



# Between the Lines



“WHERE WERE YOU THIS TIME?” MY FRIEND ASKED, stabbing at the air near my sternum with the business end of her fork.

“The Alps,” I shrugged. “French ones mostly.”

“You’re such a f—king jet setter.”

“No,” I said, indignant. “I’m a jetbag.”

“A jetbag?” She’d obviously never heard the term. I think I had just invented it. The nomenclature of travel clearly hadn’t caught up to guys like me yet.

Right then I had a hard time explaining to this jealous friend that, on paper, I was technically a member of the working poor: a grad student with three crappy jobs; no capital to speak of (except on student loan day); and close to zero career prospects (present gig excluded). I couldn’t pretend that my passport wasn’t a well-stamped affair. I knew people who flew more than me yet none of them were as broke as I was. Rockin’ on someone else’s dime was a long-standing specialty.

The problem was that “jet setter” conjured up negative images to my crusty snowboarder’s mind. She was calling me something I was not. Jet setters have a girl in every port, you see. They have black belt translators, and Mont Blanc pens from the Concorde. Jet setters smoke cigarettes, drink martinis and have a crisp tuxedo at the ready.

I don’t smoke. Martinis are about the only alcoholic beverage I loathe. And, since the last tux in my possession burned in a post-wedding incident involving a certain surprisingly hot halogen torchière in a fellow shred’s living room, every tuxedo rental outfit on the west coast now keeps my photo next to their till.

My jealous friend grew impatient, waiting for the definition. “Half jet setter, half dirtbag,” I explained, thinking that this was one of those things you don’t realize is true until you say it out loud, like “I love you.” I was a jetbag. Before I coined the term I was just a guy who spent a lot of time in airports dragging a shitty blue board bag around. “We don’t have much money,” I continued. “Our luggage

doesn’t match. But we’ll go anywhere, anytime, with almost anybody. We are the Jetbags.”

And so it began. Self-consciousness of my lucky situation had crept in. I’d been questioned and had answered. Like a new species or a new disease, I’d given it a name. I was committed to explain things now. This could be the beginning of the end, I realized. No more going to Austria for the weekend and managing to eat *wiener schnitzel* five times in three days. No more last minute missions to Mammoth with 60 bucks in my pocket and nowhere to stay. No more good luck.

But it all turned out okay. Four years ago, when discussions about starting this magazine first began, I was mooching a

standby seat at Mike Wiegele Heli, putting my boots on every morning and hoping somebody with money or a travel budget was too tired or hungover to claim theirs. (You’d be surprised...) I was unhappy with the state of shred mags in general and agreed mainly because I wanted to share the dirtbag enthusiasm for adventure that snowboarding had instilled in my own life and changed it forever.

I hope this travel special has something for everyone. It spans half the world—from obscure post-

Soviet shredding to chasing Nicolas Müller in his homeland to more domestic missions like Portland and Utah—because the jetbag is nothing if not an omnivore. So, whether you’re game for some serious find-out-what-you’re-made-of riding or just a road trip to a new terrain park, I hope the stories here will inspire you to start packing—or at least to renew your passport in case the opportunity should arise.



—Colin Whyte, Editor  
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The above is an adapted excerpt from “Jetbag,” a chapter in my (cough) book of non-fiction, I’ll Give You Something to Cry About: An Exercise in Character Assassination.

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anybody. We are the  
Jetbags.”