

# BRC WEEKLY

From the  
makers of  
*pliss  
clear*

# LET'S BITCH ABOUT BURNING MAN!

## An aural history of BRC by BUCK A.E. DOWN

It seems as soon as the whole turnkey camp debacle finally ran out of steam, it was time once again for that oldest of Black Rock City traditions – bitching about music at Burning Man. It may seem like this year's hot topic, but guess what? Bitching about music at Burning Man is older than the city itself. Seriously. **People have been griping about sound out here since before there were even city streets.**

Maybe it just seems louder now because there are more of you fuckers here than ever before. Or maybe it's the amplifying factor of Facebook, or Burners.me – BRC's own fundamentalist panic room version of the *Drudge Report* – that's turning up the volume on the notion of turning up the volume. But even back in the old days, we bitched on 3Playa (a crappy HTML web interface, which mystifyingly still exists, and is still chock full of angry people bitching about the perceived loss of "their" Burning Man). In fact – it's not just the music. People have been wringing their hands over the **Death of Burning Man** pretty much non-stop since at least 1996. You can take some comfort in knowing that **people have been ruining this event long before you got here and started fucking things up for everyone.**

Perhaps a little history is in order, because context is king, you little serfs....

### Past Perfect and Present Tense – a Brief History

Once upon a time, way back before your mom and I even started dating, this city was just a few thousand

jackasses going apeshit across the desert floor. Center Camp was just a parachute on some sticks, no one gave a shit about burn scars, and chaos held sway. People were driving around shooting guns out of moving cars while dragging their friends from the bumper on tarps. **Pussy and winning lottery tickets rained from the sky every morning. It was glorious and you missed it.**

But even then – for all the madness people were cool with – the one thing **not everybody** was down for was a bunch of someone else's music being blasted at them. So compromises were made. Those who wanted to dance to music were

invited to take their shit a couple miles out into the open desert where they could have "Rave Camp" – and everything was cool, right?

Except that putting an attraction way the fuck out in the darkness meant that people had to travel,

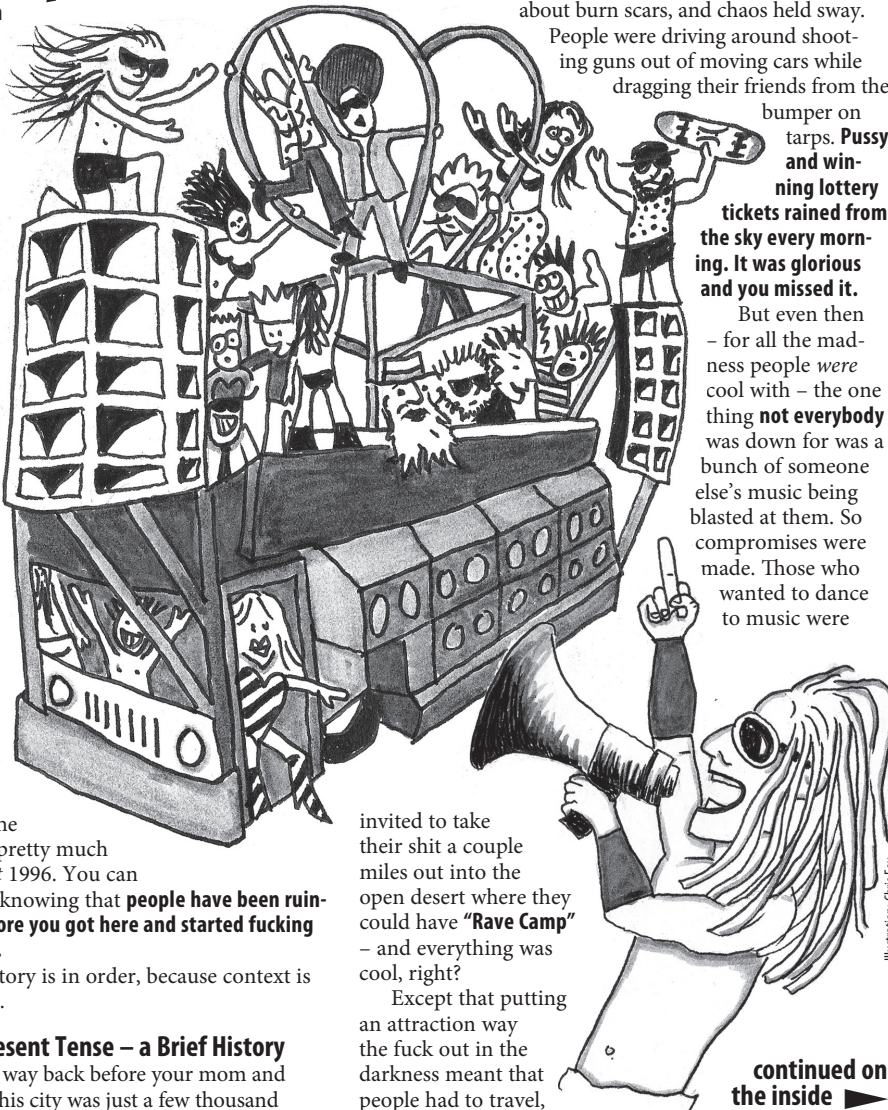


Illustration: Chris Fox

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**Open letter to "big-name DJs" at Burning Man**

**The Playa Drug Guide returns!**

**BLM works to create police state in BRC**

**Sex appeal: The only real playa currency**

**Nothing about this year's Bugpocalypse**

**The infamous Out/In List & Playa Lingo**

## Help deliver me!

The *BRC Weekly* needs volunteers to help deliver our fine newspaper. If you'd like to help, please stop by our offices at **3:30 Rod's Road** (the Outer Ring Road of Center Camp) **near 5:30 & Ballyhoo.**

Look for the dome and RVs with the big *BRC Weekly* logos. We usually have a couple boxes of newspapers at the front of the camp **next to the red newspaper box.** If it's the morning, we'll probably still be sleeping, so just grab a stack of papers to distribute around Black Rock City! **Take all you want, but deliver all you take!** Thanks, BRC!

continued on  
the inside ►

# It's our best issue ever! (We say that every year)



Your post-jaded editor

by ADRIAN ROBERTS

Welcome home, bitches! And hopefully you're actually reading this while you're on the playa, and not a week later on your way back to your *real* home in the Default World, because you were way too busy (or on drugs) in Black Rock City to bother to read **this stupid little newspaper**, but now you're desperately trying to soak up as many leftover playa vibes as you can while the feelings are still fresh and you're sobbing on the ride home.

**Yeah, we've all been there.**

Or maybe you haven't? If this is your first year – and statistically speaking, that's at least 60% of you – then welcome to **the most inhospitable vacation resort on Earth!** A dusty trailer park **dirt rave!** Survivalist desert camping disguised as an "arts festival!"

Yet, there's no other place we'd rather be this week. Your one-time "bucket list" item is our annual ritual. I've been coming out to Burning Man now for half of my life. Yup,

I'm what's known as a "lifer" – just like **Danger Ranger** and **Larry Harvey** (who?), I drank that Kool-Aid a long time ago.

**Burner, please! I'm post-jaded**

So sure, I love it here. But with that "old-school burner" pedigree comes the right to earnestly bitch about Burning Man. But don't get the impression that I'm **one of those cranky jaded "old-timers."**

We're still here, aren't we? Bitching about Burning

Man just makes us happy! (And gives us a twisted sense of playa purpose. Exhibit A: This newspaper.)

I've been publishing a newspaper out here nearly every year since 1995 – a year many of you were still in diapers! I've seen a lot of changes throughout the years – and some things that never change (**shirtcocks** are having a bit of an ironic comeback, aren't they?) But Black Rock City

has never failed to provide us with enough content to write about, which is why we're still out here doing it.

Actually, let's be honest here: Whether as *Piss Clear* (this paper's legendary predecessor) or as the current *BRC Weekly*, we usually only care about printing two things: the **Out/In List**, and **Playa Lingo**. Everything else in these pages is just filler!

But, oh! What glorious filler it is! We think we've put together a pretty fine issue this year – and despite all the bitching and moaning and colorful cultural commentary, we hope you'll see that it all comes from a place of **dusty, hard-earned love.**

**Get a sticker!**

Feel free to stop by the *BRC Weekly* offices at **3:30 Rod's Road in Center Camp (near 5:30 & Ballyhoo)** and shoot the shit with us! Plus – camp cliché achievement unlocked! For the first time ever, we've finally got stickers: "Black Rock City: Burn & Raised." See you out on the playa! **BRC**



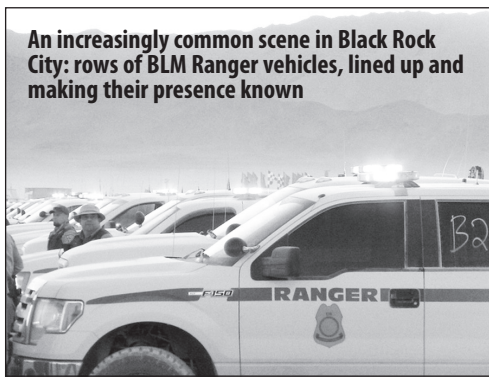
## BLM works to create police state in BRC

by SHAM

The Bureau of Land Management began with the best of intentions – protect our vast public land from sea to shining sea, for the public to enjoy for many generations to come – yet it's evolved into a bit of a muddy mess.

At some point (probably around 9/11) it all became part of **Homeland Security** and the **BLM Rangers** were issued high-powered guns and bulletproof vests, as well as a full arsenal of military gadgets, to help them protect our lands from all sorts of threats – real or imagined. This militarization continues to evolve and spiral in what appears to make the BLM part of the **U.S. military.**

I've been attending Burning Man for well over a decade and hardly noticed the gradual changes as the years passed by. Minor safety changes are to be expected at any large-scale event. There has always been a police presence here, and relations between participants and law enforcement officers have been, for the most part, quite good. I stop and chat with the same officers year after year.



An increasingly common scene in Black Rock City: rows of BLM Ranger vehicles, lined up and making their presence known

However, over the last few years, there has been an ever-increasing police presence at nearly every corner of the event, as well as on the roads leading in to it. Not that I am doing anything that should make me feel under suspicion, as my drugs of choice these days are related to blood pressure and cholesterol. But BLM SUVs are everywhere and they are eyeing everyone with a dusty vehicle on the road.

The real police presence starts in Empire. Cars are starting to get stopped for anything. Obstructed license plates, checking for loads tied down properly, drug-sniffing dogs – **after all, ragged-looking vehicles must have illegal substances in them.**

I was most taken aback by the rows of neatly parked BLM SUVs

at the entrance gates. Using their government-issued, high-powered binoculars, they scan for cars crawling in the endless entry line for drivers not buckled safely in their seat, moving a car length at a time. Then the window knock, license and registration and the ominous question – "**DO YOU HAVE ANY ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES IN THE CAR?**" No! "Do you mind if I check?" Yes! Time to call in the K9 doggies and work on practicing the intimidation tactics.

**There is definitely a different feel in the air.** It turns out that the most peaceful and playful event in the world has turned into a tactical training ground for the newly-militarized BLM. They have high-powered surveillance up in the hills looking down at the activities. They know the exact coordinates of the city and have strategically-placed officers ready to pounce at a moment's notice. Keeping in mind that most burners are a friendly, happy bunch of mutts that don't put up a fight, the BLM is able to play their SWAT team drills without fear of getting hurt. Burning Man is forced to pay for this, and the attendees have to put up with these **jack-booted cops playing macho man on the playa.**

So many of the attendees don't really get to see this crazy, heavy-handed side of our government, but we need to learn and bring that education home with us. As we read

news stories, we tend to be much more skeptical and sympathetic when we see heavy-handed police tactics being used on the streets of America. For this education, we need to thank the BLM, for we now have all seen firsthand what the **militarization** of America looks like. **BRC**



BLACK ROCK CITY'S  
INDEPENDENT NEWSWEEKLY

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# Not all bitching is equal

by SHUTTERSLOT



The wonderful world of burners has been filled with **First World People** bitching about the way the event is “Over! Ruined!” since the second Burn or thereabouts, and not once have those predictions come true. Sure, some people hit a wall and stop going, but that just means that they are “over,” not that Burning Man itself is over. Just think of it like climate change – the planet might become uninhabitable for us, but it will be just fine for the lifeforms that come after. **Just because you’re weak doesn’t mean that Burning Man isn’t still happening.**

This year has been particularly fruitful on the dire predictions front: **Plug & Plays! Evil board members! Tickets selling out “too fast!” “Banning” Dancetronauts! BLM pleasure palace! Vehicle Pass shortage! Bugs!** Yet the event is still happening, the party is in full force, the action is as fun as ever and the Man will still burn on Saturday night.

This doesn’t mean everything is all right in **Playaland**. No, it just means that people are so busy yelling about their particular issue that they can’t see anything else. A few of the above issues are real. As for the rest, well, here’s the thing: 90% of the time, people are just bitching to be bitching. Sure, people needed to scream about the way the BMorg was letting billionaires get advantages the rest of us peons didn’t get, especially in these times of ticket sellouts. And people really need to scream about the utter stupidity of arbitrarily setting a ridiculously low number of Vehicle Passes, and then refusing to modify that number regardless of the amount of absolute terror the lack of them was causing ticket holders. The former has hopefully been fixed, the latter, as of this writing, is still a disaster. The other issues? Personality problems sometimes, one-sided presentation of the “news” in others, people just screaming to make themselves feel important in most cases.

## Death by a thousand stupid decisions

While people are busy bitcherbat-ing about their own pet issue, the actual march towards the death of Burning Man as we know it will be caused by a thousand stupid decisions made by those people who run the event from their ivory tower, and who’ve taken to closing the shutters until they shake with the screams of the riff-raff who attend the event,

instead of actually listening to them before the shit hits the fan, causing the **Powers-That-Be** to have to make a minion rush out another Burning Blog post filled with supposedly exculpatory information.

Now, I’ve met most of Powers-That-Be, and they’re perfectly nice people. The problem is that like the aristocracy of old, most of them, and a lot of the staff at BMHQ, have become isolated from the average burner and have no fucking idea what it’s like to deal with the event as a participant on the ground. None of this mattered in the old days, when tickets were plentiful and the decisions made in the gated and private community of First Camp barely affected those of us frolicking in the dust. Sure, there were new rules here and there to appease our critical overlords at the BLM and the counties, but most people who hadn’t been here in ’96-’97 didn’t even know some people owned Burning Man, or didn’t know any of “**The Six**” besides Larry “The Hat” Harvey and Danger Ranger, and just thought this was all about partying, or finding your bliss or whatever.

## Something to bitch about

Since the sellout in 2011, that’s all changed, and the decisions they make affect all of us – mainly because it’s impossible to get through the Gate without a ticket (and now a fucking Vehicle Pass), and it’s becoming harder to get those lovely pieces of paper into your hands. It took forever

for the BMorg to come up with our current “fair as possible” system, but they kept burners out of the active loop and only responded when our screaming got too loud.

There are, of course, actual important things to bitch about that are actually damaging the event. They start with the fucking **\$800 Early Tickets**, which are sold up to four at a time and don’t bar you from entry into another sale. Are you fucking kidding me? All summer I’ve seen what that’s causing – rich assholes with money to spare selling those \$800 tickets to poor desperate Burners who didn’t score in any sale, because the rich asshole managed to get a cheaper ticket and is now doing BMorg legal scalping. Either get rid of that sale, or make those tickets’ face value the same as the general sale so the asswipes can’t fuck those unlucky in the ticket game.

Or how about dealing with the **Vehicle Pass disaster**? What fucking ivory-towered genius decided that an “average” of one fucking year made a good number to limit the next year’s sales to? Total asshat math. You lower in increments – drop a thousand or two a year to pull the number of vehicles down. But no, someone pointed out the first easy number and ran with it, and when it turns out to be way fucking short, BMHQ doubles down and says, “Sorry, our numbers say this is all that’s needed.” Look, we all know that a plan to reduce traffic has to happen if we’re ever going to see the population grow and more tickets



hit the market. But you don’t have to create an artificial famine to get the numbers down.

Everything that’s happening is looking like the Powers-That-Be are forgetting that the event is created and kept alive by **riff-raff like myself**, and the other 70,000 non-staff regular burners who devote their year to creating cool shit to bring out here. It’s time to throw open the shutters on the ivory tower and start listening to the peasants at the beginning of the process, not after things are already on fire. I get it, it’s a business, not a democracy, but in that case **we’re the fucking stockholders** since it’s all done with our money, and there should at least be a pretense of letting us know what’s going on. **It’s fucking time for the people who run this event to act like the benevolent overlords they play in their propaganda.** You can’t spew verbiage about the wonderful future you see blossoming from Burning Man while you’re ignoring the fact that your actions are poisoning the flowers. **BRC**

## PINDER THE PANDA BEAR *Is it hot enough for ya?*

Burning Man’s Black Rock City is built in an alkaline desert, so a dust storm can kick up at any moment. Now, during a complete whiteout it’s easy to get turned around and lost. So it’s really important to stay close and-



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TUESDAY SEPT 1

PARADISE MOTEL HAPPY HOUR 7:30 & DONNIKER · 5 PM - 7 PM DEATH GUILD THUNDERDOME ESPLANADE & 4:15 · 9 PM - 10:30 PM SPANKY'S WINE BAR 4:00 & CARNY · 9 PM - LATE

WEDNESDAY SEPT 2

DECADENT OASIS DAY PARTY 7:30 & ARCADE · 12 PM - 7 PM ASHRAM GALACTICA 6:15 & ERSATZ · 11:30 PM - 4 AM

THURSDAY SEPT 3

PLAYANAUTS BEER OLYMPICS 8:15 & ARCADE · 3:30 PM - 5 PM FANDANGO! BOOTIE BRC 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY 9:00 PLAZA & KOOK · 8 PM - LATE NOKTILUNA SILENT DISCO ESPLANADE & 9:00 · 9 PM - 4 AM

FRIDAY SEPT 4

AUTOMATIC SUBCONSCIOUS ESPLANADE & 8:00 · 9 PM - DAWN

FREE Bootie mashup CDs will be gifted! BootieBRC.com

If you could design Black Rock City, what would you do?



BLACK ROCK CITY 2015

An international design competition for the BRC city plan. Black Rock City Ministry of Urban Planning · www.brcmup.org



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If you like the BRC WEEKLY, you'll love PISS CLEAR!

PISS CLEAR is a book!



"The alternative history of Burning Man, written as it was happening."

From 1995 to 2007, the alternative newspaper Piss Clear was a fixture at Nevada's annual Burning Man arts festival, its cheeky name deriving from the Black Rock Desert's #1 survival tip: "drink enough water so that you piss clear." For 13 years, editor Adrian Roberts and his staff of writers wrote about the colorful culture of Black Rock City, and their snarky and sarcastic tone gave Piss Clear its well-earned reputation as the "Vice magazine of the playa."

Having started off as a sort-of sassy survival guide, Piss Clear quickly evolved into Burning Man's snarky reality check, chock full of

hard-hitting articles, acerbic rants, witty commentaries, and funny lists. Along the way, it documented – as it was happening – the growing evolution of the Burning Man event.

Burning Man Live: 13 Years of Piss Clear, Black Rock City's Alternative Newspaper compiles all 34 issues of Piss Clear, and includes a brand-new essay from longtime columnist Malderor, as well as an introduction from Brian Doherty, author of This Is Burning Man. There are also yearly chapter introductions from Adrian Roberts. Telling it like it was, this is the alternative – and yes, opinionated – history of Burning Man.



BURNING MAN LIVE: Go to www.pissclear.org or get it at your local independent bookseller