

Capture the flag

Mar 21, 2009 11:46PM

I've lived in London for ten years; I've done urban exploration, squatted, been in riots, been to countless punk shows, but I've never had as much fun as I did last night. Last night I finally got to play capture the flag for the first time; a game I've been wanting to play since I first read about it in American zines a few years ago.

(For those who don't know the game, or at least the alternative version of the game, it takes place in a section of the city with two teams. The teams each have a flag and a jail. The goal is to steal the opponents flag, whilst keeping yours. If you get caught trying to steal the flag you get put in jail. There's more details of the rules here)

Standing outside Liverpool street station I was beginning to regret showing up. The game had been publicly announced a week before the G20 protests were to happen in exactly the same spot. Perhaps they thought it was a ruse rather than a game so the City police were out in force with a couple of evidence gatherers wandering around pointing cameras at anyone dressed in black.



The teams gather at the start of the game

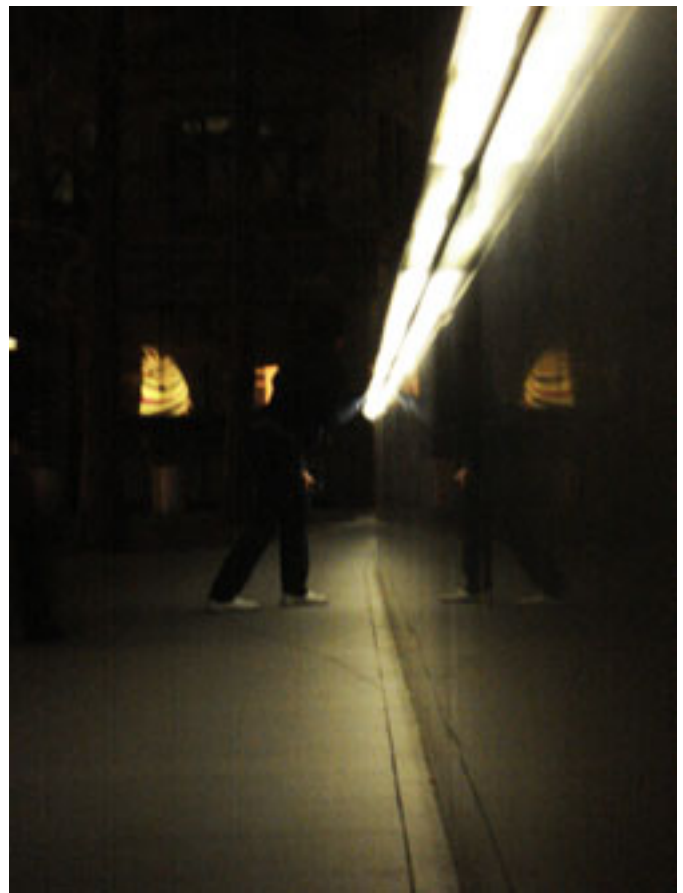
I shouldn't have worried though, the police - though a few stayed for the rest of the night - started to melt away soon after the rules of the game were explained and the teams split roughly in two.

Bandanas were passed out: red and black teams; lines drawn, and maps given to everyone.

Bandanas were passed out: red and black teams; lines drawn, and maps given to everyone. Our black team, of about 60, streamed through the backstreets of the Square Mile confusing and surprising city workers out for an evening drink.

A jail and space for the flag were decided on. Chalk circles drawn around the two and we're off. The team isn't organised enough to come up with a strategy, or if it is my friend and I have caught the competitive bug so badly that we don't notice it. We just want to run headlong into enemy territory.

Five minutes later and eight of us are hidden behind pillars working out what on earth to do next. I'm not sure any of us have played the game before. We don't know where the flag is, or much about the geography of the space. We creep forward along the main road trying to act nonchalantly.



< Sneaking into enemy territory

We decide on headlong attack. We're rumbled almost instantly; thankfully we're far enough a way to make a getaway and regroup. Under the Gherkin (a large skyscraper in the Square Mile) a few of us try a more subtle approach to see if we can at least find the flag.

Spotted! Racing backwards I end up in a dead end street. I try rushing my captor but I'm firmly tagged. As he escorts me by the arm I almost forget it is a game, it feels so close to a real arrest that I almost try and de-arrest myself. Remembering it's a game I

introduce myself and try and have a fun conversation trying to second guess where their flag is.

Not that it'll do me any good languishing in jail. 15 others from my team are stuck there too; all had tried a headlong attack and got caught. Clearly subtlety is the name of the game.

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Just as I'm getting my breath back a City cop comes over to the jail, "Okay, here's the update. The black team have the flag and are running back to your side," Whoops go up, "But the red team also just grabbed your flag and were trying to make a dash for it", our grins turn to fixtures of concern, "But don't worry about it they were caught almost straight away." And with that he wanders off. "Jokes!" laughs one of my other arrestees as others text our location to team mates.

And then it comes: the jailbreak! I'm still not sure how she slipped through, but tagging us out we all make a dash for it. Chaos ensues: I should have used my time in jail to at least look at a map! Within two minutes I'm down another dead end being captured again. But not long in jail this time, breaking out we disappear in the right direction back beyond the Gherkin.

We split up, and myself and another woman decide to take a subtle approach. Acting as tourists we slip along the far side of the playing area to behind the court where they're holding the flag. A group of tourists on the Jack the Ripper trail act as the perfect cover. Seconds later other team mates try a head-on assault distracting the guards and allowing me to reach the flag. I scoop it up and sprint off. But not only am I heading in the wrong direction towards two red team members the flag is also double the length I expected it to be. I thankfully get caught before I send myself flying through the air tripping on the fabric!

Back in jail. But this time it's half time that saves me. Wandering back to no-man's land it's still a 0-0 draw.



Trapped in jail!

After a twenty minute break the two teams swapped ends and in the black team the offensive swaps with defensive. The rules have changed slightly this time too. In the first half you could just be tagged out and had to go to jail, this time you have to be physically escorted. So every person nicked takes one of their opponents out of the game for as long as it takes to get to the jail.

The black offensive team decided to mix up the strategy and attack en-masse in the hope of at least a few of them making it through. The only problem being it left us with a scrappy defense. Thankfully the red team didn't try the same tactic because otherwise we wouldn't have stood a chance.

But 20 minutes later it doesn't bode well the message percolates back to the defence team, 'All 20 of the offence are trapped'. Damn! The only chance is a suicide attempt at a jail break. Five of us head off with fixed details of the situation. The jail's at a junction below some stairs if one of us can make it down the stairs and passed the guards we're all free. But I don't make it down the stairs and passed their guards!

I'm slightly embarrassed to discover there's only two other people in the jail when I'm escorted there.

But I hear the cheer in the distance and know we've won.

But suddenly the red's jail is overrun with my other blacks, we're free. And in the distance the cry goes up, "We've got the flag". We charge headlong through the cobbled alley towards our team mates as they stream past with their prize. Up past Tower 43; through the underpass, across no-man's land, back into our territory - is he really going to make it all the way back to our base? By this point I'm crumpled over 300 minutes short gasping for breath, ankles aching, and back stiff. But I hear the cheer in the distance and know we've won. There's only three minutes left on the clock and we're one-nil up; with our flag safe in our territory.

As I cycle away I contemplate about how we just liberated a tiny corner of this city for a tiny parcel of time. A dead area of commerce and law witnessed for two fleeting hours gasping lungs, peels of laughter, and a mad competition. But most important my competitive itch had been scratched, we'd won! Who cares about anything else?

I had the time of my life. Here's hoping this becomes a regular event in the city!

G20 protests kick off series of anti-capitalist action across the globe

Mar 20, 2009 09:37PM

Whilst people in the UK have been busy planning and publicising the upcoming G20 protests in London, others across the globe are planning actions of their own.

In the UK, 2009 kicked off with strong protest against the occupation of Palestine including riots in London and the student occupation movement. As well as this solidarity events have taken place in aid of the struggle in Greece and more recently No Borders protesters have been taking direct action against deportations. This is all set on a backdrop of constant concern over loss of jobs and homes as well as the environmental.

Things look like they will escalate further as mass mobilisations are planned across the globe. Below is just a preview of some of those events.



Spain

On the 28th of March anti-capitalist and anarchist groups will be marching through the streets of Madrid 'contra la crisis' or against the crisis.

NATO

This year's NATO summit takes place in Strasbourg, France and Baden-Baden, Germany on the 3rd-5th April at which 40 heads of state and government leaders will meet. The summit will mark

NATO's 60th birthday - 60 years of co-ordinating war and oppression on a global scale. A variety of groups have planned to mobilise and take direct action in protest. For more information check out past news from Last Hours (

<http://www.lasthours.org.uk/news/mobilising-against-nato-2009/>)

USA

On April 24-26 the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank will be holding their annual spring gathering. Various groups from across the USA have called for protest on the three days including a group calling themselves the 'Self Described Anarchists' who have made a national call out.

We have a choice to make, stay on the sinking ship or turn and fight. The people that structure this destruction have faces and meetings. We intend to take the fight to them, and this is a fight for our world, a fight for our lives. April 24-26 in Washington DC the International Monetary Fund and World Bank will be holding their annual Spring meetings, and we will be in the streets waiting...

We are calling for an anti-capitalist bloc to strike a blow against the death machine.

Kick it till it breaks!

A communique from the Self-Described Anarchist Collective

selfdescribed.org

UK

Back in the UK the Smash EDO campaign are celebrating the rich anti-capitalist history of Mayday by holding a mass street party at an unconfirmed location in Brighton. The webpage proclaims 'Smash EDO/ITT, Smash Capitalism'

For centuries Mayday has brought people together and out onto the streets. People danced for the coming summer and the fertility of the crops. People marched in remembrance and solidarity with their fellow workers around the world. People gathered in their cities to fight against global capital and exploitation. Smash EDO invites you to a celebration of all these aspects of Mayday.



The event is the third national protest called for by Smash EDO in the last two years. Previous demonstrations have been heavily policed resulting in the use of pepper spray, police dogs and batons against protesters. (Visit Last Hours coverage of the Smash ITT protest -

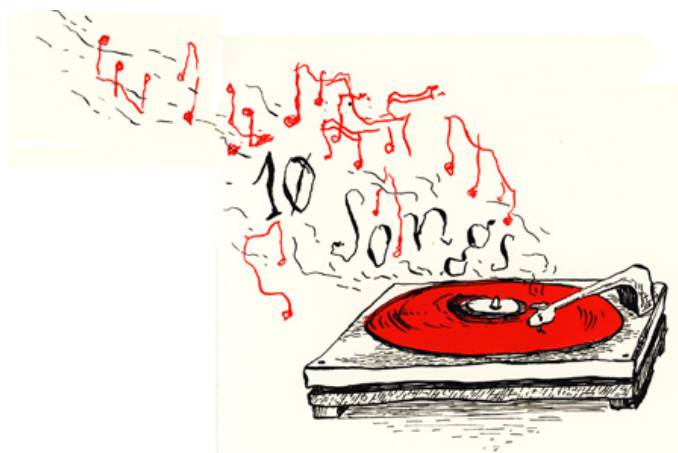
<http://www.lasthours.org.uk/news/immediate-thoughts-on-the-shut-itt-demonstration/> and

<http://www.lasthours.org.uk/news/analysis-on-shut-itt-demo/>

www.smashedo.org.uk/mayday-09.htm

Podcasts on Last Hours

Mar 20, 2009 01:14AM



Yes, Last Hours has finally entered the new millennium and is entering the world of podcasts with the help of Phil Chokeword,

and his monthly podcast '10 Songs'. As part of Last Hours expanding content you'll now be able to listen to, and download the podcast through Last Hours. The other good news is that there's more coming - but you'll just have to wait another month for details of all the other audio goodness you'll be able to get on Last Hours soon!

Ten songs podcast #3 audio stream

Or you can download it by right clicking here.

This month's ten songs was more epic than usual with xHannahx of South Coast cooking zine (and soon to be one of the cookery corner duo on Last Hours) coming in to guest present some of her choice acoustic punk rock songs.

Track listing

- 1. Off With Their Heads - Theme Song (From the "Hospitals" MCD on Recess Records)

Guest set with xHannahx:

- 2. PJ & Gabby - A Collection Of Thoughts (From the "Alarm Clocks Kill Dreams" CD on Cottage Records in the USA, Tiki Records and NC Records in Europe and available from them in the UK)
- 3. Kelly Kemp - Misanthrope (From the S/T CD on This Ones For The Crew Records)
- 4. El Morgan - Six Weeks (From the self released "6 Hours In Queens Park" CD)
- 5. Sam Russo - Your Parents Sins (From the self released EP "Darkened Doors")
- 6. Fucked Up - Colour Removal (From the "Epics In Minutes" CD on Deranged Records)
- 7. Uniform Choice - Screaming For Change (From the "Screaming For Change" CD on Wishing Well and available from Revhq)
- 8. School Jerks - Problems (From their self released demo tape)
- 9. Parade Of Enemies - Anti-youth Culture (From their self released demo tape)
- 10. Tranzmitors - Beating Up My Heart (From their S/T CD on Deranged Records)

Footnote stuff from phil!

1. I still don't know what I'm doing. Sorry. I even bought a book on podcasting. This was put together on my family's PC using Audacity and a USB record player, some over played CDs and 7"s and a cheap Internet microphone. Plus this MP3 is a lower bit rate than most in order to keep it at a manageable size. So if there's a song on here that you dig and want to buy the record it came off, don't be put off if it sounds kinda rough or scuzzy. I can guarantee it'll sound better in the original format. I hope that makes sense!

2. I either asked the bands (PJ & Gabby, Kelly Kemp, El Morgan,

Sam Russo, Uniform Choice, Parade Of Enemies, School Jerks) or the record label who put out the record I was playing (Recess, Deranged) if it was OK to podcast their songs and they were cool with it. I think one of the great things about the Internet is that it's really easy to get in contact with people whose music you dig and I'd like to take time to thank them for allowing me to play their songs. Cheers!

3. If you dug the Parade of Enemies song, good luck finding a tape copy... I'm uploading the whole demo though in a few weeks so you'll be able to download and stream it then. Woo.

4. It goes without saying that if you like this podcast, let your friends know about it! Please? Thank you. And get in touch too if you dig it/hate it/have any tips. [tensongspodcast \[at\] googlemail \[dot\] com](mailto:tensongspodcast[at]googlemail[dot]com)

Posi Matt's cheese cake

Mar 20, 2009 12:18AM

Welcome to the first Last Hours cookery corner! Every couple of weeks we are going to write you lovely people a vegan recipe or two (hopefully complete with photos to help you decide if you like the look of it and see if yours turned out better than ours) and a bit of a rant! This week we will be showing you how to make Posi Matt's delectable cheese cake.

Hannah's Intro:

I'm xHannahx and I do a vegan cooking zine called 'South coast vegan cooking zine' and I'm also attempting to write a vegan cook book called 'South coast vegan cook book' (you can tell I thought very hard about the title, eh?!) I've been vegetarian my whole life and vegan straight edge for 8 years now... I decided to become vegan after cooking for vegan friends a lot and enjoying the food and then doing a bit of reading about why the dairy industry is nasty. I pretty much lived on oven chips for the first few months as I was a lazy vegetarian who just ate Quorn burgers and chips so I stacked on the weight and got ill. I decided to buy a few vegan cook books and decided I really enjoyed cooking and more importantly EATING the food I was making and it's gone from there.

The recipes I use are all super easy to make (because I'm lazy..) I hate it when I want to make something new but realise I have to buy a million ingredients all of which I need 1 bloody teaspoon of and will never use again! I warn you now that I have a very sweet tooth so don't expect many healthy, nutritious things from me! I'm a junk food addict and love stuffing my chops with sugar! My recipes come from all over too. Some I've made up, some I've got from books/ zines and some have come from friends who have been nice enough to send me them or even better make them for me (my favourite type). I'm always on the lookout for new recipes to try too though so please, please email me any you think I should try (NO DRIED FRUIT THOUGH - YUCK, YUCK, YUCK!)

Isy's Intro:

I'm Isy. I'm involved in a cooking collective, the Anarchist Teapot (www.eco-action.org/teapot) - we've been dishing up at events, conferences, camps, demos and gatherings for over 10 years. I also cook in a volunteer run vegan community cafe (www.cowleyclub.org.uk) and have a small business baking vegan

cakes (www.myspace.com/vegancakebakers). In 2008 me and my friend Mike had a cookbook published called *Another Dinner is Possible*, which is going into its 2nd print run later this year! Almost all my recipes are also suited to cooking on a larger scale, whether it's to have a feast with friends or to use in a cafe or in a community meal.

I've been vegan or vegetarian since I was 14 and to me, it's a part of my attempt to live in a way that is true to the values I believe in (solidarity - autonomy/self determination and freedom - co-operation - fighting exploitation). I deeply despise much of what goes on in the food industry, from the destruction caused by industrial agriculture to the mass slaughter of animals to how we are sold lots of unnecessary, unhealthy and expensive crap. And I love food and cooking. I get a lot of satisfaction from it and want to share that with as many people as possible!

I also think dried fruit is yuck.

Posi Matt's cheese cake

by Hannah

Posi Matt made me this when we first started hanging out and I'm pretty sure it's the main reason I like him so much! He also makes a mean Cornish pasty which I will be hassling him for the recipe of. Cheese cake is very quick to make but needs a few hours to cool down before you can eat it so just make sure you don't leave making this to the last minute!

(MONEY SAVER - Cream cheese can be expensive so Matt suggested I use only half the amount of stuff for the 'middle' and keep the base and topping the same to save cash and it works fine)

What you need:



Base:

- 200g digestive biscuits (most supermarket own brands are vegan)
- 150g margarine

- 400g Cream cheese (I always use Tofutti but you can use any brand or silken tofu if you prefer)
- 1 ripe banana (it has to be ripe or it's a pain to mash)
- 1 cup orange juice (approx. 100ml)
- 4tbs sunflower oil (or any vegetable oil except olive - that'll make it sour!)
- 4tbs sugar (I've used caster and granulated white sugar, it doesn't matter)

Top:

- 1 tin fruit compote or grated chocolate or fresh fruit

What you do:

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C
2. Put the digestives into a food bag and bash the hell out of them with a rolling pin/ hammer/ book etc.)
3. Melt the margarine in a pan on a low heat (keep stirring it!)
4. Mix the digestives in with the melted margarine and push into the bottom of a casserole dish/ cake tin.



5. Put all the 'middle' stuff into a bowl and blend using a whisk or bung in a blender until smooth.



6. Pour the 'middle' over the base.



7. Place in the oven for about 30 minutes - until the top starts to brown.



8. Leave to cool on the side then bung in the fridge for a few hours and pour on topping just before you serve it up!! (YOU MUST LEAVE THIS TO COOL PROPERLY OR THE MIDDLE WILL BE RUNNY!)



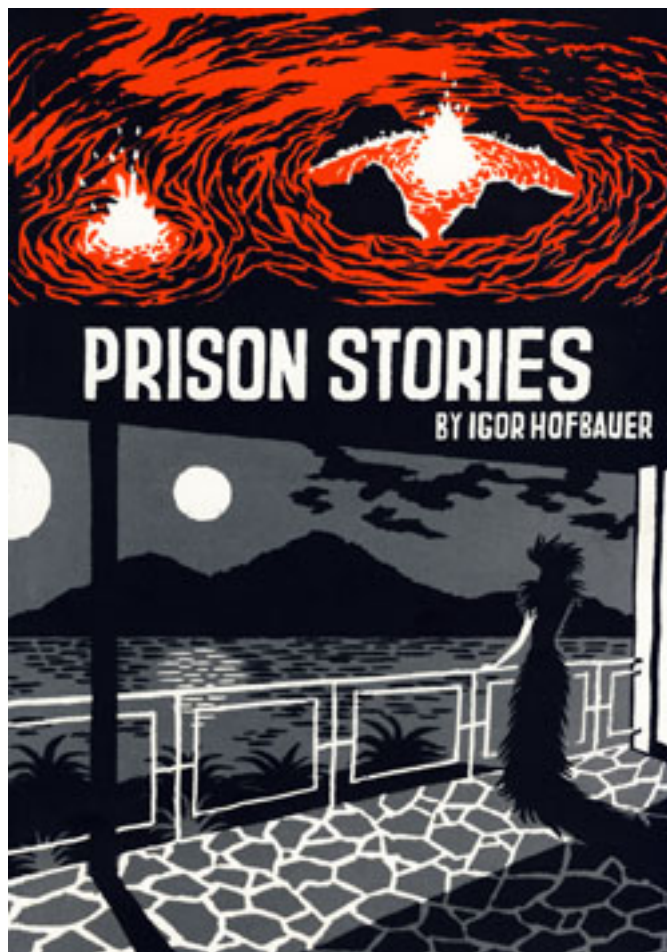
And here's the tasty result!

Prison Stories

Mar 19, 2009 02:02PM

This is a revelation. I've never heard of Igor Hofbauer before; but this may be the best book I've read so far in 2009. Prison Stories is a rolling narrative of seven interlocking stories exploring imprisoned characters. The book is frankly terrifying. Not in a 'goblins are going to eat my skull' way, but a 'humanity has deserted all bonds of allegiance' way.

In terms of mood imagine Charles Burn's Black Hole turned up to 11 and you're getting close to the futility and despair exuded by every character in this book. Terrifying but strangely beautiful at the same time.



The book starts with 'Nail story', a short silent comic about an attempted murder and the revenge which has a sense of Jim Woodring about it. In many ways the story is filled with non-sequiturs, but where as others may use the technique for comic timing here it just adds to the terror.

In many ways, 'Olympia story', the second story and the longest in the book by far is more traditionally structured and if you've enjoyed anything by Charles Burns or Daniel Clowes you're in for a treat. I took it as a metaphor for the suffering of a failed celebrity and the anguish the final fan must feel.

The remaining stories continue the theme. All use a stripped down palette of heavy blacks, dark grey and an iridescent orange. Many use no, or very few words, with people inhabiting near soundless, and apparently deserted, cages. Even if that cage is a city. I'd strongly recommend finding a copy. My new aspiration is to create a story that's halfway towards being as good as these.
