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OTTAWA

magazine



BEST RESTAURANTS

CHRIS KNIGHT'S TOP 10

NOVEMBER 2007 \$4.95



**HOLIDAY SHOPPING GUIDE
GHOSTS OF BUSINESSES PAST
BAD TIMES ON CUMBERLAND**

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josh

tiffany

USER

PORTRAITS AT CUMBERLAND AND MURRAY

PHOTOS BY TONY FOUHSE

WRITTEN BY JUSTIN KINGSLEY

CANDICE

My parents were dead by the time I got to be 14, so it wasn't long before I got married. I just wanted to be a perfect mom. Motherhood makes a woman complete. It made me whole. It's where my heart is. I was a mom from the get-go.

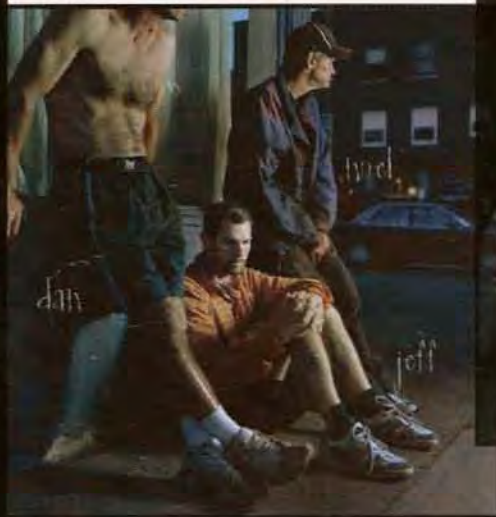
I'm from Ottawa, Little Italy, and I was brought up that you do anything for your neighbours. That's just the way it was. My dream when I was little was to become a mom and a housewife, and that's exactly what I was. I'm 47 now, and my kids are 30 and 29, but none of my family knows I'm down here.

I only ever wanted to be a perfect housewife, and I was. I never screwed around on my husband. I went to church. I even read the Bible to my kids

I only ever wanted to be a perfect housewife, and I was. I never screwed around on my husband. I went to church. I even read the Bible to my kids. Seafood fettuccine is my best dish, and I do a really good lobster boiled. Really good.

I worked in restaurants and hotels around Ottawa. Granato's. The Brit Hotel in Aylmer. Chaudière, at the golf course. I'd never done drugs, except for pot. Then I tried crack for the first time. It was 18 months ago. A couple of friends asked me if I wanted to try it. I'd been watching them get high, and it looked like a great buzz.

There's nothing like crack and good sex. Nothing. Want a blow job or something?



KEVIN

My dream's always been to have a nice big house and take care of my mom. She's always taken care of me, so I'd like to be able to take care of her. [I smile when I think of her, but I can't tell you that.] She's the only parent I really ever had.

I'm 22. I was born in Montreal, but I'm in Vanier now. [My name's Kevin, but I tell people it's Junior.] When I was a kid, I wanted to be a weapons technician in the army, then I wanted to be a mechanic because \$45 an hour is a lot of money. These days I work in a temp agency in a warehouse.

My dad, he left cocaine around the house, so I tried it when I was like 13

I used to have a pretty good life. I had everything I ever wanted—an apartment, some furniture, a fiancée, and a daughter. Her name's Brienne, and she was born May 15. Seven pounds, four ounces. The parents of my ex blocked me from seeing her, injunctions and everything.

My older brother liked to party. My dad, he left cocaine around the house, too, so I tried it when I was 13. I liked it. Crack? I went to a party, and it was in a joint, and I didn't know, but it's a great buzz. Now I do crack so I don't have to think about my daughter and everything.

ESRICK

I had a little bike, but I didn't stray too far because my parents didn't want me to get shot. My neighbourhood was called Kingston 13. We played soccer with tennis balls. I played marbles too.

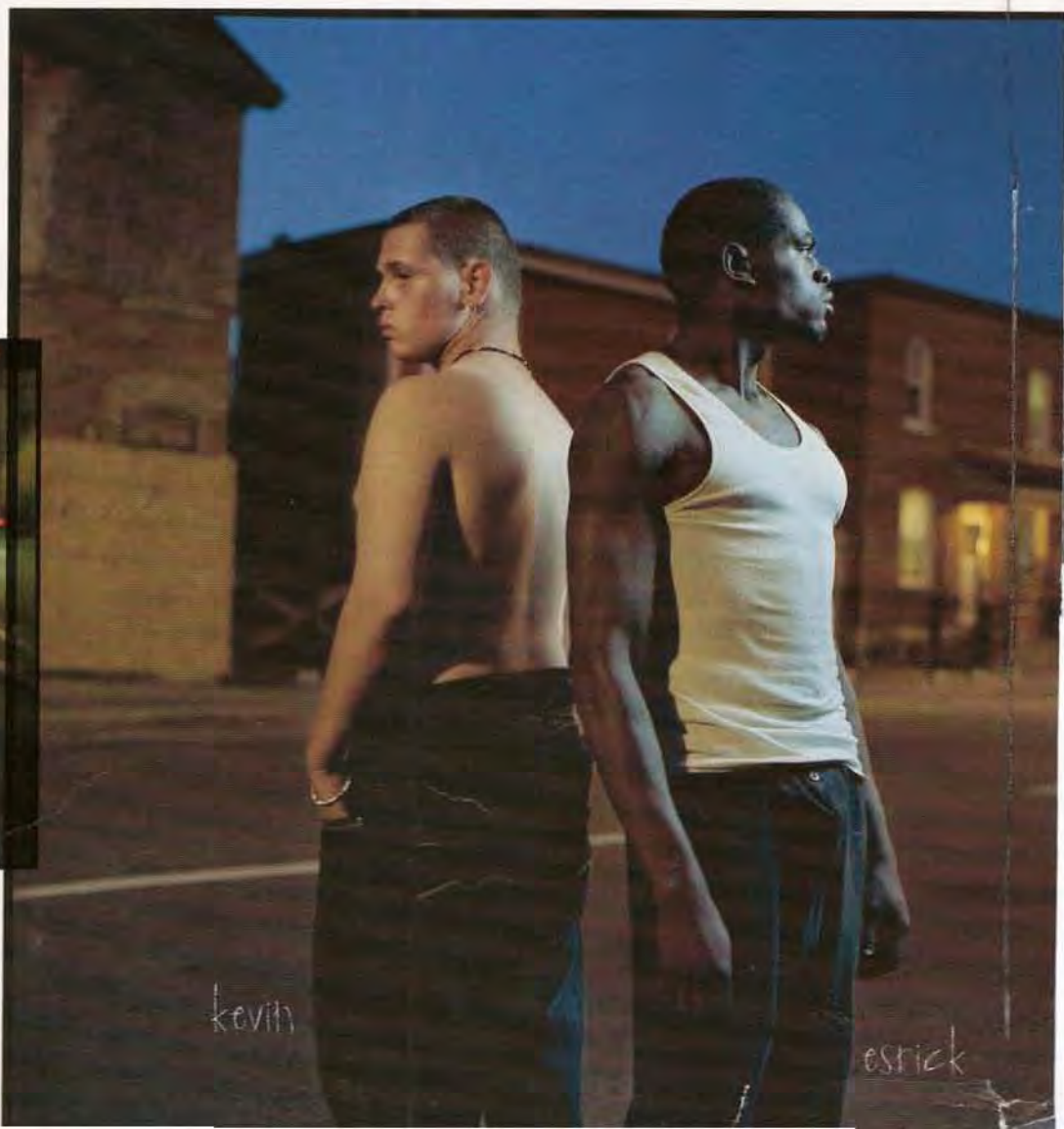
Kingston 13 was like a big yard with a whole bunch of little houses down a long road. We got candies and sweeties from the store on the corner. But it wasn't like here. You heard gunfire, and there were dead bodies on the side of the fucking road, bodies stripped.

When you heard gunshots, you went down on the ground, and you would stay there until the shots finished. But that was only in the nighttime. You went down because you never knew if the bullets would come in through your living room. I came from Jamaica 12 years ago. I'm 21 now.

Sometimes I regret it, but the high is so good. Don't show my picture to the cops

The first time I tried crack, I was 17. I was at a friend's house, and he said, "Let's do some juicy." We rolled one up. I was curious because it smells so good. But he wouldn't give me a puff, so I took it from him and I had some. Then I went to the pipe.

Sometimes I regret it, but the high is so good. Don't show my picture to the cops.



kevin

esrick

ARCHIE

When I was a kid, I did model cars and customized them with putty and sandpaper. My favourite was a '57 Chevy, the blue one. I know everybody says that, but it's a nice car. I like the wings on the back. I liked doing models because of the finished product. I had about 45 of them, cars and motorbikes.

My dad died when I was eight. That's actually when I started doing models. That's when they started giving me drugs. They gave me Valium instead of treatment. I couldn't handle it when he died. I jumped on the coffin. They just gave me Valium.

I've had 53 jobs in my life, but I just couldn't stick. I have a brother and sister, but she hung herself when she was 41

My dad's name was Eddie. He worked at the Château Laurier for 20 years as the head doorman. I stuck to him like glue. I loved him. He always took me to the Dairy Queen. He died from cirrhosis of the liver.

I've had 53 jobs in my life, but I just couldn't stick. I have a brother and sister, but she hung herself when she was 41. I have a stepsister too.

The first time I tried crack, a friend of mine got some powdered cocaine. We put it in water and baking soda, and then we cooked it in a Coke can. Tell people not to do drugs. You can get hooked on them.

CATHY

I was always creative. I had peer groups. I found that mentally I was always five years behind my physical age. It was like I lived in a windstorm. Because of mental illness, I guess. And issues with my family life. Mental hospitals are not much fun, you know? I'm trying to hold things together.

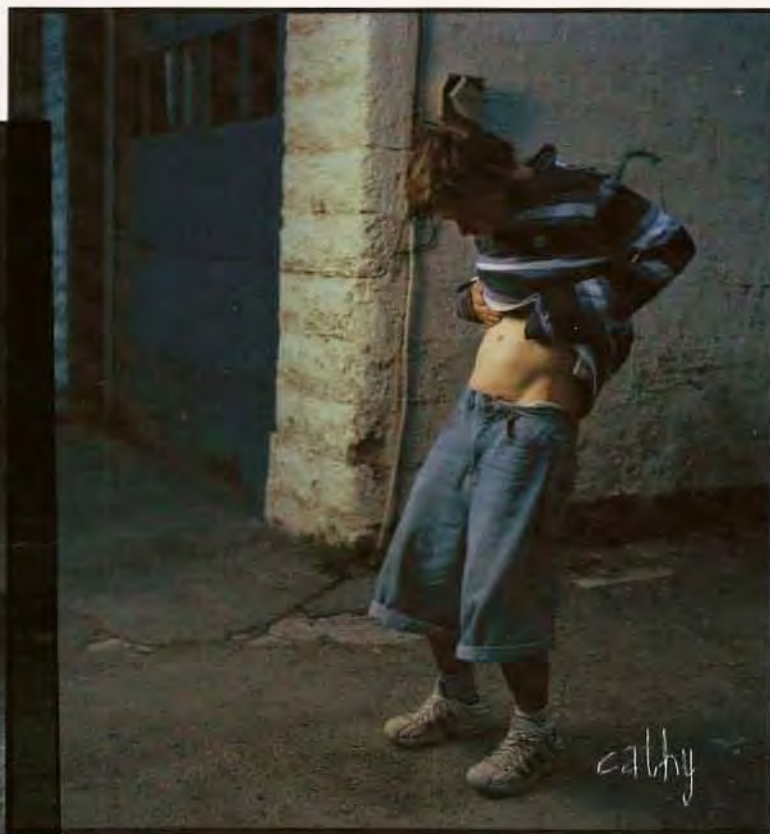
I felt like I was drowning. I've always felt like it keeps getting deeper. Blue is my favourite colour. I like older houses. I have three kids. I was 22 for the first one. They took them away from me.

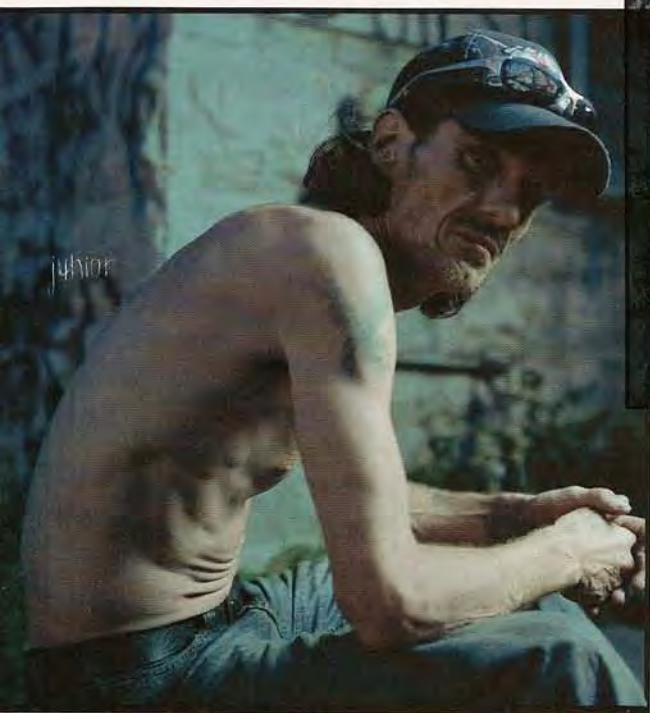
I don't remember much about being a kid. But I remember things about other people that could freak them out. I like turnips. I remember they were fun. I make meat lasagna and I liked boat rides.

As far as I know, I first tried crack when I was 19. I was drunk, I beat my sister up, and I never touched it again until I found it has healing powers

I went to high school in Smiths Falls. My favourite teacher was Mr. Paul. He had a shaggy beard, like a disciple. I read books in his class. Dean Koontz. It's like Stephen King but better, more formal. It's been a big help in my life, but I can't read them anymore because I don't want all that stuff to get transmitted back to the author and have him knowing all these things about me, you know?

As far as I know, I first tried crack when I was 19. I was drunk, I beat my sister up, and I never touched it again until I found it has healing powers.





JOSH

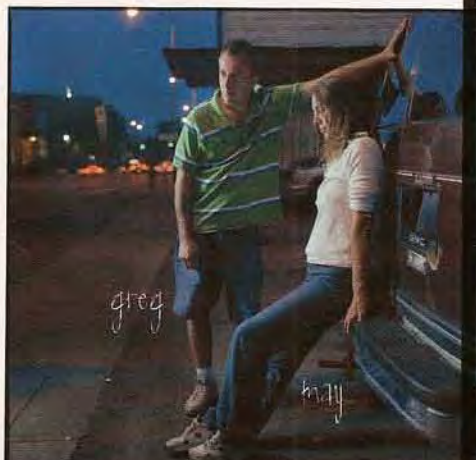
I wore Number 9, and I played centre or right wing. I was so into sports, man, it was my thing. I played for the Dartmouth Whalers. We had blue-and-white uniforms, and the logo was just like the old Hartford Whalers but with a sideways W, you know?

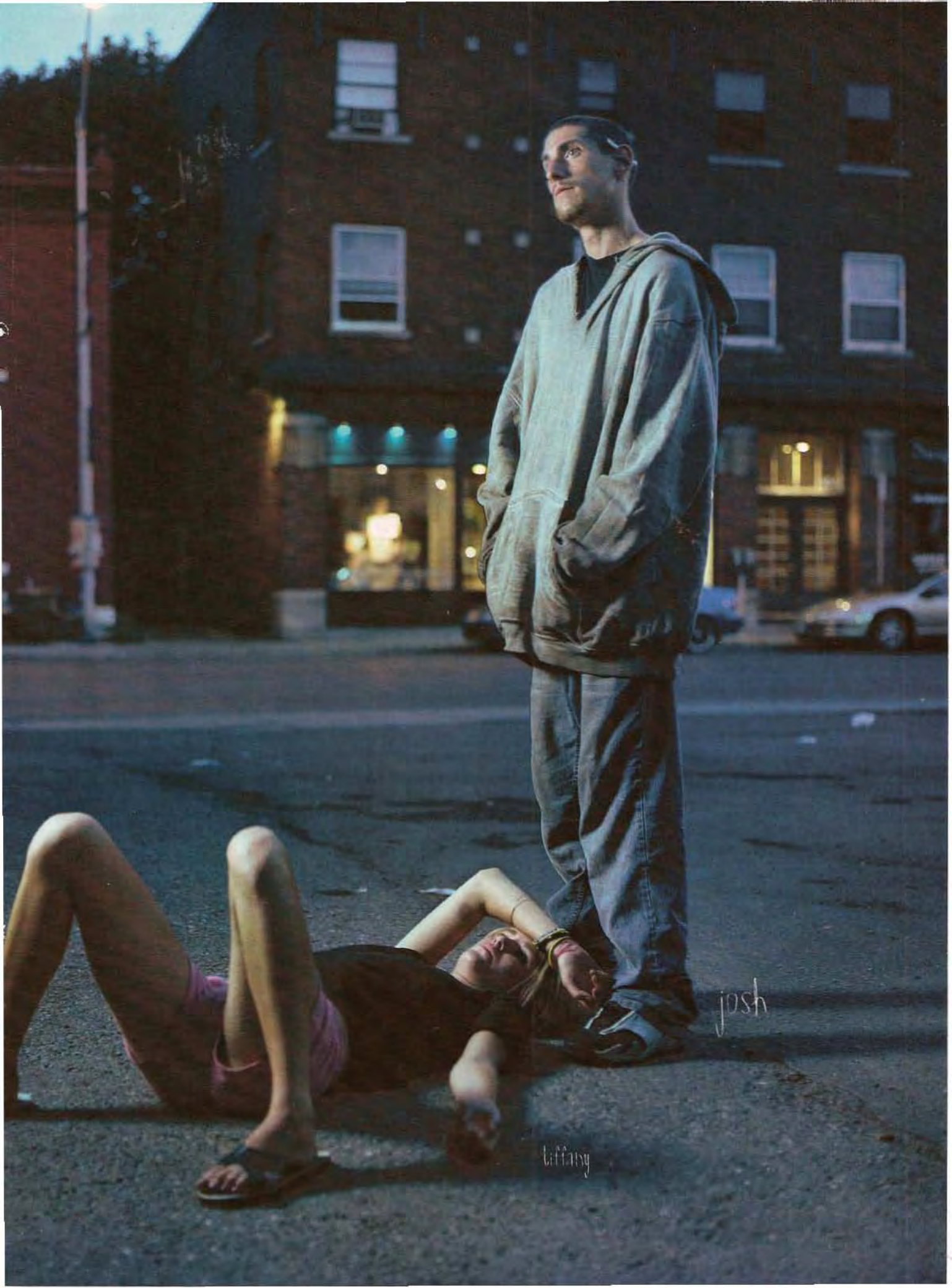
I was better than average. I was drafted to the Quebec Major Junior League when I was 16. What happened? Drugs. If I showed you a picture of me from before, you wouldn't believe it. Preppy shirts, long hair, the whole bit. I come from a good family. We had money. Well, our family had money—not my parents or anything, but, like, my grandparents and stuff. I was even good in school until, like, Grade 4 or 5.

If I showed you a picture of me from before, you wouldn't believe it.
Preppy shirts, long hair, the whole bit. I come from a good family.
We had money

I have a good heart, like my father. He was a really sweet, great guy. His name was Darryl. He died when I was 18. Before I came to this city, I experimented with a lot of different drugs. I tried everything. I always felt really bad about it, but where I come from, this is what you did to be cool. The first time I tried crack, I was with my buddy and my buddy's uncle.

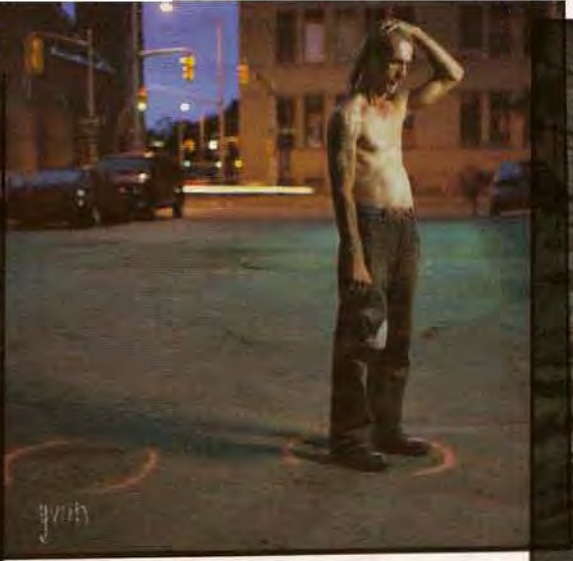
I wanted to try it.





josh

tiffany



BRAD

The first album I bought was by the Scorpions. I don't remember which one. The posters I had on my wall were a lot of punk rock. The Deftones. I liked Guns N' Roses a lot, Led Zeppelin, and Pink Floyd.

I had this Gibson Nighthawk guitar. I wanted to make a recording in the studio. The two songs I preferred to play were "Nothing Else Matters" and "Stairway to Heaven." Yeah, that one can get you laid, I guess. I just liked to play it.

I was 12 the first time I tried crack. My friend had a pipe. I thought it was weed and, well, it wasn't

I'm from Alexandria and came to Ottawa—South Keys—when I was 17. I'm just aggressive. I get in a lot of fights. Always have. I've always been around a lot of anger. I wasn't in school much.

I was 12 the first time I tried crack. My friend had a pipe. I thought it was weed and, well, it wasn't. We're not friends anymore.

I learned a lot of things from crack, though.



PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE

These images are a selection from an ongoing series of portraits I've been shooting at the corner of Murray and Cumberland. Thanks to the people on that corner for allowing me into your lives.

La Petite Mort Gallery hosts an exhibition of these photographs, entitled *USER*, from November 2 to December 2. 306 Cumberland St., 613-860-1555, www.lapetitemortgallery.com.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

"These are very powerful," Joe said after reading a couple of crack stories. "I just wonder how much is bullshit."

It was a good question. My buddy Joe, a divorce lawyer, has seen a fair share of bullshit in his life.

Finding a response was easy: "I have no idea how much of it is bullshit." I also have no idea how much it matters.

Here is how it worked: I paid \$10 for each interview—about three puffs of a crack pipe. We sat down on the sidewalk where these people get high. We were surrounded by drug

addicts, the sunset, crack residue, and police cruisers. I asked questions—anything I wanted to know, really.

We talked about anything and everything before the day each person started using crack. The interviews lasted between seven and 25 minutes. I wrote everything down on a notepad and rewrote my notes when I got home. I wrote each piece in the first person, trying to capture the right tone and language. I hope I did a good job. The best lines are verbatim.

END