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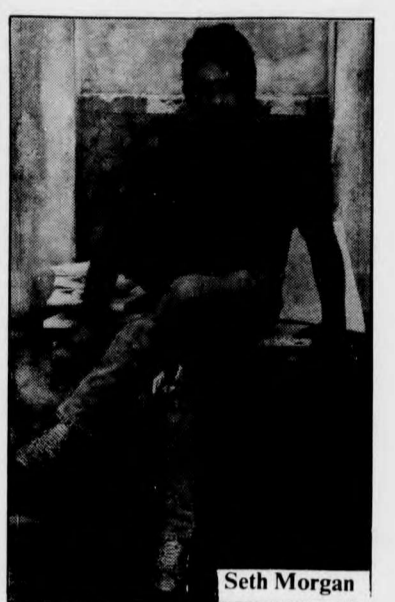
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**ARTS**

*I wouldn't let my mother read it*



Seth Morgan

Photo: Marion Ettinger

by Paul Gazzola

Homeboy  
written by Seth Morgan  
published by Random House

Sometimes it takes a kick in the head to make you see the obvious.

Having finished Seth Morgan's first novel, *Homeboy*, I didn't know what the hell to write about it. Damon Runyon's cops and robbers stories mixed in with alot of Joseph Wambaugh sensationalism came to mind, but something was still missing. Then, I saw David Lynch's *Wild At Heart*, and it proved to me again that the obvious works best when no one realizes how obvious it is.

*Homeboy* is a love story set amongst pimps and prostitutes, cops and cons. Joe Speaker, the homeboy of the title, is a strip-joint barker with a healthy heroin habit. To support that habit, he gets involved in a robbery with another addict/friend, who panics and kills the shop owner.

So, Joe and his friend decide to run, taking with them Joe's girlfriend, Kitty Litter. But, to accomplish their getaway, another robbery is needed, and, to make a long story short, that robbery is also a major fuck-up. Joe gets stuck with an unwanted diamond that has a long history of killing its owners.

Oh, almost forgot, the diamond belongs to the local smut boss, Baby Jewels Moses, who's using it to blackmail a prominent judge. Joe gets caught stealing a Porsche by a gung-ho homicide cop looking for his runaway daughter and is sent to jail.

Actually, despite a cast of thousands and a helluva lot of sub-plots, the book never gets too confusing. If anything, *Homeboy* is sometimes too predictable, and, in certain spots, suffers from the Charles Dickens disease of coincidence: father finds son in prison, star witnesses bang into each other at a plumbers convention, etc. Just like *Wild At Heart*, Morgan gives his book a fairytale quality while conjuring up some brutal realities like a prison AIDS ward and a pimp who uses disobedient prostitutes as "stars" in his snuff films. But, if you can overlook all the bodies — and, there are lots of burnt, mutilated bodies in this book — you'll find an old-fashioned love story.

Not that I'd let my mother read it...

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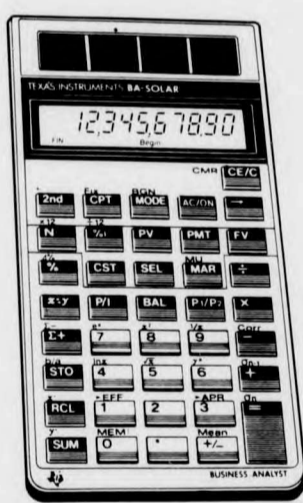
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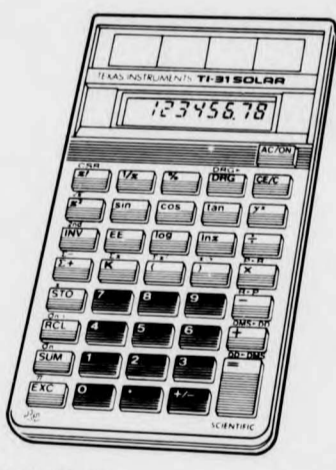
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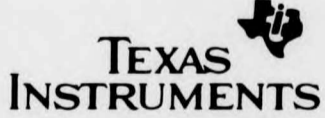
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