

...Maybe it is my memories of mountains and chalets - these being the backdrop of what was, I seem to recall, a seven-hour train journey.

Maybe it's these images made me think that George and I spent time in Switzerland.

In fact, the itinerary and the details of this trip revealed itself to me only during its writing. I kept no diaries and took no photographs during these busy years.

There was little time for reflection. I was so embedded in and of my life, I couldn't see it.

In my final teenage years, I was madly into photography. But when I fell in love for the first time, at 19, I stopped taking photos overnight.

The first years of Jack were akin.

So. George and I are goofing around on a lovely old-fashioned train.



Figure 1 George and Anthony, by a Goatherd

At one juncture, the dynamic of our relationship has swung so that it is now *he* who will not stop talking.

Instead of replying, I draw a caricature of him on a napkin with a speech bubble saying '*blah blah gibber*' etc



Figure 2 George Talking May 1996

I hand it to him. George studies it delightedly. 'Huh!' He exclaims grinning fruitily. He then screws it up and throws it in my face. It bounces off into the aisles, landing merrily between a professor and a spinster.

George thus resumes yapping, the syllables, and vowels becoming white noise as my focus shifts to the snowy scene outside the window.



Figure 3 The view from Anthony's train window 1996

I gaze out at the latest station. Thus begins a fantasy, a fetish that stays with me to this day. From my seat, I watch people embark and disembark from the train. Beyond the entrance of the station, there's a small village/town. I see shops, streets, alleyways and forecourts, people talking, living...a population of beautiful young mothers, ugly postmen...children on bicycles, unpublished poets, harassed looking clerks, expensive dogs on long designer leads, old men who shuffle like nazi war criminals incognito. And I am gripped with a physical urge that makes my legs actually *twitch*. I want to run from this train into the town and out of this life and into another. I shall walk into a pub; buy a frosty German beer and fall into easy conversation with the barman. As he cleans the glasses and wipes the surfaces his features are friendly, the voice deep and beguiling : 'Oh, Ja, you are English, Ja, ist gut... Zey are looking for an English speaking man up at Ze University. Bed and board, 1000 deuschtmarks a month...Ja, Ja...tell zem Rudi sent you...'



Figure 4 Mrs Reynolds

I meet and fall in love with a Agnetha from Abba look- alike, only with an even bigger, shapelier ass, if such a thing were possible. We raise a brood of beautiful children. Decades pass. The years are good to us. Somehow, I eventually become mayor of the town. 'TonyTown' as its now known. Cut to my smoky leather study, the year 2040. I'm sat at my desk, grey, wiry and distinguished looking. A pair of silver half moon spectacles alight my still handsome face. A knock at the door. English gentlemen. Government officials. In the gloved hands of one of these gents - a Jeremy Irons look - alike, there is a heavy brown paper package. 'Herr Reynolds?' He asks. His tone is serious, that of someone about to deliver either a Nobel peace prize or a bullet to the cranium. 'We have crossed oceans of time to find you...'

The train crawls out and an unspent life dissolves like some name scrawled on a misty winter window. Life is slow. Birds fly south. I cross my legs and knead my temples. We're scheduled to pull in to Paris late afternoon.

I love Paris. As a boy my family and me went on holiday to Canet Plage (?) In the South of France, I think? On route we stopped near the Eiffel tower no less and snacked on croissants. It was early morning, misty and out of focus and the atmosphere of the place struck me forcibly. Years later, at 19 I went again with friends. A hollow trip yet profound. Something about Paris is in tune with my ancient soul, it strums at it like a guitar string...oh yay. 'Les artistes de demain' etc

So anyway. I'm most excited because we'll be interviewed by my favourite French magazine...(I only have one) - 'Les Inrockuptibles'.

I picked up a fine example of this gorgeous magazine for the first time in 1990 - the legendary Velvet underground edition. Other copies filtered through to me since then. All my heroes have appeared in it and now *I will*. I don't care if we do or don't one other interview as long as were doing Les inrockuptibles.

Back in the carriage, somewhere between Amsterdam and Paris, George has seemingly halted his monologue.

I revel in the silence. All is calm, all is still... Ahh...summertime...tonytime...I lean back allowing myself to relax. George is now looking through his bag, hopefully for headphones. I close my eyes and drift. *Maybe the Inrockuptibles interview will be a cover feature?* I shall have to make some effort before the photo shoot! I want to look my best for all

**those potential French fans...my fans...oh, I love you,
mon sweet pretty enfants...**



Figure 5 French Jack Fans circa 1996

'I cant fucking find it'.

**Far away George is talking to someone. I ignore him.
Behind my eyes, beautiful rich French girls are
handing me the keys to sumptuous apartments off of
the Palais Royale. And these aren't *any* ol' beautiful
French girls. This is Beatrice Dalle, only a little older
- just a smidgen, mind - from how she appeared in
Betty Blue. She has just opened the enormous doors
to a penthouse. 'I want you to `ave ' she says
seductively, gesturing to the empty apartment but
meaning much more. 'Your vocal on 'Hope is a liar'
saved my life. Please accept all ...this...as a small
token of my appreciation.'**



Figure 6 Anthony's mistress~1 1996

I respond in Jimmy Stewart mode 'Aww, Gawsh, I, it was nothing, mam, really, I...'

The flat is enormous, chandeliered, mirrored, and elegant. I am *finally* getting what's mine. *Finally*. I scan the luxurious décor...saliva glands working overtime...

**Somewhere far off a coarse male voice screeches:
*'I've fucking lost it!'***

I walk on into the apartment. Original Cocteau's line the walls. A Picasso here, a Modigliani there. The place smells of pinewood and cocaine. I saunter hypnotized into a warm golden bedroom. There on the four-poster bed is Babarella! I mean, Jane Fonda. As she *appeared* in Barbarella.



Figure 7 Anthony's Mistress~2 1996

'Hi' she says, her beautiful bright face lit by a powerful inner intelligence. She strains to address me. But she's actually tied to the bed, face down and it's some effort for her to turn her head, although not an effort she seems troubled by. In fact she seems rather chipper. Glad to see me, no less. 'I've heard all about you', she smiles.

'Beatrice won't stop playing that darn record. Mmmm'...She turns to bite the snowy pillow. But not before a snowy smile. Her smile is a symphony and I feel the stirrings of great luck below my YSL belt.

On the bedside to her right is a magnum of chilled Champagne, beside it on a silver mirror, an elegant mound of white powder. Heated oil swims gently in a crystal tub atop some sort of plinth. In a distant

room Erik Satie is playing. Beatrice takes me gently by the sleeve of my vintage Pierre Cardin jacket. She smiles sharklike. 'Oh, didn't you know? Barbarella and I are *lovers*'...

I gulp heavily and glance downward. My Dior shirt is actually unbuttoning itself of its own accord.

From the train a coarse male voice bellows :
'Awwwwwfucking hell.No! Bollocks, I've fucking lost it'...

I snap open my eyes, dissolving the Palais Royale apartment and leaving Beatrice and Jane to get on with their good dirty work.
George fixes me with those big googly baby blues. He looks ashamed. Holds my gaze. Oh, what fresh hell is this?

'I've fucking lost my fucking passport.'

The train has pulled into Gare du Nord. The very same train that seemed prettily empty during our journey has now filled this wide station with passengers. The walkway is teeming. I focus ahead. My inner voice is turned up to eleven :

'Be a man for once, why don't you?!'



Figure 8 George's welcoming committee Paris 1996

There are few cops between us and Paris, stopping passengers at random, flicking through their passports and waving them on. I quickly calculate

that they are picking out every 30th passenger. Mostly ethnic types. Go figure!

'What are the odds' I tell George, feeling wrongly confident. 'They wont pick on us. Not a chance. You stick by me. Well be fine, boyo'.

As we approach the police, I feel my nerves straining. Inexplicably, my whole body is yearning to distance myself from my comrade. The Reynolds 'Traitor gene' is kicking in full force. I fight such instinct heroically while suddenly feeling the need to sing a Thomas Dolby song: 'Urges'.

Were a few feet away from freedom now, I can *smell* the coffee and pastries goddamit, and so inevitably, a cop has picked up on my vibes. He lasers in on George and I, exclaiming wrongness in a hostile sounding foreign tongue.

'*Ill distract him*' I hiss to George through flawless Ice white teeth. '*You go on.*'

I flip open my passport, cracking a rictus grin at the uniformed gentlemen, tilting me noggin in friendly compliance.

Alas, the Cop clocks and then ignores me, heading straight for my 6ft 8-inch buddy, seemingly shinier than ever in his grimy Lilac leather.



Figure 9 George enters Paris

As George's expressive giant hands weave their protest, accompanied by his broken French, I clock the latest record company rep' who is now approaching, a look of amiable befuddlement on his handsome bald features.

Were signed to Virgin records in France - a label I've actually *heard* of - and here comes their man. What happens next is a long forgotten flurry of gestures, mixed language, and broken syntax.

Luckily, the chap from Virgin (labels) is a wise and evolved dude. He doesn't freak.

As George is taken off to the local Police station, the rep' seems unruffled and philosophical. I told ya - Haven't I always loved the French?

The chap whose name I obviously don't remember shrugs off George's arrest as just another every day occurrence. Now *that's* style.



Figure 10 George is taken away

As we stroll off I turn sadly - Seeing Gs skyscraper frame stoop into the cage of a foreign police van I feel suddenly melancholy. Maybe I should smash a lamp or something and join him? Take off my clothes and wave my second hand corduroys in protest? 'Goddamit! I wont let you take him alone! I'm *old!* (Two years older than George, who is 22) *Spare the boy! Take me instead!*'

(George 2007:

Yes, the curse of my otherwise-so-stylish travelling was (and is) my bloody passport. I'd like to believe it was a subconscious rejecting of the whole idea of the Nation State/ no borders, etc, but in reality it's just a lack of care - shouldn't HRH take care of me, with or without that black (then), crimson (later), crimson and biometric (now) bit of card and paper?

So yeah, French cops - they weren't best pleased. The UK embassy people were lovely – 'it could happen to anyone, old chap'. That purple jacket of Reynolds's served me well through i-D shoots, this trip, random fights at bus stops ('you look like a puff' - (I stand up - he sits down, 'um, sorry') and so on. Think I lost it about the time I lost my youth...'

'Ok ' says the virgin Rep coolly. 'Lets go. Were late'. I'm getting used to this now. I stifle a sigh, as the police van sails off to God knows where. 'Who's first?' I ask all casual like, now the seasoned pro. Already George is a smudged memory. The good die young. So it goes, bub. Lets talk about me, *bab ee*. Bring it *on*. George is *dead*. Long live the *George...!*

I come to and the rep smiles. 'First we' ave the biggest interview of all.....*Les Inrockuptibles!*

'Sigh'.

And so it came to pass that I am photographed for this feature absolutely knackered, unshaven, mop akimbo and in *daylight* no less. Next to a lemon Citroen. In the photograph I look like an hundred year old woman.

I am mostly heart broken.



Figure 11 Les Inrocks

The interview goes well though and by now George has joined me unflustered, as if being arrested on arrival to Paris were the most natural thing in the world: 'Just saying hello to the chaps down at the station!'

In place of a passport he now sports a stick drawing of a gangly man on a piece of paper with his name scrawled beneath. Albeit signed by the British Embassy.

Interview over, just as in my childhood dreams, we are allowed into the offices of the magazine and thus help ourselves to scores of back issues. (Although, and this is the Sylvian issue from 1987 I wanted has inexplicably sold out)

(The response on publication is muted. Beatrice Dalle never gets in touch. I get little feedback from this coup, other than:

James Cook, of the perpetually obscure (and wonderful) band 'Nemo' tells me in 2000 that: 'I was

camping in France in 1996 and picked up that issue...I thought, 'the bastard! That's what I wanted to say!'

Lucy Wilkins, Jack violinist for a few months once Audrey had left, told me soon after; 'Oh, yah, I read that on a tour bus in Nantes...I saw the photo and thought: 'He needs a Stylist'...

In the summer of 2001 I am recording with Franck Roussel in a steaming hot Parisian Studio. Next to the couch is that very issue. 'Shit' says Franck, 'You look younger now than you did then.')

All else I remember of our final city on that first press trip is as follows:

Eating and enjoying steak for the last time in my life in a smoky nighttime restaurant, near the old prison, a steak with Pommes Frites and blue Cheese sauce...Oh Boy! (I stopped eating beef then and gave up eating animals completely in 1999).



Figure 12 Anthony and George in 1000mph Promo mode 1996

I remember the tone of the journalists being fresher and younger than other countries, each one telling me

about their proposed future artistic exploits and how *Pioneer Soundtracks* had galvanized them in some way...

I recall G and I being invited to a pretty writers flat (Hurrah! We get to see someone's home)...where we watched pop videos...

The Virgin rep telling me of his aspirations as a drummer - sadly for me they may have come true, as I never saw him again and my dealings with Virgin went down hill sharpish from then on...

I recall at one point the sky being *Tupperware* grey and George and I are being escorted past a Parisian shoe shop. We both stop and gaze lustily at a pair of hemp yes; they are made from *hemp* - trainers on display. 'Boy, ah sure wish I could afford them some', we drool...



Figure 13 Sneakers you can smoke

At the record company office we are treated further to goodie bags of free records promos and the like. 'Do you want yours'? G asks innocently.

I take a quick survey. There's not one record I can imagine ever playing. 'Nah'.

**On cue, George disappears.
I am mid interview hours later when he re- appears
minus the freebies but wearing a spanking new pair of
Hemp trainers.**

(George : Paris was a dream, Virgin Records France made us feel welcome, gave us all sorts of nonsense promos, some of which I still have, most of which were swapped in a great little shop in the 3rd for crisp Francs, and yeah, I bought some lovely sneakers.)

And so it goes. By the time were in line to board the flight home I will happily never do another interview again. A call to my Girlfriend, back home in Holloway road, North London, seems like a portal to some other almost forgotten alternative life. Everything is in order although it seems Melody maker journalist Taylor Parkes has become temporarily homeless and wants to move in as soon as I return...'Ill review the situation on may arrival. Of course, what larks...' *and what not let me sleep I'm tired oh sugar...just get me home..*

At some point while waiting to board the final flight, George and I separate. I eventually settle onto on a full plane, with just one empty seat glowing conspicuously beside me. Everyone seems eager to fly but there's some sort of delay. I flick through the free magazine. I'm royally fond of George, but right now I would quite happily never see him again. Until the next time. Maybe he's copped off with a baggage handler. Whatever.

Again, my recurring urge to walk up the aisles and address the pilot directly is kicking in. Sighs, hums and ennui.

'Come on' someone shouts along the way. Other passengers gradually relinquish their manners and

start huffing and puffing like the counterfeit human currency they are. *Oh for fucks sake.* ' A robot voice fills the air: *'I am sorry for ze delay'* its the pilot, over the PA system. He babbles further while I study the tarmac through the tiny window and fantasize about crashing into gymnasiums.



And then here he is. *All aboard for funtime!* Huffing and puffing stylishly along the aisles, to the boos and hisses of the passengers, I present to you - *Mr George Wright.* A wet head, shiny hemp trainers, violet leather jacket and there in his hand, right there, a scrap of paper where a passport should be. He takes his seat next to me, his proud brow gleaming with sweat. I say nothing...

Who am I to judge? I nod silently in empathy. Continue reading the magazine. Ill fuck anyone aboard this plane who fucks with my wee Georgie. *Right...*

A respectful hush, as if the fellow passengers could read my thoughts. And then the engines kick in, the plane picking up speed on the French airway.

Surely, if there's one last fuck up, its time is now? But no - without warning, we are free of gravity once more.

So soon -too soon - we are suddenly unbearably young once again.

George and I, both borderline beautiful, fucked and frazzled, flying fearlessly into the future...

