

## GUTS

“Vision without guts is fantasy” -Toba Beta

The definition of guts: *The digestive tract or a portion thereof, especially the intestine or stomach.*<sup>1</sup> This word isn't so simple though. In the above quote (as in many literary and cinematic references) it denotes some above-average amount of courage or bravery. It's also been known to reference confession as well as trusting phantom instincts. In horror movies it insinuates the masses of shocking human innards sure to be strewn about by maniacal killers, disfigured cannibals and razor-toothed monsters. Just in case you were unaware though, there is another popular use: the vaginal region of a woman<sup>2</sup>. This implies that during intercourse the man's penis is ramming into the female's inner organs. Let's take a deeper look (no pun intended) at some of these meanings.

### ***It took a hell of a lot of guts to...***

Before any mention of notably *gutsy* men and women it's probably important to throw out the very real possibility that, perhaps, astronauts take the cake in this category. What could anyone possibly do to top the feat of leaving your planet buckled to an enormous rocket? That being said...

A quick glance through modern history shows that there's no shortage of people worthy of being nominated for bravest individual. The problem is that sometimes it's difficult discerning between bravery and stupidity. Take Anatoli Bugorski for example. On July 13<sup>th</sup> 1978 this Russian scientist decided to put his head into a giant particle accelerator, a *U-70 synchrotron* to be exact, the most powerful one at the time. Unsurprisingly he was blasted with a beam of protons which nearly killed him and left him burdened with frequent seizures for the rest his days<sup>3</sup>. Maybe that falls more on the side of *stupidity*...and maybe so too does Barry Marshall. This Australian physician, convinced that a particular bacterium called *Helicobacter pylori* was responsible for peptic ulcers, drank a petri dish full of it. His potential stupidity paid off however as he was proven correct and eventually awarded a Nobel prize for this work<sup>4</sup>.

Maybe the bravest people you're likely to hear about (especially in recent history) is the *suicide mission seniors* of Japan. Following the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in northern Japan, this group of 500 or so senior citizens volunteered to enter the damaged Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant despite knowing that it was essentially a death sentence<sup>5</sup>. The radiation levels were too high to safely work but the work had to be done in order to ensure the prevention of a total nuclear meltdown. Knowing they had less time than others anyway they went in to do what they could and, by many peoples accounts, prevented a global catastrophe.

### ***All up in them guts...***

A lot of people would have good guesses as to who “got up in them guts” the most throughout history. Playboy founder and owner Hugh Hefner is a common guess, although his number is (self) reported to be around 1000. Warren Beatty claimed to have slept with a new woman every day of his life from when he turned 20 to when he got married in 1992. That amounts to about 13,000 *guts gotten up inside*. In Wilt Chamberlin's 1991 biography he claimed to have slept with over 20,000 women during his notorious run as star athlete and ladies man of his time. The unofficial record though comes from the Fokken twins. These 70 year old female twins were working prostitutes in Amsterdam's red light district for over 50 years. They report to have averaged about 10 men a day which, over their careers comes out to about 177,500 men each<sup>6</sup>.

### **Blood and guts...**

Instead of discussing real blood and guts and making you feel like a sad morbid son of a bitch for the rest of the day perhaps we can look at something else: *fake blood and guts*. Horror movies have been around probably since *Le Manoir du Diable* which is widely credited as being the first after it premiered in the late 1890's<sup>7</sup>. One thing films since have often shared is their depiction of death and dying. This common thread though has gone through countless iterations as the standards and authenticity has exceeded many people's imaginations over the years. Viewers were left aghast in the 1930s watching films such as *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*. Both of which often only insinuated terror, barely showing more than a dash of blood.

In the mid 1960's a slew of low budget gore-shock films altered the horror genre landscape. Films like *Blood Feast* and *Two Thousand Maniacs!* Which pulled no punches depicting devil cult-killers and cannibals soaked in blood dismembering and eating unfortunate victims for two hours. While better filming equipment (as well as rising standards of directors, actors, editors and crew) can be considered much of the reason for the jump in cinematic gore's realism over the decades, the materials used to depict fake blood and guts have also improved. 1971's *The Evil Dead* for example, revolutionized fake blood depiction by making their own (Still used) special mixture of corn syrup, food dye and instant coffee<sup>8</sup>.

### **Spill your guts...**

There are plenty of *gut spillers* all around us. Never a shortage of people willing to tell you about themselves and what they've done now that we exist in a selfie-stick era. One website/publication that takes full, glorious advantage of this is *Post Secret*<sup>9</sup> created on a whim by Frank Warren to field the anonymous confessions of strangers. These confessions contain subjects that range from love lost, abortions and crime all the way to trivialities and existential ruminations.

When people think about spilling guts, the idea of a deathbed confession often comes to mind. Deathbed confessions have been everything from hilarious to shocking and much in between. As he lay dying in his bed in at age 93, Christian Spurling admitted that his famous *surgeon's photo* of the Lockness monster was faked<sup>10</sup>. Another deathbed spill (or hallucination, or joke) was when former Beatle George Harrison's last testament claimed that Paul McCartney had died in 1966 after a deadly car crash and was shortly afterwards replaced by the winner of a Paul McCartney 'look-alike' contest<sup>11</sup>. This look alike is supposedly the Paul we still see today.

### **Trust your gut...**

Everyone has experienced a gut feeling at some point during life. These are usually rather mundane like an urge to skip class or preferring one pizza topping over another for inexplicable reasons. Although these reasons seem inexplicable they're actually patterns that your cognition has recognized (mostly on a subconscious level) and decided to (also subconsciously) use for whatever situation you've found yourself in. These can be tiny cues like someone's tone of voice or facial expression, something you aren't even aware you're noticing<sup>12</sup>.

Bestselling author Scott Berklin doesn't think trusting your gut is sound advice, at least not every time. His reasons are fairly simple, the biggest one being that *data trumps memory*. He explains "We have poor retroactive memories. When we pick X, and we're wrong, we'll say 'Damn! I knew I should have picked Y. Really? Are you sure? If you didn't write it down and capture your thinking before you made the decision, you are going to be biased in how you think about your thinking afterwards.'"<sup>13</sup>

Maybe this will make you think a little differently about a subtle word and all its meanings. Maybe you'll think of sex in a slightly new way. Perhaps you'll wonder what you might cop to on your own death-bed or what will happen to your innards after you actually die. Maybe next time you have an urge you'll wonder if that's your gut speaking and whether or not to listen. And, if you do listen and do something truly brave or stupid...you might hear people say you had some real guts.

**Dates:** From June 2<sup>nd</sup> to August 10th 2015

**Vernissage:** Tuesday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2015, from 7 to 10 pm

**Curation:** Ryan Nimmo

**Art Direction:** Thomas Charvériat & Anto Lau

**Scenography:** Jean Le Guyader

**Research:** Jiang Linping 江琳萍, Lin Zang 臧琳, Irmantas Bortnikas

**Artistic Research:** Jin Yun 金云, Tang Dashi 汤大师 & He Dashi 贺大师

**Coordination:** Eden Gibbs, Yeung Sin Ching 杨倩菁, Adam Hsieh 谢昕

**Sound Score:** David Poppell

**Venue:** island6 Hong Kong, 1 New Street G/F, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong S.A.R

**Artist:** island6 art collective (Liu Dao 六島)

**Link:** [http://island6.org/Guts\\_info.html](http://island6.org/Guts_info.html)

**Wine Sponsor:** <http://www.corks.com.hk/>



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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/guts>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=guts>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/science/blog/2010/nov/11/hardest-bravest-science>

<sup>4</sup> ibid

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.npr.org/2011/09/12/140402430/japanese-seniors-send-us-to-damaged-nuclear-plant>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.11points.com/Dating-Sex/11\\_People\\_Who\\_Claim\\_To\\_Have\\_the\\_Most\\_Sexual\\_Partners\\_In\\_History](http://www.11points.com/Dating-Sex/11_People_Who_Claim_To_Have_the_Most_Sexual_Partners_In_History)

<sup>7</sup> [http://pages.emerson.edu/organizations/fas/latent\\_image/issues/1990-05/horror.htm](http://pages.emerson.edu/organizations/fas/latent_image/issues/1990-05/horror.htm)

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodily\\_mutilation\\_in\\_film\\_-\\_cite\\_note-6](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodily_mutilation_in_film_-_cite_note-6)

<sup>9</sup> <http://postsecret.com/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://listverse.com/2009/09/29/top-10-fascinating-deathbed-confessions/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.quora.com/What-are-some-of-the-most-interesting-deathbed-confessions-in-history>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200704/gut-almighty>

<sup>13</sup> <http://scottberkun.com/2012/trust-your-gut/>