



INTERVIEW WITH CHUCK KLOSTERMAN

Do you still harbor ill will towards Billy Joel? Or does Billy Joel still harbor any ill will toward you?

I never harbored any ill will toward Billy Joel. Wouldn't I generally be considered America's foremost Billy Joel apologist? I have no idea how he feels about me. I would be pretty impressed if he remembered who I was. Also, I would like to note that "Summer, Highland Falls" just came on my iTunes while I was typing this.

With the Lakers and Celtics having been in the NBA Finals this year, you must have been on cloud nine. Give us your impression of the series. Does this end the "Kobe is the best player ever" argument?

I was in East Germany at the time, so I managed to see about 20 minutes of the entire series. I was not aware the "Kobe is the best player ever" argument even existed, except maybe among people born post-1996.

I've read about these instant millionaires in the Dakotas who are striking oil on property. Being a North Dakotan yourself, what do you suppose these people are going to do with their newfound fortunes?

Buy some bigger TVs and a lot of Schmidt beer. The rest will go in the bank.

What's the difference between low culture, pop culture and high culture?

The person who happens to be describing them.

When you were writing the book, *Sex, Drugs and Cocoa Puffs*, did you have any idea that it would become the cultural phenomenon that it has?

If I had known how many people were going to read that book, I don't think I would have been able to write it!

In the next century as they look back on influential writers of this era, would you be at all surprised to find both your name and the name of Hunter S. Thompson on the list? Who else might make the cut?

Oh, I'll be dead. Who cares? If I'm lucky, people might say, "Chuck Klosterman? Wasn't he that guy inappropriately compared to Hunter S. Thompson?"

One of the greatest aspects of your writing is your keen self-awareness. For our readers, describe yourself in three words.

Six foot two.

Who are the three people (living or dead) you would most like to meet and why?

Jesus, Hitler, and George Washington. Just want to get the real story, you know? They seem like the ultimate interviews. I supposed I'd be obligated to punch Hitler, though. I would hate to be known in social circles as The Guy Who Didn't Punch Hitler.

Are there any current t.v. shows that really push your buttons? If so, which ones and why?

I love watching TV. I love *Lost*, *The Office*, *Survivor*, *Friday Night Lights*, *Project Runway*, *The McLaughlin Report*. TV is such an incredible bargain.

What made you decide to venture into fiction writing after such a long history of successful non-fiction writing? How is the process different for you? Do you plan to write more fiction?

Fiction was really hard -- harder than I anticipated. It's more creative, and therefore less reactive. My next book is going to be an essay collection of straight-up cultural criticism, but maybe I'll write a novel again. I hope I do. But who knows?

You've recently spent time in Germany. How has your stay there influenced your view of American pop culture? How does German pop culture differ?

Germans still see a massive schism between low and high culture, and that profoundly informs their appreciation of America in general. Being

here has actually made me appreciate the tangential influence of American culture more, because it infiltrates Europe in subversive ways I would never have normally realized.

There's a rumor that the rights have been sold to *Killing Yourself to Live*. First off, is this true? And either way, which actor would you like to see play you in a movie?

That's true. I'd like to see John Cho play me in the movie, assuming that ever happens. People think it's weird when I say that, but -- technically -- there is nothing in KYTL that dictates the main character is not Asian. I really think John Cho would be awesome in this role. He has the perfect demeanor.

What magazines do you read regularly and which ones would you like to write for in the future?

I'm not a big magazine reader. I read books and newspapers. I read the *New York Times Magazine* every week, but that's mostly because of my girlfriend. I still enjoy writing for magazines, though.

What do you still have left to learn?

2/3s of everything.

