

Deviant Subcultures

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Entertainment

Midnight Facts for Insomniacs

Podcast Transcript

(Note: transcript consists of episode outline)

This is going to be kind of a unique episode. This is the first topic we've covered that you might say is open to interpretation. Well first off Duncan, what are some of the subcultures that you identify with? Gamer, dungeons and dragons player, maybe musician? Bald and sexy? Podcaster is a subculture. Are any of them deviant? The topic for this episode is "deviant subcultures," which according to [study.com](https://www.study.com) can be broken into three groups: sexual, drug related, and criminal. We're going to talk about subcultures in at least two of those categories. But the problem is that while the idea of a *subculture* is easy to define, deviance is a different story. Here's the basic definition: A deviant subculture is a group of people that share a common interest in a subject that the majority of society considers strange or objectionable. And therein lies the problem, because society is fickle. There was a time when marijuana was illegal in every state and weed enthusiasts were a deviant

subculture; now edibles can be ordered like Jager shots from so-called bud-tenders at any dispensary, and while stoners are still a subculture, in California it wouldn't be fair to describe them as deviant. I think the majority of my friends are stoners at this point. And they are a bunch of deviants, let's be honest. But they're not representative of weed smokers as a whole. The LGBTQ plus community was once considered deviant, but now the scales have tipped and I think it's safe to say that the majority of Americans are down with the gays. Similarly, elements of BDSM have long been considered deviant... There was a time when calling your partner daddy in bed was gross or kinky, and now it's basically first base. Same with rough sex, or anal sex, in the 1950s those were all perverse, deviant acts. These days it's tough to find a porn video that doesn't look like a violent, nonconsensual enema. So today's deviant subculture could be tomorrow's regular old subculture. In fact, the first "" deviant subculture that we're going to explore has been largely embraced by—and integrated into—mainstream Internet culture.

The furry fandom is a predominantly online subculture of people who are fans of—and often sexually aroused by—anthropomorphically depicted animals. We're talking about images and videos of animals that have human characteristics, often bipedal, walking upright and talking etc. And right off

the bat someone out in the midnight masses is yelling at their speakers and vowing fuzzy revenge, because yes, I understand that the furry fandom is not a monolith, there are non-sexual furies. But in popular culture when people talk about Furies they're generally referring to the furry kink, not just the subculture, and this episode is about DEVIANT subcultures, so we're specifically going to be focusing on the very large percentage of Furies—whether you want to concede this point or not—who love them some sexy animal/human hybrid action. A 2013 convention survey found that over 95% of male furies had viewed furry pornography, along with approximately 80% of females.

So if you search for "furry" online—this is great—the first result that pops up is not Wikipedia or some kinky sex website, it is a British educational website called "our safer schools," and specifically an informational page with the title "let's talk about Furies."

'What are Furies?

According to research from a range of sources, furies are people who have an active interest in animal characters with human characteristics. These characters are often created by the community members themselves, who take them on as a "fursona" (an alternate persona) who interacts with other 'fursonas' in the community via roleplaying and art. The fursona commonly embodies characteristics (personality traits, physical attributes,

and projected ages) desired by the individual creator. Some members even make vibrant costumes of their characters (called "fursuits"), and usually wear them in a public forum either in-person or online. There are world-wide conventions and "meets" that act as real-life gathering spaces for members." it's a pretty solid description, gotta give it up to England for taking the lead when it comes to teaching kids about weird ass fetishes. The important stuff. Reading, writing, arithmetic, and yiffing. We'll get to that.

Now I feel like you and I are uniquely qualified to talk about this subculture for two reasons. First off, because of our unofficial motto, we do not kink shame. So we're not going to be throwing any *intentional* shade. however, we may say things that are unintentionally offensive to any furry listeners, because this community is ridiculous. See what I mean? I'm not trying to insult anyone but Furrries are funny. And if you don't have a sense of humor about yourself I'm gonna be honest, this is not the podcast for you. If your hobbies include dressing up like a sports team mascot or Goofy from Disneyland and banging it out with other goofies and mascots there is nothing wrong with that, but if you also don't think it's funny and you're super sensitive about it, then maybe kink is not the reason people tend to shame you.

And just to be clear, I like this fetish. Of all the fetishes that I don't have,

this is one I'm cool with. There are a lot of fetishes that I just can't understand, which doesn't mean I judge you for having them. But I can't understand foot fetishes, or body hair etc. but Furrries, I do get it. It's like Chris rock says: I don't consider myself a furry, but I understand. My furry sympathies have two very simple explanations and genesis points... first off, ThunderCats. There was a cartoon when I was a kid called ThunderCats, it was an offshoot of the he-man universe, and these titular Cats of thunder were feline/human hybrid aliens, and they were hot AF, especially cheetara, who I remembered as being more catlike but I googled some pictures for this episode and in reality she's just a basic ass human woman with kind of crazy hair. Second, While doing the research for this episode I stumbled on a wild bit of nostalgia, I recalled having a very extreme crush on this other character from a different show. There was a cartoon called Heathcliff, it was all about the Hijinx of the titular Heathcliff the cat, and each episode had two segments, the first would be about Heathcliff and then the second segment would be about the Catillac cats, who were anthropomorphic cats that lived in a junkyard, and I would always be so excited for that segment because there was a female cat named Cleo who was the girlfriend of one of the other cats named riffraff, and I lusted after this fake cartoon cat like you would not believe.

Here's a description from the From the wiki fandom

"Cleo has light yellow fur and golden, long hair, the majority of which is placed in the front of her torso. She also has black eyes with a light purple eye-shadow and pink in the crevices of her cat ears. Lastly, Cleo wears a light yellow leotard, matching her fur color, and pink legwarmers to finish off the outfit." I'm getting excited just reading it. Cleo's boyfriend riffraff sort of looked like a cat pimp, he had a jaunty hat and a cane, I kind of hated him. I was very jealous and bitter.

So I had my furry proclivities, briefly; that phase of my life was short-lived, because I personally found it difficult to maintain my sexual interest in cartoon characters after I began to regularly interact with human females. Maybe I just don't have a good enough imagination, but I do believe reality has some advantages. Fake animal women can be very hot, but the whole "them not existing" thing is a little bit of a Boner killer. At least for me. But not for Furies, they have very good imaginations, in fact—as the entire country of Britain informed us—they create entire imaginary animal characters for themselves. The aforementioned "fursona." You can take various online quizzes to determine what your fursona might be. I took one and I do not recommend it, unless you want to risk crushing disappointment. According to a BuzzFeed quiz, my fursona is an armadillo. A particularly ugly one, this

is not even a photogenic armadillo. That sucks. I was like 90% sure I was going to be a tiger or lion or fox or something, I didn't even know they had crappy animals as an option. "Your fursona is a grub worm." Why do they even include animals that aren't cool or badass? Why do we even have this lever?

So people have been conceptualizing and drawing or depicting anthropomorphized animals since prehistory, but the modern furry fandom originated with the alternative comics movements of the 1960s and 70s. Of course you had Mickey Mouse before that, but he was always squeaky clean and honestly kind of an ugg, he was not remotely sexy or grown up or sexual. but then in the 60s you get Fritz the cat who was drawn by the legendary alt comics artist R Crumb, Fritz was the anti-Mickey, he was an amoral hedonistic drug user and all around horny bastard who lived in a supercity of anthropomorphic animals, it was like a depraved Zootopia. And this was really one of the first examples of kinky furry action, because Fritz was banging every other animal in town. Frogs, rabbits, crows. And by the way the crows clearly were intended to represent Black people, it's pretty fucked up I'll be honest. That was super weird and common back then, you remember from Dumbo. It was a different time. The comic that often gets credited as being the first modern take on the furry genre was

called Omaha the cat dancer, from 1976. I read an issue, it looks very similar to the kind of furry art you would see online today, basically just human-shaped characters covered with fur and they have cat ears. And they bang. Or Yif, as mentioned. We're still not there yet.

The actual term "furry" originated way back in 1980 at a science-fiction convention, and by 1983 the term was being used frequently in fanzines and among the community itself. The first full-on furry convention was held in 1989,

and it was dubbed Confurence 0. Get it? That's as bad as one of mine. it was held at a Holiday Inn in Costa Mesa California. I've learned a lot about our home state over these last few episodes. We are the original home of the Hells angels, and the Satanic panic, and Furrries. confurence was retired but has now been replaced by Califur, so California furrries rejoice, we still have the OG fur convention. Go us. You gotta take your wins where you can find them. According to a UC Davis survey, 40% of Furrrys have attended at least one convention. The biggest furry convention each years is Anthrocon in Pittsburgh, which takes place in June and can host up to 8,000 Furrries at a time. June in Pittsburgh, the best possible place and time to wear a giant fur outfit.

So a few quick facts and stats about Furrries. There is a large amount of crossover between the LGBTQ plus community and the furry fandom;

compared to the percentage of queerness in the overall population, the percentage of LGBTQ members who identify as Furies is higher by a factor of 10.

The furry community is male-dominated, estimated to be around 80% male. The furriest state is Oregon, at least according to prevalence of porn searches in America. Like most subcultures there is a vernacular, a particular furry lingo. Which finally brings us to yiffing. I love this term. It started as a non-sexual exclamation of excitement indicating an exuberant affirmative, it was basically furry for yes, but now it refers to furry sex, and specifically the sounds that a fox would make while getting his furry freak on. From a New York post article titled "what it's like to have sex as a furry", here's a member of the community explaining the appeal.

"It's less inhibited — less letting anxiety get in the way...When animals have sex, they have sex and then they're done. When people have sex they have to think about it. They lose their boner if they get freaked out."

So I guess that means it's more primal? I mean sorry to be the bearer of bad news but you're still people having sex. You just have more layers between you. Maybe there's less anxiety because you're not being judged for who you are, no one is looking at your belly fat or whatever, but I'm not sure exactly what he means. You can get the same

experience by wearing clothes and a ski mask, which is also something people do. For research purposes I did think it was very important that I check out some furry porn. I can officially say I am not into it. It did look like two sports mascots having sex, it's not my thing. It was silly af, i'll be honest. Now the cartoon stuff is a little hotter, I had to explore the full breadth of the experience, I had to go down the furry rabbit hole so to speak. Rabbit hole takes on a whole new meaning when you're a furry I guess. I've been a lot worse than you with the inappropriate comments, lately. I'm just not scared of getting canceled, I've been super busy, being canceled would be a relief. Create a new identity, move to Idaho or something. That's kind of the dream.

So anyway, I think I understand the appeal of cartoon furry content, and the online elements of furrydom, but it's the in person stuff that I just don't understand. The most uncomfortable experience I had this week was watching a video of a person in a fur suit attempting to swim in a lake. She explained the sensation by saying that it's just like swimming in clothes except imagine if your wet clothes weighed 20 pounds, and could drag you to the bottom. The idea of being wet and sandy in a giant fur suit with a big fuzzy helmet on, it made me incredibly uncomfortable. The day-to-day realities of engaging with the physical world as an in-character furry has no appeal to me, but hey, refer to our unofficial motto.

Like with any hobby, being a member of the furry fandom can be incredibly expensive if you go all in. Fur suits can be extremely elaborate, ranging from \$500 to upwards of 10,000. The more expensive suits feature animatronics like articulated jaws and even eyes that appear to move. From wikifur:

"So-called 3D or *follow-me* eyes can be constructed so that the character always appears to be watching the viewer, although some find this effect disconcerting..."

Ya think? It's like one of those portraits from Scooby Doo. Creepy.

Due to the expense, some Furrries start with a "partial" suit, usually just the head and maybe paws and a tail. Paws have to be designated as hand paws and foot paws for obvious reasons.

Just like any other subculture you can completely immerse yourself and make it your entire identity or you can dabble just occasionally by admiring hot pieces of furry art. That's the level at which I engage with furrydom.

Researching this topic was a bit of a roller coaster, some very entertaining stuff and some very uncomfortable stuff, but I found this in particular kind of hilarious: If you search for podcasts about Furrries, you might find the moms of Furrries podcast and that's PAWD-cast, this is two very adorable older moms who have a podcast in which they awkwardly try to support their children who are self identified Furrries. It's adorable cringe. Their goal seems to be to dispel the "myth " that

Furries have anything to do with kink or sex. They are hilarious. I hate to break this to you, moms. Your kids are yiffing. Or at least aspiring to yif.

Furries often report feeling that they are depicted negatively in the media, and probably by dumbass podcast hosts. But while Furries have been the butt of many jokes over the last few decades (or haunches or hind quarters of many jokes?) the tide seems to be turning, or at least the media seems to have moved on to other targets. When I see references to Furries now it's usually just as kind of an amusing subculture very similar to Weebs or anyone who's into anime. Much of the mocking has receded, maybe everyone just finally got tired of bashing people who aren't harming anyone with their wacky little hobby.

Bronies

Since we talked about Furries I feel like we have to touch on a subculture that occupies a very similar space in the collective conversation, these people have long been the target of mockery and derision and fascination.

And this one also hits home in an even more personal way. My little pony was a line of toys and an associated cartoon launched in the 1980s targeted toward little girls, this was a very obvious play for the horse-loving girl demographic, also known as the every little girl demographic. But in the

2000s with the launch of the fourth incarnation of the franchise—a new show called my little pony: friendship is magic—the cartoon attracted an entirely different and unlikely group of fans: these are the Bronies, predominantly straight grown men who are obsessed with my little pony. Now unfortunately this subculture originated from the same cesspool as much more harmful deviant groups like QAnon. The bronies can trace their origin story back to the notorious website 4Chan, and essentially to trolls, who make up about 90% of the 4chan user base. But like many things that begin life as memes and jokes, the line between absurdity and reality slowly blurred and a genuine community was formed.

I watched a documentary about the Bronies called "A Brony tale," it was entertaining and I enjoyed it, I also tried watching an episode of the actual show. Less of those things. Not entertaining and I did not enjoy it. But I'm also not into anime or like adult swim or even the Simpsons...I don't know, I can't really handle sitcoms, and it felt like a sitcom. Anything where you're supposed to learn a lesson by the end, I kind of hate it. But again, I don't kink shame. I'm glad people like it. I did venture into the toxic hell that is 4Chan to check out the pony Channel, and despite this being a very wholesome seeming subculture and past time, the 4Chan version of this community was exactly the toxic hellscape you would expect. the first comment I saw was, "bitch I

just jumped into this conversation but you're gonna act like three other posters in here were me." this is a channel dedicated to a children's television cartoon about ponies. Proof that the Internet can ruin anything. I noped out of there pretty quick.

However I mentioned I have a connection to this subculture, when I was a kid my mom would give me a small allowance to buy toys, and we would take a trip to Toys "R" Us every few months, this was always the most thrilling event in my youthful itinerary, and I would usually get G.I. Joe's or He Man action figures, but on one of our trips to Toys "R" Us I headed straight for the girls' section and picked out the cutest, most adorable little purple pony, and my mom is very open minded but I feel like there must've been a moment where she questioned my future sexuality. I'm sure she didn't judge me when over the next few weeks she watched my G.I. Joe's riding around on twinkle toes or whatever the hell it's name was, my mom is very accepting and liberal and non-judgmental, but I'm sure in the back of her mind there was a little twinge, she must've envisioned how difficult my pony loving gay life was going to be. However, it turns out that i'm not gay, it's just that ponies are just so damn awesome that they transcend gender and sexuality, who doesn't love a freaking pony? I guess lots of people, there are some animal haters out there but not the Bronies, they don't not love ponies. That got

very confusing. Anyway there is a significant segment of the straight male population in America that is secure enough in their masculinity to admit that ponies are cute AF. And they frequently mention the wholesomeness and innocence and the overall entertainment value of the cartoon as being elements of the appeal. This subculture is only considered deviant because of ridiculous and confining traditional gender roles, and even though my obsession with my little pony only lasted a few weeks, I applaud the Bronies for their bravery and for letting their freaky equestrian flag fly. There are women who identify as Bronies incidentally, these are typically the girlfriends and wives of Bronies, and they refer themselves as Pegasisters, which is my new favorite thing. And by the way the reason I gave up on purchasing My Little Ponies was because the figurine was not articulated, it was this rubber little pony that was stuck in one pose, and you couldn't move it into any other positions, there were also no appropriate accessories for the way I was playing so I could not arm it for battle, it turned out to be simply impractical for my purposes. But the Bronies are cool by me. I mean i'm a cynical person so it's hard not to imagine that a few of them are using this obsession to try to connect online with little girls, I guess that might be a problem, but I haven't seen much evidence of that; however since we're on that subject (notice my artful

segue?) we're going to travel outside of America's borders for the first of our international deviant subcultures.

Otaku

In Japan, the word Otaku refers to people, mostly men, who are obsessed with particularly childish elements of pop culture, whether that's animation or video games, basically this is a person we would think of as a Weeb. If you're not familiar with that term the word Weeb refers to Americans who are obsessed with Japanese anime and pop culture, but if you live in Japan and are obsessed with your own pop culture you can't really be a Weeb, so you're an Otaku.

But there is a subset of Otaku that are fixated in particular on so-called teen idols. Japan is host to an estimated 10,000 of these idols, they are attractive young girls who dance and sing to J-pop songs but mostly just get mildly famous for looking adorable and innocent and young. 17 is considered old for an idol, but they can last into their 20s and on the rare occasions into their 30s if they look young enough.

The idol phenomenon has been around since the 1960's; back then they were starlets chosen and packaged by producers and agents to become household names, but they really took off in the 1980s, with the rise of the girl groups. I talked to our

good friend Tomo about this, and he made an interesting connection... you could conceivably draw some similarities between geisha training and the way the idols were packaged and presented, they were trained in the fine arts like singing and dancing as well as social graces, politeness and refinement and taught to be pure and "perfect" to have maximum appeal to a male audience. One pioneering original idol group was Onyanko Club, the idol group that introduced the now-common practice of cycling out members as they got older, known as graduating. Idols also are not allowed to date, if they want to have a boyfriend or God forbid get married, they have to leave the group. Onyanko Club was also one of the first groups to become popular on television, with their own variety show. Idols would become staples of TV in the 80s because these young talented girls were cheaper to hire than established pop stars and yet still appealed to a mass audience. The so-called "chidol" boom of the 1990s introduced the first elementary school aged idols; they're now referred to as "junior idols" to make it seem a little less disgusting. The most famous idol group is AKB48, the highest selling musical act in Japan when it comes to singles sold, and the fifth highest selling girl group worldwide. The concept behind the group was "idols you can meet"...they are named for the Akihabara area in Tokyo in which the theater where they perform resides, and you can go there and see them and meet them via

supervised post-show meet and greets. Tomo explained that the group was brilliantly marketed with the "handshake" meet... the only way you could meet them was if you bought a CD. Which artificially boosted sales of the album because often fans were just paying for the opportunity to touch an idol, but each handshake also counted as a CD sale.

The group was conceived as having 48 members, naturally, but ballooned to over 120 at its highest and today sits at around 80. Members are split into teams which can travel and perform in different areas. As mentioned, women who age out of the group are considered to have "graduated" and are replaced by new "trainees."

So AKB48 is the most prestigious idol group, but becoming a member isn't easy and most of the girls pay their dues by grinding it out on the underground circuit for years and slowly developing a fan base one otaku at a time. And of course as with any other popular aspiration, many of the wannabe idols never achieve any level of fame yet still spend years performing in sweaty little clubs. Watching the Tokyo idols documentary, it becomes clear that the process of becoming an idol is very similar to the comedy club circuit.. the girls start at the equivalent of open mics, where they perform choreographed karaoke, basically dancing and flouncing around and striking poses in front of an audience

of guys in their 30s, 40s, 50s, sometimes older. The girls who are considered most desirable get booked at bigger venues and start building a legit fan base. So there's pressure to be flirtatious and inviting and welcoming because you're competing for a limited pool of fans and newer, younger competition is developing all the time. The meet and greets are extremely important when it comes to building those fan relationships, but they're not a free-for-all; There are strict regulations regarding how the men can interact with the idols at meet-and-greets. Most of these guys are socially awkward, and the handshake events give them an opportunity to interact with girls in an unthreatening environment where they don't risk rejection. The girls have a stopwatch and each man is given just a minute or two to get an autograph, ask a couple questions, take a photo, and then they have to move on. For years the men weren't allowed to touch the idols beyond a handshake but now they can get a little closer, maybe put their hand on her upper back when they're taking photos together. In Japan, sexual purity is prized, young girls are valued because they are considered unspoiled, and so there is often a veneer of platonic innocence to the fandom, it's almost a weird contradiction: on a base level the fans might want to have sex with the idol but that would ruin the fantasy of this completely pure and unspoiled virgin. In 2013, one of the AKB48 members appeared in a YouTube video

with her head shaved, apologizing for having been caught by a tabloid having spent the night with a man. She claimed that shaving her head was her own idea as self inflicted punishment for her shame, but there was speculation that she had been under pressure to humiliate herself as punishment. She was downgraded to a trainee. So the fans of these girls take purity seriously... like I said I wouldn't put it past any of them to have sex with their favorite idol but I can only imagine how bad the slut shaming would be in the aftermath, the girl would immediately lose her desirability because she had been tainted. So most of these men don't realistically think there's any chance of a hook up, but they bask in any attention they can get, they just want to be in the presence of all that beautiful imaginary purity. there is a childish innocence about some of these guys, almost like they are stuck in a juvenile state, it's that feeling you got as a teenager when every girl was on a pedestal and you were scared to approach them because they were so perfect and you thought they would never like you. It's like these guys never matured beyond that mentality. And they're just marinating in the pain of unrequited desire, there is definitely some masochism involved because there's no chance that they will ever achieve any real intimacy and they know it.

A quote from one of the Otaku in the documentary, he's probably in his early 50s,

"I'm rational enough to know that nothing will happen with her in reality. She's only interested in me as an idol."

When you boil it down to the basics, this is an addiction, with all of the same mechanisms behind it. These guys often quit their jobs, many rely on public assistance, they spend their days working on flyers and crafts and helping decorate these girls' outfits, it's frankly sad and kind of pathetic.

My favorite quote from one of the newer idols, "my dog's always adored me, but I'm not used to that level of adoration from men."

The documentary featured experts who point to Japan's enduring economic recession as one of the explanations for this subculture. Middle-aged men who can't support a family on their salaries may give up trying to find meaningful relationships with women their age, and instead infantilize themselves to a certain degree, Preferring the fantasy of a pure and perfect relationship from a time when life was simpler. Or they might just be gross old pervs. From the documentary, I think there's a mix. Some of these guys come across as extremely lonely and desperate for any semblance of female attention, others would probably eat your liver with a nice Chianti.

The entire idol industry is of course extremely cynical and transactional, it's built around the goal of separating

these men from money, and there seem to be no illusions or deception about that fact.

These are actual lyrics from an idol song: praise, praise, worship, worship (this part is a call and response, the audience of older men repeats these words like a chant, the song continues, "make a donation, say a prayer, don't listen to reason.")

From another popular Idol song:
"Some ask should I stop being Otaku but being Otaku is for life, I have no friends left in the outside world, but I still can't stop being Otaku"

So this subculture— and maybe more importantly the perception of this subculture—is really fascinating to me, because I am interested in anything that exposes hypocrisy. The pervy otaku, as I'll refer to them...they represent a very strange and foreign-seeming subculture to us, but let's look at the reality here. According to pornhub, the most popular porn search for men last year worldwide was teen. The most popular search overall was hentai, a Japanese genre that often includes teenage girls and rape and monsters, and teenage girls being raped by monsters. And look at onlyfans. You can't tell me that there aren't guys in America spending their entire paychecks on 18-year-old girls. You and I both remember the rise of Britney Spears in the early 2000s, it wasn't just young female fans that propelled Britney to fame. Her

breakthrough song and video was called baby one more time, and featured a 16-year-old Britney Spears in a school girl uniform and pigtails dancing suggestively and asking to be hit...again, I guess. So Americans can get our collective panties in a bunch about the fetishizing of teenage female sexuality, but that same subculture exists here, it's just that adult men in America generally don't show up at concerts; they instead confine their perving to the Internet... there's simply more shame around the idea of gross old men, whereas in Japan it's much more mainstream and accepted. The truth is that every culture fetishizes pubescent female sexuality to some degree, presumably because that's when women become fertile and thus viable as mates, it's just that different cultures place different amounts of shame on both female sexuality and the idea of girls being viewed as sex objects. And where there's shame and repression, it's easy to create an unhealthy obsession.

I'm not saying that we should openly fetishize teenage girls, I'm just saying that we already do but then we condemn it at the same time, which makes it more of a taboo, and this innate contradiction only contributes to the problem. I don't have the answer here, but I do think there's a reason that every sexually repressive country and organization produces a huge amount of sexual abuse, because as you pointed out, shame and repression leads to obsession and

acting out. We certainly shouldn't be celebrating the sexualizing of teenagers, but we also shouldn't deny that it exerts a force on culture, because if we don't acknowledge it we can't reckon with it. And Japan is trying to reckon with it as we speak. Just a few days ago, on June 16, Japan raised the age of consent from 13 to 16. For the first time sexual coercion is illegal in Japan, and also the definition of rape has been expanded to include sex acts in which the victim is intoxicated and unable to consent. Also for the first time it illegal to film up women's skirts, there wasn't an official law against that staple of pervy Japanese anime until just last week. Crazy that these laws didn't exist before but it's good that they do now. However, we'll see whether much changes... It's technically still legal to have sex with a 13-year-old in Japan if you're within five years of her age, so an 18-year-old can have sex with a 13-year-old. But again before we get too self righteous, keep in mind that the age of consent in many American states is 16, and until 2001 the age of consent in the American state of Hawaii was 14.

The Tokyo idols documentary actually starts out by following the career of a moderately popular idol named Rio, who is 19 when it starts and turns 20 during filming, so in the beginning it wasn't quite as shocking to me as I thought it might be, like it's not socially acceptable for 40 year-old guys to be attracted to 20 year old women, but it's legal.

but by the end you get to see some of the younger idols who are on their way up, these are 10-year-olds dancing in front of a sea of middle-aged men, it's disturbing. Great documentary but ultimately not a fun watch.

Gopniks

OK Duncan, pop quiz, what do these things have in common: vodka, shaved heads, sunflower seeds, Adidas tracksuits, and squatting on the ground. These are all characteristics and accoutrements and signature moves associated with the Gopniks, a notorious subculture of Russian hoodlums. To tell the story of the Gopniks we have to go back to 1980, when the German shoe and apparel company Adidas designed the tracksuits for the Russian Olympic team. Later Adidas was banned as being emblematic of western capitalist culture, but after the fall of the Soviet union the tracksuits experienced a cultural resurgence thanks to their popularity among blue-collar, uneducated, underemployed young hoodlums who viewed the suits as comfortable and stylish and symbolic of criminality (because track suits were also the standard uniform in Russian prisons).

The Gopniks rose to prominence in the 1980s and were inspired by the Bratki before them, basically members of street gangs who committed petty theft and lived by a violent credo. The Gopniks would pay homage to the Bratki credo by adopting their own

informal code of conduct: in order to justify robbing someone the Gopnik has to goad a potential victim into reacting to provocation, which I guess somehow indicates that the victim is disrespectful or doesn't know who they're dealing with. So for instance, the Gopnik will toss out one of a few standard questions: fancy a smoke, or where are you from, or the most sneaky and confounding: "you what?" There is no correct answer here, the only hope is to avoid responding and thus show deference and also savviness by indicating that you know what they're trying to do to you. But anyone who isn't familiar with the Gopniks will inevitably try to be friendly or reason with them or react defensively and get roughed up. The Gopniks can be distinguished from other members of rebellious groups by the fact that they don't consider themselves rebellious at all. They are in fact extremely conservative. They ardently support the government—right now they would be very much in support of the war effort against Ukraine, they are Putin backers. I see a lot of similarities between the Gopniks and Hells Angels, criminals who perplexingly claim to support the state and the status quo and hate anyone who rebels against "normalcy". Their signature move is the squat, I'm sure you've seen this parodied in movies or TV shows featuring any kind of Russian hoodlum or Russian mafia, guys in tracksuit squatting on their heels while smoking cigarettes or

chewing their signature sunflower seeds, with shaved heads and black jackets. they're Thugs, basically. Russian skinheads. They tend to be racist and nationalist and homophobic... dicks. I find it kind of funny that one of the deviant subcultures we covered is basically just jerks. They're not obsessed with fur suits or my little pony, they just get off on really sucking as human beings.



There are so many more fascinating devious subculture is, but those will have to wait for other episodes; these were the ones that interested me this time.


We have a new menace!

Meet INNOCENT NPC. Miiight be a gamer, I don't wanna jump to any conclusions.

New \$5.00 patron! 🎉 Meet **AJ**

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Email: ajmcd42@gmail.com

Also two new minions, Patrick van as and Eric Grazulis, both of those don't sound like real names but also don't

sound like names people would make up, so conundrum. I'm curious as to the nation of origin.



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4:22 PM

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