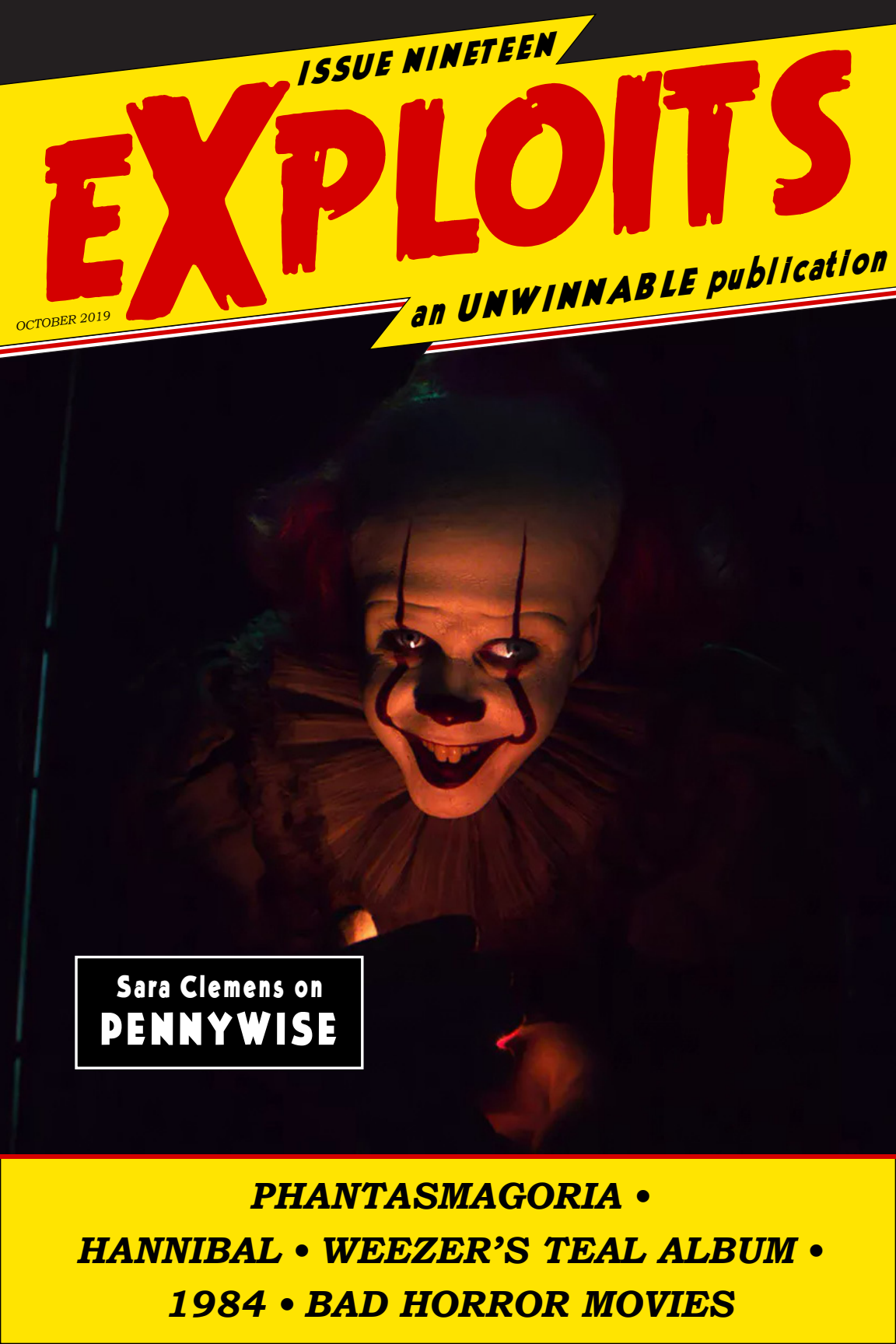


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EXPLOITS

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Sara Clemens on
PENNYWISE

**PHANTASMAGORIA •
HANNIBAL • WEEZER'S TEAL ALBUM •
1984 • BAD HORROR MOVIES**



1984 – It’s not about sex; it’s about power. This idea is entertained within *1984*, where sex is an act of defiance against a repressive state. While the sexually violent fantasy that precedes Winston’s pursuit of an unsanctioned relationship with Julia is fleeting, it finds an unfortunate and misdirected echo in the “incel” movement, which employs sexual violence, imagined and real, as a fantasy of retribution.

For Winston, the episode of imagined sexual violence occurs in the Two Minutes of Hate, where he fantasizes of murdering and raping his coworker Julia in an almost animalistic fashion. It is brutal and vengeful, representing his desire to fight back against the restrictions of the Party. The Party may enact the restrictions, but his impotence and rage are channeled against a woman he desires. As seen with Party scapegoat (and Trotsky stand-in) Emmanuel Goldstein, it is easy to direct people’s anger and issues towards other people. Julia herself doesn’t hold significant power, but as a woman and a leader of the Anti-Sex league, she becomes an easy target. Incels enact the same targeting strategy seen in the Two Minutes of Hate. They may talk about other men in the form of “Chads”

and the “80-20” rule, but their vitriol always returns to women.

In *1984*, the state control of sex serves to control passions that could be detrimental to Party loyalty. Sexual violence in Winston’s mind is directed against a perceived loyalist and finds expression in the same language that the Party has given Winston as the sole release outlet for his frustration and rage. To incels, sex is seen as the solution to life’s problems. Their confidence, work, and happiness are all tied to sex, which is then used to justify a hatred of women for supposedly denying them sex. By using sexual violence, they seek to regain a sense of agency by reasserting a fantasy of male domination.

However, in *1984* Winston’s eventual acts of resistance do not revolve around violence against women. Julia is just as powerless as Winston, harmed by the same restrictions of the Party. Incels, on the other hand, seek to place restrictions on others to give themselves a sense of power. They may align themselves with Winston, but they are not a resistance, only a perpetrator of the violence and targeting that the Party uses within the Two Minutes of Hate.

– WILLIAM DOWELL