

LAUSD BOARD: DUMBER AND DUMBERER | LONG GONE: THE GREAT LOST QUICK ALBUM | NOAH BAUMBACH: DRIVING MR. GREENBERG

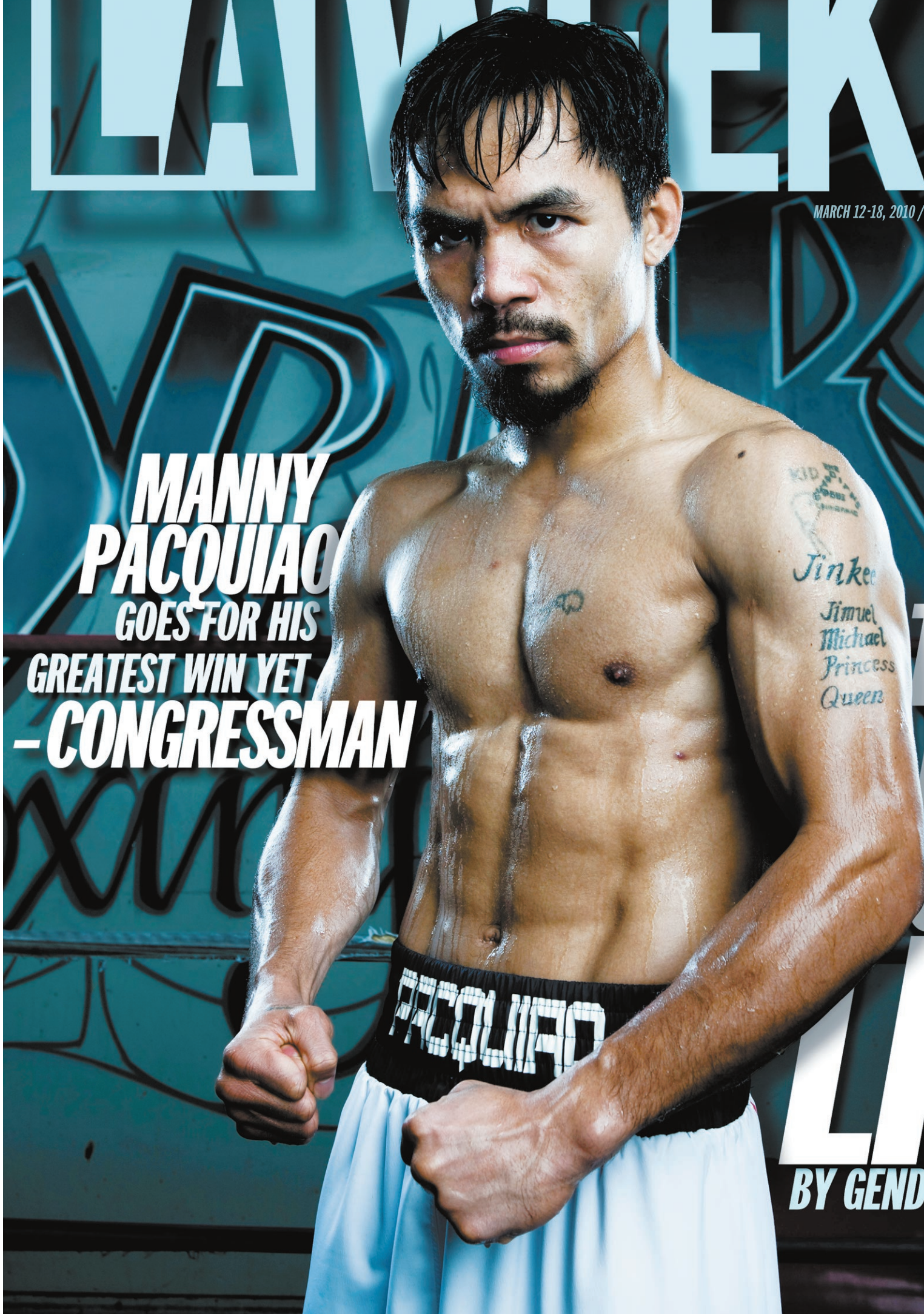
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**MANNY
PACQUIAO**
GOES FOR HIS
GREATEST WIN YET
— **CONGRESSMAN**

Jinkee
Jimuel
Michael
Princess
Queen

**THE
FIGHT
OF HIS
LIFE**
BY GENDY ALIMURUNG





IMAGES FOR THE POST-VIDEO AGE

DIRECTOR KEITH SCHOFIELD MAKES VIRAL VIDEO STARS

BY DREW TEWKSBURY

The shoot is like any other. The craft-services table offers stale bread, a plastic knife juts out from an open peanut butter jar, and the red light of a coffee machine glows. More than 100 extras sit on foldout chairs in the parking lot, all clad in athletic gear from this morning's K-Swiss commercial shoot. Earlier they had run a minimarathon down Hollywood Boulevard past Mann's Chinese Theatre. Now they wait. The 5:30 a.m. call time ensured the streets would be as vacant as the extras' bored stares. One man hangs his head and sighs, "What's the director's deal?"

A few blocks away, that director, Keith Schofield, looks at a monitor, and politely asks the runners to assemble in front of the camera. There's not much to see, but a mother and her adolescent son, lost tourists from Florida, stand behind Schofield and watch anyway.

Then through the crowd of extras — some checking their iPhones and others flirting — something happens. "Oh, my gosh, look at that!" the mom exclaims, as a man wearing purple tights and a silver cape strolls through the extras; then a masked Mexican wrestler, a *luchador* naked at the waist with action figure-size muscles, follows him. The kid's mouth is open, the mom is smiling.

"Wait 'til later," Schofield says nonchalantly. "That's when the tricycles, scooters and fireworks come out."

It's not all tricycles and fireworks for the 30-year-old director, but when it comes to non sequiturs, WTFs and moments of wonder, few

filmmakers do it better than Schofield. He has directed commercials for A-list clients like McDonald's, Virgin Mobile and, most infamously, Diesel, for whom he created the successful viral video "SFW XXX" in 2008, featuring comically amateurish animations obfuscating the nasty action of vintage porn. Think ice cream cones, horseback rides and pinball machines drawn with MS Paintbrush over videos suitable only for late-night Dutch television.

His commercial success, he says, comes from his music-video background. Although music is heard through video games and commercials, interactive iPhone apps and ringtones, the music video has returned as a powerful medium in the post-MTV media climate. And Schofield's videos are tailored to the ADD, concept-starved audience of the Internet era.

His roster is a litany of established and rising artists: the Ting Tings, Death Cab for Cutie, Fatboy Slim, Justice, Beck and Charlotte Gainsbourg, CSS, Mims and Supergrass. In 2008, he won best rock video at the *U.K. Music Video Awards*, for his guitar-smashing, gravity-defying treatment for Supergrass' "Bad Blood." Schofield was chosen to speak at the Flux Screening Series at the Hammer Museum in 2008, where he presented a naked-dance-party video (censored with creatively placed black boxes) for Fatboy Slim's Brighton Port Authority, featuring Dizzy Rascal and David Byrne. He led a PowerPoint presentation of weird Internet photos. His dry sense of humor and simple commentary confused some of the audience as he displayed an astronaut with pancakes for a head, and a skateboard resting on cheeseburgers. A year later, Schofield returned to the Hammer's film series to debut his Gainsbourg video for the Beck-produced "Heaven Can Wait," featuring

more than 50 live-action reenactments of his bizarre image collection, pancake head and all. He was joined by the visionary director Michel Gondry.

But before Schofield's awards, speeches and magazine covers, there was *120 Minutes*. As a kid in Chicago, he used to tape his favorite video off the MTV alt-rock video show. Schofield grew up in the Golden Age of videos: the 1990s, when video budgets were fat and the spots were more than merely a commercial for a band, or an album. These videos were in fact a short film, a visual poem. It could cover up an unremarkable band or highlight an underrated one.

"I still remember that Spike Jonze video for Wax, the one with the guy running in on fire in slow motion," Schofield says, "and it was totally unforgettable, even though the band was. But then there's Weezer, who before that Buddy Holly video, they were just the guys with the 'Sweater Song.'"

In the works of Jonze and Gondry, Schofield recognized the freedom that comes with collaborations. Videos were the haiku of film;

FOR WINTERGREEN'S SECOND VIDEO, "CAN'T SIT STILL," SCHOFIELD PUSHED THE DRUG THEME BEYOND ITS LIMIT, FEATURING A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR MAKING CRYSTAL METH, WHICH THE BAND CONCOCTS AND INGESTS.

they were stripped-down, three-minute bursts of strong concepts. At NYU Film School at the turn of the millennium, he began directing music videos on the cheap; when he moved to L.A., his reputation for microbudget, lo-fi videos with high concepts helped him to connect with other artists.

But midway through the 2000s, the music video died as its main avenue, MTV, shifted from clips into scripted and reality shows. Some cable channels attempted to pick up

the slack, but few would ever have the cultural clout MTV had wielded in the 1990s. Internet video was shoddy at best, and any videos worth watching were diminished by slow connections. But as high-speed Internet became nearly ubiquitous on college campuses, the viral video was born. And Schofield was at its forefront.

In 2006, L.A. band Wintergreen approached him for a video — but they had no budget. Schofield's solution? He recalls thinking, "We're not going to be on MTV, we don't have any money, so let's do a video that will appeal to video-game nerds online." He capitalized on an Internet urban legend about Atari's 1982 *E.T.* video-game flop, and a New Mexico landfill where unused cartridges were buried. With a simple story of Wintergreen setting out on a quest for the cartridges, Schofield released the video on his Web site, presenting a DIY, nerdy narrative that earned him nearly a million online hits, before YouTube was even launched.

Appealing to Web audiences gave Schofield a new philosophy for creating videos in the post-video age. "I wanted to make videos that could never be shown on MTV, using nudity, brand names, drugs, whatever."

For Wintergreen's second video, "Can't Sit Still," Schofield pushed the drug theme beyond its limit, featuring a how-to guide for making crystal meth, which the band concocts and ingests. The recipes, made from kitty litter, bleach and other household ingredients, were entirely fictional, but the video stirred up serious controversy.

"We didn't get much reaction at first when we put it on YouTube, but when we titled it 'How to Make Meth,' the reaction was crazy. It was featured on a newscast about online meth recipes — even though it was fake."

Wintergreen singer/guitarist Drew Mottinger witnessed the effects immediately. "Some fans loved it. Some fans hated it. Most people believed it. Some parent coalition started a blog trying to get it banned. My parents definitely hated it. I still get e-mails from kids claiming they made the drugs and that they worked."

Now, as countless video sites populate the Internet, the computer is the main dispensary of music, and of the images that go along with it. Schofield helped to resuscitate music videos and adapt their content for an increasingly digital age. But for Schofield, it was no big deal.

"I'd hate for people to pretentiously think that there's some meaning behind it. I mean, it's not rocket science." □