or innuendo. Rather, it's grotesque because it's so obviously a recreation of behavior that goes on at college spring breaks across America all the time (what I saw was

arguably even worse). It's not funny because it's true; it's horribly dark and difficult to watch because it's true.

Spring Breakers puts on blast the bizarre and ugly rituals of college spring break, a frequently stupid event that outlets like MTV, which has covered spring breaks religiously since 1986, have diligently and gleefully attempted to make into a rite of passage for American children. If anyone is complicit in the rape culture of spring break, it's not Harmony Korine; it's the collection of corporate brands—along with MTV, there is *Girls Gone Wild*, *Corona*, *Captain Morgan's*, *Jose Cuervo*, *Señor Frog's*, etc.—making millions by convincing students that you're not really a college kid until you've chugged a grain-alcohol daiquiri out of a plastic novelty cup and screamed, "WHOOOOOOOOOO!" at a drunk girl flashing her breasts.

I fell for that sham, and it ended up with me driving away from a shitty Fort Lauderdale nightclub feeling anxious and a bit sad. "I got the worst blowjob of my life in the bathroom at that place," said Burke as we pulled off. Two months later we would leave school for the summer and I would never see him again.

If *Spring Breakers* scared you—if it offended you by exposing you to crass assholes, and if there were moments in it in which you were certain you were about to witness a sexual assault—then good. Spring break is an awful morass of young men chugging alcohol, plying young women with more alcohol, and then goading those women into doing reckless things. That should scare you. ■



B



POWER

\$

Power



Money



GET MONEY



Money



High as Finance

by JOSHUA CLOVER *and* SHANE BOYLE

All this coke and no credit card in sight

THUS SHOULD OUR travels have been: serious, dubstepped. It seems for a suspended moment that *Spring Breakers* purposes only to be the cinematic realization of a musical genre, a voyage to the holy land presented in increasingly swift cuts, repeated units arranged with precise variations unto the point of panic, dissolving into semi-lucid drift and just as suddenly summoning a euphoric wobble. We wait and wait for the film to pivot toward the cautionary tales it so much resembles, wherein a colloquy of underdressed teens find themselves drunk, high, and sexed-up, and the die-off begins. We wait, in short, for the drop which will replace *Girls Gone Wild* with the 80s slasher *Welcome to Spring*

Break.

It does not come. We are on the far side of a trench that separates us irrevocably from that era. Harmony Korine's lurid spectacle is a cautionary tale about something far more terrifying, a horror the film sets loose well before the story proper begins.

Spring Breakers unfolds in a world without credit cards. This remarkable lack is the film's premise, one that allows it to glimpse a future that awaits those without access to fictitious capital.

Four college coeds dream of trading their rote lecture halls and cinderblock dorms—is this a for-profit university?—for the debauchery of Florida spring break. Standing

between them and their escape is a shortage of ready cash. Lacking alternatives like Mastercards, they solve their liquidity crisis by knocking over a local fried chicken joint. Most jarring in these opening moments is not the violence of the robbery, but the obviously incredible possibility that four college students in the United States lack access to easy credit. After all, what is a student today without the potential for indebtedness?

To note the absurdity of the film's premise is to recognize *Spring Breakers*' world without credit cards as a dreamworld. Told from the perspective of finance capital, this dream quickly reveals itself to be less paradise than nightmare. *Spring Breakers* is a cautionary tale of what would happen to the subjects of finance capital were student debt to become impossible.

Once we take up these categories, the film's fantasia comes clear. On one side, the world of fictitious capital, played by "spring break" itself: money for nothing and your bodyshots for free, the unmoored utopia of until-

the-world-ends hedonism on which floats the endless array of healthy white bodies, notably female bodies charged with standing for that freedom beyond reason that characterizes the "new economy," exploitation always elsewhere. *Jeune fille* indeed. On the other, that place of actual toil, grime, and danger where our coed protagonists must venture to get hard currency once the cash and Smirnoff run dry: the real economy, played here by employees and criminals, who turn out over and over again to be lacking in either six-packs or camera-ready boobs. Also? They're mostly black. It is a strange movie that casts Gucci Mane as production itself.

Gucci, as Arch the drug lord, has his other in his childhood friend, the rapper/thug aspirant Alien played by James Franco, whose profound whiteness allows him to pass from one world to the other. He raps, he burbles Britney ballads. He slangs product, hangs with the breakers. But this is an unsustainable double life, as we will discover, in a way that is at once racialized and economic. From his grillz to his home décor, he is a racial poseur. But he is as well a one-man crisis of overproduction, a mad agglomeration of commodities unable to find outlet. "Look at all my shit" he cries over and over again flaunting his collection of burners, body sprays, and bricks of dope, desperate to play this off as triumph and not catastrophe.

Rather it is Candy, Brit, Faith, and Cotty who succeed in crossing from one world to the other and safely back again. The latter two do so only partially; they retreat before the climax, one with a cross, one with a bul-



let. Their reason: a preference that the shirtless strangers groping them be white rather than so obviously other. They favor the intimacies of spring break's whitewashed poolside parties, not the working class pool halls of St. Pete. When insolvency strikes again—this time brought on by cops and possession charges—the real economy gets too real.

The two who complete the final sally across the line and back are the pair who performed the armed act that sets *Breakers* in motion: a sequence which will be shown a second time, to clarify the film's duplicity. When the robbery initially unfolds, the exterior tracking shot conceals the dirty work underway; it unfolds with choreographed irreality. In a liquor store parking lot following their arrival to spring break, Candy and Brit recount the events in all their amped-up ferocity. "You really did that?" Faith asks, wishing to have remained oblivious to the source of the cash funding her Florida respite.

On second showing, we find ourselves inside the business, closer to the perspective of customers and employees. We discover further that the girls single out a black man quietly eating a plate of fried chicken. This startling detail reveals the racialization that undergirds the film's real economy and fuels the spring breakers' gangsta film-inspired fantasies. The film asks us, somewhat banally, to understand the girls as products of simulation: "Act like it's a movie," Candy and Brit tell each other right before beginning their masquerade of *Menace II Society*. And, "just pretend it's a fucking video game." But this is a symptom of a symptom. It would be clearer

to note that the sequence repeats to capture events once from the perspective of fictitious capital, once from the position of the real economy.

There's something right here: the way that finance's coldly erotic dream of money minted from pure desire must always rest uneasily on the brutalities and immiserations of the real economy; that the world is structured to preserve this fantasy of autonomy for its beneficiaries; that when the fantasy collapses, it is revealed not simply as illusion but as dependent on racialized violence. It is the nature of crisis to disclose this; it is the moment when the fatal entanglement of the two orders is revealed, precisely as they fall out of joint.

It is hard to know, then, what to make of the film's conclusion, wherein the white girls' expropriation of a black man is replayed with higher stakes all around. We could say it is *Django's* finale dialed up a notch, at once more absurd and more historically accurate.

Or perhaps it is as if, having cloaked themselves in the most powerful media iconography of the global white female—Snooki and J-Woww's DTF sweatpants, Pussy Riot's masks—they have become masters of the universe.

Well, better them than Gordan Gekko or Lloyd Blankfein; we should trust a woman in a pink unicorn balaclava a lot more than we do those dudes. But we know too that fiction can never do away with the real, and that the bubble they ride into the sunrise will burst again, and that the money has to come from somewhere, and what then? ■

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- 1/2 Doz Brandy
- 2 Lbs Lint
- 5 Yds. Plain Gause 1 yds.
- 2 Lbs. Absorb. Cotton



Kids in the Haul

by DURGA CHEW-BOSE

From Nazi Austria to late capitalist Florida, a list of the shit we list

I. Excerpt from Alien's My Sheeyit manifesto:

"This is the fuckin' American dream. This is my fuckin' dream, y'all!

All this sheeyit! Look at my sheeyit!

I got ... I got SHORTS! Every fuckin' color.

I got designer T-shirts!

I got gold bullets. Motherfuckin' VAMPIRES.

I got *Scarface*. On repeat. SCARFACE ON REPEAT. Constant, y'all!

I got Escape! Calvin Klein Escape! Mix it up with Calvin Klein Be. Smell nice? I SMELL NICE!

That ain't a fuckin' bed; that's a fuckin' art

piece. My fuckin' spaceship! U.S.S. Enterprise on this shit. I go to different planets on this motherfucker! Me and my fuckin' Franklins here, we take off. TAKE OFF!

Look at my shit. Look at my shit! I got my blue Kool-Aid.

I got my fuckin' NUN-CHUCKS."

Seconds later, Candy and Brit shove two guns into Alien's mouth. He blows them. Tables are turned, the girls are in control. But more importantly, flipping the prep school rich kid stereotype, so often employed in film to illustrate teenage malaise these Florida spring breakers are not virgins who can't drive. They are everything Sarah Michelle Geller's Kathryn wished she could be. "God

forbid I exude confidence and enjoy sex! Do you think I relish the fact that I have to act like Mary Sunshine 24/7 so I can be considered a lady? I'm the Marcia-fucking-Brady of the Upper East Side, and sometimes I want to kill myself."

Acidum

II. About that Starter Mansion Life:

Halfway through the 2012 documentary, *The Queen of Versailles*, about Florida billionaire timeshare mogul, David Siegal, and his wife Jackie, and their eight kids, and 19 staff, and caboodle of white fluffy dogs, Jackie returns home to Binghamton, New York to visit family and childhood friends. Reflecting on the Siegal family's flashy and devastatingly gaudy life, one old neighbor comments "Well the American dream is raising way up above what you started with, and achieving something way beyond what anyone would dream that you would achieve." And as one of Jackie's high school friends adds, "Typical middle class America was not going to make her happy." Happy is an especially off-putting word when describing the mood in the Siegal family – the documentary's entire tone is mournful. A garage of unused bicycles, a Filipino nanny who hasn't seen her own kids in 19 years and who lives in what was originally one of the children's backyard playhouses, and a dead lizard lying limp in its aquarium, starved to death. A house of stuff that teems with neglect.

Later, the crew films the Siegals at Christmas ripping open presents. Jackie's given David two board games – Risk and Monopoly – both regifts.



III. Ben Affleck as Michael Douglas as Gordon Gekko in *Wall Street* in *Boiler Room*:

"Anybody who says money is the root of all evil doesn't fucking have any. They say money can't buy happiness? Look at the fucking smile on my face. Ear to ear, baby. You want details? Fine. I drive a Ferrari, 355 Cabriolet. What's up? I have a ridiculous house in the South Fork. I have every toy you could possibly imagine. And best of all kids, I am liquid."

150

IV. \$587,412.97 over 2 years AKA Buzz Bissinger's Gucci addiction:

"I own eighty-one leather jackets, seventy-five pairs of boots, forty-one pairs of leather pants, thirty-two pairs of haute couture jeans, ten evening jackets, and 115 pairs of leather gloves. (...) As a stranger said after admiring my look in a Gucci burgundy jacquard velvet jacket and a Burberry black patent leather trench, "You don't give a fuck.""

Later, he goes on to catalog the brands he owns in alphabetical order. The list reads like a nursery rhyme for *Richie Rich* had it

starred Harry and Peter Brant instead of Ma-caulay Culkin.

5 Lbs. Vaseline

V. Speaking of nursery rhymes, sorry childhood. Maria's My Favorite Sheeyit:

Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens
Bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens
Brown paper packages tied up with strings
These are a few of my favorite things

Cream colored ponies and crisp apple streudels
Doorbells and sleigh bells and schnitzel with noodles
Wild geese that fly with the moon on their wings
These are a few of my favorite things

Girls in white dresses with blue satin sashes
Snowflakes that stay on my nose and eyelashes
Silver white winters that melt into springs
These are a few of my favorite things



VI. SHOW ME THE MONEY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

"I will not rest until I have you holding a Coke, wearing your own shoe, playing a Sega game *featuring you*, while singing your own song in a new commercial, *starring you*, broadcast during the Superbowl, in a game that you are winning, and I will not *sleep* until that happens." -- Jerry McGuire

VII. PAIN & GAIN & GATSBY & THE GREEN LIGHT

a) Known for his slow motion, low angle, 360 degree hero shots, Michael Bay's *Pain & Gain* promises Mark Wahlberg and The Rock as 1990s Miami (Florida, again) personal trainers, and that their American Dream "IS BIGGER THAN YOURS."

b) Known for his hyper-romantic and hyperbolic style, Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* promises a scintillatingly void adaptation of Fitzgerald's American Dream metaphor; *The Green Light*, likely not so "minute and faraway." ■





Fort Slaughterdale

by ALEXANDER BENAÏM

Korine holds our legs for cinema's final keg stand

SPRING BREAKERS HAS put most critics in one of two moods: 1. “This *isn't* critique,” and 2. “Hurray.” The first of these responses takes to task the 40-year-old Korine for not giving the grownups a raw, yet judgmental, report on today’s youth. If Korine had given us big booties and grand pianos and blood in the name of critiquing the kids, this film would “matter.” Instead, Korine offers useless fantasy without apology. He finds beauty in or right near trashy death. At the same time, his giggly perversity begs for a bipartisan scolding. To many, the film is “uncritical,” a term wielded by left-ish secular viewers the way “amoral” is by conservatives.

To me, however, in this age of American

cinema—making a movie whose value can’t be counted, whether by box-office draw or topicality-to-tears ratio, seems far more substantive a move than shouting “exploitation” in an uncrowded theater.

The second sort of response, to wit, “hurray,” sees that *Spring Breakers* is a cartoon of the contemporary south, by a son of the contemporary south. AA-inflected Christianity hangs with lawless, corporatized fun. White skin takes on geological tones and textures or else turns orange, and black skin gets demonized. There is no defending this palette. But James Franco’s swerving accent, and the unreliable reality it implies, defang the film before it bites. (Franco as “Alien” is one of the

boldest, slyest, best performances of the year so far.)

Spring Breakers wears its artifice, its status as Korine's inspired, ignorant fantasy on its sleeve. In doing so it asks that you consider not American History but Art History, after '90s rap videos and Wong Kar Wai's gangster films, and before all we see melts into Internet as we see it.

The Internet was where *Spring Breakers* lived as a glorious preview and where it will someday fade into an infinity of clips. In the past few weeks it has been spliced into clip after clip after .gif, a fate for which it seems intentionally ready. The Internet is very much on this film's mind.

But *Spring Breakers'* rich, syrupy lighting, deftly disorienting cuts, and traditionally famous stars let you know the director has two

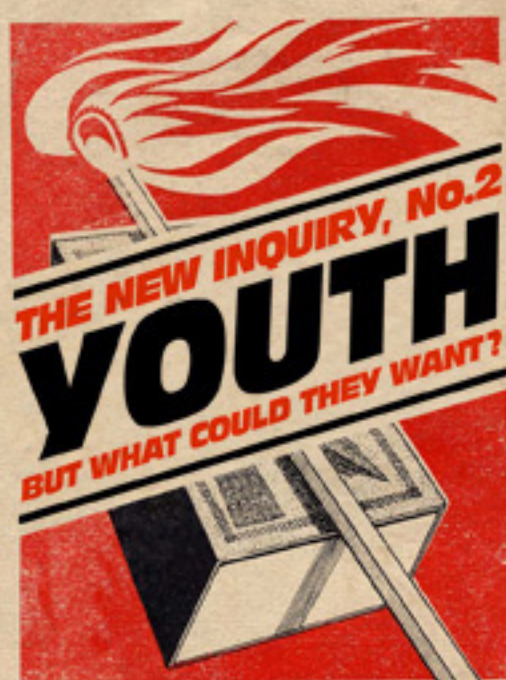
tools the Internet doesn't: A deep sense of the history of his form, for one, and studio money, for two. Korine is in admiring but gently competitive conversation with the Internet—and not the 2001 Internet but the 2012 Internet. He knows the beach tableaux that bookend his film may well be bookmarked or Tumblr'd on your machines already, perhaps next to porn that looks alarmingly similar. Korine is not asking an audience, their laptops resting warmly on their stomachs, to choose between porn and film. But his ennobling upward-swooning angles and golden-lit scenes let you know which side he's on. This is the skilled debater who gives a self-aggrandizing paean to his opponent's power. According to Korine, Werner Herzog once called him "the last soldier in the army" of cinema. It seems he's found his battle. ■

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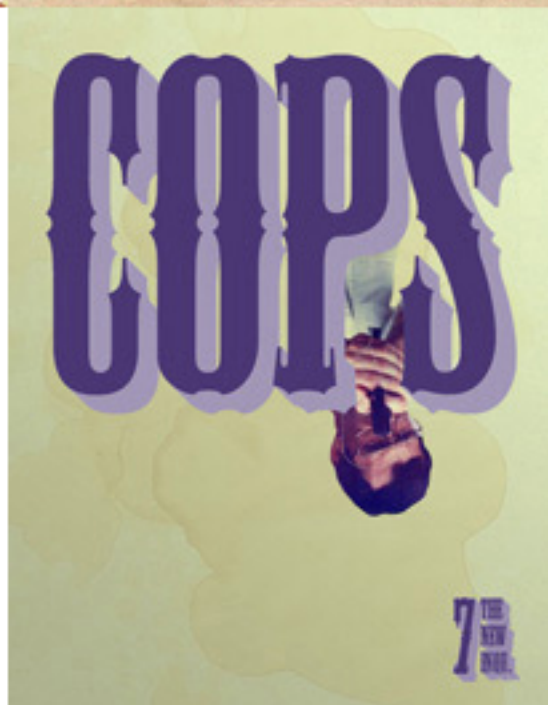
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BEAUTY

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