

NEW

BOOK OF THE

# 2010s

THE MAJOR MOMENTS, MUSIC,  
MOVIES & MOVEMENTS FROM...

## 2010-2019



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Book of the 2010s

FUTURE



# TRENDS AND MEMES OF THE TWENTY-TEENS

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY TRENDS  
THAT HAVE GOT US TALKING THIS DECADE

**T**he fashions, the catchphrases, the jokes – the 2010s probably had the weirdest of them all. With the internet permeating further into every household, the smartphones in our hands spreading information faster than ever before, it was only a matter of time before people harnessed this incredible ability just to make strangers laugh.

The trends and memes of the decade have showcased the very best – and worst – of humanity. We've laughed at funny photos, GIFs and cartoons together, bonded over charitable causes, and danced in unison to music we don't understand the lyrics to. That said, we've also done some pretty dumb and dangerous things in an attempt to leap on the trending bandwagon – think jumping out of moving cars, doing tricky poses on top of cliffs, and eating laundry detergent. Ring any bells?

Then, there's the rise of 'influencers' – social media professionals setting trends for the rest of us to follow, especially in the realm of fashion and beauty. We went through a phase of being obsessed with Kylie Jenner's lips – to the point where lip fillers

and DIY injections were being widely sold – and desperately wanting our eyebrows to be 'on fleek' (whatever that means).

Memes don't just stay behind computer screens anymore, and this decade has been testament to that. As well as fun dance routines and stupid stunts, we've seen memes being used to stir up political sentiments, like cartoon frogs being appropriated by the far right.

Still, for every fascist frog, there are hundreds of harmless, hilarious ones, ready to bring a smile to your face on a dull day. Long live the meme!

AUGUST 2013

## Doge

This adorable Shiba Inu from Japan showed us the fun side to humankind's relationship with dogs. Known for her round face and concerned expression, Redditors tried to interpret what the dog was thinking when her photo was taken. The results were cute, funny and confusing in equal measure – written in a uniquely broken form of English, and always in the love-it-or-hate-it font Comic Sans, Doge's internal monologue varied from expressing surprise at her new-found fame, to fears about being attacked. Much concern.







**JULY 2012**

## Gangnam Style

When South Korean comedian and musician PSY dropped his 18th single, Gangnam Style, nobody could have predicted its success. You know the choreography – pretending to lasso an invisible horse, then riding it sideways across the floor. What began as a jibe at South Korea's super-rich had become an anthem for the world's dance lovers. It didn't matter if you were rich, poor, old or young – we were all dancing along with PSY.

Gangnam Style also had the added bonus of introducing the Western world to the joys of K-pop, which continues to delight us even as the decade closes.

**2014-PRESENT**



## Pepe the Frog

A cartoon of a green frog with a sad look on his face was all of us in 2014. Singers Katy Perry and Nicki Minaj tweeted images of Pepe to point out the downsides of being pop stars, and soon, variations of the character started cropping up. But Pepe took a dark turn when Donald Trump and his Twitter followers started sharing the meme to troll non-supporters. It's since been branded a hate symbol, as it is so often used by the far right.



**FEBRUARY 2015**

## The Dress

Was it black and blue? Or did it glimmer white and gold? This picture of a dress in Scotland revealed how our eyes really can deceive us. The angle and lighting at which the photograph was captured altered the human eye's colour perception, with some of us seeing blue and black, and others seeing white and gold. The dress' manufacturer, Roman Originals, revealed that the dress was blue and black – and sold out of it within 30 minutes. A white and gold version was later produced exclusively for a charity auction.



**SUMMER 2014**

## Ice Bucket Challenge

Sometimes, the power of the internet can be harnessed for good. The Ice Bucket Challenge was exactly that – a task aimed at raising money for research into Motor Neurone disease. When an American graduate was diagnosed with the condition, his friends founded the challenge. A participant had to donate money to the cause, drop a bucket of freezing water over their heads, and challenge someone else to do the same. The challenge soon came under the radar of celebrities such as Weird Al Yankovic and Justin Bieber. In 2016, it was said the money raised by the Ice Bucket Challenge funded research which identified another gene as a potential cause for the disease.





Twerking  
became a  
phenomenon at  
the 2013 VMAs



## [EARLY 2010s]

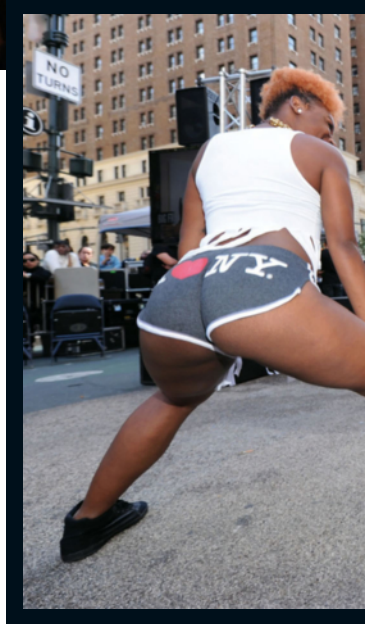
It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. The start of the 2010s was an innocent time – we were still laughing at the ridiculous trends of the noughties, blissfully unaware we were actually taking part in new, equally laughable ones.

In this era, musical memes ruled the roost. We were singing un-ironically along to *Friday* by Rebecca Black, *Call Me Maybe* by Carly Rae Jepsen, and the strangely iconic *Trololol* song. The Gregory Brothers were at their finest, remixing clips from American

local news channels to turn them into works of art – who can forget the *Bedroom Intruder* song, or Sweet Brown's timeless *Aint Nobody Got Time For That*?

To accompany our musical tastes, the internet came up with some great new dance trends to get us moving. As well as *Gangnam Style*, there was the inexplicable Harlem Shake, and many of us had a go at twerking after we'd had one-too-many drinks at a party, a la Miley Cyrus.

But even with all these musical offerings, most of which have now had their moment in the spotlight and faded away, one question remains – did anyone actually work out *What Does the Fox Say*?







## The Harlem Shake

Who'd have thought a 30 second video would have the world on its feet? The Harlem Shake was one of those fun trends everybody could join in. Every clip followed the same formula – one person would dance by themselves to the song *Harlem Shake* by American producer Baauer, ignored by anybody else in the vicinity. Suddenly, the bass would drop, and the clip would cut to everyone else in the room dancing along too. Nobody can really explain how or why this was so popular, only that it WAS popular. In early 2013, up to 4,000 Harlem Shake videos were being uploaded to the internet per day – that's one video approximately every 20 seconds. The largest ever Harlem Shake was arranged by musicians Matt and Kim at their concert in Troy, NY, with 3,444 people taking part.

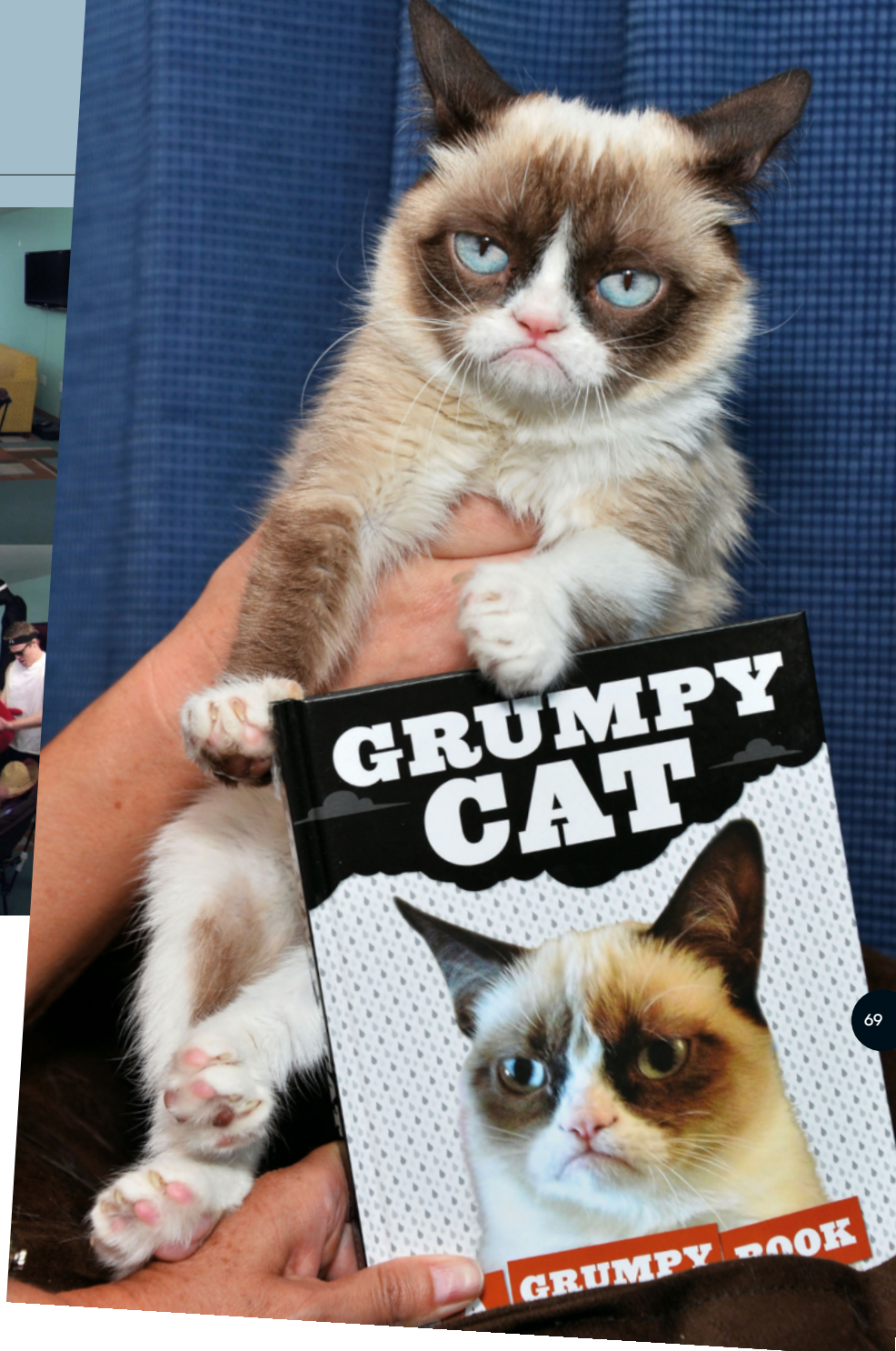


## Twerking

If you've got it, flaunt it. The early 2010s were all about twerking – the dance move that involves shaking one's booty up and down, in rapid motion. If you squatted down and thrustured your hips, you might be able to replicate the move perfectly, or you could have looked very awkward indeed. There was no in-between.

Twerking originated on the New Orleans music scene, a primarily African-American setting. Artists such as Beyonce had paid homage to it in their music, but it became a phenomenon after Miley Cyrus performed the move at the VMAs in 2013, with people all over the world later having a crack at it. When Vine was still a thing, women (and men) across the world posted short clips of them twerking for the camera.

Nicki Minaj, Cardi B and Taylor Swift also released music videos featuring twerking, but it soon became controversial.



## Grumpy Cat

The meme to end all memes, this adorable cat from Arizona had real staying-power. Real name Tardar Sauce, this cute little fluffball actually suffered from feline dwarfism, which gave her a prominent underbite. Unfortunately for her – but happily for us – this meant she had a permanently grouchy look on her face. Grumpy Cat soared to fame in September 2012, when her owner Tabatha Bundesen's brother posted a picture of the cross-looking kitten nestled in his lap on Reddit. Within 48 hours, more than a million people had seen her Imgur page, and the hilarious captions were rolling in. "I had fun once... it was awful" and simply "Good" were some of the first – and funniest – lines affixed to her miserable image.

Grumpy Cat was no longer just a creature, but an unstoppable brand. Clothing, furniture, mugs, accessories, and even iced coffee were sold with her likeness emblazoned on them, and the small cat was once estimated to be worth \$100 million. Sadly she died on 14 May 2019.



## Mannequin Challenge

You've heard of planking, now get ready for... the Mannequin Challenge. In it, people pose as still as possible, while the song *Black Beatles* by Rae Sremmurd plays. A camera moving around the room captures all the action (or lack thereof). The trick is not to lose your footing, blink, or make any other involuntary movements – otherwise the illusion of perfect stillness will be ruined. We don't know how it started, but we do know it was a craze back in November 2016. It was particularly popular amongst sportsmen and women, especially national football teams and ice skaters. Celebrities followed suit, with one particularly notable incident broadcasting on the UK X Factor – the judges (including Simon Cowell and Sharon Osbourne), presenter, and entire studio audience posed for the Mannequin Challenge during Honey G's semi-spoof performance of *Black Beatles*.

The most impressive Mannequin Challenge, however, has to be the astronauts aboard the International Space Station, who managed to hold their poses in zero-gravity conditions. French astronaut Thomas Pesquet posted the video in the last few days of 2016, and the world admired their effort, giving the Mannequin Challenge the perfect send-off as we headed into 2017.



## [MID 2010s]

As we got a bit older and wiser, our memes moved away from the simplicity of grouchy cats and silly dance routines, to thinly-veiled pop culture references. Frogs continued to dominate our computer screens – Dat Boi, Evil Kermit and Tea-



Drinking Kermit being some of the most popular memes. But Kermit was more than just a Muppet – he was the voice of a generation, made too self-aware thanks to the internet, but sort of naïve in an era of somewhat sheltered upbringings.

The animal kingdom brought us more joy, in the form of a rat triumphing against all odds. To New Yorkers, the image of a rat dragging a slice of pizza bigger than itself down some stairs embodied the spirit of the city they called home – plucky, even under adverse circumstances.

Left Shark, however, was exactly the opposite – many felt that Katy Perry's half-hearted, blue-costumed backing dancer at the Superbowl 2015 captured the broken spirit of tired millennials.

Canadian rapper Drake was trendy, mostly for the right reasons, but sometimes for the wrong ones. His erratic dancing in the *Hotline Bling* music video gave the internet a whole new meme, which reached meta status when Drake parodied himself at the Superbowl 2016.

What a wild time the mid-2010s were.







## Salt Bae

In an era where 'saltiness' was a highly prized personality trait, it was only natural that this artful sodium-sprinkler became a meme. In January 2017, Turkish/Kurdish chef Nusret Gökçe became a viral sensation when a video of him preparing 'Ottoman steak' at his steakhouse in Dubai hit the internet. His unusual and flamboyant method of sprinkling salt on meat – dropping it from his fingertips, to his forearm, and then to the meat – caught everybody's attention. But it was a single freeze-frame of the video that captured our hearts – an image of a man, with John Lennon sunglasses, sprinkling salt in a way that was so sassy, his vibe was felt around the world.

Salt Bae capitalised on his viral success, using his new found fame to open up a load of new restaurants in Turkey, the UAE, NYC, Miami, and even Mykonos. When Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro visited Istanbul, Salt Bae was tasked with cooking for him. This move drew criticism from many, including Florida Senator Marco Rubio, and people protested outside his restaurants. Sadly for Salt Bae, his recent fortunes have not been good, either. His restaurants have been panned by critics, and a current lawsuit alleges that he underpaid his Miami staff, and did not distribute the tips fairly. Sounds like he has a reason to be salty.



## Harambe

Harambe, a 17-year-old silverback gorilla, was minding his own business one day at Cincinnati Zoo, when a three-year-old got into his enclosure. The other gorillas obeyed the zookeeper's command to go back inside, but Harambe went to investigate. He played with the boy for a bit, but when he started to get aggressive, the zookeepers made the decision to kill Harambe to protect the toddler's life.

A video of the incident was soon posted on social media, and viewers were incensed at this decision, saying Harambe did not need to be killed. Vigils were held, including one in Hyde Park, which had more than 3,000 attendees.

Somehow, the martyrdom of Harambe had turned him into a meme. What were perceived to be over-the-top reactions to Harambe's death were turned into objects of ridicule and sarcasm. 'Dicks out for Harambe' became a mock tribute to the killed gorilla, and Cincinnati Zoo temporarily shut down its Twitter because of the constant Harambe trolling.

In the run up to the 2016 US Presidential Election, 'Harambe' was tying with Green Party candidate Jill Stein for a percentage of votes. Some even say that votes for 'Harambe' in the actual election inadvertently led to Donald Trump's win.

RIP Harambe.





## Eating Tide Pods

As stupid 'challenges' go, this has got to be one of the most foolish. Tide Pods are a form of laundry detergent, an all-in-one soluble pod that includes both detergent and fabric conditioner. You pop them in the washing machine – not your mouth. But, stories later emerged of kids and teens eating the Tide Pods. Soon, it became a dare – after all, making 'challenge videos' often wins the uploader a number of views and subscribers, and if you're looking to make your way in the world as a YouTuber, it's an easy way to increase your viewers.

Because concentrated detergent (like the stuff that's inside a Tide Pod) is toxic, many of the participants in the Tide Pod challenge ended up in hospital. In the first two weeks of 2018, it's estimated that 37 teenagers were hospitalised after consuming Tide Pods – and half of these were intentional.

People began to criticise the appearance of Tide Pods themselves, suggesting that the bright colours tricked our brains into perceiving the detergent as a form of candy. Even a US Senator commented that he saw one on someone's desk, and wanted to eat it.

As a result, the manufacturers Procter and Gamble made the Tide Pod tubs opaque, so kids couldn't see what was inside. They also added a chemical that would make the product taste bitter, in the hope that anyone attempting the challenge would spit it out. The craze has largely died out, but you can bet your bottom dollar there'll be another equally stupid 'challenge' out there soon.

BELOW: That time an egg got Insta likes



## [LATE 2010s]

The end of the 2010s were a hell of a time. Global politics turned crazy, with the swing to the far right causing distress and misery in many Western countries. Combine that with the daily news that climate change is getting worse by the minute, and you've got a winning formula for the production of some downright hilarious memes.

We saw a spike in 'challenges' – some of them stupid, some of them harmless, and some downright dangerous. An egg got more likes on Instagram than Kylie Jenner, and people were throwing their Vans shoes in the air in an effort to prove they always landed on their feet (pun



## Distracted Boyfriend

If you've ever spent any time a stock photo site, you'll know there are some images on there that are real gems. From obviously staged laughter at random objects (fruit and salad being two popular items), to grown men dressed in children's clothing, stock photo sites are a real treasure trove.

One day, Spanish photographer Antonio Guillem was doing a regular shoot with two models in Girona, Catalonia. The series featured a disloyal boyfriend looking at other women in the presence

of his girlfriend, albeit in a humorous way. Aside from being good photographs, there was nothing unusual about Guillem's work.

That was until a Turkish prog rock fan club on Facebook found a particularly funny image, and put the very first caption on it. The man in the photo was now musician Phil Collins, eyeing up 'pop music' whilst still being very involved with 'prog rock'. The original image gained a lot of traction on social media, with people constantly

putting new captions on it – one particularly popular version saw the distracted boyfriend 'The Youth' admiring 'Socialism' and turning his back on 'Capitalism'.

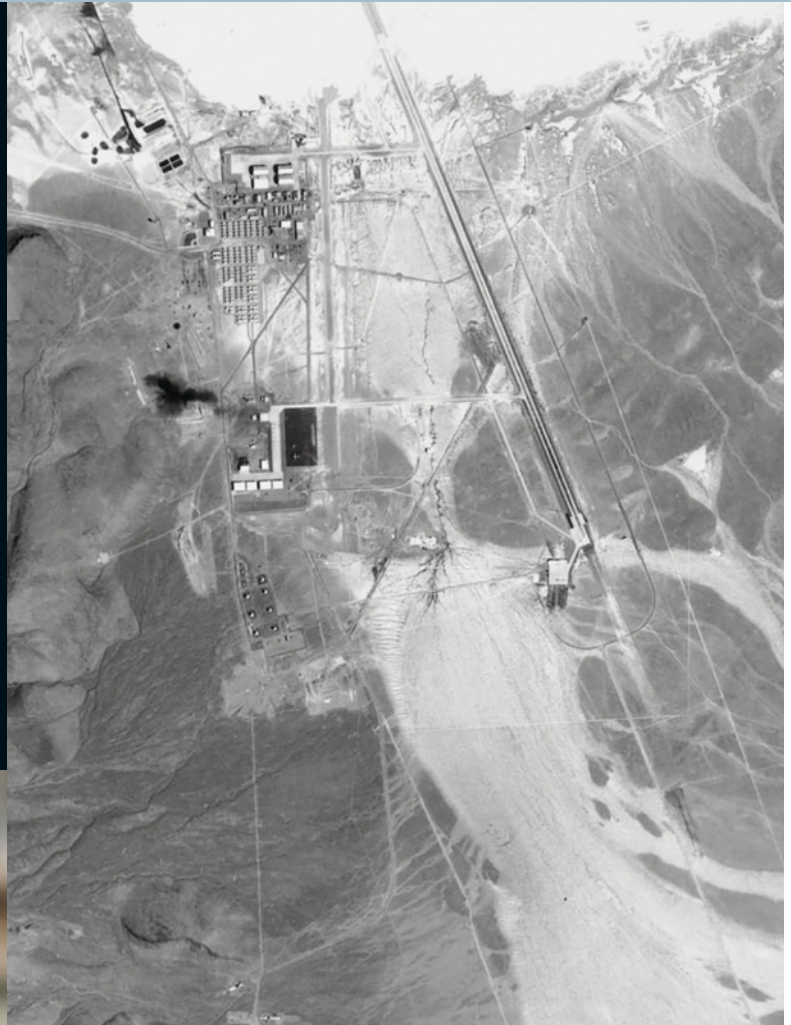
Needless to say, Guillem was shocked. He says he didn't even know what a meme was until the models in the photograph explained what had happened. Even today, the Distracted Boyfriend meme is still widely shared, with new spinoffs appearing on social media every day.



intended). On YouTube, two of the most subscribed channels went head-to-head for the most number of subscribers: Swedish gamer PewDiePie challenged Bollywood record label, T-Series, to a contest. Turns out, Bollywood is better-loved than any man, winning the challenge by being the first to get more than 100 million subscribers.

In music, Drake's songs continued to be meme-able, with the track *In My Feelings* spawning the Kiki Challenge. Here, a person jumped out a slow moving car, and danced for the camera while facing oncoming traffic. Britain, meanwhile, was spitting fire to the parody grime track *Man's Not Hot*.

But, perhaps the best thing to come out of the late 2010s was a bizarre sense of unity, even though the world was more divided than ever before. We bonded over the funniest memes, and remembered that even in the midst of dark times, there will always be something out there to make us laugh.



## Area 51

The US Air Force base, Area 51, is no stranger to conspiracy theories. The secrecy surrounding it has led many to comment that experimental projects - both military and extraterrestrial - are going on behind its highly guarded walls. The most popular suggestion is that there's a lot of alien activity going on in the area, and the US military is covering it up. Evidence suggests it's actually used for testing new aircraft, and has been for decades, but the conspiracy theory persists.

One Facebook group was determined to find out what really goes on there, once and for all. 'Storm Area 51, They Can't Stop All Of Us' set a date and time for a potential invasion of the area: 20th September 2019 at midday. They describe the siege thus:

"We will all meet up in Rural Nevada and coordinate our parties. If we naruto run, we can move faster than their bullets. Lets see them aliens." [sic]

The creator of the Facebook page insists that it was created as a joke, but he didn't expect it to go viral. Its success came from being shared on TikTok, Instagram and Reddit, where it spread like wildfire amongst meme-lovers and conspiracy theorists alike. Even rapper of the moment, Lil Nas X, remixed his smash hit *Old Town Road* to contain information about the planned raid, while cartoon band Gorillaz sent out flyers and a series of Spotify playlists for a spoof 'MaydeUp Festival' - coordinates on the artwork pointed to Area 51.

On 30 August 2019, the page has 2 million attendees, and 1.5 million 'interested'. The USAF was warning that it would shoot to kill potential intruders and the military were apparently briefed on what a 'Naruto run' (running like the lead character from the anime of the same name) was. But on the day, the turnout was, according to witnesses, a couple of thousand at best. Far from storming the gates, the well behaved crowd hung out with law enforcement and the press for a while, partied politely, then left.