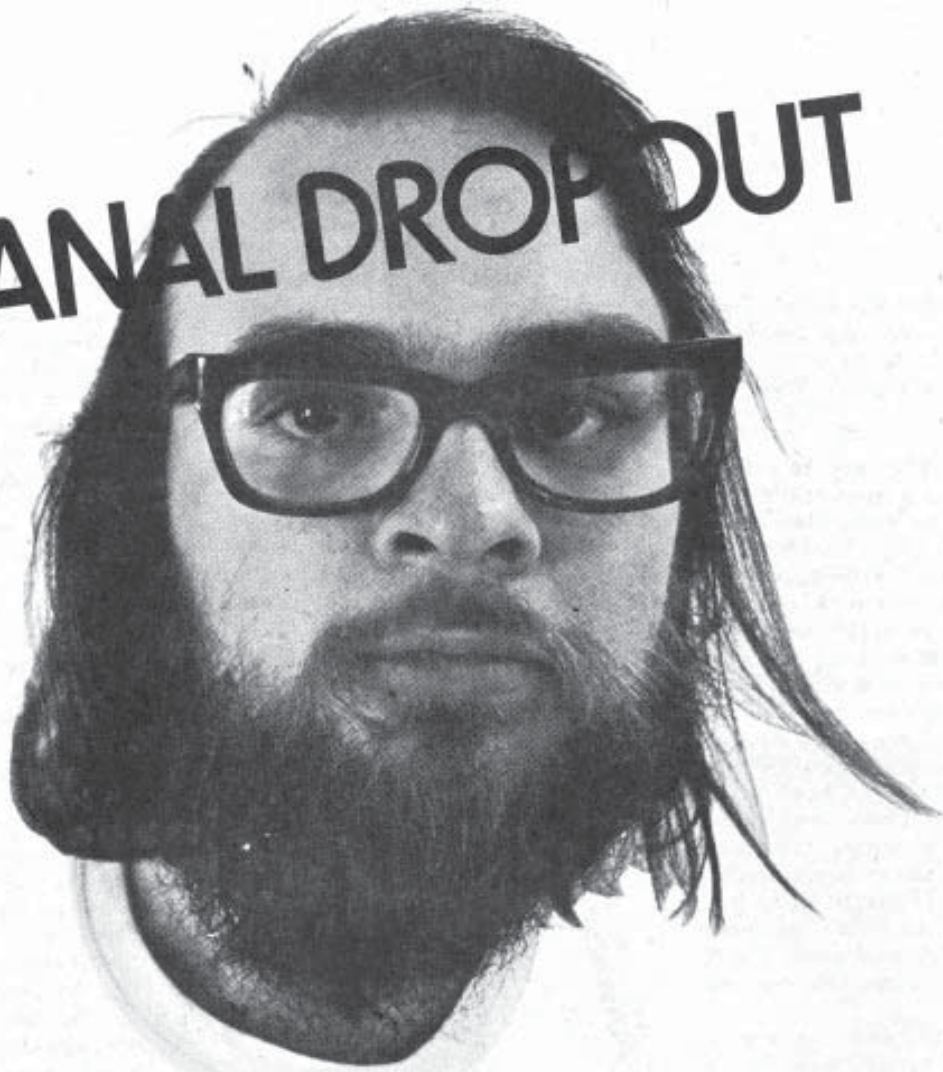


ANAL DROP OUT



It was his mother who first hipped him to it. "You look like an unmade bed," she told Jon Carroll one day as he was bicycling off to school. "Nonsense, Mama," he replied, or words to that effect. But later, after mature reflection, Jon copped to it. You bet, he looks like an unmade bed.

by Jon Carroll

What's so awful about an unmade bed?

That's what this little thing is all about. If your first instinct when you see an unmade bed is to make it, then pass on, pass on. But if your first instinct is *lie* in it, then we may have something to talk about. Welcome aboard.

Inevitably, when I discuss my approach to the aesthetics of fashion, the word "slob" comes up. I dislike the word—it's full of middle class judgments which I don't happen to ac-

cept—but I can't quarrel with it. Slob. It's accurate enough. In the fraternity, we like to be known as those who have abandoned the Anal Ethic, but slob is okay. There will come a time when you won't even be ashamed if you are fat.

But, Christ, you know it ain't easy. Fashion drop-outs are subjected to a great deal of personal abuse. People willing to forgive almost any kind of sexual, moral or political deviation find their gorge rising uncontrollably in the presence of someone who is,

you know, *messy*. Messies are generally considered unemployable—there's a bad rap going around that a messy body means a messy mind. Yet Albert Einstein was a prominent messy. So is Katherine Hepburn. But nobody cares. Messies are the niggers of the leisure class.

On the other hand, being a slob has definite advantages. For one thing, it's cheaper. Money that other folks spend on clothes messies can spend on real necessities—books, records, dope, etc. And it's easier. I can get dressed

in 30 seconds—45 if I'm really sleepy. And there are never any agonizing choices over what to wear. In fact, there are no choices at all. You wear what you got.

Basic wardrobe:

Shirts: Four. This may be a little extreme, but in cool weather it means you only have to wash your shirts once every two weeks. The shirts can be drip dry or not, depending on your commitment—shirts work perfectly well unironed, but many Americans have trouble breaking away from the idea that a wrinkle is somehow dirty. If that's the problem, get drip-dry shirts instead. (Note: Never iron. It dissipates energy which could best be expended in other areas. Ironing is a chump's game.) Unless you sweat profusely, a shirt should last three days before it becomes unbearable to your intimates. If you're living just for yourself, a shirt can go three weeks before it gets intolerable. Which means that four shirts will last you three months.

Pants: Two pair. One pair is your basic trouser, which you wear on all occasions and in all weather, 355 days a year. The other pair is your second-line pants, to be worn on those monthly occasions when the first-line pants are being washed. After four years, your first-line pants give up entirely, and the second-line becomes the first-line and, after a decent interval, you buy another pair. I prefer wash pants because I've never gotten over my aesthetic objections to the way Levis look new, but you can get another year or so out of Levis, so maybe that's the best after all.

(Both pants and shirts should be as nondescript as possible. A neon orange shirt with the words "Another Motherfucker For Peace" emblazoned across the back in black sequins may seem nice for a while, but it begins to pall after a bit. A drab blue shirt and unmemorable brownish pants, however, can last a lifetime).



PHOTOS BY JOHN BUREK

Ties: None. Shit, man, they get around your neck and begin pressing against your Adam's apple and you sweat and the sweat mixes with the dirt and it begins to hurt and you feel rotten and start cheating people and snapping at your old lady and you know, *you know*, that if you could only rip the insane ribbon from around your neck and get the blood flowing to your brain again that everything would work itself out . . . don't start. Ties suck.

Shoes: One pair. Sturdy. Boots are very good, as are Hush Puppies, of all things, because they're very light

and they wear well. Moccasins are the best for comfort, but they don't last as long. But whatever it is, you only need one pair at a time.

Underwear: Sure. Or not.

Socks: Three pair. Sturdy and cheap. Sweat socks are alright, but they feel weird on hot days. As you will.

Coats, sweaters and other warm stuff: Depends on the climate. I live in San Francisco, so one lumpy five-year-old car coat does me fine. In colder climates, perhaps another one should be added. But certainly no more than two. Whatever it takes to keep you warm.

That does it for the basic slob wardrobe. The renaissance slob, however, requires something more—a flash of color, a little something for the ladies. The messy has a distinct advantage in this area—while the fashion freak has to try constantly to outdo himself, *any* bit of satorial elegance on a confirmed slob is like the dawning of the Age of Aquarius. So the wardrobe should be slightly expanded:

A far out shirt: Bright colors and startling design is recommended. I have a green velvet Russian peasant shirt with gold and silver metallic trim which has served me well for better than four years. If you wear your stunner infrequently enough, it could probably last a decade.

Jewelry: Preferably eccentric. I have a broad, cheap leather watchband with weird metal holes in it, plus a pendant featuring swirling enamel patterns on copper. But it could be anything. An incredible hat, a bold masculine anklet, maybe even a codpiece.

But how, you are no doubt asking yourself, can I become a slob? It's remarkably easy. Don't buy any new clothes for six months, train yourself to dress in 30 seconds, cover your mirrors and don't listen to your Anal Ethic friends. Lose your vanity and save your money; forget your hang-ups and save your soul. ☺