





## Nursery Crimes:

An Egregious mystery in Segments  
By Christian McPherson

### PART II: RUB-A-DUB-DUB, TWO MEN AND TWO NAKED BLONDES IN A TUB

"A little to the left baby, don't be afraid to hurt me," said the Butcher to the naked blonde massaging him under the bubbly veil of the hot tub's surface, her custom made breasts bobbing like apples among the froth. She grimaced as she worked her heavily lacquered red nails into the carpet of the Butcher's wet hairy back. Adjacent to the hot tub, in the gingerbread man shaped pool, a well-tanned brunette floated on a yellow inflatable lounge chair wearing nothing but Ray Ban sunglasses and a thin layer of Coppertone.

A Latino man dressed in a black and white servant's uniform approached the hot tub.

"Mr. Candlestick is here to see you sir," said the servant.

"Bring him out here," huffed the Butcher, "and some lunch."

"Yes sir." As he turned to go back inside the mansion, the Butcher barked out, "And Juan, bring us another round of drinks too."

"Yes, sir."

"I must say Butch, you do have a wonderful rapport with the staff," said the Baker from the corner of the hot tub, another topless blonde wrapped around his backside, working his shoulders with a pruned care.

"If you don't have discipline, the whole friggin' show falls apart," spat the Butcher.

Both the Butcher and the Baker watched as a tall thin man in a white suit materialized in the back doorway of the Butcher's mansion. He twirled a dark cane between his fingers as he approached the hot tub.

"Butch, Mr. Baker, ladies," said Candlestick, taking a seat poolside.

"Whatcha got for me Candlestick? You get me my money?"

"I'm afraid not."

"What? What did that fat Humpty Dumpty piece of shit have to say for himself?"

"Not too much. He said he didn't have it. Then things took a downturn."



"Downturn?"

"Let's just say Humpty Dumpty had a great fall."

"Fuck! I'm paying you to get my money Candlestick."

"Easy, Butch. I think there is a way of getting most of it back."

"How?"

Just then, Juan approached the hot tub carrying a tray with cups.

"I have taken the liberty of getting Juan here to make you a cup."

Juan placed a mug on the edge of the hot tub - one beside the Butcher and another beside the Baker.

"What's this shit?" asked the Butcher.

"Try it," said Candlestick.

The Baker picked up his mug, smelling it curiously. He took a sip and looked at Candlestick.

"What's the fucking Nescafe shit all about?" griped the Butcher.

"Not Nescafe, my dear Butch, kopi luwak," responded the Baker.

"We can sell it for a lot of money, Butch," said Candlestick.

"How much?"

"A lot," said the Baker taking another sip. "Oh yes, a lot."

"Are you guys pulling my leg with this?" asked the Butcher.

"Not at all," said Candlestick.

"How much do you have?" asked the Baker.

"Five-hundred pounds."

"Wow. Pass me the cell. We'd best meet with the Muffin Man."

### PART III: THE MUFFIN MAN

To the rich and powerful circles he traveled in, he was simply known as the Muffin Man. You would call him if you were going to throw a party and serve an endangered species. You would call him if you wanted the finest wine, the fanciest chocolates, or the best cigars in the world. You would call him if you wanted a delicate flaky croissant served with organic grain fed yak butter. But what you would never do is cross him.

•••

Ray Fiddle, the owner of Rocket Fuel Cyber Café moved down the dark alley with trepidation. Part of him felt lost. Part of him felt scared. High above him, echoing down the rusty fire escapes, he heard a couple arguing, then the smash of a plate. A nearby rat scurried at the sound, knocking over a tin can in the process. At the end of the alley there was a light, its electric hum grew louder as he approached. It illuminated a red door. From his coat pocket, he pulled a crumpled piece of paper where he had jotted down the directions: 'off Drury Lane, down the alley to the red

door - knock twice.'

Knock. Knock.

He waited.

Nothing.

He waited some more.

He was about to knock again when a peep-hole plate in the door slid open revealing a pair of blood-shot eyes.

"Yes?" asked a husky voice.

"Do you know the Muffin Man?"

"Do I know who?"

"Do you know the Muffin Man?" repeated Ray.

"Yes I know the Muffin Man. Did you bring the dough?"

"Yes."

"Through the slot."

As he handed over the money, the husky voice said, "Wait here." The plate in the door slammed shut. Then the red light went out.

A minute passed and Ray began to wonder if he'd been had. Then suddenly a larger slot in the door opened near Ray's knees and a manila package was tossed out.

The slot slammed shut.

He picked it up and smelled it. It was tightly taped. He slipped the package under his jacket and hurried out of the alley. When he got to the street, he ran. ○

Illustration by Lee H. Wilson



This page: *The Office Meeting*. Self-promotional piece, 2008. On the cover: *City Corner*. Client: Red Bull Music Academy's *A Jaywalker's Guide to Toronto*, Art Directed by Noel Dix.

## With Alejandro Cardona

... Toronto-based illustrator and frequent contributor to *The Egregious*.

### — Just the facts:

**BORN:** Mississauga, ON, 1984;  
**CURRENTLY LIVES IN:** Toronto;  
**STUDIED:** Illustration at Sheridan Institute; **DESCRIBES HIS STYLE AS:** A fresh approach, vibrant colours and detail. Based on satire and wit;  
**FAVOURITE THING TO DRAW:** People, characters, humour and narratives;  
**LEAST FAVOURITE THING TO DRAW:** Inanimate objects with no personality and characteristics;  
**GREW UP DRAWING:** Monsters and exaggerated characters of people. Usually funny noses;  
**CAN BE CONTACTED:** Through his website, [www.alejandrocadonna.com](http://www.alejandrocadonna.com).

### — Just the answers:

**EGREGIOUS:** We understand you've got a new book out from online publisher, Blurb. What's it about?  
**AC:** This is a compiled book mostly of portraits from a series of work titled: *People in the Neighbourhood* and also several characters I did for *The Egregious, Vol 1*.

The book is primarily for promotional use and I will be shopping it around to potential publishers. You can check it out online through my site or on Blurb.

**EGRS:** Was this your first book project?

**AC:** Yes. One of my passions is narrative and Children's books. I have been trying to get my foot in the door with the children's book market and soon enough I anticipate a project. I am working on a few concepts that will be

finished sometime in the New Year.

**EGRS:** Your style is very recognizable by your renderings of the human nose. Why the nose?

**AC:** Well the nose is my signature stylistically, and it serves as a stamp. It is something that derives from childhood and how I drew noses.

**EGRS:** If you had to illustrate Alfred E. Newman for a job, what would you do with his nose?

**AC:** His nose would most likely get that Cardona stamp. Haha.

**EGRS:** Many of your characters are obscenely hairy, what is it about body and facial hair that appeals to you as an artist?

**AC:** I love to exaggerate the hair because it adds character and just makes me chuckle. Hairy friends have always surrounded me. Some of them, unfortunately, look like the sasquatch.

**EGRS:** Is there an artist out there influencing your style?

**AC:** Most of my influences derive from stereotypes and pop culture. I always favoured Picasso growing up and it was his work that pushed me to become an artist.

**EGRS:** What projects do you have coming up? Any new books or exhibits we should know about?

**AC:** I've been finishing up a piece for an upcoming exhibition in the New Year. It is a portrait of a famous drummer for Cut to the Drummer, an art show and drumming event in support of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada. It's going to be at the Steamwhistle Brewery in Toronto on February 5th, 2009.

**EGRS:** Just for fun, can you describe your workspace in 5 words?

**AC:** Surprisingly very organized and spacious. ○

# poetry



*Regular Feathertale poetry contributor Jeff Van den Eng's twists of phrase surprise readers at each stanza as he explores everything from the pressures of manhood to the bottling of water.*

## Back to Charlie

charlie and i discuss  
the bottles of water  
on display  
at our local grocer.

"thirteen," says charlie,  
"the greeks have  
thirteen kinds of water  
for sale."

from seventy nine cents  
to four bucks  
a bottle

that good old trickle-down-  
a-mountain water,  
distilled and demineralized.

one bottle depicts a goat  
drinking from an old man's hand  
by a narrow country stream

and charlie, looking puzzled,  
says "well, if it's good enough for the goat."

## Man Up

the don'ts are outdoing the dos,  
the platform is useless here,  
soggy wood, a hazard for up standing  
and much too small for dancing —

the old soapbox, nobody carries  
soap in a box anymore.

Suck it up, they say, one young thing  
even had the stones to say man up

be a man,  
but don't raise your voice if it caw caw caw caws  
in your brain,

simmer down, quiet now, do the good job,  
earn the big raise, make love to valedictorians,

yes, the words are like too much vaseline,  
too many trumpets blowing  
for a deaf and tired edmund fitz g  
join a gym, buy a straw cowboy hat,  
ride the mechanical bull  
all the way to mallory or missy g.

don't call it bullshit,  
call it oopsy poopsy or just tv, life, order  
another round of opiates for the gang  
and lull together on the cover of a magazine,

pretty and poised and glossy.  
stand up for nothing that may  
cause a shadow, a pixel variation,  
a dent in your ten by ten.

don't frown, don't squint, don't forget the lotion,  
the old aphorism 'smile'

johnny, betty, christopher and oops  
johnny you're a third wheel— better read this again.

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### THE EGREGIOUS

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