



# Florida

Will Kill Us All



Tampa Am Trip 2007  
By Michael Burnett





Javier Mendezibal relaxes his mind and floats upstream at Kulas' backyard trip-out

## Orlando

**THERE'S NO USE** even trying to explain the original intent of this trip. To spell it out now would only be acknowledging how ridiculous the idea was, and how sadly it fell off course. There's no point, really. Let's just say it involved pleasure boats and a Suzuki Samurai and leave it at that. For the purpose of this article, let's pretend that no other plan had even occurred to us other than to fly cross-country to attend the Surf Industry of America trade show in fabulous Orlando, followed by a week of streetstyle, before ending at the 2007 Tampa Am.

Volcom hosted a pro mini-ramp contest on a ramp that was about 200-feet wide with all sorts of exciting obstacles all over it. I really intended to shoot it, but pulled a Late Larry and got denied platform access. Rune McTwisted off the over-vert extension, and Karl Beard tore it to first. None of our guys made the cut, but I did spot Florida legend Buck Smith in the crowd. Guess he couldn't get on the deck either.

We skated Tim Kulas' killer homemade bowl and those brick quarterpipes, the likes of which haven't been skateable anywhere else in the United States since the early '80s. The fact that they were even built is amazing, so our getting to shred them uninhibited for over two hours during a trade show weekend should count as a minor miracle. And all the tricks Javier Mendizabal did? That's just his regular shit.



## “LET’S JUST SAY IT INVOLVED PLEASURE BOATS AND A SUZUKI SAMURAI”

## Salad Orgy

**ELISSA STEAMER IS DEFINITELY TUNED IN** to life's finer things, and in Orlando she narrowed her focus on a restaurant called Souper Salad, or Salad Crazy, or something like that, and wouldn't shut up until we took her there. The difference between one of these all-you-can-cram salad restaurants and a more conventional, non-salad-themed smorgasbord is the smug look on the patron's fat faces as they lurch along in the line.

“I just love it because it's all so fresh and healthy!” they'll exclaim, as they carefully select their sliced red peppers and miniature corn on the cobs. “Beautiful!”

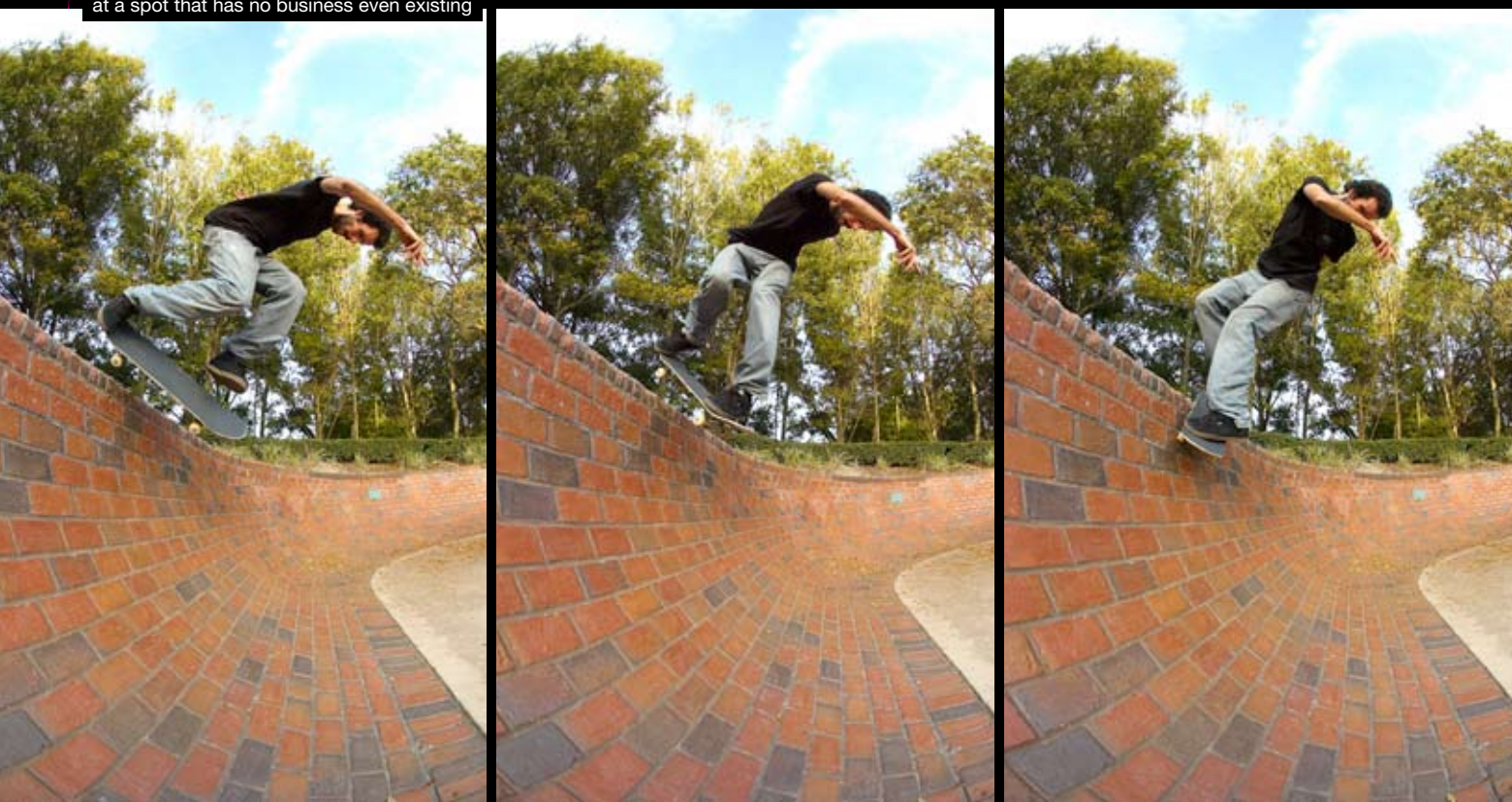
But like our crew, they'll abandon their one-third-eaten mountain of ranch-soaked greens in the first eight minutes, and quickly fill a second plate with the other crap they offer—namely microwave pizza, Texas toast, macaroni and cheese, chili, and similar items that look straight out of a junior high cafeteria. Top that off with an Oreo-heavy trip to the ice cream suicide station and you're looking at a healthy 2,500-calorie “salad” fit for a massive infarction. Elissa left completely satisfied.







Casually gnar, Javier whips a sugarcane at a spot that has no business even existing



## Miami

**TRY AS WE MIGHT** to escape the South Beach Best Western pool area and hit the streets, a minimum of 8 to 10 of our 16 waking hours was spent posted up under the gently fluttering white umbrellas. As soon as one half of our crew got motivated to go skate, they'd discover that the other half had just left to get pizza. Then when the pizza people got back, that would remind the first group that they too were hungry and should probably go get some pizza. Having finished their slices, the first pizza group would decide that the best way to get the grease off their finger was to go for a quick dip in the ocean. Then Elissa would go take a nap. Then it would start sprinkling. Then it would get dark. Once it got dark, that would mean it wouldn't be out of line to go for a quick beer, thus setting off an entire other set of distractions. Sooner or later, we'd all end up back by the pool where, under best circumstances, we'd make a plan and go skate, and worst, well, you can imagine. Actually, none of it was that bad. There was no worst part. In fact, fucking around by the pool was the best part of the whole trip. I don't even know why I'm trying to paint it as anything different. Miami's great. Go there and get wasted.



"Whaah!"



# "THERE WAS NO WORST PART... GO THERE AND GET WASTED"

## Dill

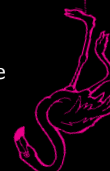
**JASON DILL WAS ONE** of the first pro skaters I ever shot photos with when I moved to California in the late 1990s. Although our relationship was perfectly amiable, I was a total novice trying to get my shit together (in photography and the world of professional skateboarding), and I've always felt like he and I were never really on the same page. I felt like we never really clicked, whatever the hell that means. In the



following years, I've admired Dill from afar as he morphed from an average-seeming weed-and-rap-obsessed crooked grinder into a very interesting character with his own sense of style and take

on skateboarding. So it was on this trip that we were to become reacquainted. After about two half-conversations, I realized that our lack of connection 10 years earlier had nothing to do with my inexperience or shyness. It had everything to do, however, with the fact that Dill has little or no interest in anything not dealing directly with Dill. In fact, I've never met anyone who can steer the topic of a conversation towards themselves so effortlessly and consistently. "Does anyone want to go get pizza?" you might ask. "Did you know I fucked Chef Boyardee's daughter?" he'll respond.

It's really amazing. But rather than get irritated, you can't help but just kick back and enjoy the show as the conversation jettisons off into a monologue—usually one far more interesting than whatever you were previously talking about anyway. It must be one of those traits that celebrities master. Which is why I realized that Dill and I are never going to be bros. I'm just not cut out for it, and that's fine. I've always been better off as a fan.





# Florida Will Kill Us All



## Swamp Fever

**I'VE GOTTEN SICK** every single time I've gone to Florida. While the plane ride, hotel AC, sweaty high fives, and general swampiness of the Tampa area are all likely culprits, I point the snot-covered finger directly at the stagnant bog of sewage that runs directly in front of the park. This fetid drain, the famous Tampa Moat, which a nude and very drunk Brian Schaeffer once leapt into from the skatepark roof, consistently out-produces the actual park in terms of photo gold and sustained laughs. But it's still, as the name suggests, a moat—ie—a river of liquid so disgusting and dangerous that no one should dare cross it. Treat it like hot lava. Like hot, shit-scented lava.

Clifford put us up in the soundly hepatitis-free Marriott, which I saw as a good first sign of staying healthy. At the contest, I further insulated myself from germs by adopting the embarrassing "nucks" form of greeting rather than an adult



Striped shirt date!

## "TREAT IT LIKE HOT LAVA. LIKE HOT, SHIT-SCENTED LAVA"

handshake. "Sup, bro?" I mean, how much staphylococcal bacteria could really be transmitted by two men just tapping knuckles? By day three I felt like I'd surely beaten whatever sick I could have possibly contracted, and jockeyed aggressively at the moat's edge to photograph the poor

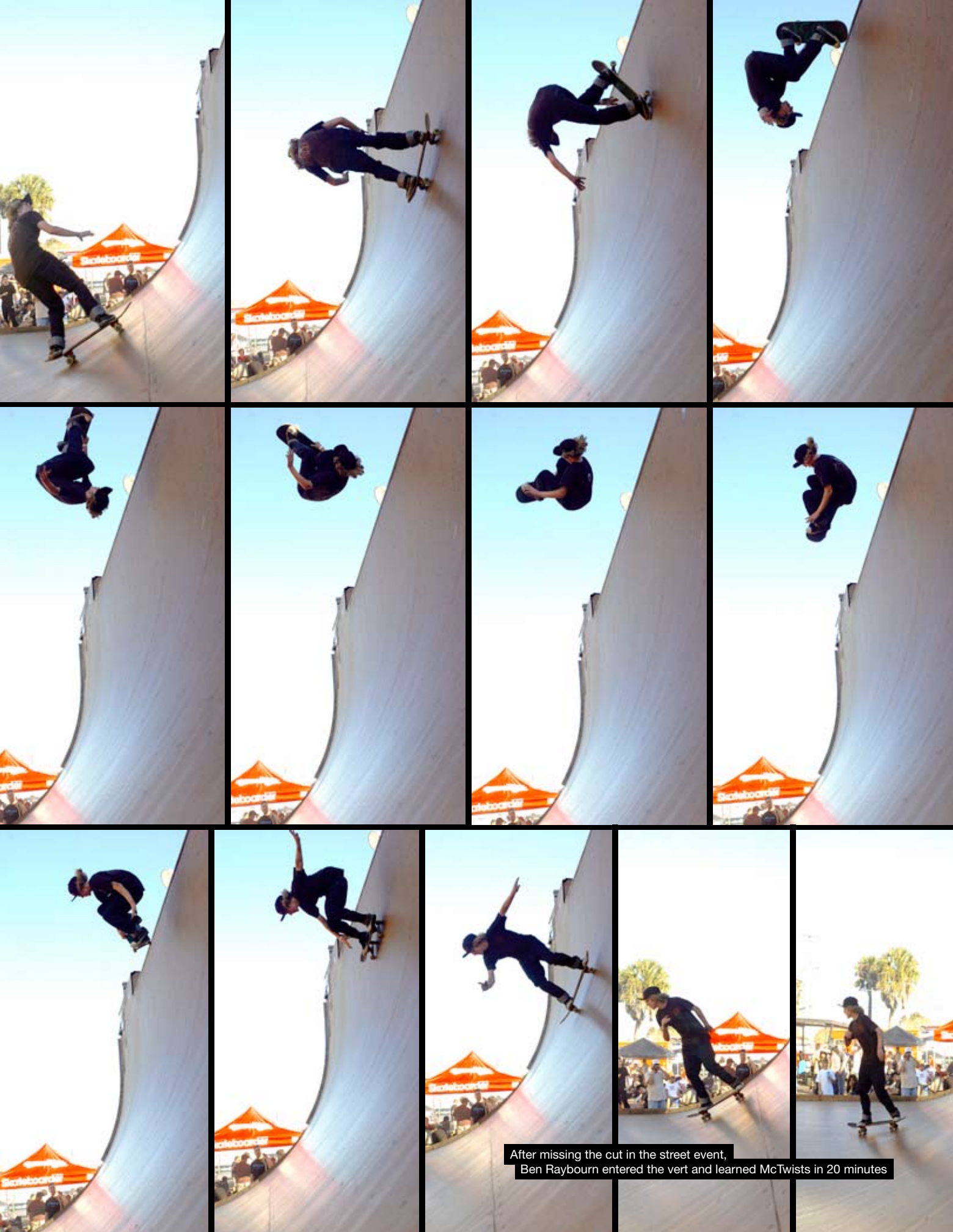
confused contestants as they traded their health and dignity for a shot at a prize drawn from the SPOT shop's bargain bin. It was then that I leaned in a hair too close, just in time to watch a child fall with a mucky splash and personally catch a sloping line of gray moat water directly up my right nostril. I immediately tried to farmer-blow it back out as I ran to the skatepark bathroom in search of soap—a pointless gesture as that room is the second-most disgusting place in Tampa after the moat (and where the

soap dispenser might have been, there was instead a crudely drawn vagina). In the end, I rubbed some of the snack bar hand sanitizer around the edges of my nose and waited. Within 20 minutes my sinuses were filled with concrete, and I was swallowing back phlegmatic sand.



After getting lost trying to find another spot, Eric "Fletch" Fletcher spotted this rail and switch frontside flipped it





## Titans of the Pit

**JUST AS THEY'VE TAKEN OVER** the feet of every skateshop employee in the US, Nike has grabbed the reigns of the Tampa event, which meant a fancy new street course, and even fancier entertainment in the form of a free concert starring post-punk, early-skate-video-favorites Dinosaur Jr. I'm honestly not sure if skaters even go to shows these days, but a big part of my youth was getting to see my favorite bands play live. And since the music I liked leaned towards the punk rock, a regular hazard of attendance was dealing with people who would get so excited about the songs that they'd want to take off their shirts, elbow your girlfriend in the throat, and then swirl around punching and kicking everything in their path. I saw Fugazi play at least 10 times, and there wasn't a single show where Ian didn't stop rocking to get the pit jocks to quit putting people in suplexes. Maybe it was my changing musical tastes (not too much crowd surfing at Belle and Sebastian), or maybe the mosh pit maniacs all got DUIs and couldn't make it anymore, but I hadn't dealt with the swirling circle of fury in 10 years until the Nike Dinosaur Jr show. Now I don't want to get down on retard kids out having fun doing what they've seen on TV, but no sooner did Lou and J



clearance for stage diving opportunities. I don't think they were expecting such a rowdy crowd at a corporate gig, so Dinosaur Jr had no security, allowing all comers to jump up willy-nilly, stare awkwardly at J Mascis for a few seconds, raise their fists in triumph, and then cartwheel back into the crowd, who generally parted to let them splat to the concrete. Someone karate kicks



## "VIA THEIR TATTOOED AND ZITTY BACKS DIRECTLY TO THE SIDE OF YOUR FACE"

hit the stage than 8 or 10 grown men stomped through the fans who'd been waiting patiently for an hour, took off their shirts, and commenced the pit of pain. The typical course of events follows like this: big shirtless jocks start swirling and punching. People who waited for hours to be in the front get jostled, and start pushing the jocks back. Jocks, being jocks, get in the faces of the front-row pushers, flex on them, and maybe poke them in the chest. Stalemate. Jocks start up the pit again. At this point the heavier moshers will have worked up a good all-over sweat, which will soon be wiped, via their tattooed and zitty backs, directly to the side of your face when they stumble backwards into you. Next comes the evacuation of all but the sturdiest of front row diehards, giving

someone's girlfriend in the face on a stage flip, and the next thing you know people are whaling on each other. Most of the time this is the point where the band steps in, and, with all the authority of a substitute social studies teacher, Lou Barlow politely requested a ceasefire. Which might have gotten some results in the old days, but this is 2007 and none of the pit maniacs even knew who the band was anyway. "Fuck you, old man! Play some Foo Fighters!" From there it's an endurance test of who will get tired first—the band or the jocks. In most cases, you'll walk from the last encore to find your former attackers already at the head of the beer line. And even if you're tempted to say something like, "Hey, thanks for kicking me in the eyeball," don't bother. They'll have no idea what you're even talking about.



After missing the cut in the street event, Ben Raybourn entered the vert and learned McTwists in 20 minutes







## Antwuan

**ANTWUAN CAME OUT** of his shell at Tampa, shedding any lingering ideas that he was some sort of “gentle giant” as he pounded hard liquor, got in fist fights, danced around the course during people’s runs, and generally made a spectacle of himself. While some openly compared him to another famous contest train wreck, Sean Sheffey, I don’t think he’s quite there yet. He may have hampered a few people’s crooked



## “HE MAY HAVE HAMPERED A FEW PEOPLE’S CROOKED GRINDS”



grinds, but at no point did he, Antwuan, don a bright blue wig, pitch a glass bottle full speed into the crowd, or whip someone’s ass while completely naked in a hotel lobby at five in the morning. I’m not saying he couldn’t do it someday. Sheffey was almost 30 when he threw French Fred off the Dortmund pyramid, after all. But Antwuan’s still a teenager. He’s got at least 10 years of hard skating before he needs to get that rowdy.



The Bruiser from Belfast, Conhuir Lynn, can really crank a kickflip

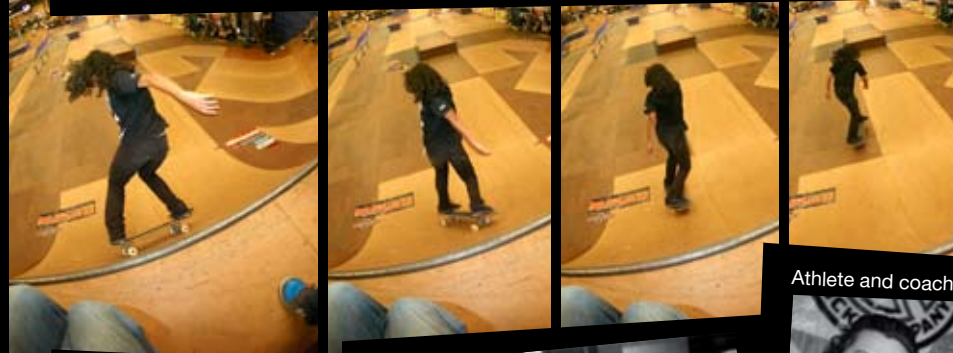




David Gonzales gets fancy  
where most dudes just axle stalled



**"THE NEXT THING YOU KNOW  
PEOPLE ARE WAITING ON EACH OTHER"**



Athlete and coach



Tampa's resident street star, Abdias Rivera,  
drops a frontside flip at a spot he's skated for years



## The Worst Date Ever

**WHEN GOING ON A DATE**, there's always a little anxiety. Will she laugh at my jokes? What if I get food stuck in my teeth? A typical concern for most normal people, however, is not:



"What if we get so shit-house wasted that neither of us can talk, walk, or even stay awake for more than 45 seconds at a time?" This was the situation for a couple I encountered at the late-night pizza window

in Tampa's Ybor City. As I was ordering my slice I noticed that the woman next to me had started to slump. Despite her date's attempts to steady her, she slid further and further down, pressing her chest against her slice and smearing it against the glass before flopping onto her ass. I looked at the dude and realized that he was almost as wasted as she was.

## "THE DRUNK DUDE FELL BACKWARDS AND SAT DIRECTLY ON HIS GIRLFRIEND'S HEAD"

"It's all right. She's my girlfriend," he kept slurring. I helped him get her into a chair, after which he feebly tried to revive her by feeding her a bite of his pizza. "You gotta eat something, baby!" he said while sticking the business end of the slice into her gaping, semi-conscious mouth. Though she was totally zorched and he could barely stand up straight, he next decided they should start walking and lifted her from her chair only to stumble backwards with her in his arms, both of them body slamming into the sidewalk. At this point people had started to gather and gawk, and I couldn't help but take photos as the dude ate his pizza, while his lady lolled from one ridiculous pose to another. Readers of last year's Tampa article will know that this sort of photography is all the rage, so soon there were several other photographers getting in on the action, including one guy who decided the angle he wanted was six inches from the woman's face. This greatly upset the drunk dude. "Hey! That's my girlfriend!" he repeated one more time. And even though he could barely walk, the drunk dude wobbled to his feet, snatched the camera from the surprised shutterbug, and smashed it to pieces on the ground. The crowd gasped, and the fight was on. The broken camera dude grabbed the drunk dude and punched him in the face. As his glasses went flying and his brow spurted blood, the drunk dude fell backwards and sat directly on his girlfriend's head, who was positioned sitting Indian style behind



him. The tussle continued for a few more cringe-worthy minutes—the drunk guy battling the shutterbug while still astride his hopefully soon-to-be-ex-girlfriend's head. Eventually the cameraman realized that no amount of pummeling the drunk dude was going to get his Elph back and moved on.

"Great! Now I can't drive home!" the drunk dude wailed, as he searched for his broken glasses. I swear to God he said that. Finally a nice guy helped the two pathetic creatures on their way while his Guido buddies chided him.

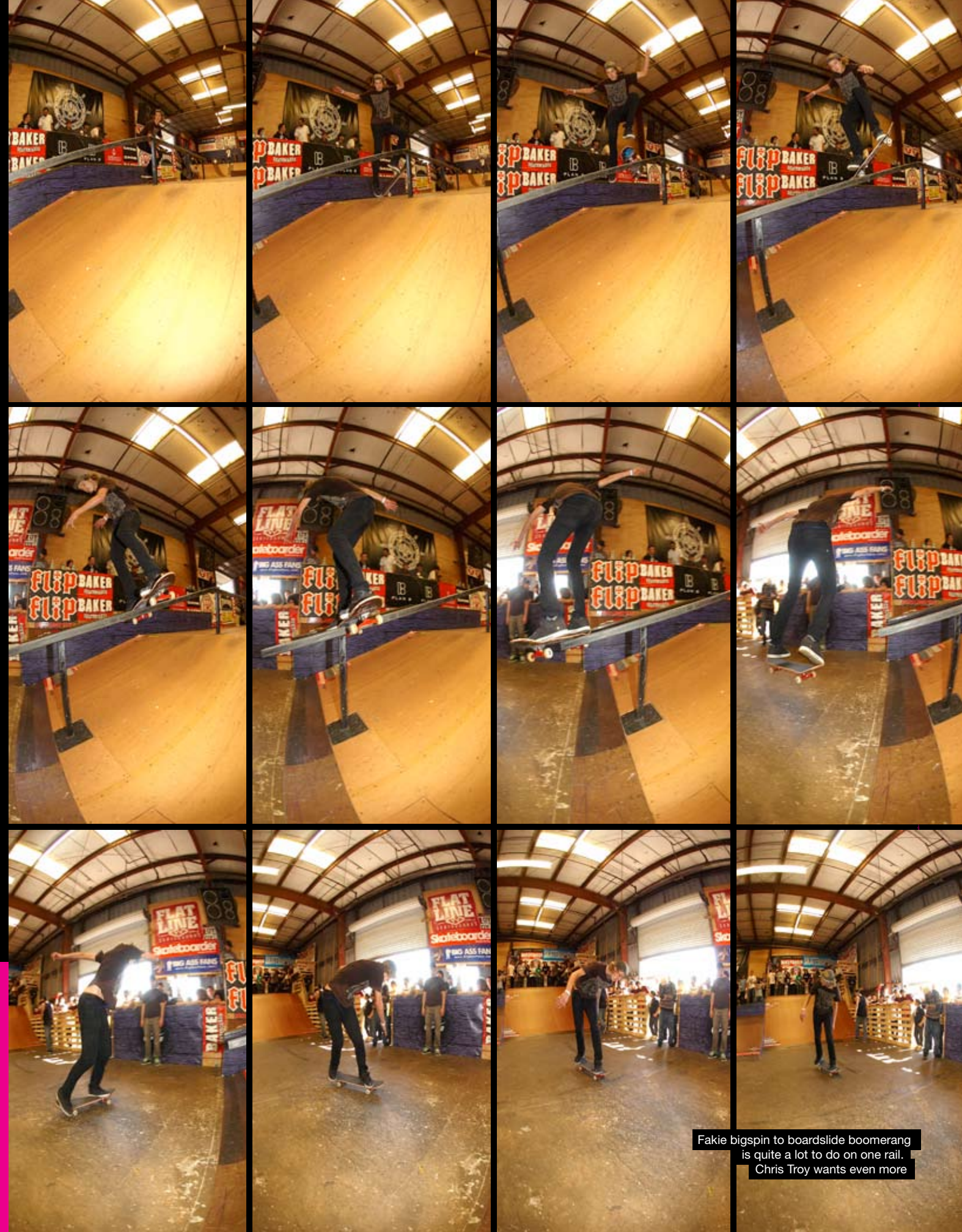
"Don't get none a that blood on you, Pauly!" The worst date ever was officially over. ♠



"Felipe Gustavo came out fighting! First place!"

### TAMPA AM 2007 RESULTS

1. Felipe Gustavo
2. Sierra Fellers
3. Grant Taylor
4. David Gonzales
5. Evan Smith
6. Ruben Rodriguez
7. Chris Troy
8. Justin Figueroa
9. David Loy
10. Donovan Piscopo



Fakie bigspin to boardslide boomerang is quite a lot to do on one rail. Chris Troy wants even more