

# Neutral Milk Hotel, Conversation with W. Cullen Brown

But we fucked up that Remedial English class, because we were smoking pot

□We're not in college.

□Right.

□We can't move on to college, can we?

□So, like-

□We are not in college, are we?

□So, how do you move on to another place to shop if you haven't taken that Remedial English class?

□Grow sideburns.

□Sideburns. They really help, really?

□Yeah.

□They give you that distinctive look.

□They do.

□Like standing out of the crowd.

□They really do, they really do, and I...that's why I don't think I fit in.

□Because you don't have any sideburns?

□I can't grow 'em, I just...they just don't look right, I always cut them off.

□(Long pause)

□That's terrible...

□See, the problem is: you can't find the puzzle with they guy watching 'Price is Right'...

□I want-

□You need blood wafers.

□No, I want the puzzle with--

□See, they have ones...they have the one with your family, you just haven't been to the right place.

□No, but see, I bought the...the puzzle with the rat on the treadmill on the farm, and the...the decapitated head.

□That's the problem, you have to get the ones with the wafers. And the bloody trousers. And your family.

□But I've already got all these puzzle pieces stuck together that are, like, a part of me now, they're

□So that makes you an artist.

□I know! but I've gotta get some more puzzle pieces.

□You're an artist! Make your own pieces! Use wafer. Use pieces of wafer. Use Thumbtacks.

□But what am I going to do with all these weird puzzle pieces that weren't even supposed to be part of the puzzle?

□Can I-

□But then I shoved the pieces together, and, it was too late! It was like all these, like, disjointed bodies.

□You know why, right? I am telling you I know the answer, and it's this:

□(Long pause)

□Do you remember when you were talking about putting the thumb- the pushpin in...

□Yes. In the blood.

□Right.

□Doesn't it all make sense now?

□No!

□Did you...did you find...the sideburns...in, in the puzzle?

□No!

□They're in the bottom! They're taped to the bottom.

□I've got these-

□Can I use them, can I please staple them on? That is the key.

□You can do what ever you want.

□(tacking noise)

□Ulp

□What you don't understand, is it-

□(tacking noise)

□Ow

□What you don't understand, is I thought it was a flower. But it wasn't. Ok? It was part of the rat on the treadmill.

□They've gotta be animal pieces. They might be animal pieces. Pieces of goats...

□That's what I was trying for. That was, like, a rat and a goat and the whole thing and the goats did it.

□And you bought this at Wal-mart?

□And that's what I wanted, that's all I wanted. Since I was a kid. Since I was a kid! And it was just- I

□And you've never gotten a puzzle together?

□No.

□Never?

□Never. There are all these disjointed parts I convinced myself to be flowers.

□You have a serious problem, young man.

□I know I do. But I don't think I'm much different from anybody else...I bet everybody else has got a puzzle.

□Nope.

□I mean, I hope I'm not alone in this thing, you know.

□You are.

□well, it sure feels that way, I mean when I go through the news stands and stuff and read the mag  
□They've got computers...they've got their shit together.  
□Right, they can make it look like you got your flower together, but they really don't. But it makes th  
□You are. But that's what makes all the difference, you're an artist.  
□But I'm not insignificant, because my flower isn't any more pressed together than anybody else's f  
□No. You're an artist, I told you a hundred times. You see, what you...the part that you don't unders  
□Very off. I didn't realize how off I was until I pulled my pieces of puzzle out of my pocket, and saw  
□Did you try tape?  
□It was stuck together...it's- I wish I could pull 'em apart. If I could pull 'em apart I'd be OK, but I can  
□ see.  
□Well, I came home, showed it to my folks really proud of my flower...and that's when I realized:  
□You should be in college.  
□ should be in college, yep.  
□ should be tak-  
□(buzz)