

MOFO GOES HOME

Issue 21

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Penn is a superb houseguest.
Next time you see him ask him
to do his squirrel impression. —
phyllis eve bregman.

Mofu Knows
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Change of Address Requested



Tarantino. Aniston. Penn. Teller. Manipulate them at will in *Steven Spielberg's Director's Chair*, the new CD-ROM game from Knowledge Adventure and DreamWorks Interactive. Fight to stay within budget and on schedule as you and your crew of honest-to-god filmmakers create a multi-million dollar movie. Write! Shoot! Edit! Be delayed! Be ridiculed! Grind your teeth and let's do lunch! Then add music, sound effects, and credits, create a poster and tickets, and slay audiences worldwide with your gut-wrenching tale of how beautiful Laura (Jennifer Aniston) frees her beloved Jack (Quentin Tarantino) from the evil geniuses, Paine & Terrore (duh). But don't worry: the real Steven Spielberg occasionally drops in to guide and amuse you. Tell Santa (or, if you're a skeptic, your mom) you want to find *Steven Spielberg's Director's Chair* under your Christmas tree. Three CD-ROMs and hours of megaboss film-making fun for a suggested retail price of only \$54.95.

P. S. This game is *sooooo* cool! We just spent another hour and a half playing it. To hell with work!

A Tot Fooling with a Bear Trap

In 1989 when we were working on creating a trap routine to accompany Penn's profound and lyrical "King of Animal Traps" monologue, I bought a bunch of traps and sat in my garage for a long time, just staring at traps and trying to think of how to plot out Penn's idea of an act in which things would be snatched barehanded from open traps.

In the midst of thinking, an image popped into my head: an open bear trap in a playpen, with a little "Bump 'n' Go" battery-powered car careening around inside the playpen, perhaps finding its way onto the pan of the trap and getting smashed.

I liked the suspense: the silly, ignorant car careening recklessly around while the trap waited ominously. I liked the way it played with scale: either you imagined yourself inside the playpen as a tot fooling with a bear trap, or you pictured yourself as the driver of the toy car; in either case, the bear trap became, in the viewer's mind, enormous. Perversely, I also liked the fact that since the bear trap is built for the weight of bears, there was no real harm posed to the toy, but the viewer would have to think hard to recognize that.

A couple years ago we played Pittsburgh and visited the Warhol Museum. The exhibition director asked us if we had any ideas for installations. I told her this old idea. She liked it. I didn't hear from her for

a year or two, then this past summer she contacted me and said they wanted to do my installation.

I talked on the phone with the

gallery installers, Roger, a rail-thin sculptor in his late thirties, and Jim, a burly and taciturn guy who does a lot of hunting. We agreed that our planning really needed to be done in person. So, having a day off from performing and being only an hour's flight from Pittsburgh, I flew in and we installed.

They had bought a playpen and, per my directions, stapled chicken wire on the inside and across the top to protect the trap from the public and vice versa. The trap looked great inside.

They had bought bags and bags of toys from Sam's Club. And they had a month's supply of Energizer batteries, about fifty pounds. We turned on the toys. They all made noises: sirens, bells, clanking, squawking. In the smallish, hard-walled gallery it was almost unbearable. The din of life.

I realized we had to have that sound. We had to use more than one toy. The trap lurking in a whole society of giddy, unaware beings would be even more threatening. But there wasn't enough room in the small playpen for them all.

So in three hours Roger, Jim, and I built a playpen three times life scale. Six-foot high and nine-feet across, of two-by-fours, all lined with chicken wire. Just as the exhibit was to open, we turned all the toys loose and closed up the wall.

It was quite spectacular. Spinning, beeping, flashing, screaming, flapping toys careening around the trap, coolly waiting.

Then the toys began to get tangled up in one another. We removed the more troublesome toys so the others could move freely. We opened the

gallery. People swarmed in and gawked and laughed and stared. The gallery people started talking about the potential for making this a travelling installation. I doubt anything will come of it, but it was nice of them to say.

Then I went downstairs to the theatre and did a Q&A with about a hundred people. Boyo, P&T have some serious fans. One guy had driven four hours to see the installation and ask his questions. At the end of the talk, I did the Needles and said goodnight. Two-thirds of the audience left, but the remaining 1/3 stuck around for another hour and a half of Q&A. Some SERIOUS diehard fans, let me tell you.

I went to the museum the next day to work out some of the fine points of the exhibit, and left Jim and Roger still experimenting with combinations of toys. They bought some radio-controlled ones so the spectators can control a bit of what's happening on the inside.

What a funny, fun thing. And, I think, not inappropriate to the Warhol Museum at all. If Andy had not done what he did, I doubt I would ever have thought to place those machines together inside a pen of chicken wire and call it art. —*Teller.*

[Editor's note: The exhibit closed in mid-November, 1996. So, if you go to the Warhol Museum, you won't see Teller's exhibit, but you shouldn't hesitate to beg for it to be brought back.]



Lo. Lee. Ta.

I just finished reading *Lolita*. Man. It's really the perfect book. I put off reading it for a long time because I thought it was a book about little girls and I'm not very interested in that. But that's like saying that because I wasn't going whaling in the near future I shouldn't have read *Moby Dick*.

Lolita is amazing. It's a book in which I couldn't really turn down pages, I could just turn down every page. It really is, in some way, very different from any other book. There is a directness and a beauty. It makes me think most of Nicholson Baker. The things Nabokov notices are like he's been reading your mail.

I don't care about little girls and

I don't care about Humbert Humbert—but, man, I really do. I really understand, I really feel it. I just saw the original movie and loved it, that's why I started reading the book. And now I've read the book and I hate the movie. The movie is nothing, the movie is cheap, the movie tells us nothing.

I also love the book's afterword, I love what he says. It seems right. I love the way he works on it. I love how he knows where he got the idea and how the book grew and knew what he was saying. There is no sense of "I did it because it worked"—he had something to say and he said it. No message, no real point, just real art. It must have felt so good

to write this book.

I would think that I would be obsessed with the shock of this book, but that's completely unimportant. Completely. The only shocking thing about this book is how good it is. And man, is it about love. It's wonderful how envious I became of Humbert's pure love. His pure passion.

You know, if I'm going to write about this book, I should really write about it and I should think about it and I should really decide how to say what I'm feeling. But, I don't need to write about this book—there is the book. I just want to remind myself when I reread it how much I liked it the first time. It is so inspiring. — Penn.



Reporters who know nothing about theatre and who write reviews frequently tell falsehoods. Not wrong opinions. Factual falsehoods, like misspelling "Jillette" or misquoting lines so the sense is distorted. Or more complex falsehoods, like erroneously relating the events that happened on the

BIZARRO Piraro

THEY INSIST IT'S ONLY AN ILLUSION, BUT IT'S REALLY GROSSING OUT THE NURSES.



December 28
Caesars Palace 30th Anniversary
Show
ABC-TV

December 28-31
Shubert Theatre
New Haven, CT

January 3-25
Bally's Las Vegas
Las Vegas, NV

February 26-March 1
Majestic Theatre
Dallas, TX

Check your local television listings for Penn & Teller's next appearances on *Sabrina*, *The Drew Carey Show*, and *Muppets Tonight*.

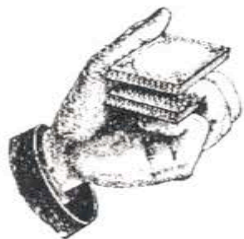
Schedule at the mercy of Fate.

The next issue of *Mofoknows* will be published in mid-April, 1997.
See you then!

In the Spielberg thing, I had to be conked over the head with a crystal ball. They had one made of candy glass (really heavy candy glass, I might add). There was a tiara inside it and Jennifer was supposed to smash it and have the tiara land on my head. She was afraid to hit me, so they had her stunt double do it. The stunt double hit and then followed through. The



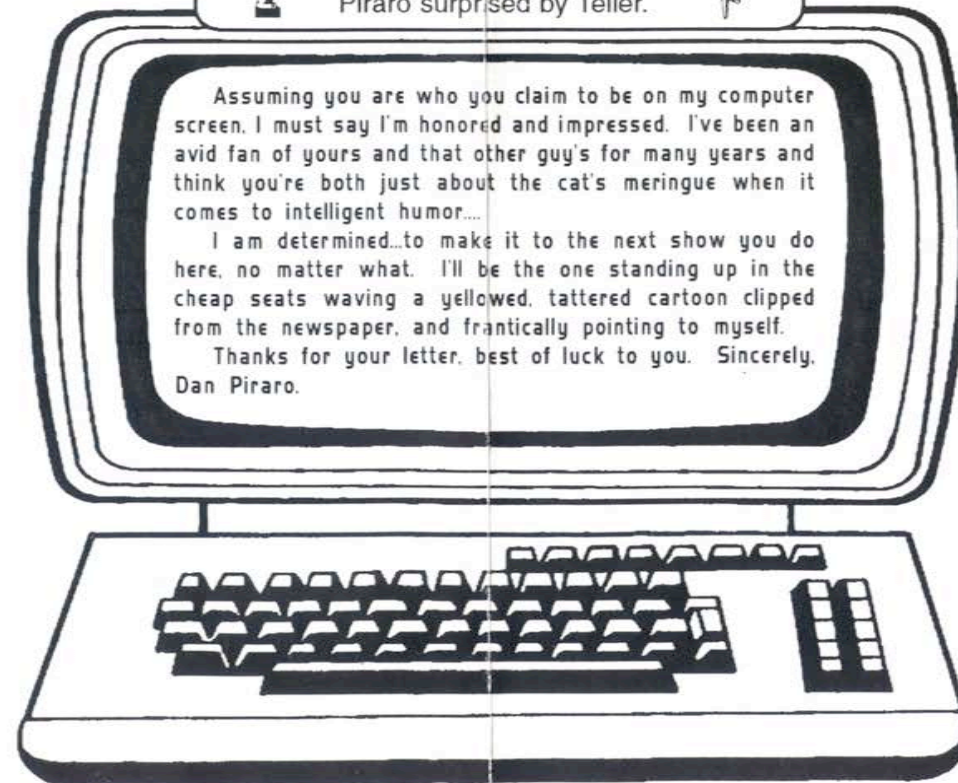
stage. Insufficient skill and experience prevents, for example, the reporter from distinguishing deliberate dissonance and an inability to achieve consonance. What I am saying is that there IS an element of reporting about reviews. Something happens in the theatre as surely as it happened on the Senate floor. There is a bottom line of conscientious reporting that an uninformed, unobservant person simply cannot do, any more than somebody who doesn't understand congressional procedures can report on the progress of a bill. There are facts and information even in art. I'm fine, once the information is accurate, with reviewers having strong opinions and expressing them artistically. —Teller.



I'm surprised that parents don't ask their kids to check on things for them, like: "I know I won't be around, but, if you have children, have them ask their children who's more famous in the 22nd Century—Houdini or Elvis?" You know, just have them think about something that you care about and can never know. —Penn.



Piraro surprising Penn & Teller.
Piraro surprised by Teller.



"glass" didn't hurt me, but she rammed the tiara (it's called "The Tiara Del Fuego," get it?) into my head and did a little tiny cut on my forehead and a few other little ones in my hair. Then Teller really got a good whack on the noggin when they lifted him by the foot—but all and all the boys did pretty well. —Penn.



Gene Hatcher went to the Las Vegas DMV to do some dirty work for Teller.

The clerk who waited on Gene said, "Wait a minute. Who is this vehicle registered to?"

Gene said, "Teller." Gene pointed at the name on the registration.

The clerk said, "Is that a business or a person?"

Gene said, "A person. He's Teller of Penn & Teller."

The clerk said, "And he has just one name? He has just one legal name?"

"Yes," Gene said. "You know, like Socrates."

"Or Goofy," said the clerk. "He finally got his own movie, you know.... Goofy, I mean, not Socrates.... Of course, Socrates could have finally gotten his own movie, too, for all I know. I don't get to the movies much."