



Source: Thanassis Cambanis, 'Christian split in Lebanon raises new fears of civil war', *The New York Times* in *The Age* online, 08/10/07.

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In a circle of teenage boys in a field away from the sounds of the city is an unlikely boy being thrown into the middle of a cultish brat pack from the school of hell. Each boy on the outer whistles and barks *en masse*. A helicopter is flown in to survey the clearing with a searchlight and a camera. The images are transmitted to a homebase surveillance tower and broadcast live on a local public television station. A deal was struck by some rich kid in the pack. There is all this light and a circle of white-skinned bodies. In the clearing the boys mouths are open. Strange growls and sounds like hate. Their game is always played in loops. They all hold hands, trance-like. The televised image struggles for definition. Only criss cross lines and static. In the clearing the unlikely boy is being hounded. Hunted like a dog. Dutifully sacrificed, made victim for betrayal of their fathers who are embedded in their collective consciousness. They chant a mock eulogy. One older boy says (under his breath): *you're in trouble now. Daddy's gonna getcha*. So the boy in the middle must be violated and destroyed. That's the plan. Some kind of bored high school plot. These boys have it all worked out. They believe they are demi-gods. It's a boys' own adventure.

But, according to the television network manager it's all good fodder for a reconstruction. Or a tv-series. In which, a scene of once cute young teenage punks who you'd see at every club get transported after their gruesome deaths to another plane of surreality. For effect some faces will be too far gone and zombified. They will carry out private ceremonies of boy team sacrifice and football league bravado stadium scrums. The pivotal scenario in the shower block where a line of naked ball players soap each other's bodies down, tongue kissing and jerking off and nipple biting and cable tv ratings all going sky high viewed on 10 by 10 metre visual display units, previewing the rushes for a newly designed gay porn channel, leaving it all quite open for inspection.

Stills from the above scene will be taken to an edit suite, displayed as a wall of photographs. Boys missing. Cross referencing. Persons misplaced. A harsh light is focused on the row of photos. A selection of 'media experts' will gather to examine the stills. In one you see the circle of boys in a field surrounded by light. Like UFO castaways stranded in a clearing. Presented here so that the panel might concentrate and reflect on the finite details, the facial expressions of the boys, the tattoos and marks on their skin, their criminal intent. The manager's assistant butts in. 'Consider, if you will, the following comparative photographs, taken from our media archives, to give you a kind of background on the private lives these boys might be leading...' She passes the following images

around, all marked and numbered: Boy One, head lowered, shirtless, an indistinct gash or wound on his left cheek...Boy Two, completely naked, lies face up on a mattress, his legs and feet are far more focused than the rest of his body, you can't see any facial expression...Boy Three with Boy Four, tied together with a black rope looking passive...Boy Five, in a familiar setting, is having his toes sucked by Boy Six...Boy Seven has his back to us, he appears to be photographed in mid-fall...Boy Eight, Boy Nine, Boy Ten, all wearing faded denims, again shirtless, Boy Ten is on a chair with a horse bit in his mouth, nasty...Boy Eleven stares into the camera, tears streaming down his face, wearing a dog collar...Boy Twelve is being thrown against a door, blood in his hair, with an indistinct figure moving out of shot...Boy Thirteen looks incredibly familiar, could easily be mistaken for Boy Ten...Boy Three returns and is whipping a new Boy (Boy fourteen) with chains, leather straps and barbed wire, both boys appear to be laughing...Boy Fifteen is crouched in an alcove by a window wrapped in a grey blanket, eyes down casting an air of melancholy upon the scene...Boy Nine is now being hit by Boy Three, lit by fluorescent light and Boy Nine looks awkward dressed up like some undergrad novice, all tulle frock with his denims wrapped around his feet and his tattooed chest pressed against the wall...Boy Seven in this scene still has the wound straight up his spine but now lies face flat on the carpet and in this particular scenario the camera loves his shoulder blades...Boy Eleven has had the dog collar removed and is being attacked by two sick-looking creatures, canine variety, while Boy Thirteen sits in the background on a chair by the alcove, he seems to be speaking or shouting at the dogs but the scene never changes...

We return to the televised scene of the clearing. The cultish brat pack have now disappeared and are moving through dense scrub and overgrowth. Standing amongst trees near a river they stop and remove their shirts. They will spit in their hands and rub it into each other's bodies removing dead skin, removing the lines of scars and afflictions, blurring the wounds with greater holes, greater views in, with love. One of the boys runs to the river. He tears away from the pack. He's screaming and slapping and hitting his body with thuds and smacks and he doesn't feel washed or alive or healed but he does feel free so he shouts: *I've got these bugs crawling around in my head alright and they're not going away*. No-one retrieves him. He dives into the river. He hits something hard on the bottom. The other boys move on. There's nothing to be done. They just hum. No words.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Jason Sweeney.*