

THE INNER SWINE

Volume 7, Issue 3, September 2001

\$2.00 A Frickin' Bargain



STOP BEING MEAN TO ME
... or I'll cry!
THE INNER SWINE
on Competition



Once the game is over,
the king and the pawn,
go back in the
same box.


— Italian proverb



VITA 2KT


THE INNER SWINE

CONCEPT BY

Jeff Somers 

Robert Gala 

Ken West 

Jeof Vita 

COVER ART BY

Jeof Vita

EDITOR: Jeffrey Somers

PUBLISHER: Cassie [REDACTED]

WEBMASTERS: Jeof Vita, Ken West, my own bad self
ADVICE & FREE DRINKS: Actively seeking wedding invites for
the open bar opportunities

PROOFREADER: Karen Accavallo

STAFF DISSIDENT: Rob Gala

OVERALL OFFICIAL COOL CHICK: Lauren Strutzel

LEGAL COUNSEL: The Duchess



OFFICIAL EXCUSE: *"I've been sick."*

FRIENDS OF THE SWINE: **The Duchess**, as always, for caring so much that I do it right; **Jeof Vita**, for not dying when he jumped out of that plane, because without his covers we're just another amatuerish zine; **Misty Quinn, Esq.**, for also not dying when she jumped out of that plane, and for somehow subduing those terrorists and saving the lives of all those people; **Cassie and Mex [REDACTED]**, who had a lovely child together; **Mom and Sean**, for dragging themselves to all my boring events; **Ken West**, for showing up at everything, and for *not* jumping out of a plane, which is the first sign of good sense I've had from him in some time; **RA**, who continues to support me despite my obvious failings, and it means a lot; **Lauren Strutzel**, for handing me a wonderful interview, and who got married despite my best advice; **Karen Accavallo**, for soldiering on with the proofreading despite the unrewarding nature of my friendship; **Rob**, who e-mails me on occasion to let me know he still thinks I'm ridiculous; **clint johns**, who frightens me with his enthusiasm sometimes, for wanting to put out a TIS book



WHAT THE FUCK'S BEEN GOIN' ON?

PIGS, I have always had a bad habit of talking to myself when I'm alone, which wouldn't be so bad except I often consider myself *alone* while walking down the street in full view of the public. While I usually manage to keep my conversation internal, I have on occasion realized that my lips were moving slightly and that I was one small step away from being a Crazy.

This realization hit me hard the other day: I was out walking in the ole' hometown, enjoying a beautiful sunny day, and in the course of my wandering I passed no fewer than three Crazies who were stumbling about talking to themselves, often clutching inappropriate body parts (and one other guy who turned out to just have one of those earpiece cell phones - if you want to know what a jackass looks like, just picture someone walking around talking on one of those fucking things; do people have no shame any more?). A few blocks later, I realized I was almost-talking outloud to myself again. A cold sweat burst out all over me as I connected the two: is this how Crazies start? Is that my future? Does it just progress, slowly, until I don't even realize what I'm doing?

I figure I can buy one of those earpiece phones, just to have the excuse.

BIG-ASSED FAMOUS: Your Humble Editor is now the 143,567th most popular author in New York City, friends. In early July my novel "Lifers" got reviewed by *The New York Times Book Review*, I did a book signing in Morristown, NJ of all places, and a reading in August at the Astor Place Barnes & Noble in Manhattan.

Tower Magazines, our faithful distributor, is helping me publish *The Freaks Are Winning: The Inner Swine Collection* which is a collection of articles and editorials from our first 23 issues. You'll soon be able to buy a copy at a Tower Records near you, or directly from me for either a reasonable sum of money or a live chicken. Why should you buy a copy? Well, I can't think of any reasons, which is probably why I am still poor.

Being big-assed famous has its perks, for sure, but it also has a dark side. The dark side is pretty plainly meeting all you folks in the flesh; it was so much nicer when you were all just mysterious letter-writers who couldn't actually, you know, touch me.

Other than that, just the usual shit going on. Work, sleep, write, work. Watching my slim life pass by in a depressingly monotone way. But I rejoice! If nothing else I will leave behind a long line of these magazines, like fossilized droppings proving my existence. Plus, there are years and years of video games, television shows, and alcohol to immerse myself in before the Reaper plucks me from the pool and holds me there, squirming and stunned, wailing "Not yet! Not yet!" as he laughs grimly.

Until then, here's issue 7(3)...enjoy!



RANDOM HAIKU, BABY: "It is so hot here / my face melts into putty / I sculpt it anew." YAHOO!!!

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The Inner Swine Volume 7, Issue 3 (ISSN: 1527-7704). Magazine published March, June, September, and December by Oinking Sow, Inc. © 2001 by Jeff Somers. (There is no company, really) Individual subscription rates: \$5.00 (cheap!) per year in U.S.; \$6.00 (cheap!) per year foreign including Canada. Single Copy \$2.00 (cheap!) but stop teasing me, you’re never going to order a subscription, *you heartless bastards*. Free trades are absolutely entertained, send me something, and I will mail you treats. Checks payable to Jeff Somers, Editor. Address submissions and correspondence to Jeff Somers, The Inner Swine, POB 3024, Hoboken, NJ 07030, mreditor@innerswine.com. But let’s face it,

when was the last time we published anything not written by me or one of my cronies? Other people’s pimply writing gives me hives. Still, all submissions or requests for Guidelines (there are no guidelines, though) must be accompanied by S.A.S.E. It’s no secret that Mr. Mute is based very closely on Misty S. Quinn (above) whose drunken rages have left many a scar on Your Humble Editor. Pity me.

Everybody's talkin' at me...

Here's what they're saying about ME:

An **anonymous past contributor** emailed me this desperate, and depressing, cry for help: *"...let's be real- you and I are all over the web. I assumed it would be a one time only print magazine deal with a limited circulation. I didn't think it would be in my face each time I checked my [web] entries! This is not fair Jeff. When I apply for any job, (especially writing) they may see this and I'm finished. What we think is amusing may not be to prospective employers with company reputations to uphold. This [piece] limits my chances of success. I don't believe in censorship, but this is exceptional because I malign myself forever through your back issue that is readily available by any employer who wants to check me out. Who knew that in such short time both of us would get so far? People are looking for our stuff more and more."*



Send me a letter with my name in it and I guarantee publication.

I didn't know what to say to this, someone asking me to pull a piece they'd written for me from the web site because it was damaging their career. I compromised and changed their name throughout to a pseudonym, and that satisfied them. I would never want to be the cause of strife for anyone associated with TIS, but maybe I need to tell people that if they write for me their name is going to be associated with *The Inner Swine* for eternity. Maybe longer, if I get that immortality device working.

Not the biggest deal in the world, especially since this person didn't write much for us. But something still disturbs me about it. Maybe its the fact that someone would disavow something they'd written. I don't think less of the person in question, but I think it bothers me that this situation even comes up.

Sometimes in my everyday life I can see people hesitate to point out my involvement with this zine to their friends or family, because if you don't get the joke here I must appear to be a really deranged asshole. That's worse, of course, because there you have someone who knows and cares about you who is unwilling to step up and defend you against that kind of bullshit. But at least it doesn't involve changing anything in the TIS archives. This did, and I think that's why it bothered me. I can't help it if someone feels ashamed of their involvement with TIS, but when I have to go back and alter published text, well, that gets under my skin.

Then again, maybe I'm being a Nancy about the whole thing.

Eric Lyden of Fish with Legs emailed this brief but immensely wise note: *"Some comments on the latest issue- First of all- this is the third consecutive issue I've been in the IS letters column. Is that a record? I thought you were kidding when you said you printed every letter you received that mentioned your name... now I'm starting to think that you really do print any piece of crap letter you receive...And on your "I can't Stand my Fellow writers"- let us face it- most "writers" are no talent sacks of shit who never*

actually write anything. I took a creative writing class in community college and good lord was it awful... first of all, most of the people were not the least bit creative- they'd simply write boring shit about their personal lives which is fine is something interesting happens in your life, but..god it was bad. Then there were several aspiring screenwriters and that was just painful and humiliating to sit and listen to... if there is a writer's hell it is filled with aspiring screenwriters reading aloud from their inept scripts...one guy read from some of his script and afterwards everyone was pointing out the plot holes and he's just sitting up in front of the class trying to answer the questions even though he had no answer...I swear, he was about to cry. Most writers are no talent sacks of shit and most zinesters are pompous asses. Once you admit that and deal with it you'll be OK. For that matter, most people in general are fucking useless morons. But I actually enjoy my trips to the Post Office- i enjoy going anywhere that virtually anyone has to go and watching them try to get along without killing each other.

"By the way, how the fuck do you fill 60 pages quality pages of your zine every 3 months? (well, each issue has 5-10 pages that are sort of lame, but why quibble?) seriously, it's pretty damn impressive... I'm slow so I admire speed and especially speed and quality which you manage to do. Pretty damn cool...OK, that's all for now. Lame email, I know, but it'll do for now."

Your Humble Editor is a Review Whore and proud of it - if you in some way comment on me or my zine I print the damn thing, it's that easy. Glad we're not the only people who think our fellow writers are annoying. As for how we put so much good stuff in each issue, it's simple: I write about the same crap over and over again. So far no one seems to have caught on. Yahoo!

M. Cameron Newell almost managed to escape the Event Horizon of TIS, but we managed to pull him back in: *"Ese Somers, I knew something was missing from my life. And it couldn't have been that malignant tumor I had plucked off my spine last month because I've been living fine without it. As it turns out, it must be that the latest issue of The Inner Swine hasn't gotten to me, and with good reason. I moved. Please re-send the issue that bounced and I'll do my best to renew my subscription when it comes due. Plus I'll see what I can do about getting your name in print in the magazine I work for. Well, actually it's a free weekly newspaper about local music, but if you can give me some good pull quotes I'm fairly certain I can work an obscure Inner Swine reference in. Ex; 'I mean, I'm no Jeff Somers, but I do believe living a barren, soulless existence IS the way to go...' or; 'Sure, I don't think that children are life sucking, snot-farms, but tell that to Jeff Somers...'*

"You get the idea. You see, it pleases me almost as much as it pleases you to see my name in print. Writers are such hopeless narcissists, you know? Of course you do."

Baby, a barren, soulless existence is the *only* way to go. This 'losing Newell' scare has really sobered us, so we've decided to implement a stricter control over our mailing list. You'll be issued implantable chips for tracking. Don't worry, your privacy is assured. Just insert them under a flap of skin and let it heal over. We'll all rest easier knowing we can deliver your issues of TIS

wherever you go. Plus, we'll be able to send small electric shocks to you remotely, which will be fun.

Someone named **Gianni Simone** sent us this nice note from Japan in the old-fashioned mail: *"I've just finished reading TIS 7(2) and I'm feeling a strong urge, not to puke (maybe you hoped so...) but to write a letter. It was a great reading all the way and I definitely want to be sodomized some more...(it's not in my own interest to say this, but you should raise the price: it's way too cheap for your excellent zine!) I wanted to write something bad about TIS, but I can't find anything to criticize."*

Gianni also sent us \$10 American cash money, which instantly warmed our hearts. While the references to sodomy make me pause, I can only assume that once again I have passed out while writing and Evil Jeff slipped lots of sodomy references into the last issue without my conscious knowledge. That prankster! Evil Jeff exerts more and more control every day. I don't know how much longer I can hold him off. Run while you can!!

Naturally after blowing the ten spot on beer I packed off a thick envelope of Swiney Goodness to the land of the rising sun. We hope to keep getting interesting letters filled with cash in return!

Bruce Allen of **The New York Times Book Review** (<http://www.nytimes.com/books/>) actually took note of my novel *Lifers* in July: *"Midlife crises arrive early for the three young New Yorkers who aspire to lives of crime in this engaging, laid-back first novel. Damien, a jaded slacker who writes excruciatingly bad poetry and works as a video store clerk, is game for almost anything that gives offense and exhibits his individuality. His roommate, Dan, is an alcoholic accountant belligerently mourning the loss of the girlfriend who has dumped him. And Phil, who narrates, intermittently considers himself the sanest and least dangerous among them. He's an underemployed "cubicle jockey" at a Manhattan publishing house, whose office equipment and furnishings the three plot to hijack, then fence. This casually planned caper draws in Dan's more criminally accomplished Uncle Tommy and Phil's streetwise cousin Frankie, a serial carjacker — both promising comic characters who aren't given enough to do, by either the fledgling robbers or their author. The only other character who matters much is a waitress named Chick, the erotic object of Phil's unrealized dreams. Jeff Somers observes these amiable sociopaths with a funky wit that revs up nicely whenever the three friends are companionably abusing one another, but stalls whenever his novel's undernourished plot threatens to upstage the miscellaneous noodling."*

Overall a nice enough review, not perfect but not shabby for a first novel. And heck, great exposure. Your Humble Editor is now referred to as Jeff "Big-Assed Famous" Somers. It's contractually required.

Phil Shill of **The Savage Zine of Philman** (\$2/trade to SZOP, 636 Hall Ave, St. Paul, MN 55107; lyta@alexander.vg; www.users.qwest.net/~killbill) sent us #8 and #9 of SZOP, each featuring way-cool ads for TIS, and included this quick-and-dirty way into my heart, and thus my zine: *"'The Inner Swine' is one of the most well-written and entertaining zines in print. Jeff Somers needs*

money and I think you should give it to him. Why? Because he may be the nation's last, best hope for sanity. Okay, the last part is bullshit. Buy the zine because it's great!"

Shucks. Who knew we would touch someone's heart so thoroughly? Phil was kind enough to run our ads, so we're doing our part by running an ad for SZOP, see below. SZOP itself is a straightforward letter-sized zine with minimal graphics or special effects and plenty of words, which is cool, because that's why we pay for the ticket, to read, right? While I like to sprinkle some pictures here and there, I like to think every issue of TIS is 90% words. *My* words, of course.

In SZOP they are Phil's words. Phil has strong opinions and a clear style of writing that presents them straight-forwardly, which is cool. Send the man some zines or dollars and read them for yourself, and you'll earn yourself Swine-Karma, which is better than real karma because it rewards you with pork products after you're dead.

Scout from **Scout**(PO Box 48522, Sarasota FL 34230-0522) sent us a letter addressed to **Jeff Somers, Superstar** which immediately got our attention: "*Hi Jeff. Thanks for the recent copy of TIS. Good stuff...this one I read cover to cover, and now I understand what all the fuss is about. I was very amused by your "What They Need's a Damn Good Whacking" story. I can't fucking stand those pompous 'literary' types...it makes me want to tear my own arm off just so I have something to beat them with.*"

See? We're not crazy. Someone is readin TIS and liking it. Scout also indicated in this letter that a new issue of *Scout* will be out in a few weeks, so let's all send out some money in hopes of snagging one, want to?

Well, that looks like it for the ole' mailbag this time around. Guess the reviewers of the world are bored with my me-me-me schtick...heck, I think *I'm* bored with it. Oh well.