



# THE SPRING

TEXT ROBERTO CROCI

# BREAK RITUAL

Like bird migrations towards the tropics. Just like chips with a hamburger. Like the olive in a Martini drink. From the beginning of March to mid April, if you are between 18 and 23, you are at university and live in the United States, you simply can't avoid the Spring Break



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# THE SPRING BREAK RITUAL

**IN ALL OF OUR LIVES THERE ARE IMPORTANT, SIGNIFYING, DEFINITIVE MOMENTS, SOME RITE PASSAGE THAT SOMETIMES RE SHAPE OUR LIFE,** giving it a different value instead of an other, sometimes underlining a welcomed (temporary) detachment from reality, other times, unfortunately, marking it forever.

The Spring Break, basically. But what is it exactly? It kicks off on the 1st of March and goes on until mid April, when, for a week at a time, approximately 15 million students between the ages of 18 and 23 take over beach resorts, ready to lavishly celebrate the first holidays after the last exams of the academic quarter. The choice of location comes after boyfriend or girlfriend have booked elsewhere. From here, the idea is that anything can happen. Literally, anything. And I am referring to the bacchanal aptitudes of young people. Men and women trying to explore and surpass the limits of sex, drugs, alcohol and rock & roll, typical of American culture. You will definitely score. You don't need to speak English much. Here, they don't say no. They take on the beach like a mass of Visigoths coming from cold places, heading for the warmth of cities like Miami, Lauderdale, Panama Beach, Lake Havasu, Rocky Point and South Padre Island or they migrate towards foreign shores like Cancun and Mazatlàn (Messico), Negril (Jamaica), Nassau (Bahamas) where the drinking age limit is not set at 21 like in America, but it is 18. Last info, of a financial nature. Last year, the business created by the Spring Break phenomena has neared a billion dollars.

Enough words, fasten your seatbelts and let the protagonists of Spring



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Breakers, the new movie by Harmony Korine, a musical expert, skateboarder aficionado, on top of being a utopic and controversial film director of *Kids*, *Gummo*, *Julien Donkey-Boy*, to tell you the rest. Out in Italy on the 7th of March, the film tells the story of a group of penniless girl friends – Vanessa Hudgens, Selena Gomez, Ashley Benson and Rachel Korine – that, rather than miss out on the SB party, they decide to rob a restaurant, consequently ending up in two thousand extreme fucking situations, where, us viewers, will be taught what are the rules et regulation representative of SB: Wet T-Shirt Contest, Foam Party, cocaine, mushrooms, ecstasy, body shot, naked-pool-parties, marijuana, wet willies, tits & tsses, beer funneling, Jagermeister run, balcony jumping... “The film was shot in St. Petersburg in Florida, known as The Sunshine City, during a real Spring Break. We have enrolled more than 500 extras – says Harmony Korine – “all they had to do was do nothing different than what they would have done during a normal SB: drink dance, smoke, sleep, shag, faint and start it all, all over again the next day”. How did you convince James Franco to interpret the role of Alien, the local criminal who puts the girls under his wing? “I’ve known James for a long time, I’ve always admired him because he is one of few Hollywood actors who isn’t a machine serving the corporations, he has interests outside the world of cinema and he always manages to work on projects that interest him. We’ve always wanted to film together. Then he contacted me for the exhibition *Rebel Without A Cause*, that he has put together for the 2011 Venice Biennale. He wanted me to shoot one of the videos, to re create the



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violence of the famous gang fight that appears in the original film. He was the first person who's seen the screenplay and he accepted immediately". What reference points did he use to create Alien? "No-one really knows who he is. There are hippie and naïve elements in his personality that are in stark contrast with his lifestyle, with his drugs and fire arms business. I wanted him to have different personalities, he is a killer, dangerous but sensitive, sells drugs but loves to take pictures of dolphins, he is a mystic gangster. He has that attitude typical of rappers from the south of the United States, like Tommy Wright III, Project Pat and Dangeruss".

Why did you choose to make this film? "I was brought up in Nashville, and when my school college pals were leaving for Daytona Beach aka Redneck Riviera, I would take the chance to train with my skateboard. They would all come back happy to have had sex and to have destroyed themselves drinking and smoking like nutters. Making this film has given me the opportunity to understand their enthusiasm. SB is an American tradition, where they all want to have fun and are ready to break all the rules, to the point of committing illegal acts; being arrested has become quite cool. I was fascinated by the idea of making a film that was a sort of social experiment: it was like two different movies, the one I wrote and the one of various media entities and paparazzi who followed us for almost two months, tweeting and posting photos and videos online". ●

