

"E.S.P."

Buenos Aires & Hello

By Craig Anton

I watched my spit freeze today. I watched it freeze on the person walking in front of me. She didn't even notice. A wide line of frozen saliva. (It almost blended into the cheap plaid.) It looked good actually.

"Scuse me miss, I've accidentally violated your personal space," I said with a grin.

"Quite alright," she said unknowingly.

I smiled back at her and made a quick exit into the union. Why was I afraid of telling her that she had frozen spit occupying the back of her ugly trench coat? Was it because she was so beautiful? Was it because of her new wave sunglasses, the kind with hard black frames and burgundy tinted lenses? Was it because she was bobbing her head to her Sony Walkman? Was it the weather?

Welcome to the sub-tundra, sub-arctic, sub-psychotic, sub-human weather of Nebraska; the Good Life. With your host, Governor Kay Orr or is it Ray Ork? Sorry, me brain just can't function in this temperature.

I watched the cutest little squirrel today. He was standing under a tree. I was in the library. He was so cute, and he knew that I was watching him. He just stared straight on, holding his little nut in hand. So cute he was. I thought perhaps that the little squirrel was showing off, doing his impression of a mannequin. But after an hour of watching the little guy, I realized that he was frozen to death.

I decided to take him home. I finished my research on reverse transcriptase, closed my book, put on my down vest, my down coat, my

down hat and then walked down the sidewalk to where the little squirrel stood.

I don't know why I approached with caution. He was frozen stiff. But for some reason I didn't trust the little sucker. I circled him slowly. I made casual passes. I walked by him out of his peripheral vision, then I crept up and jumped in front of him, springing up and down, waving my arms wildly, kicking snow at him, yelling obscenities like, "Yah, Yah-Giddyup little doggie!"

He stared straight ahead, completely oblivious to me. I gave him another scare cause I thought he might be faking. I took out my mechanical pencil and whipped it at the little varmint. "Clack," went the sound of the pencil hitting the nut. The nut fell out from between his clutches. I was ecstatic. I danced around in the snow, chanting, "Yah Yah Yah-Giddyup Yah!"

Then suddenly I, too, was frozen in the Icelandic perma-frost outside of the library. I didn't freeze because of hurting the little squirrel, no he was still quite stiff. It wasn't the chilling wind which seemed to blow up from the Nordic-north. Nor was it the fact that I forgot to zip my fly. No, it was simply the negligent mistake of being found out. Four exchange students from the Phillipines stood inside the library where I had first spotted the frozen furry fella. They were laughing like hell. Pointing and laughing, waving their friends over. I stood there frozen with embarrassment: The squirrel stood there frozen with embarrassment. The students laughed on.

I gave them this very cool look;

you know that kind of James Bond — Ron Reagan look. The kind of look that gives the illusion of being in complete control. I turn to the students who are now laughing uncontrollably. One kid gets a nose-bleed. I bend down to the squirrel. I pet the squirrel. I then zip open my bookbag. Smiling at the students I pick up the frozen squirrel and put him in next to my Bio-Genetics lab folder. I walk away into the wind, the stinging wind.

My roommate is not excited about my new found pet. "Y' better get that thing out'a here before the landlord sees it, plus it's gonna start stinking up the whole damn place."

My roommate — what a stick-in-the-mud, — always bossin' me around. I bribe him to let me keep the squirrel overnight. I give him my new live Bruce Springsteen album. He doesn't know that the album is scratched.

I unzip my bookbag and stand the little squirrel on top of the television. I turn the set on, and cruise the channels for something that he might approve of, something like "Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom," or "Those Amazing Animals." All I find is Tammy Faye Baker's "Night of a Thousand Evangelists." I decide to watch, "Vixens from Mars," on my VCR. It's a great movie starring John Carradine and Seka. Midway through the flick I tell the squirrel that I'll be right back and ask him jokingly if he'd like a tuna fish sandwich from the kitchen. Suddenly weird music screams out from the heat vent — and then it stops. I turn and look at the squirrel. He looks straight ahead, still holding his lost nut.



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