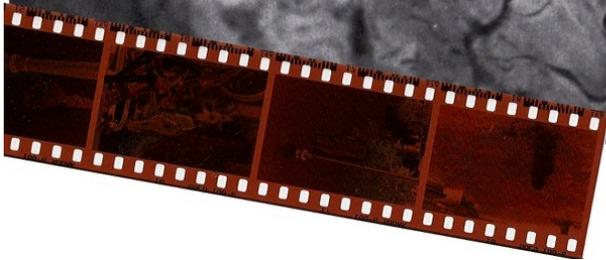


Notebooks on **E**uphoria

Sometimes A Life On The Edge Is The Only One You Get

A Man's Life In 12 Rounds



Created by John L'Ecuyer
8 X One Hour

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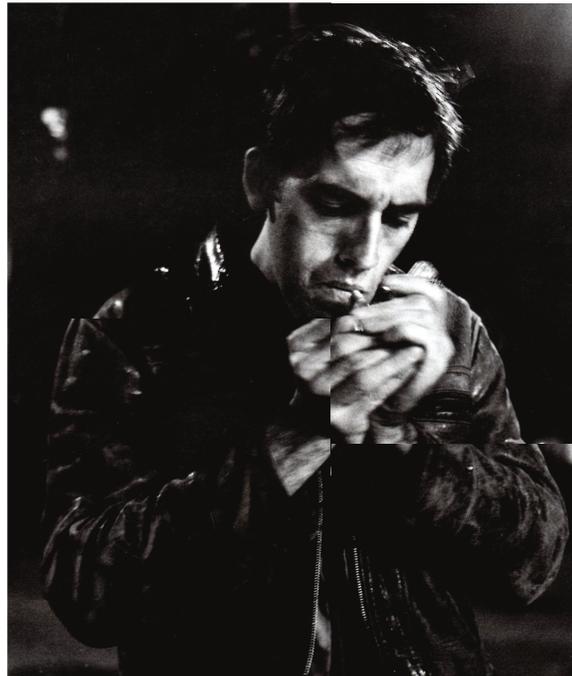
THE SHOW

HENRY LATRIGUE lives a lot of lives.

He's a "Gonzo" journalist with a dark edgy sense of humour who lives for excitement, danger and the adrenaline high of life on the edge. Sometimes he's fastest to the scene (he once beat the first bullet of a civil war to its target); other times he hangs back until the final shot has been fired and the real interesting stuff happens. He's ridden with bikers, interviewed the teenaged suicide bombers of Boko Haram, partied and written about El Chappo of Mexican cartel infamy and gone mano a mano with African warlords. Henry has seen human beings at their best and their worst. And like every great Gonzo journalist, he's been there himself.

He's also a father who shares custody of his sixteen-year-old daughter, COOKIE (CHRISTINE) with his high-strung ex-wife, JANIS, and is grappling with his own dark thoughts after the suicide of his mother, MARY—a woman under whose shadow Henry has lived his entire life.

Mary Latrigue is both Henry's inspiration and albatross. A renowned journalist, Mary was there when Castro took power, she was there when the Killing Fields in Cambodia were discovered, and she has held private counsel with almost every powerful man in the world. Her death is something Henry has yet to come to terms with; her legacy something he wonders if he will ever measure up to.



But Henry is something else as well—a heroin addict. It was a habit he started in his teenage years, but it grew out of control during his reportages in Asia, the Middle East and with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Even after many painful "cold turkeys," 24-hour opiate withdrawal programs, NA, CA, AA and every other therapy and self-help group, the full-force of addiction rears its ugly head whenever he needs "a break from feeling"—a break from the memories and nightmares of genocides in Rwanda and Darfur and Rape Camps in Bosnia. He's functional but walking on emotional thin ice every day of his life.

And as we meet him that ice is starting to crack.

WHY GONZO?

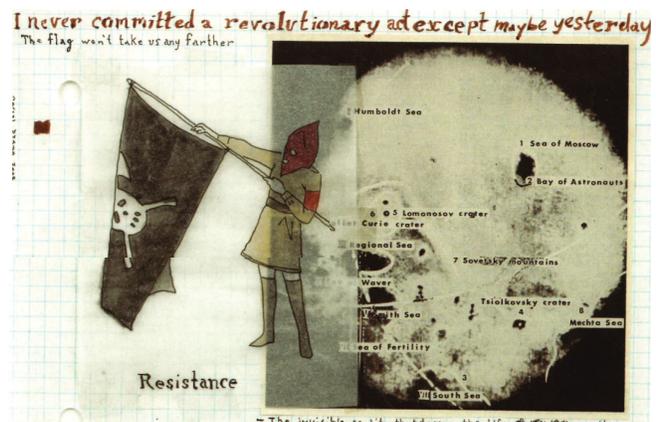
In Gonzo journalism the writer is the story. And Henry is purpose-built for that. He's the type of guy who, in order to write about crack addicts, dives head-first into that world, holing himself up in Vancouver's East Side, living in squalor at a vagrant's "hotel," and living the life—drugs and all. He has taken the adage "Write what you know, and if you don't know, live it and learn it" to a whole new extreme. He's the true definition of "Gonzo Journalist," all shotguns, bravado and mescaline. In the words of Hunter S. Thompson, he's all kinds of "bad crazy."

Henry could be described as misanthropic to those who don't know him well—he pushes away most people in his professional life—but he's actually an idealist, all too aware that he will never be the man he wants to be. So he retreats, saying shit like "Roots are for family, but they're a career killer," knowing full well that he has yet to find the courage to commit to the hard work of tending to his own flesh and blood.

The one person who knows that, and knows the true Henry, is **KOUMBA ST. GERMAINE**—a Haitian-born photojournalist who dogs Henry because she knows his assignments are the best ones to photograph because they're the most "out there."

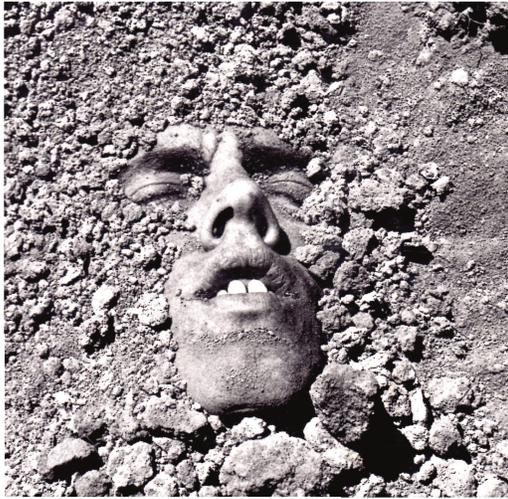
She is his only confidante regarding his drug use and she has learned to fight fire with fire when it comes to verbal blows with Henry. Despite their volatile relationship, they meet daily at a notorious hole-in-the-wall hangout called Open Da' Night. It's a melting pot of the fringes of society, where artists, vagrants, drug dealers, bikers, musicians, writers and assorted low life mix their twisted genetics, screwed up DNA, and blow-hard thoughts into little hurricanes at every table.

Henry's lifelong friend, **EARL DOURIS**, runs Open Da' Night in Montreal's St Henri area. Earl's past includes addiction, crime and prison, but now he's sober. He doesn't drink the poison he serves anymore, but holds no judgment against those who do. He's the first to understand that everyone has demons.



It's in the back booth that Henry holds court with Koumba, planning writing trips, pouring through the Herald Tribune and New York Times or just getting drunk to soothe the savage beast within. All the while CNN/ Al Jazeera /BBC plays in the background like an operetta of the misery of the world. It's here where Henry churns his soul looking for it to thicken into the life he wishes he had.

While Henry is not yet completely aware of it, the most important part of Henry's life is his relationship with his sixteen-year-old daughter—COOKIE (Christiane). She constantly questions the motives of those around her, especially her father. She asks, "If you don't care whether you live or die—then why did you have me?"



Henry strives to communicate with Cookie, but regrettably their conversations usually hit that "generational wall". Henry wants to protect Cookie from the world's evils but does not want her being naïve, either. We see Henry learn ways in which he can explain how the world works to Cookie— from serial killers, gay televangelists, the birds and the bees and everything else that CNN, the Internet and newspapers drag into our homes.

Henry also puts his thoughts in order by writing and "collaging" in notebooks – cut- out pictures, matchbook covers from brothels in Bangkok, syringe wrappers, words written so hard they tear through the page and come to life in rapid-fire visual collages, voiceover and animations.

Each episode chronicles Henry's struggles to understand his place in the world and to find reasons to keep the gun from his mouth—especially when he questions whether or not he is doing more damage to his daughter than good.

He loves her, but the world, his addiction (albeit tempered by his "functional" status), and his mother's legacy torture him, but he's been through the shit so many times you know he isn't going to give up. Henry's circumstances create situations where the emotions he copes with are the same as everyone else's— albeit accelerated. He's an everyman (emotionally speaking), despite the extenuating circumstances of his day-to- day existence.

While Henry's life is different than ours, his challenges are the same—keeping his little family together and doing his best to be a good person.

He still hasn't completely given up on his love affair with his ex-wife, JANIS. Their relationship, broken due to Henry's absences and erratic behaviour, is damaged but not yet dead. Their agreed upon "shared custody" of Cookie is the elastic band that joins them, sometimes it flexes—other times it's pulled tight, ready to recoil, whipping back to slash both people hard. Still, Henry does have a strange faith that one day they will be together again.

Then there's the relationship with his father, LEOPOLD, a quiet hardworking man that is struggling with Parkinsons and a mild form of paranoid schizophrenia who refuses help from everyone, including Henry. Leopold occasionally ends up 'missing' as he drifts for weeks from shelter to shelter until Henry can find him get him back on his meds and patch him together again. Their relationship is mostly non-verbal as Leopold's mind drifts from one random non-sequitur to the next. Harmless but tragic and a constant puzzle for Henry as he tries to help.

And finally there is the memory of his dead mother, MARY, the person Henry always wanted to prove himself to. She still visits him in visions during times of trial, offering advice and criticism in equal measure. Speaking through his phantasmagoric collages and ample doses of mushrooms.

And while Henry's writing is his salvation, it's also a curse. His assignments allow him to bail out of family responsibility, but during idle times he has a hard time living without the "buzz." During these hiatuses, Henry's bad habits surge forth. This constant tug of war between sobriety and the out and out insanity of heroin, speedballs (mixture of cocaine and heroin) and other drugs, leads Henry into moments best described as self-created insanity.



Henry's need for chemically induced euphoria often goes off the deep end in the form of overdoses. A speedball can be the ultimate high, but depending on the cut, quantity, and quality it can also lead to seizures, delusions and temporary psychosis.

From episode to episode we'll get an insight into the mania, love, genius and emotional hurricane that is Henry Latrigue—a character who taps into human emotion with a chisel and hammer, slices through experience with a scythe and expresses his emotions phantasmagorically through his writing and collages.

Henry sees life from different perspectives than "normal" people. His vulnerabilities are waved in the air like a white flag surrendering to the collective soul of human life. He dives headfirst into the abyss of understanding, karma, empathy and psychic pain like there is no tomorrow. And for Henry, the adage "you can only keep what you are willing to give away" holds more truth than for others. Each episode has Henry and family arriving at new understandings of love, cruelty and kindness – in short, the stuff of life.

Henry's journey goes from self-loathing to realizing that love, while an effort, is worth it. His physical body is a topographical map of scar tissue from the self- inflicted wounds from needles, suicide attempts, reckless acts and other outward expressions of dying for life experience. His need to give this knowledge to his daughter, if only so she can avoid the mistakes he's made, becomes his life's quest—the only reason for Henry to try and give up adrenaline and heroin is to live for his daughter's sake.

VISUAL STYLE

Notebooks on Euphoria will have a rich, commercial feel that will utilize the energy and kinetic force of the visual language used in French New Wave cinema, documentary and American cinema of the 1970s and early 1980s. We'll employ a handheld, spontaneous camera style that puts the viewer "there"—in the moment with the characters.

Henry's Notebooks (The Notebooks on Euphoria) will be a tool to communicate his inner thoughts. We will see Henry piece together the thoughts and images to his story. At times we'll see Henry's handwriting across the screen as he writes the main points of the story—his version of an outline. We'll also see and hear his thoughts under photographs Koumba takes during their various assignments—sometimes these photos are frozen still-lives: the subjects appear to be in a framed photo, but they are live actors, frozen in a moment, yet you can see they are breathing, blinking, momentarily alive. Other times, Henry sits alone as a shower of letters, different sizes, fonts, etc. fall from the sky—a confused mess of thoughts looking for a home in his mind.

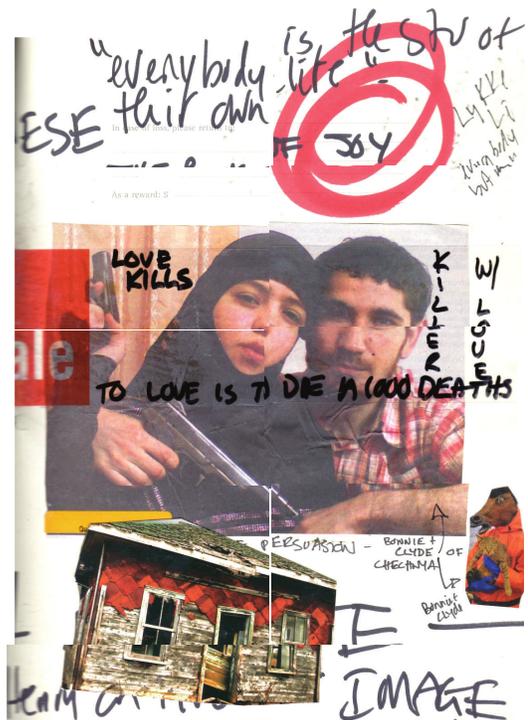
An off-the-shoulder, documentary feel will be used during conflict—be it Henry on assignment or in domestic turmoil—for hard-hitting, visceral effect. As well, a sophisticated manipulation of the visual language will be used by creating a blueprint for **specific moments that explore the subtext of the written message visually by using focal racks, whip pans, and slow dolly shots.**

A multitude of visual techniques and forms will be lightly employed in certain episodes, everything from cell-phone camera films, voiceover and direct address. Henry's notebooks/collage journals will have a life of their own through the economical use of magic realism. Parallel questions and answers to life and living will reveal themselves in Henry's collages.

Koumba St. Germaine's photographs are beautiful, sometimes stark, and challenging in their representations of the troubled places she's been, but her eye always catches something beautiful in the world before her, thereby making the photos her contribution to the collective hope of mankind.

Koumba's oil paintings, on the other hand, make Dante's Inferno look like a travelogue **to the Caribbean. They're a graphic mix of Jean-Michel Basquiat and Mark Prent** sculptures (disfigured, amputated subject matter), so while her photography finds beauty in the eyes of children, her paintings reveal her soul. And in them we see that the violence of her youth and the carnage of Port Au Prince are indelibly stamped on her heart.

Building upon the idea of the frozen image photography and painting provides, we will create “freeze frames” in moments of great tension, in order to analyze the environment, people and circumstances of what we think we are seeing. For example, Henry gets caught in a bank robbery while writing a story. At the moment when the bank robber pulls the trigger, time will freeze—the bullet hanging in midair on its way toward its intended target, a frightened looking teller frozen mid-scream. The actors will hold their positions; the only one moving is Henry as he sidles up next to the shooter. He comments on the situation, knowing that when the moment comes back to life—the split second it takes for the bullet to pierce and enter the head of the teller—everyone’s life will be changed forever. Once the bullet left the chamber, destiny—or just plain bad luck—is all that is left.



Attention to detail will be intense on every level: the cinematography, music, score, colour palette, casting and locations will all be used to create authenticity.

This will be a series with a powerful, driven and focused design.

HENRY’S BACK STORY/MORE INFO

Henry Latrigue is a 43-year-old writer whose first novel, *Cottonfever/Libertine*, was the diary (writings and collages) he kept while a junkie between the ages of 14 and 17. Its publication made him an underground literary sensation, and his career as a journalist took off. From reporting for *Rolling Stone* magazine on the crisis in Darfur to writing for *The New York Times* about spending the day with a suicide bomber in the West Bank as he prepared to destroy himself and others in a crowded market in Israel—Henry became a star. His writing is much like his personal style, witty, biting and acerbic.

As we meet Henry he is haunted by his Mother’s suicide—Why did she do it? Why didn’t she call him—even just to say goodbye? His current collage/diaries explore her death, the meaning behind losing a parent, his love for his daughter, his conflicted on/off relationship with the love of his life, Janis, as well as the story/issue/event he is writing about at the time.

Cookie (Christine) Buchan is the 14-year-old daughter of Henry Latrigue and Janis **Buchan. She’s a loner, a “still-waters-run-deep” type who’s into music like Godspeed You Black Emperor and TV on the Radio, and walks around with an “I Hate Lady Gaga” t-shirt.** Like her father, Cookie dances to her own beat. She reads/looks at her father’s diaries/collages as a means to understanding him.

Cookie could be compared easily to a slightly older version of the little girl in *Little Miss Sunshine*, but with a harder edge. While she is angry with her father and his various “abandonments,” she knows she would not want him to be any different.

Janis Buchan is a radicalized and proactive feminist and film critic for the city’s free weekly, *The People*, as well as being a freelance book editor and a volunteer for an AIDS Hospice. She spent

ten years with Medicines Sans Frontiers as a field worker on the front lines. She deals with life head-on and doesn't mince words—in Janis' mind, poetry is mental masturbation and she believes that writing needs to be a tool for change.

She was Henry's "rock," maintaining stability in his life. She's disciplined and smart, but ultimately struggles with describing what's going on inside herself. In the end, Janis and Henry's extreme personalities became too much, and they mutually agree to separate. But going their own way proves to be more challenging than either of them thought. While they miss each other, their miscommunication continues to create conflicts, because underneath it all, Janis is struggling with an anger so deep and so strong that it even scares her.

Leopold Latrigue is Henry's father and the quintessential "working class hero." He's also largely responsible for igniting in Henry the passion for change, equality and empathy. A Union Organizer and dock worker, Leopold did everything and anything to support the family. As his wife went to college and became a writer. But Leopold was a puzzle.

The puzzle he created is that, on the surface, Leopold lived by all the values of the 1950s and yet kept a deep, dark secret hidden for so long. His mind was slowly disintegrating into the chaos of mental illness but he adapted himself in order to mask his symptoms as long as possible.

Koumba St. Germaine is a beautiful, slender and intelligent photojournalist who lost her family during the Haitian Duvalier dictatorship and his Ton-Ton Macoute henchmen. Her father had been a politician for the people and Koumba was five years old when she witnessed his execution in her living room.

Her formative years on the planet were in the world's armpit—Port Au Prince, Haiti. It explains why she's considered fearless by her peers and that civil wars, jihads and junkies don't shock her—she'd seen a lot worse before her sixth birthday than most people see in their lives. Koumba's photographs are Walker Evan's-like beauties, Larry Clark-ish hardcore through to WeeGee-ish tabloid crime – in your face exposes. She knows how to hit a nerve and play with your heart.

Her gentle demeanor comes from a massive empathy for emotional pain. You can't be evil if you've felt the pain evildoers' cause, but you also learn to trust no one.

Except for Henry...

Mary Latrigue (Moran) is Henry's Mother. Her troubled upbringing made her at once a dark, sad and depressed soul struggling constantly with the "meaning of life" and the complete opposite as well—a hard-drinking, joking, tough Irish gal. Her influence on Henry is huge—her wit and help fuel Henry's efforts to change the way he is living.

But Mary is more than that. She is also the person whom Henry measures himself against, and so far, he has always come up short. And she (or her "spirit"—she committed suicide) is not afraid to remind him of that.

Earl (Pinkie) Douris is Henry's buddy, a funny, worn out, "seen-it-all" who owns the café/bar that has become Henry's second home, Open Da' Night. Think Peter Falk with the humour of Dave Chappelle. Earl financed his modest enterprise by dealing pot from his taxi and selling Mob merchandise from the trunk of same. Now he's in AA and lives "on the straight line."

Earl tries to help Henry in his sobriety and their 'man to man' conversations are sometimes subtitled to reveal the hidden emotion and caring they have for each other but could never verbalize overtly.

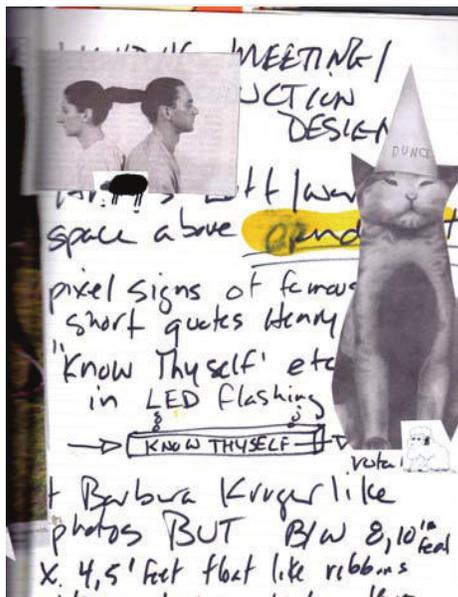
CREATOR'S NOTES

The straightforward approach in **Curtis' Charm**, along with the magic realism and visual language of my second feature, **Saint Jude**, are testimonials that it has been my life's work to understand and employ all the tools I have at hand as a Director.

As well, my films **Le Gout Des Jeunes Filles** and **The Riverbank** are also an amalgamation of these varied techniques in successful usage. Most recently, the 2015 Chinese/English Crime series **Blood & Water** (Directed entire season and the upcoming Season 2/2016) is also a strong visual template for what Notebooks On Euphoria will look like. After more than 100 hours of TV, documentaries, short films and features I've directed, not to mention the book I've written (UseOnceandDestroy) and the jazz CD based on the book; I know I can create—along with the right team—a remarkable, forward-looking and unique TV series.

Notebooks on Euphoria is about all that is beautiful about the human soul; the innocence of a child, the fear when one comes face-to-face with death, and the altruism shown by some people under the most difficult of circumstances. Notebooks on Euphoria will communicate each episode's subject in both sophisticated and simple visual language.

When Six Feet Under debuted, it seemed a strange concept—a family owning a funeral parlour, characters talking to dead parents (magic realism)—but we were starved for its groundbreaking creativity. It blasted open the doors for other genre- busting concepts including **Luther**, **The WIRE**, **OZ**, **Narcos**, **Lilyhammer** (Norwegian/English) and **The Killing**. I believe Notebooks on Euphoria will be equally groundbreaking.



We see the series at its core revealing the day-to- day life of a person who has chosen work that takes him to the margins of society, all the while exposing the tightrope he walks as he takes demanding, life-threatening assignments. People like Henry are unique: they have the same emotions and live in the same world we do (families, children, dreams, hopes and aspirations) but they tempt fate and push their souls to the edge with every endeavour.

When we meet Henry he's standing on that edge once again. Will he fall or will he step back from it?