

## WELCOME TO nOwHere

ANDIE GRACE

Burning Man is ridiculous. What, you expected "Welcome Home"? Think about it: you have hauled yourself to the middle of this relentlessly dusty dirtpan, a place totally devoid of resources. It would kill you if given half a chance. And yet, here grows a real city populated by 60,000 people who will howl in unison at a good sunset. A city of impossible art. A city where they wear tutus to breakfast and the women dress up, too. You're really going to sweat building an eight-day city that nobody will ever set foot in again? Ridiculous.

But what's not, really? Friend, we live on a rock hurtling through space at a speed so fast that our brains have seen fit to block the travel from our perception just about completely, so that we can focus on important things like sex, starting fights, empire building, and subscribing to magazines about cake pops.

Ridiculous. And yet, we do this. Whatever this Burning Man has become in these years, whatever growth or awareness has exploded around the world, whatever happens next year... you are Now Here, and whatever happens next is happening, and with you in it.

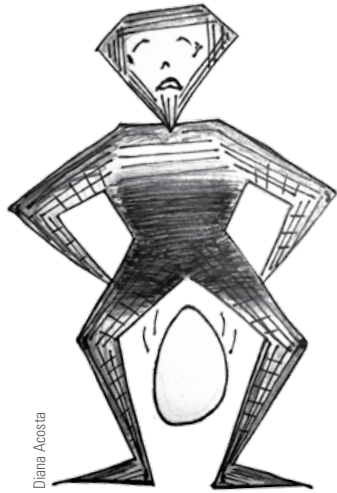
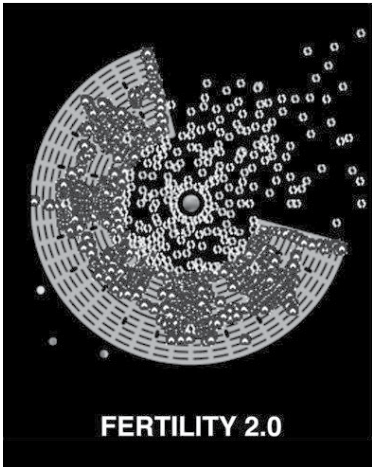
So, you've brought costumes (no feathers, of course — cough — right, class of 2011?) and power tools and reassuring amounts of water and rebar and glitter face paint and several watermelons you won't eat. Let's get down to the really important question: why are you here?

I do not mean to ask why you are here. No: why are you here?

Why would it be that you, and these faces around you, made it, when so many infinitely deserving once and future neighbors lost out or got frustrated or gave up or just couldn't find tickets. Is it possible that there's something here, this time, that you alone can bring, can take home?

See, it's absolutely amazing that you've made it, but let me remind you: many did not, for this reason or that, your humble (and bummed) author included. And I honestly believe that signals a birth process for this thing. No more can we just wait for our temporary city to rise each summer. There must be a way to open this ridiculous portal wider. Now, I don't know how you're going to uncover your part in that and carry it out of this desert with you, but one thing is certain: you're not going to find out by sitting in the shade reading the paper. Now, go immerse yourself.

Andie Grace, sometimes known as Actiongrl, came to her first burn in 1997. She recently retired as Burning Man's Communications Manager.



Diana Acosta

## BURNING MAN LAYS AN EGG

MITCH

The folks who run Burning Man may be a lot more clever than we give them credit for. What else explains the choice of this year's theme, Fertility 2.0 and its dandelion-ish logo?

For years, the Burning Man Organization has encouraged the spread of Burner culture, a concept that probably means something different to everyone reading this, but one that nonetheless is recognizable to most of us. The main mechanism for this propagation is the regional Burns, little baby Burning Mans sprouting up all around the world.

How best to fertilize such a movement? The question fortunately answers itself; this is, after all, a family newspaper.

The unlikely vehicle for delivering virtual nitrogen and phosphate to the Regionals is the Burning Man ticket that got you past the Gate. That ducat has dug the Bmorg into a pretty deep hole.

We need not dwell on the ticketing debacle itself: the tiers, the tears, the re-cremations, the Official Response that ranged from You Self-Entitled Fools to We Are Terribly Sorry and Humbled.

The upshot of an auction for most of the tickets that included two low-priced tiers that did not confer any disadvantage on the buyers was to encourage scalpers and take tickets out of the hands of the theme camps that the Bmorg said "cling in fertile clusters" to Black Rock City's "latticework of streets."

What the honchos seem not to have appreciated when they were making their ticketing plans was that without the key members of theme camps and art projects, Black Rock City would be about as interesting as the petri dish to which they likened it. So after the initial debacle in which veteran Burners seem to have acquired between a quarter and a third of the tickets they needed, Bmorg sent the camps 10,000 tickets that had been destined for a secondary sale open to all comers, and then trickled out a few thousand more through the Secure Ticket Exchange Program and a mini-offering of 1,000, making approximately nobody happy. Except for scalpers who bought \$240 and \$320 tickets and sold them for \$400 or more before prices collapsed earlier this month.

By the weekend of August 18-19, ticket prices had dropped below face value for all but the \$240 tier. On websites that show you the sales prices, deals were going through in the \$300 area; asking prices were higher on the bulletin boards in various cities, perhaps misguidedly so. The majority of the visible listings were physical tickets, not Will Call, which seems devilishly complex given all the hard copies out there. One guy in New York was asking \$409, but he was throwing in the fireball.

Takeaway: People who donate thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours to provide for free what Burning Man is selling to the public have to be assured that they will be able to attend every year without jumping through hoops or they will not come.

Other takeaway: Many will go somewhere else if they aren't coming here. The Beacon has received reports from regional festivals of substantial growth. Some of this can be attributed to the spreading Burner culture, but at least part of the reason is people who lost out in the main sale deciding they could not or would not expend the effort to find a ticket. More on this later in the week.

Not that Burning Man isn't growing. Black Rock City last year exceeded its population cap of 50,000, and tickets sold out for the first time, leading to the botched 2012 sale. This year, the cap has been raised to 60,900, though not quite that many people can be expected in the city to avoid sanctions for going over the limit two years in a row.

The Bmorg has targeted 70,000 people as a maximum population. That is about all the roads can handle, though the Playa can fit many more. Easing access would allow growth, but most of the ways that could be done would be expensive. The event might be lengthened to spread out arrival and departure times, though that would strain the infrastructure, especially law enforcement.

Behind the desire to expand the Playa population is the nagging need for money. The six grandees who run Black Rock City LLC are planning to turn the event over to a not-for-profit company, but not before they cash out. Nobody should begrudge them happy retirements; after all, they built this city, or at least did a good job of conning others into doing it. Still, the unspecified amount of cash they need — let's guesstimate \$12 million — is money that could be put to work on highway and other improvements.

That's unlikely. The Bmorg will continue to milk the event, hopefully allowing it to accommodate all who want to come at a price that is not prohibitive and with access and departure waits that are manageable. It must tread carefully, though. No more Rube Goldberg ticketing systems or creative anachronisms for Gate opening times.

The risks of mismanaging the event have grown with the efficient creation of alternatives. There may soon be a year with 70,000 tickets that do not sell out as the regional Burns become lively Renos to the Playa's Fat-Elvis Vegas.

## Black Rock City Takes Pershing To Federal Court

SPACE HOOKER

After contentious negotiations earlier this year, the Burning Man organization sued Pershing County in the U.S. District Court for Nevada in Reno to block a new festival ordinance that requires an enlarged law enforcement presence and could threaten free expression at the event.

The suit claims that Pershing County has unconstitutionally applied the Outdoor Festival Ordinance to First Amendment-protected activity. It asks that Burning Man be exempted from the ordinance, that Pershing refund the 2012 fee, and that the county stop regulating the event in areas that overlap with the federal Bureau of Land Management. The suit is also seeking damages for breach of contract and attorney's fees.

Lightning Clearwater, Burning Man's general counsel, said that Bmorg had no choice but to litigate because "Pershing County is doing things that are patently unconstitutional and breaches their previous contract with us."

Prior to 2006, Burning Man interacted with BLM to coordinate law enforcement. Given the growth of the event and the increasing participation of Pershing, after 2006 Burning Man began to cover law-enforcement expenses from the county through a direct agreement between the two. Until this year, the agreement with Pershing exempted the event from the festival ordinance and outlined how law-enforcement costs were to be reimbursed.

Earlier this year, Pershing District Attorney Jim Shirley filed a petition to force the County Commissioners to subject Burning Man to the festival ordinance. The Bmorg was not a party to the action, which its suit claims was "instigated" by Judge Richard Wagner of the Sixth District of Nevada. An "astonishing series of events" found the same Judge Wagner granting the petition, and the commission meekly accepting it, according to the suit.

The Bmorg says that applying the outdoor festival ordinance to Burning Man is unconstitutional because the event is essentially a First Amendment-protected activity. (One reason: it has daily newspapers.) "The government can't try and gain revenue from expressive activities," according to Clearwater. "Expenses have to

be reasonable and demonstrated."

At a commissioners meeting in January, Pershing County proposed an increased fee of \$2 per person per day under the new ordinance, along with language that would have prohibited children from attending because the event involves nudity and a minimum 1/500 law enforcement-to-participant ratio to be provided at Burning Man's expense. Combined with other costs, Pershing County proposed a payment of \$800,000 from Burning Man.

The Burning Man Project maintains that the county has only been able to document \$120,000 in costs, and proposed a complete payment of \$240,000, including law enforcement costs.

Under the current ordinance, Burning Man must reimburse Pershing County for law enforcement expenses incurred directly by the event, as well as pre-pay prosecution costs associated with the event.



Photo by Todd Gardiner/Copy-right Todd Gardiner 2006, used with permission

As a result, law enforcement costs for the 2012 event will be about \$400,000. The ordinance also includes a reduced \$1.50 per person per day fee, and a change to the original language that now allows children to attend, despite nudity at the event. The total license fee for 2012, including law-enforcement costs but excluding extras like trailers and fuel, is \$448,326.75, according to the suit.

Clearwater said he believes these extra charges are entirely unfounded. "Last year they documented 120k, and this year they asked for \$400,000. There's no reason for this threefold increase," he said. "We agreed to apply for a license under duress, and they imposed these law enforcement fees as part of the ordinance."

Still, Clearwater said the Bmorg remained open to a settlement. "We'd be happy to settle with this if they'd come up with a proposal," he said. "We've been trying to settle all along."



Each Burner must practice radical self reliance and have enough water, food and shelter to comfortably and safely enjoy Black Rock City. I'm writing to discuss water.

You are in a city that, on average, receives approximately 0.055 inch of rain annually. Just go with me on this, average August precipitation is 0.22 inch, according to the Desert Research Institute, and the City is only around for a week. You really need to bring your own water. How much? I found a clever calculator at [tinyurl.com/brbhydro](http://tinyurl.com/brbhydro). It uses things like weight, exercise, and alcohol consumption to determine a healthy amount to consume each day.

People like me who weigh 195 pounds, expect to dance 60 minutes a day, are not pregnant, will not be breast feeding, look forward to five alcoholic drinks each day, and do not have fever or diarrhea should consume 1.4 gallons of water daily.

That does not leave much of the 1.5 daily gallons the Survival Guide recommends for other uses like washing up. You can account for some from water-heavy foods, like fruit, and from melted ice, but next year, if you plan to take personal hygiene further than your toothbrush, you might want to up your water allocation.

Ice, one of the few things you can buy on the Playa, costs \$3 per 5-pound bag or 7-pound block at the dispensaries in Center Camp and the 3 and 9 o'clock plazas. Drinks at the Cafe are also \$3.

**GREETINGS BURNERS!** The Black Rock Beacon is pleased to bring you the eighth annual installment of Black Rock City's saltiest independent newspaper. After today's issue, we're aiming to publish on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday.

Wanna help out? Drop by any morning this week for our 10:30 a.m. meetings, where we chew the fat and dole out assignments. We're looking for writers, editors, layout folks, insomniac press operators, photographers, illustrators, schwag-happy delivery people, and people who like makin' bacon. Find us at 1:15 on the Inner Circle of Center Camp. *Lux. Veritas. Lardum.*





**SCRAMBLED EGGS WITH BACON** • Cook Time 20 min. Servings 4.  
**Ingredients** 1/2 lb. sliced bacon; 8 eggs; 3 cups heavy cream; 3/4 t salt.  
**Preparation** Cook bacon. Transfer to paper towels to drain. Keep as dust free as possible. Pour off all but 2 T bacon grease from skillet. Beat eggs lightly. Whisk in cream, salt, and pepper. Pour into skillet. Cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until thickened but moist, 6 to 9 minutes. Transfer to plate. Serve with bacon strips.

# BLACK ROCK BEACON

"I'm very concerned about what the community standards are becoming in this community. When they first came, everyone was shocked. Now, we've accepted them and now we're embracing them, because what? They bring money to the community? Something's wrong with that."  
 —Judge Richard Wagner

Sixth district court of Nevada, espousing a very Burner-like point of view (while doing his best to eject Black Rock City from Pershing County)

## Burners You Should Know Flash Hopkins

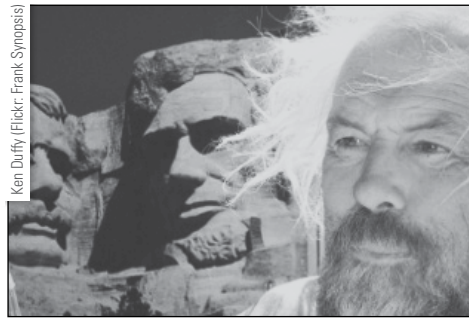
### MRS. LUCKY

The way Flash tells the story the first Burning Man was a woman. "Don't burn your ex-wife's effigy in front of her house," he told lovelorn Larry. The knotty lady went down to Baker Beach instead, set up at water's edge. It was 1986. A local coven was having a midsummer ceremony and shared their lewd pastries with those first Burners. Flash remembers cookies with strawberry nipples being pressed to his lips.

One of the few who have never been new, Flash Hopkins has probably seen every Burn. "I've never missed a one I can think of." He caravanned from San Fran for Zone Trip #4. He took aim at Barney the dinosaur on the Drive-by Shooting Range. He filled the mouths of comely blonds with beer at McSatans, played a corporate Beelzebub in the Helico extravaganza, and blind-piloted the Whale in its joust with La Contessa. The efforts of Flash lie behind many of Burning Man's most mythical endeavors. While some Black Rock pioneers sit out the last week of August off-Playa, you'll still find Flash out here.

Look for the Department of Public Works truck with a Harvard window decal, or a red lightening bolt branding the vintage trailers he rents out. You might spot his hair, which shoots like jet-trails from beneath the broken straw brim of his hat. You can't mistake the voice; New England vowels, alkali wit, full of rowdy promise.

He's a busy guy at Burning Man, tending bar



Ken Duffy (Flickr: Frank Symposi)

at the parties of his darlings, fetching propane tanks, coaxing ancient RV engines. The official, authorized Playa landlord, Flash calls the income he receives from trailer rentals the foundation of his financial empire.

When finances were formalized, in lieu of a share of the gate Flash was granted the right to run concessions, a franchise he enforced with legendary flair. Woe to those caught t-shirt hawking by Flash. Eventually, it wasn't fun. Demands by the commissary's raw-food diners pushed him over the edge. Vegetarians? No problem, "Then you got the vegans. Then it was the raw people. Then we shut it down." Flash found he wanted to make art more than he wanted to make money. As a noncommercial consensus arose among the organizers, Flash redeployed his coercive arts in defense of the gift economy.

Born into an old Rhode Island family of legendary rebels and pirates, Flash was Flash before he was born. "Flash is not a Playa name," he said. On the way to the hospital, in the throes of labor his mother's eyes fixed on the Oldsmobile dashboard plate, which read Flash-O-Matic transmission. "We're naming the baby Flash."

They named him Michael. Everyone called him Flash. Forsaking an Ivy League education, he made a living running food joints at festivals along the Eastern Seaboard. Unable to haul a booth in his convertible, he built a new one at each place and burned it when the fair moved on.

Proud of his role in keeping the party going for a quarter century, he's impatient with people who take Burning Man too seriously. "On the journey to the sacred this is just a bus stop."

He does keep coming. "It still holds an interest for me. It is a really good party. I started it. I'll be there when it all ends. It's like your baby. It's like something you watched grow." Hard to say where Flash will be on Saturday when he watches the figure ignite for the 27th time. Last year, he went out on foot with a newbie, and watched it burn standing with the crowd. 🐘

## WHERE WHEN WHAT ?

As you probably know by now, shopping in Black Rock City is limited to drinks and ice. If you need something big, you will have to drive to Fernley or Reno to get it.

Between those extremes are a few commercial establishments in Gerlach and the virtual ghost town of Empire, reachable by bus or car, and further down the road in Nixon, to which you have to drive. All will be open 24 hours during the event, except as noted.

**GERLACH** The Shell station has GAS and provides potties but will not let you use their bathrooms. Bruno's bar has WIFI (which moves like molasses during the event), but will only stay open during normal hours. The Friends of Black Rock office (the historic Jalisco Club) will most likely provide some hospitality, but no one was home when I stopped to visit. The Jackass Flat has historically been home to vendors with ICE, BEER, PLAYA WEAR, WATER, hot food, and all kinds of little trinkets you didn't know you wanted.

**EMPIRE STORE** State Route 447 approximately 6 miles south of Gerlach • 24 hours a day during the event. GAS, WATER, ICE, EL WIRE, PLAYA WEAR, and a fresh deli. This place will be a min-Mecca and one hell of a burner-congested rat race. Stop in, support the owners, and meet other soon-to-be Burners. 775.557.2311

**NIXON STORE** Corner of Routes 447 and 446 Nixon, NV • 24 hours a day during the event. Local vendors will be selling art, crafts, and homemade food. More importantly, you can stock up on GAS, ICE, PROPANE, BEER, and snacks. They have run out of gas in the past, but keep a fuel truck on site for tank refills. 775.574.0467

Stop in to these places, be polite, and prove that Burning Man is good for the local economy. Check the local businesses out on your preferred social media/feedback site and let other Burners know the ups and downs.

—Hydro

## Nowhere Gets Somewhere

### ROD ALLEN

Nowhere, the European regional Burn that takes place each year near Castejón de Monegros in northern Spain, has finally cracked the four-figure barrier to report 1,023 participants in the 2012 event.

Organized since 2005 by a committee that includes veteran Burners Matt Snowstorm and Hilda Breakspear, Nowhere has until now struggled to attract its previous best of 500 participants. The more-than-100% increase this year has been attributed to the mounting cost of attending Burning Man itself from Europe and the recent plunge in the value of the euro, which makes a trip to Spain more attractive to dollar-spending Americans and pound-spending Brits than it has been for some time. The euro has fallen to \$1.23 from more than \$1.40 a year ago and to 79.5 pence from more than 86 pence.

Although successive recessions do not seem to have deterred U.S. Burners from attending the Nevada event, costs associated with travel from Europe to the U.S. have increased significantly this year. Several Nowhere participants confirmed to the Beacon that they had chosen Spain over Black Rock City mainly for financial reasons.



Meghan Rutigliano

Minx at the Gates of Nowhere

The events also saw a noticeable increase in the number of U.S. visitors. Bucket, a burner from Boston, said that she was taking the opportunity this year to travel widely and take in festivals like Nowhere. "Nowhere's great," she said, "but it's no Burning Man." Oddly, one of the smallest national groups at Nowhere this year was once again the Spanish.

Other participants came from regions such as South Africa, where the Afrika Burn is one of the largest outside the United States, attracting more than 6,000 celebrants. Included in the South African delegation were the crew from Afrika Burns' daily newspaper, who published a daily non-newspaper called No News at Nowhere, notable for the fact that it included no news of any kind.

Nowhere is not a carbon copy of Burning Man, though it has substantial similarities. For one thing there is very little fire play, and no effigy is burned, thanks to Spanish health and safety rules; for another, the various camps are set further apart, even though it is not necessary to trudge from one to another over the kind of distances that characterize Black Rock City. Unlike the Black Rock Desert, the Spanish landscape supports much insect life, including the notorious Spanish Black mosquito, which left many participants looking as though they had contracted measles. 🐘

### BRAINTEASERS BY DURGY

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### ACROSS

- Ty lit fire upsetting reproductive potential (9)
- Have faith that some won't rust (5)
- Above taking the early revolution backwards (4)
- A group of hippies hang out at this joint (3)
- Endless need for once (3)
- Laud and reverse without a bit of shame (6)
- Daring dare to enjoy a book (4)
- Half of the garden was a lair (3)
- The grand rim looks ghastly (4)
- Lead door destroyed by the golden king (2,6)
- Heard I cried when one guesstimated (9)
- A primarily really clean curve (3)
- Mind gruel when shift is disappointing (13)
- Look for headless bees flying backwards (3)
- Santa's not a saint! (3)
- Intuition that respite did not include the rite (3)
- Selecting teams based on fancy discoing shoes (8,5)
- A sign for the first law enforcement officer (3)
- Cartoon character is a fruity guy? (9)
- Extra one on the cage possibly pries bar (5,3)
- Bullhorn action takes some ego really (4)
- Lost a seat in place (3)
- Rode wildly and change again (4)
- Disturb paler whitehead in undergrad pursuit (6)
- Caustic substance reputed by golf ball position (3)
- Center cut of steak and a beverage (3)

- Dined at eight reportedly (3)
- Why model lost her head and began to sing (5)
- The truer test confused the one that stammered (9)

### DOWN

- Most forget the valley (5)
- All but Eve had takeout on rye (8)
- Endless review for rival in return (5)
- Quake with a thousand in the high range (7)
- Not hurrying to tell a fib and stays out of sight (4,3)
- Bet her emanation changed Jerome's story (5,3,2,1,4)
- Idly twist about the heart of men and surrender (5)
- An aged mud creation in perfect condition (9)
- Some use education as a starter (4)
- Puce fonts messed up this card (3,2,4)
- Home for Lily (3)
- I lie in sod about crocheted mats (7)
- Desperately yells and sues in a futile way (9)
- Somehow decode art to get trussed up
- A cock some kangaroos terrorize (7)
- Owens some hash (3)
- Networked computers for an endless land (3)
- Scattered apart, see? (8)
- The rags Pat could possibly grope for (5,2)
- A gem I make for a representation (5)
- Waits beside, confused and without a point (5)
- The molecular weight of a tooth (5)
- Renew fresher! (5)
- Opie may play at this Italian commune? (4)
- Soak flax finally for the bucket (3)

I vomit on Burning Man tickets.

In all fairness, I vomit a lot.

My steady diet of hallucinogenic toad skins and Sterno Tequila smoothies pretty much guarantees my leading place in the Cookie Tossing community.

The goo will always land on the concept of paying to go to Burning Man. In a festival designed for radical, free-thinking, open-range death defiance, paying for the privilege seems like forking over cash just to be part of an Hieronymus Bosch painting.

In the old days, a free ticket was nothing.

All it took, was a bottle of Ouzo, a Polaroid camera, and the nearest available board member.

Black mail quality snap shots have no expiration date on them.

Those days are over.

Most of the board members are now far past the point where those magic blue pills will do any good.

I'm told that Danger Ranger still has some snap in his garters, but be warned.

He has been known to take it all the way to the elbow, and unless you have ball-gown length surgical gloves, an open account at the Astro lube store, and an amazing tolerance for the reappearance of last night's tostadas, there are surely better dumpsters to fish a ticket out of.

The water trucks make daily journeys to Frog Pond, and back.

If you just happen to be at the pond at the right time, a trip inside the orange hippy enclosure is virtually assured.

Remember that the water truck drivers are hopelessly underpaid, and are thus openly receptive to bribes.

One associate of mine simply dresses up like a perimeter guard, and just drives right in.

All it takes is a black shirt, an absolute aversion to any sort of bathing activity, and some really foul attitude.

The Burning Man Organization is just like any other bloated, overdeveloped corporation.

If you can't find the loopholes and secret paths to the things you want, you're just not looking hard enough.



THOSE WHO SHOULD BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BLACK ROCK BEACON: Mitchell Martin, president. Mike Durgavich, doer of stuff. Angie Zmijewski, production goddess. Rod Allen, editor. Susan Williamson, pre-pressure. Larry Breed, co-pay editor. Taymar, webmeister. Ron Garmon, camp manager. WeeGee, minister of photography. Ali Baba, Francis Wenderlich, camp managers emeriti. Suzanne Zalev, Carry Tveit, Deb Prothero, Brian Train, Canadians in absentia. Little Jack, circulation. | STAFF THIS ISSUE: Design Goddess: Lena Kartzov. Writers: Andrew Pederson, Mrs. Lucky, John McCann. Illustrators: Diana Acosta. Monkeyshines: Zaius. Ink: Naughty Zed

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