

Guia de Ocio for helpful hints of things to be achieved in 60 mins. Cinema? too long... the only thing that fit our schedule was Nympho Girls on Vacation at SALA X, Placa Bonsucces. Feeling museumed-out (and being as naïve as my nan) it seemed like it could be the perfect antidote and a bit of a laff.

In those days the central square seemed to be off the map; the only person able to point us in the right direction was a crumbly old toothless gentleman. With hindsight this should have been a telling sign of things to come.

We arrived late, fumbling for change, eager to expedite our entrance into the theatre. We entered. The room: black, a movie already on show. It was discouragingly dark and impossible to make out anything inside apart from the lovelies being done on-screen. The Sala was silent but for a sinister shuffling akin to the restless nocturnal movement of livestock. Confused, all spatial awareness off-kilter, we loitered at the back of the theatre unsure of what to do with ourselves. This was interpreted as a salacious signal,

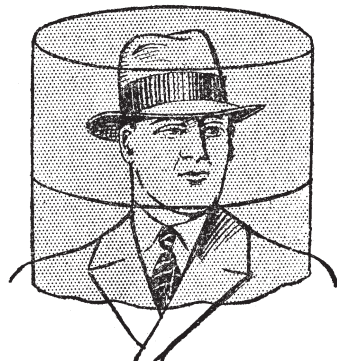
attracting a plethora of people towards our corner. Lights up, the previous film ended. We hadn't been late at all. When all was illuminated I caught site of a gaggle of decrepit pensioners engaging in a fellatio fest in the corner beside us. Corn wasn't the only thing being popped in this intermission. We had walked through the back of the wardrobe and entered a world in which we did not belong; there was a different type of Turkish delight on offer here.

SALA X was a cinema by definition only: seats, film, projector, screen and customers who entered....departing satisfied. Everyone knew what they wanted and were going to enjoy it... except us, who wanted to watch a film. Instead of legging it the hell out of there we opted to get our 300 pesetas worth. The film plot remains a mystery as I spent the next 45 minutes petrified, eyes fixed- boring holes through the screen, desperate not to cop another eyeful of the pleasure seekers surrounding me. Easier said than done as the silhouette of every Grandad's peg-legged movement was superimposed on the

silver screen, further exacerbated by our choice of seat — directly outside the male toilets.

Train departure approaching and having had more than our fill of nympho girls on-screen and the Jurassic orgy-fest off-screen we decided to leave the cinema except that we left with a little more than we had bargained for. My friend having placed his bag on the sticky cinema carpeting now found it covered with snail trails. Horrified we dragged the bag through builder's sand, BCN alley-piss, dog shit, anything to eradicate the glistening gentleman relish.

Moving to BCN years later it was no surprise to see the only building that hadn't been snapped up by property developers was the gaping hole where SALA X had stood. The question remains, where are they now? What happens to them? Just because Placa Bonsucces is a shadow of its former self doesn't mean these guys are (they might all be dead cos they were all so ANCIENT). What does the Generalitat do about these places, the darker side of BCN?



# PACO PRIVADO

IN *THE 'NIT BUS SPECIAL'*

BY *Larry Kovaks* P.I.

It's been said: once a sleuth, always a sleuth.

This week has been rough. Got fleeced by the Track Suit Mafia on the Ramblas. Lost my hat and had to buy a new one on Fontanella street. Now I'm so low on *calés* I've been eating the lemon rinds at the bottom of my *cubatas*. Sucking on olive pits. But being a detective is a way of life. Common folk, they'd end up in the booby hatch after two and a half days of this.

No new cases. My leads in the old town, strangely reticent. In need of sleuthing activity I get to thinking. The Nit Bus. They converge on Plaça Catalunya where so many of the gypmeisters operate. Under the cover of night, these rat bastards scurry home. No doubt via the Nit Bus.

## 12:27 PM /// RED LINE /// UNIVERSITAT TO PLAÇA CATALUNYA

I've been thinking of it all day. The amount of delinquent behavior at night, in such a concentrated area is enough to make the old pump give up. After rounding a shot of *Mascaró* in the Gallego bar on Ronda San Antoni I walk to the metro station. On the way a *ramera* with cavernous eyes and a pink halter top follows me. She keeps tsk-tsking me. Not tonight, nena. She spits and wheels around. Yeh. It's tough when dames are all over you. Especially when you got a mission.

The platform at Universitat. Drunken *chicas*, tourists, and possible members of the Track Suit Mafia. One individual puffing a smoke at the end. Just under the security camera. The metro comes and I squeeze in. It's thick with smoke. Smells sour, like rum and sweat. Sauced-up Argentineans jumping up and down, banging the ceiling. No shirts. Waving flags.

They bounce and grunt like they're soft in the head. Everybody files off at Plaça Catalunya.



## 12:53 AM /// SCOPING THE SCENE

I do a little reconnaissance first. After beating it around the *plaza* I end up on the median in front of El Corte Inglés. This place. A prime gypmeister spot. Guiris getting off the airport shuttle get gypped here often. Most likely a member of the Track Suit Mafia swipes their carry-on when they're distracted. Looking at a map. Asking directions. But I don't see any suspects at the airport Nit Bus stop. Must be sleeping off a hard day of crime. Careless behavior abounds, though.

Guiris. In a hurry. Often unvigilant. Prime targets.



COULD EASILY GET HIS LOUSY MITTS ON THIS.

I spot a possible suspect. Track Suit Mafia. He's dragging a cancer stick, swigging from a beer can. He suspiciously weaves through the guiris. Walks past me to the N15 stop, right as a bus pulls up. A little alarm goes off. Tells me to follow this creep.

## 1:21 AM /// N15 TO HOSPITALET

I follow this chulo de poca monta, push my way to the back so I can shadow him. He sits on top of the wheel hub and sips beer with impunity. He kind of leers left and right. Lights his cig and puffs. Mashs it out on the molded plastic.



SARTORIAL STYLE IS IMPORTANT. THESE SNEAKERS MEAN ONE THING: QUICKNESS FOR THE GYP.

More people file on. Mostly people getting off late shifts. Restaurant workers. Women of the night. One broad with an ass this big. Like the isle. She turns in her fashion, blocks my view of the suspect. All I see is her big fat karina. Across it is printed "Bad Girl". Three stops later there's a puff of smoke and the suspect gets off. I see him through the etched window. Striding into orange lit side streets. "Bad Girl" gets off four stops later and we're near the end of the line. Nothing. Floor is suffused with wrappers, spilled beer. Bus swings around for the center.

## 2:47 AM /// N6 TO CALOMA TOWN

Behind the N15 stop. The Nit Bus going to Santa Caloma originates and ends here. Sullen faces. A potential squirrel cage candidate drums on graffiti covered glass. He puffs maniacally on a cigarette burned to the butt. We board the bus six point five minutes later.

One dame winks at me through caked on mascara. Huffs and sits beside me, across the isle.



COULD BE AN OFF-DUTY *PUTA*. OR A DANGEROUS GOLDIGGER OUT TO SWINDLE.

I'm beginning to think the Nit Bus isn't such a good idea. Criminal activity needs a focus of wealth. Guiris are in the center. At the airport. Not on the bus to the outskirts, with doormen, *camareras*, tired and on the way home. A gypmeister typically would take a taxi with his freshly stolen euros. Crispy. Fast cash, fast spent. The Nit Bus is full of drunks and people too tired to care.

These thoughts. The sway and lurch of the bus. The plastic Bocatta cup rolling in semi circles in the isle. Make me drowsy. I close my eyes and open them again in a near-empty bus. We're heading back to the center. Outside the window stray cats scamper off, dart under parked cars. Two skinny kids carry a sofa down a mostly deserted street. To the left, the sparkling lights of the Forum. Past the intersection a bus stop with a group of kids. Punks. And two nengs.

The nengs walk towards the back and grapple the post. One wears a fluorescent green Larsson shirt. Tight. The other a blue and white Kappa shirt. Smell of cologne and gasoline. Hair greased up to a crest. A scooter with a modded tailpipe wheelies past. They yell and pound on the window. They keeping bobbing their heads, but I hear no music. Easy to confuse these guys with the Track Suit Mafia. My guess is they're in cahoots. One turns to the other: "*Chacho, dame un poco de esta.*"

Larsson Shirt looks around, I pretend to be looking at the hat in my lap. He pulls out a bit of cellophane from cig pack and dips a key in it. Go powder. Yeo. His delinquent friend snorts off the key and goes:

"*Joder tío, esta mierda de autobús. Se mueve mucho!*"

Next stop a group of five pakistanis get on. High pitched squeals. Chacho and Larsson shirt are sweet talking a girl to our left, rubbing their nut sacks. "*Eh Guapa. Estas para comerte. Eh guapa.*" Her eyes are fixed on something beyond the window.

Past the Monumento de Colón, we swerve up Parallel. The nengs make for the door. I follow. Hit the asphalt with both feet and shadow them from 20 paces back.

## 5:04 AM /// END OF THE ROAD /// NEON PUTICLUBS

They walk, accost every female that passes without success and enter an apartment just past the Open Cor 24 hour market. *Nada*. Another dead end.

My dogs are barking. Hard. I've been footing it all day. Past the Bagdad Sex Club there's gaudy neon stretching up to Plaça Epanya. I light a Ducado. The cherry glows brighter than all the puticlubs dotting the street. Just for a second. There's a black Seat Ibiza at the intersection blasting some of that teeny dance music. Brother, I need a drink.