

## If You're a Hipster and You Know It...

### Brooklyn Gals Cash in on the Hipster-plosion

By Jess Goodwin

Incredibly popular blog — check. Book deal — check. Weekly column on a major news site — check.

Brenna Ehrlich and Andrea Bartz, who met during grad school at Northwestern, started *Stuff Hipsters Hate* just over a year ago. They'd been exchanging e-mails about their various encounters with hipsters; one day, Ehrlich stumbled upon a new kind of hipster.

"The 'I hate everything' hipster," she said. "All he did was talk about the things he hated: jeans, clapping at shows. Who hates clapping?"

As the site grew, it garnered attention from a variety of people: from hipsters to "bros and trixies" — basically what the "popular kids" grow up to be — to all those in between.

"We've gotten e-mails from people who like, scary hate hipsters," said Ehrlich.

Good or bad, all this attention has paid off for the girls; the blog has spawned a book — *Stuff Hipsters Hate: A Field Guide to the Passionate Opinions of the Indifferent*, due for release this week.

"It's kind of a faux-anthropological look at hipsters," Bartz said of the book. "Some of it will be in the style of the blog, but a lot of it will read like a field guide."

Back in June, Ehrlich and Bartz were approached by *CNN.com* to write a weekly column on "netiquette." They've covered such topics as how to write e-mails without looking like an idiot, comment trolls and appropriate Twitter behavior.

The girls aren't just Internet personalities; they have "real" jobs. Ehrlich works as a news editor for *Mashable.com* and Bartz holds the same position at a psychology magazine.

So how do you know if you're a hipster? According to Ehrlich and Bartz, "To be a true hipster, one does not identify oneself as such. That is why you will often hear dudes in skintight jeans and chicks flashing calculator wrist watches

muttering, 'F\*\*\*ing hipsters,' as they sip at their PBRs and glare at all the kids from NYU sporting red pants spewing off the L train onto Bedford Ave."

If you believe the gentle mocking of SHH, among the other things hipsters hate fall children, religion and parents (or, what many people consider the staples of a well-functioning community). They also hate "bros and trixies" — who hate them right back — and other hipsters.

For a while — until they outed themselves back in November — no one knew who the minds behind SHH were. No one even knew that it was more than one person bringing them their daily dose of hipster info. Ehrlich and Bartz made (and still make) sure to only refer to themselves as "I" and "me," leading at least one person to believe that they were an "aging ex-hipster with a potbelly and thinning hair who lives in Bushwick." (To be fair, that is exactly what they sound like.)

That may be what drew people to the blog: hipsters could read it and assume that whomever was writing it was just bitter and malicious, and non-hipsters could read it and smile and nod knowingly. People were undoubtedly surprised that a pair of girls who look, well, *nice*, were behind the wheel, but that probably just made them like the blog even more. The tone of each post is just scathing enough to appease the hipster-haters, yet the girls seem to have a certain amount of affection toward the culture.



American Spirit has become yet another staple of 'hipster' culture. JESS GOODWIN



Brenna Ehrlich, left, with Andrea Bartz

### Not the First Blog-to-Book

*Stuff Hipsters Hate* isn't the first blog to bring its creators success outside the confines of the internet, and it's surely won't be the last. Look at *This F\*\*\*ing Hipster*, another blog dedicated to mocking the culture, released its book (or "book," the not-widely-known term for a book based on a blog) earlier this year. HarperCollins last year released Brooklynite Nick Douglas' *Twitter Wit: Brilliance in 140 Characters or Less*, a collection of funny quotes he found on Twitter.

*WTF Is Up With My Love Life?*, a forum-based web site created by Jessica Massa of Manhattan and Rebecca Wiegand of Brooklyn, was born from the girls' idea for a book and movie. (Massa and Wiegand do have a movie deal with Newline, though, in a reverse of how things like this typically work, the movie deal came first, then the book, then the web site.)

*WTF* is based on what the girls call the "gaggle." According to the site, a gaggle is "the select group of guys in [a woman's] life who compel [her] to put in that little bit of extra effort because they are, or potentially could be, romantic prospects." Massa and Wiegand came up with the idea after they realized that "people don't go on traditional dates anymore." Rather, friendships are formed first (hence the gaggle) and romantic relationships just naturally evolve.

Readers can submit to "Date or Non-Date," where their peers weigh in on whether an encounter can be considered a date, as well as the "WTF?!" section, devoted entirely to the bizarre moments puncturing people's love lives.

In honor of *Stuff Hipsters Hate*'s first birthday, Ehrlich and Bartz threw a bash at The Woods, a bar in South Williamsburg, last month. Not Paint, Blood, a Brooklyn-based progressive rock quartet known for their elaborate costumes, performed to a slew of twenty-somethings who gently swayed to the beat. After the show, a girl and two boys sat at a picnic table outside, arguing loudly about the nature of hipsters. "We are exactly what you're talking about!" exclaimed the girl, her mismatched earrings dangling. "We are hipsters."

Clearly she, at least, is not. The first rule of hipsterdom is that you do not admit to being a hipster, after all.

### Hipster: What's in a name?

The success of *Stuff Hipsters Hate* can perhaps be attributed in part to the appropriation of the topic (and terminology) into the mainstream. The word has started to be thrown around haphazardly, used to describe musical, fashion, even food trends, thereby inundating people who would never have heard of hipsters with knowledge of the subculture.

"I get Google alerts for the word hipster sent to me, and there are more and more articles every day," says Ehrlich.

Many publications have also taken to associating certain practices with hipsterdom, in effect creating "hipsters by proxy." Unless you're a racial minority and delivering food, for instance, if you're on a bicycle and of a certain age you'll be branded a hipster. Tattoos have found their

way onto the list of hipster indicators, as has veganism, drinking PBR and smoking American Spirits. Based on all this, it has been suggested that hipsters are just poor — the blog *Hipster or Homeless?* has taken full advantage of this, posting photos of particularly raggedy youngsters — but then again, another supposed quality of hipsterdom is a strong sense of entitlement, created by the trust funds they're assumed to have (how else can these kids do nothing but hang around on Bedford, yet still afford pricey apartments and gourmet food?). Hipsters, it would seem, at their basest core, are just bratty rich kids who think the easiest way to substantiate themselves is by living unnecessarily far within their means.

Every few days, it seems, a story or blog entry about hipsters emerges; a number of popular media outlets have written features

that downplay the hipness of hipsters, rendering it commonplace. In April *New York* magazine published "Clash of the Bearded Ones: Hipsters, Hasids, and the Williamsburg street," about the war over the Bedford Avenue bike lane.

"...Each group finds itself standing in for a larger one in a larger fight: the Satmars for all Orthodox Jews and the bikers for all young secular Williamsburgers, i.e. hipsters," reads a passage in the article.

Such a statement is bold, at the very least. That simple "i.e." clumps every twentysomething who lives in Williamsburg into a particular group, one that, if the stereotypes are true, forms a community of tattooed bicyclists with weird haircuts and a deep loathing for the very mainstream they're inadvertently infiltrating (also one that, assuming SHH is correct, hates all religion, and therefore doesn't actually have one to separate from state).

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