



KILLER FELONY

WHAT WOULD RIKER DO? Grifter Hutch (left) and Samson Briggs make a bacon-grease sacrifice to their idol.

## Alberta 'stache-letes ready to show beards on world stage

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When Samson Briggs and Grifter Hutch walk down the street, passersby take notice. Golden hair frames Hutch's mouth and traces a bold path up his cheeks, and the glossy locks on Brigg's chin have so much attitude that they enter rooms a full ten seconds before he does.

But these spectacular displays of virility are not just for show. These two men, the Canadian Competitive Beard and Moustache team, are serious facial-hair athletes who regularly take on the best in the world.

"A lot of people don't understand that this is actually a serious sport," Briggs says. "They think that you just don't shave, but that couldn't be further from the truth."

"You have to shave, in fact, so it grows thicker—so much thicker," Hutch expands. "And the shaving itself isn't enough. You have to will it. Every day, I spend three hours in front of the mirror, willing it to grow."

It's that kind of dedication that sets Briggs and Hutch apart from the general bearded populace. Currently training at the University of Alberta under famed follicle coach David "David Usher" Usher, these two consider beard- and moustache-growing more than a simple hobby; to them, it's a way of life. They go to great lengths to ensure their facial hair can compete against the best beards in the business.

"You look at it, and you think wire-wool thoughts. I've actually scoured several pots with my face," Briggs says. "It's good for the beard. The grease feeds it. You see, most people think you just have to feed your body, but you also have to feed your beard."

"I give mine a healthy six servings of vegetables a day; I sort of mash it in there and let it sit. It eats it right up."

Winning fur-facers like Hutch and Briggs also have game-day tricks to ensure their face-coverings are at their peak when they take the field. While not willing to give up all their secrets to the perfect facial follicles—

international competition can be cutthroat—the two did divulge what they consider the most important item in their equipment bag.

"Bacon grease gives you the maximum hold," Briggs says. "I think it has something to do with the fact that a mustache can sense fear, and so if you want to tame a wild beast like that, you have to wrap it in another beast's fat; otherwise, it won't respect you."

**"Even without a beard I have more manliness in my little finger than these guys—or Bobby Samuel—have in their whole body."**

STEVE KIRKHAM  
BEAR SCAT CREATOR/OWNER

"What he's saying is that the bacon grease distracts the moustache," Hutch explains. "While it's absorbing that, it's on show, basically. It's afraid of scavengers coming, so it's in full force."

"[The beard] is very much a separate animal. That's something you have to understand going into one of these competitions—it's like having a wolverine on your chin," Briggs adds.

The Canadians have been able to take tame that beast, however, and, despite being a young team, have already racked up an impressive string of victories. One in particular has already become the stuff of legend on the beard- and moustache-circuit: the time Hutch "actually feared a moustache off a man's face."

"That would have been about three years ago; it was at the final," Hutch recalls. "It was a head-to-head match, and it was with the Irish. They made their final play, but his moustache just wasn't strong enough."

"We were able to jump on that and take advantage of that when we saw

how strong our offence was. It first off retracted into his face, and then he started to cry out his own hair."

It was Canada's first real international moustache triumph, and Hutch says that the match forced other countries to start taking his team seriously as contenders. He says the general attitude towards him and Briggs is now one of respect and awe.

"It's a helluva feeling when you walk in and you can smell the fear in their beards."

Usher, who is a legend on the facial-hair circuit for his revolutionary "moistache"—a lip-cozy that remained perpetually dewy while losing none of its absorbency—has been credited for the team's recent success, but he insists that it's Briggs' and Hutch's natural talent that's brought them this far.

"I haven't seen such pure, concentrated manliness since General Pavel Liprandi led the Russians against the British at Balaclava," he says. "It's like they're holding their testicles on their face."

It's important that Briggs and Hutch take good care of their facial hair because at the international level, the world of competitive facial hair can get ugly. This is no country combing-bee; rivalries are common, and competition is tense.

"You get there, and there's always a lot of animosity," Hutch says. "We're all there for one reason, which is to win, to prove who has the better moustache."

"It's multi-cultural, but it's also multi-hate-ural," Briggs agrees. "We really don't get along with the other competitors. They are our enemies, and this is a battlefield."

And it's that competitive spirit that keeps these two coming back.

"It's knowing that you're that much more of a man than everyone else in the room," Briggs says. "You can actually hear their balls retract as you step in the room. It's a 'schlllllp' noise. It's like vacuuming up yogurt; that's how I'd describe the noise."

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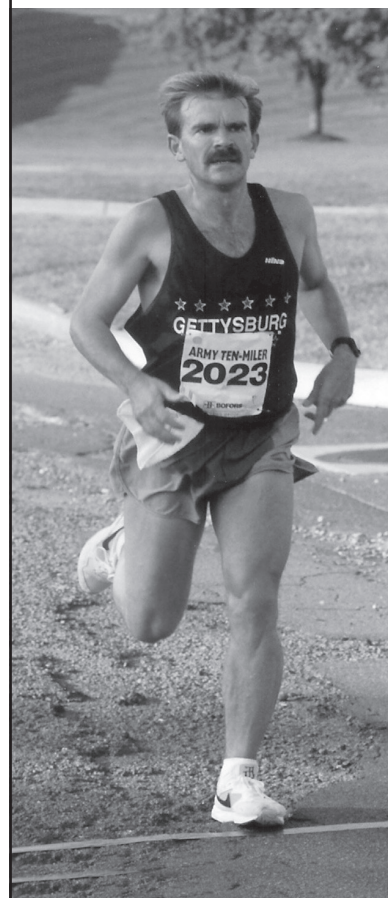
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