

BLOG DRAMA

RVCA CANADA TOUR
by Michael Burnett



IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO WRITE this story without first acknowledging just how stupid the word “blog” is. Just say it out loud a few times.

Blog.

It bubbles up on your tongue and bursts, like a belch choked back at the last second.

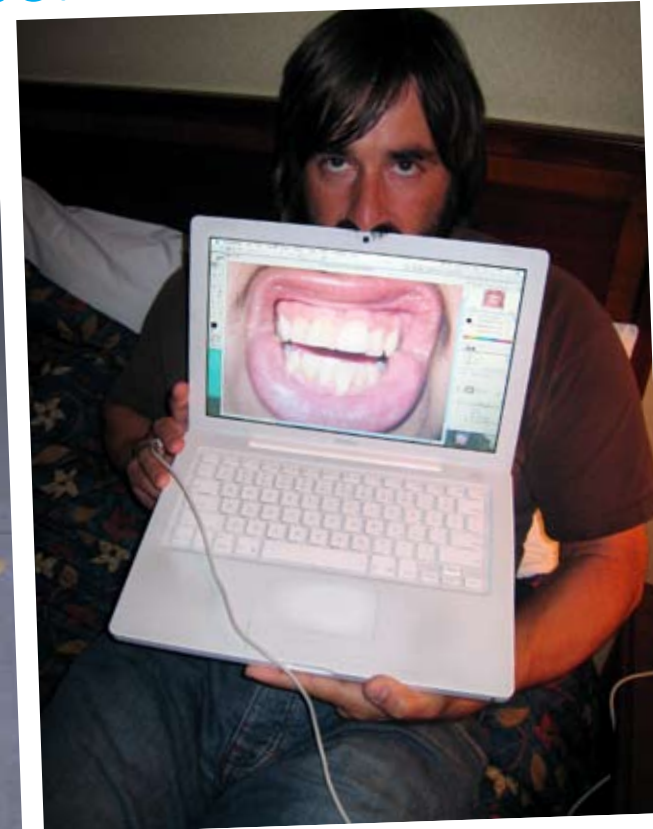
BLOG!

Now put it in a sentence. “I stopped blogging the second I saw Billy’s blog. He’s such an awesome blogger!”

Blog is supposedly a shortened version of the term “Web log,” which is strange because it’s been a while since I heard anyone talk about The Web. Most folks either say “online,” “on the Internet,” or refer to a specific site when discussing their inter-computer activity. And “log”? As far as I know, the only person to ever keep a “log” was Captain James T Kirk of the Starship Enterprise.

Still, it’s not the sound of the word or the fact that it’s an abbreviation of an already awkward and vague piece of jargon that curses it. The reason that blog is so disgustingly annoying is that it’s one of those hot new words that everyone’s suddenly talking about all the time. So like the Chicago Bulls’ “three-peat” and that point in time when the exclamation “boo-yaa!” trickled down to your high school geometry teacher, “blog,” “bloggers,” and “blogging” have emerged and quickly joined the ranks of the language of the fucked.

“LIKE WHEN THE EXCLAMATION
‘BOO-YAA!’ TRICKLED DOWN TO YOUR
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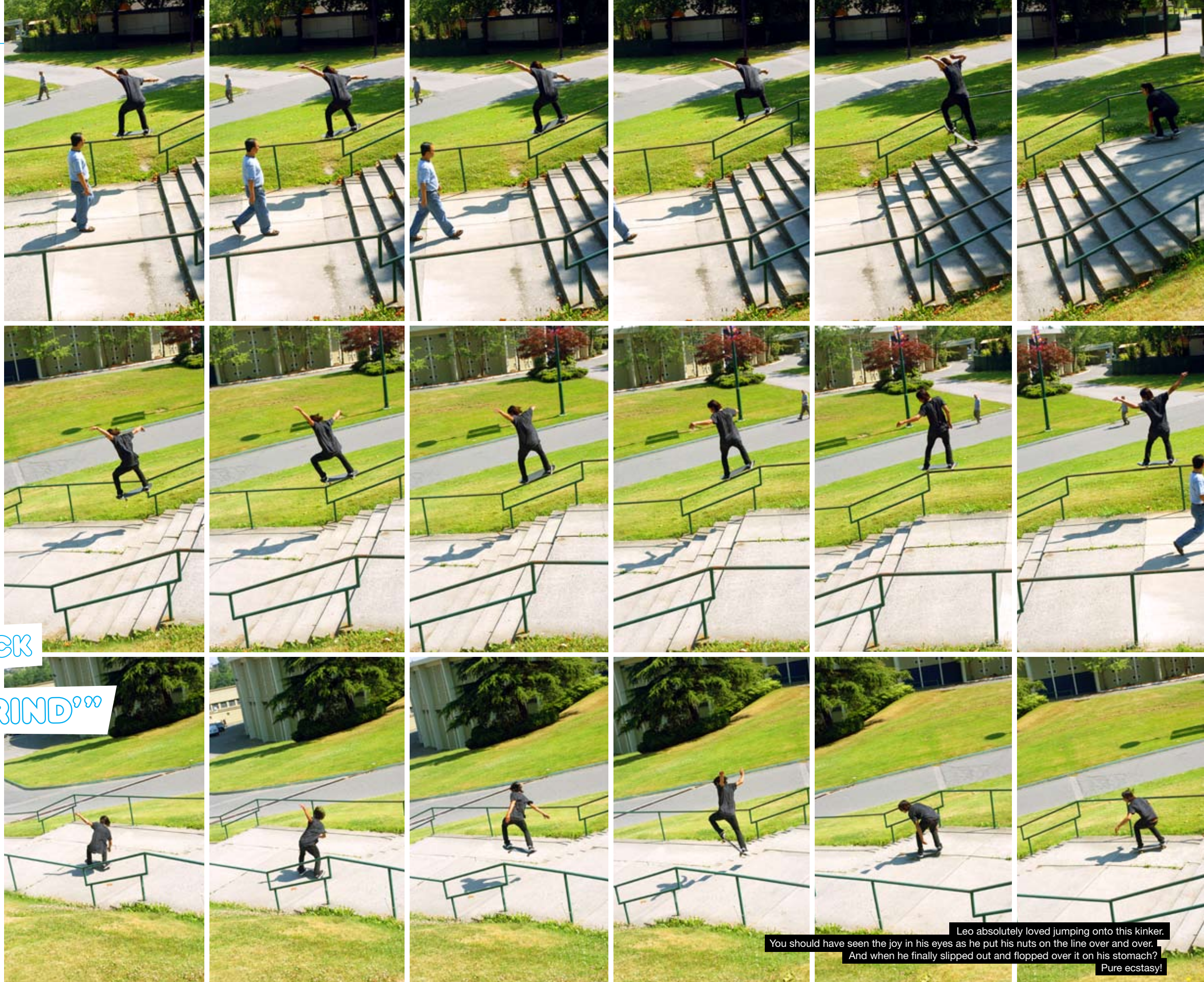
SKATEBOARDING HAS BEEN ON THE INTERNET for a long time (including *Thrasher's* ancient skateboarding news group that kept nerds around the world updated on new quarterpipes and bearing-cleaning ideas since way back in the mid-'80s), and even got caught up in the mid-'90s dot com boom when Pete Thompson famously quit his post at *Transworld* to earn an unheard-of \$70,000 a year as a skate dot com's first staff photographer. But just as the online grocery store websites failed to change the way we bought lettuce, the skate sites put neither the skate shops nor the magazines out of business, and steadily disappeared or changed focus. So it's been fairly recent that a few interesting skateboard writers and

"THEY'D HAVE BETTER LUCK GETTING THE KIDS TO STOP SAYING 'K-GRIND'"

photographers have begun to establish an Internet presence. Not in the life-changing, dramatic ways promised by your Hardcloud.coms of yore, but more often via simple collections of funny photos, inside jokes, video clips, and other chuckle-worthy bullshit—postings we suddenly seem to have no other choice but to refer to as blogs.

The other annoying thing about hot new words: once they really catch fire, it's hard to go back to anything else. For instance, prior to the first issue of the Beastie Boys' *Grand Royal* magazine in which they coined the word "mullet" to name the short-front, long-back hairstyle, I had long referred to it as a "loaf." Well, I could still use it (if discussion of these sorts of haircuts wasn't so overcooked anyway), but I'd still have to say something like, "A loaf. You know, like a mullet."

Even though I've heard the people at Crailtap.com refer to their online offerings as "columns," they'd have better luck getting the kids to stop saying "k-grind" than they would convincing anyone that they're not anything more than bloggers. Bloggers, blogging away in the goddamn retarded-ass blog-o-sphere.



Leo absolutely loved jumping onto this kinker. You should have seen the joy in his eyes as he put his nuts on the line over and over. And when he finally slipped out and flopped over it on his stomach? Pure ecstasy!



We stayed in Montreal's Chinatown, where Ed drew a crowd with an HB High staple



ON THE RVCA CANADA TOUR there were at least three bloggers in our immediate crew. First was team manager Jimmy, who vowed to update the RVCA skate blog every day of the journey. Next there was Ed Templeton, blogging for the Toymachine.com site in the “Ed T’s Cul-De-Sac of Lameness” area. I was the third blogger, having recently staked my claim on the Thrashermagazine.com site, though I felt early on that my blogging commitment paled in comparison to the other two. Other potential bloggers included Deanna Templeton, who has a blog in RVCA’s ANP site, and our beloved hosts, Judah, David, and Mathieu, all of whom shot blogworthy photos constantly and have the little-known URL’s of Canada’s skate biz to hide behind.

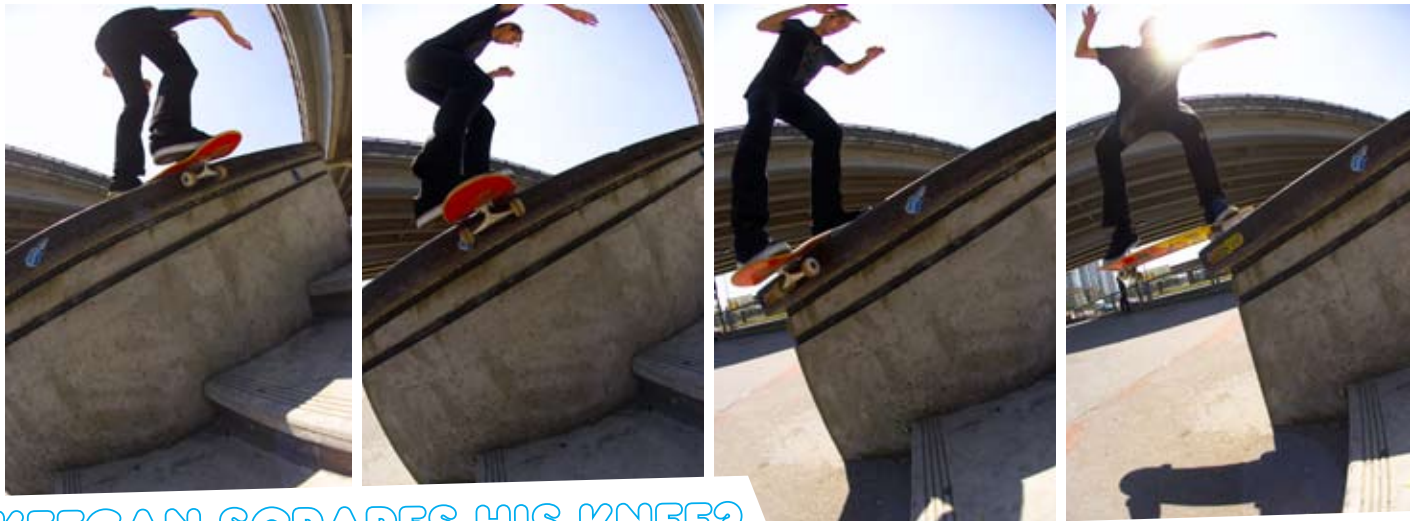
“THERE ARE NO STANDARDS. NO, SERIOUSLY. SHOOT ANYTHING. THROW IT ALL IN”

So what exactly constitutes a photo appropriate for blogging? Some of you might remember an article I did a couple of years ago listing the dos and don’ts of late-night, point-and-shoot “art” photography (hint: shoot lots of drunk people). Well blog photography is a lot like that but with one big exception—there are no standards. No, seriously. Shoot anything. Throw it all in. Dudes sitting at the airport. Your buddy eating a sandwich. Someone taking a nap. Anything. Get in there and shoot with all the discretion of a 65-year-old woman at her grandbaby’s first birthday party.





If you could tornado out of a front board like Austin Stephens, why would you ever bother coming out normal?



“KEEGAN SCRAPES HIS KNEE? BLOGGED FROM ALL ANGLES”



ON THE CANADA TRIP, the three of us were practically crawling over one another to gather images of anything deemed even remotely blogtastic. “Oh, I’m blogging the shit out of that!” Jimmy would cry out, having spotted Josh emerge from a store with an ice cream cone. Ed and I would follow closely behind, shamelessly gathering the scraps. Austin does a handstand? Suddenly he’s asked to repeat it for me, and then for Jimmy, and then for the Canadians. Keegan scrapes his knee? Blogged from all angles. At one point I posed for a portrait for Ed with my eyelids turned inside out (a trick from my childhood, not recommended), and upon seeing the photo thought, “Dude, I should get a shot of that, too.”



Being the World’s Nicest Boy, Josh Harmony has a lot of responsibility, least of which is to pull bluntslides over and over so everyone can get the right angle



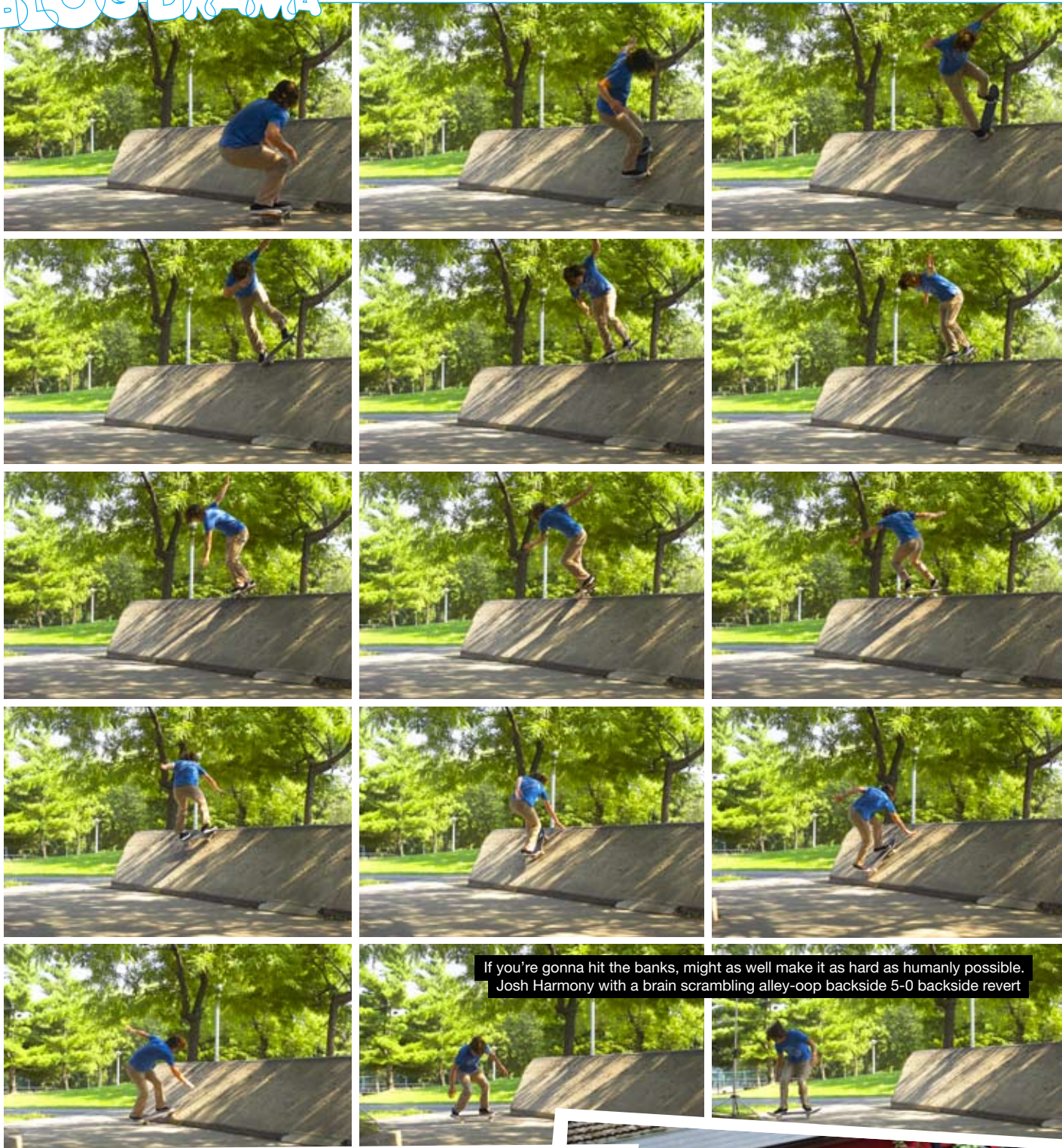
"LAZY, OFTEN BORING,
AND NOT REALLY ALL THAT SMART"



IF THE INTERNET IS GIVING THE MEDIA back to the people (doubtful), then the result is a lot like the people themselves: sort of

lazy, often boring, and not really all that smart. With my stuff on the *Thrasher* site, my goal is to show a few of the leftover photos from trips, give anyone who cares a behind-the-scenes look at the job of making the magazine, and make my friends laugh. It's not meant to be as involved as what I do for the print version, and I usually spend under 20 minutes putting it together. It's sort of crappy, basically. Apparently this is far from satisfactory for the people who write in comments. They are deadly serious and never miss an opportunity to let me know when my stupid blog fails to make muster. I know it sounds hardcore or whatever to say that you never go on message boards or pay attention to online gossip, but I'm being honest when I say that before I started my thing on the *Thrasher* site, I had never seen any of that kind of stuff. Really. When I heard that Jamie Thomas was battling some dudes on the SLAP message boards, it took me a good 10 minutes to even figure out how to see what everyone was talking about. I'm really bad with that stuff.

Sorry about your hidden head, Leo.
I'll blog it to you later. Overcrops



If you're gonna hit the banks, might as well make it as hard as humanly possible.
Josh Harmony with a brain scrambling alley-oop backside 5-0 backside revert

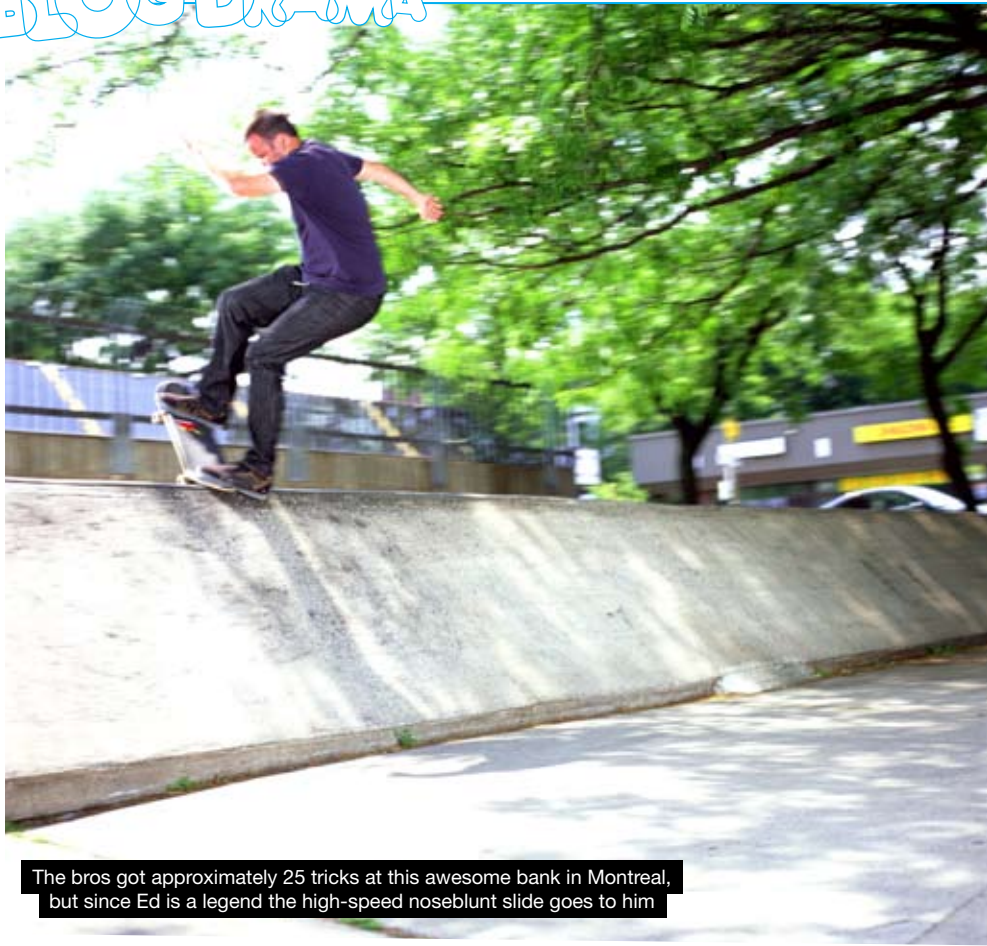
“NEVER WRESTLE WITH A PIG”

YOU PUT UP A PICTURE of your buddy eating a sandwich, and then four complete strangers with funny fake names tell you how much you suck. That's pretty much the scenario. It's not that I'm afraid of or overly hurt by criticism. I've gotten tons of it over the years. Clyde Singleton once called me a “faggot” in print, for instance. I take comfort in a quote by the famous writer George Bernard Shaw, which can easily be used to describe responding to your critics.

He said, “I learned long ago never to wrestle with a pig. You get dirty, and besides, the pig likes it.”



Fresh off ankle surgery, Cairo was along for the ride until he saw this Vancouver stack that was just begging for the ol' nollie flip



The bros got approximately 25 tricks at this awesome bank in Montreal, but since Ed is a legend the high-speed noseblunt slide goes to him



Leo Romero hanging out on a heavy Hasting's hurricane right before dark

“WHEN YOU’RE WRITING UNDER THE NAME ‘STEVE STEADHAM’S DANDRUFF 2,’ WHAT MOTIVATION DO YOU HAVE TO HOLD BACK?”

NOT THAT CLYDE IS A PIG. Far from it. I went overboard making fun of him when he didn’t show up for King of the Road last year and he, in return, called me a faggot. I reckon we both deserved it a little bit. But back to Mr Shaw’s quote. It’s hard to argue with assholes without becoming a little bit of one yourself. You’re better off just walking away. Or in my case, getting Schmittty to turn the comments feature off. Sorry, jerks.

There are a lot of problems with message board-style criticism, but the biggest are that it’s anonymous and has little value besides being inflammatory. People only check to see if someone’s talking shit, and when you’re writing under the name “Steve Steadham’s Dandruff 2,” what motivation do you have to hold back? And even though it’s anonymous, I always get the feeling that the people writing the worst stuff aren’t average skaters from around the world, but the bitter, older members of the skateboard business community. The disses are way too personal and way too informed. It’s more like the disgruntled dude from the warehouse talks shit on the pro who shunned him, the guy stuck at the shop dogs his bro who got sponsored and moved to California, and the photographer insults the skater who was mean to him in the tour van. On the flip side, you have these absurdly positive comments that could only come from a skater’s mother, but were more likely written by the team manager, girlfriend, or the skater himself. What almost all of the comments have in common, however, is the fact that they’re totally worthless aside from torturing people.

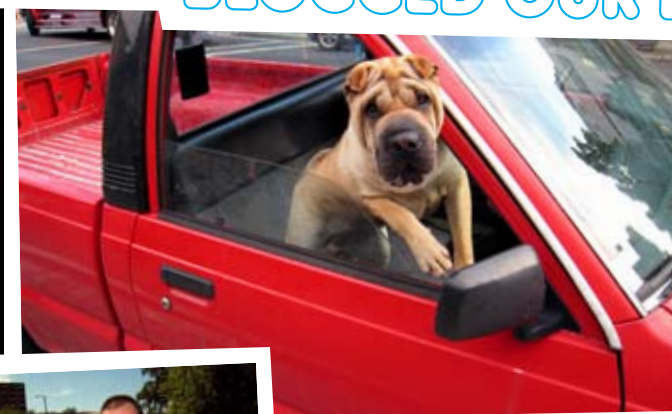




It's no grasser, but Canadian Keegan Sauder still manages to capture the spirit of the table-top on this cranked-down crooked grind



"BLOGGED OUR BALLS OFF, REALLY"



NO ONE KNOW THIS more than Ed, who got in an online comment war with Jimmy that started with complaints about Jimmy's poor spelling and punctuation, and soon erupted into both sides posting the least-flattering photos of one another that they could shoot. At one point during dinner on Vancouver Island, Jimmy provoked Ed to start whipping him with a napkin, solely to get shots of him at his most agitated. The antagonism quickly led to Jimmy shooting repeated photos of Ed eating or simply sitting prone, the latter of which had Leo inexplicably laughing his ass off. A few days later they had graduated to using the macro function to sneak up and shoot disgusting close-up shots of one another's mouths, each side threatening to reveal the other's hygiene at the slightest hint of blog battle. At one point Deanna was even pulled into the fray, though not even Jimmy would sink so low as to blog a friend's wife. Even in the horrors of blog warfare, there are rules.



It went on for the entire trip. We traveled across Canada, competed for ice cream-eating photos, raced to photograph weird-looking dogs, and surrounded whomever emerged from a heavy slam to see if their hand was bleeding and, if so, would they please hold it up and let blood drip down it so we could each take a photo? We blogged an art show at the Anti-Social shop, blogged out to dinner with the Pommier brothers, blogged Leo going absolutely ape shit every single time his wheels touched the concrete, blogged over to Montreal just in time for the Montreal Comedy festival where we were lucky enough to blog a live *Kids in the Hall* show on the night of Deanna's very bloggable birthday, and even blogged in French every morning when we ordered donuts (also blogged). It was a really nice time. And at the end of each night we'd boogie on back to our computers and blog like we'd never blogged before. Blogged our balls off, really. Blogged until we could blog no more. Then we'd sit back, hit the refresh button every 15 seconds or so, and wait for the comments to start trickling in. ♠