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# ROBERT REPINO HAS A NEW CATCHPHRASE

by Brian Hurley



## An Interview with the Author *by the author*

### **What is this book about?**

It's a collection of 104 awful lies about my dear friend Robert Repino.

### **Why in God's name did you make it?**

At first it was an outlet for ideas that didn't fit anywhere else. Like the notion of using the crossword puzzle in your in-flight magazine to send a coded message to the next person who uses your seat. I like that idea. But it didn't belong in any of the stories I was writing. So I collected these ideas, I attributed them to a character named Robert Repino, and I posted them on Twitter. The best ones are in this book.

### **So it's like Chuck Norris facts?**

Yes, some of them are absurdly macho. ("Robert Repino wrestled a blue whale.") Others are like the super-condensed narratives in Félix Fénéon's *Novels in Three Lines*. ("Robert Repino is destined to bring about the end of the world by crashing into a particle accelerator on his rollerblades.") Others are like the startling little koans in Padgett Powell's *The Interrogative Mood*. ("Robert Repino transforms, at night during a full moon, into someone who actually gives a shit.") I like those books very much. And I love it when those micro-stories come full circle; when they build an arc and tear it down in a single move. ("Robert Repino has a secret cave in the Himalayas, guarded by a clan of super-intelligent yetis, where he keeps a few knick-knacks of no real value.") It can be really dense and exciting.

### **Are they meant to be funny?**

I guess they can be. But I wasn't looking for punchlines. For me the fun part is the form. You have this tiny space in which to try a certain trick of syntax, or put a rude twist on an urban legend.

### **Does the book have a bigger story that it's telling?**

Not really.

### **How did Twitter affect the writing?**

Twitter is part of the reason I did this. I wanted to tweet, but I didn't want to tweet anything personal or newsworthy. I wanted to make something for Twitter that stood apart from the constant stream of links and updates. Using Twitter allowed me "publish" quickly. Sometimes too quickly—a lot of my Robert Repino tweets were stupid, and I didn't include them in this book. Twitter also gave me the feeling that any little thing I posted was a "drop in the bucket" of some larger, open-ended project. Which felt liberating.

### **Who is Robert Repino?**

Robert Repino is a real person, a good friend of mine. He seems to encourage other people to make up stories about him. He didn't necessarily do any of the things in the book; he's more of a concept that links these unrelated ideas. I needed a character to tie them together, and the real Robert Repino is quite a "character." I thought it would be cool to take these absurd tales and bring them back to reality by attributing them to a real person. And I'm curious to see if people can imagine all of these disparate things happening to a single person, or if the character will break apart under all the madness.

### **What's next?**

Something. I don't know. Keep checking the blog.

