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# 97.9 REPRESENT



*Inside: In Memoriam: Kevin Fahman—Jarmon Gaidon Comes At Last—Second Fermentation Pt. II—Castle Dungeon—Murtaugh Apparently Not Too Old For This Shiz—Tails Out: Bill Fool—2012 Beer Anthology—Todd On Film—Still Drinking—CD Reviews—Concert Calendar*



## Murtaugh Apparently Not Too Old For This Shit

Last month, in celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Texas A&M invited actor/activist Danny Glover to campus to speak about the Dr. King's legacy. He did that, but in the process apparently gave some rather interesting views about the Second Amendment and how it applies to the legacy of slavery in this country.

So what did Danny Glover say? This. "The Second Amendment comes from the right to protect themselves from slave revolts, and from uprisings by Native Americans. A revolt from people who were stolen from their land or revolt from people whose land was stolen from, that's what the genesis of the Second Amendment is." Themselves would mean slaveholders, and that the 2nd Amendment was drawn up so the Man could keep the slave in check. Now, I don't necessarily agree with that, but it's an interesting idea, and one that would make for an interesting discussion over beers with friends one night. Not really all that radical, especially not in the setting of a college campus where traditionally radical ideas are encouraged, debated, embraced and/or discarded.

Except this ain't just any college campus we're talking about, this is Aggieland, and we can't stand for no one that don't believe like we do, by Gawd. Student organization Texas Aggie Conservatives are all up in arms, complaining of liberal bias and wants either Ted Nugent or Chuck Norris invited to campus to give a different point-of-view, or rather one more like their own.

Now, I've attended and/or worked at half a dozen different college campuses over the last 20 years, and the idea of a liberal bias existing at Texas A&M University is beyond ludicrous. A&M has more student church attendance than any other public college in the country. It is widely considered along with Bob Jones University and Hillsdale College as one of the most conservative schools in America. Last year the student senate tried to defund LGBT outreach at A&M unless equal money was given to promoting conservative family values. My first year working on campus at A&M I was confronted with 30 foot tall photos of aborted fetuses at an anti-abortion rally in the center of campus. Let's just say that the conservative point of view is well represented around this campus. That's not a bad thing at all, but to not have the self-awareness to realize that just because something at your university offends you does not make it "indoctrination" or "Nazism" or "fascism" or some other Fox News talking point descriptor. Opinion is opinion, and no one at Texas A&M forced it upon you. So you have trouble with what Sgt. Murtaugh said? You don't have to go all Mel Gibson over it.—**KELLY MINNIS**

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# In Memorium: Kevin Fahlman



David Lynch

Everyone who knew Kevin uses the word "free" a lot when describing him: carefree, free spirit, freewheeling. However short his time on this planet, Kevin Fahlman made his mark. As guitarist for B/CS metal band **Hells Conspiracy** Kevin displayed an amazing amount of talent for one so young, really fast fingers accompanied by taste and a sense of metal's history, which is a rare combination to find in a rookie guitarist. Kevin will be missed.

Special thanks for photos from David Lynch of Lone Star Metal Magazine and Tristen Farina.



## Tarmon Gai'don: The Wheel of Time Finally Has an Ending

I have been reading *The Wheel of Time* fantasy fiction series since its inception in 1990. I was almost 16, the same age as series protagonist Rand al'Thor, and this series worked for me in ways that similar works by Tolkien, Weis/Hickman and Eddings could not (although I enjoy those novels nearly as much). The universe that author Robert Jordan created over is rich, bloated, intense, frustrating and incredibly detailed. In 2006 Jordan announced that he was ill and in 2007 he died, leaving his wife instructions on how to wrap up his series. His wife (also his editor at Tor Books) hired Brandon Sanderson to complete Jordan's work, based on Jordan's notes and, in the case of *A Memory of Light*, the final *Wheel of Time* novel, Jordan himself wrote the last chapter of the book before he died. So after 23 years, two authors, 14 episodes and one prequel...a staggering story finally comes to an end.

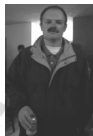
The central premise of the entire series is that a Rand al'Thor is not just a simple shepherd's son. He fulfills all the prophecies as The Dragon, the one who has come at the world's darkest hour, to fight the Dark One at the Final Battle and die in the process, or so say the prophecies. The series details al'Thor's journey, almost like a 12-step program through Heroes Anonymous. Unlike most series, not only are the plot points terribly complex (Jordan was a military historian and loved minutiae almost to a fault) but so are the characters. At times al'Thor is mean, hard, cruel, possessed and vainglorious in his guilt. At times he is kind-hearted, naive, goofy like the teenager he is at heart, and (spoiler alert) ultimately victorious. George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series (that HBO's popular *Game of Thrones* is based upon) owes a solid debt to the soap operatics of *The Wheel of Time* (though Jordan maintained a solid PG rating throughout the series...no incest or dothraki riding in these books).

*A Memory of Light* was essentially to be one novel, but Tor Books split what would have been a massive 3000+ page tome into three books Peter Jackson style. The series could have used another volume to really wrap stuff up nice with a pretty bow on top, but *A Memory of Light* does well to draw conclusions to most of the main story lines, with the book's center being a gigantic "Last Battle" chapter wherein dozens of characters' arcs are followed. Although Jordan's series was born nearly a decade before J.K. Rowling's, the way Tarmon Gai'don plays out is uncannily similar to the final battle between Hogwarts and The Death Eaters. Some important characters die spectacularly, some deaths wasted, all as a diversion for the battle between Good and Evil, Harry and Voldemort, Rand and Shai'Tan. The prophecy says that Rand's blood must be spilled upon the rocks of Shayol Ghul (the Dark One's prison) before the battle can end. Rand assumes for the good portion of the series that he must die, as does Harry Potter. Of course, neither die. But how the two characters avoid that ending while paying out to the prophecy is quite interesting and not alike at all.

We don't end up knowing what happens with Matt and the Seanchan. But Egwene al'Vere's sacrifice is touching. Demandred proves nearly impossible to kill, but somehow Padan Fain is killed rather easily. Gawyn dies valiantly, but his brother Galad, who is rather despicable throughout the series, is redeemed. Olver becomes the Hornblower and I have to say, I shed a tear when Jayne Farstrider AKA Noal comes back from the dead to rescue the kid.

In a series this long, drawn out, complicated and exhausting, it is near impossible to please everyone, but I think *The Wheel of Time* concludes in as tight a bundle as any of us should expect. I am hoping that perhaps Tor and Jordan's estate will allow the licensing of Jordan's world and characters so the stories can be continued somehow. It would only be fitting that the *Wheel of Time* continue to turn, and that this ending is only an ending, and not the ending.—  
KELLY MINNIS

## Todd On Film: Zero Dark Thirty



I remember exactly where I was when I heard that Osama Bin Laden had been killed. My buddy and I had gone down to O'Bannon's to enjoy a pint or two, possibly in conjunction with their weekly pub quiz, when I started receiving texts from friends saying that something big had gone down. Sure enough, the rest of the bar began to buzz with the same news as well, and it wasn't too long before the president came on TV to address the nation and confirm what we had heard. I have never seen that place so crowded yet so quiet before or since. All the screens were tuned into the presidential address, and the volume, although not needing to be, was turned up so we could hear every word. When it was over, there was a cheer of acknowledgement and the clinking of glasses.

In that moment it didn't matter how long we had been at war, whether we were a red state or a blue state, or where things would go from here. Our greatest enemy had finally been found and killed. It was a victory that everyone could share, not one which brought happiness but rather a little bit of comfort for all of us who had experienced the last ten years. Most of all, it was something that had to be done.

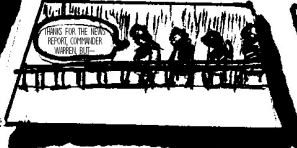
*Zero Dark Thirty* is the story of how this event happened behind the scenes while the rest of the war was simultaneously going on, not just the final strike but the years of research, interviewing, leads, dead ends, and breakthroughs that went into it. Regardless of how much of the movie is true, it is one of the best procedurals I have seen in a while. All of the action is quite realistic (including the waterboarding), and there are plenty of tense moments along the way. What sets it apart from others, though, are the characters that are written and portrayed in the film. Too many investigative films have detectives or operatives who are flat and uninspiring, but all of the people in this film have a purpose besides simply trying to solve a case. Jessica Chastain's portrayal of Maya in particular carries a lot of the weight on her shoulders, whether she's sitting silently behind a desk or yelling desperately for an operation to be carried out.

Parts of the movie particularly reminded me of scenes from *The Wire* (if you've never seen *The Wire*, go watch it). Maya is the person responsible for a particular lead which she meticulously pieces together by going through stacks of VHS tapes looking for potential clues. Eventually a phone number becomes the key, but the number itself only helps her team identify which needle in the haystack they are looking for. Only after hours and hours of monitoring calls does it lead to anything useful. The same kind of great procedural story was done on *The Wire*, just within the confines of Baltimore instead. Perhaps the biggest difference between the two is during that TV show we were able to see both sides of the equation, the police and drug pushers, as they fought against each other, whereas here we understand both who the other side is and know the crime they committed as they remain a seemingly unreachable enigma (that reminds me: I need to finish season five of *The Wire*).

One of the great qualities about *Zero Dark Thirty* is that, like director Katherine Bigelow's previous film *Hurt Locker*, it's not a political movie. There are mentions of politics, sure, such as the scaling back of torture during interrogation upon Obama's first election and the dangers of being a white American working in the Middle East, but at no point in the movie do the characters stop to discuss political ramifications or the moral right and wrong of a decision they need to make. It's implied that these issues exist and should be considered, but the entire focus of the movie is the manhunt and the significance of finding a killer. We follow Maya throughout the story as she becomes a seasoned veteran in the CIA, not only committed to finding the end of the trail but a believer in the work she and others have made major sacrifices to get done. It is her character who continually pushes for those above her in the chain of command to follow through, because the end is more important than all of the other noise surrounding it.—TODD HANSEN

# Castle Dungeon

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In a selfish effort to expand my already feverish passion for craft beer, I enlisted the help of those people who are most responsible for my love of beer: my drinking buddies. Three weeks ago I sent a mass email out to nearly 40 people, all of whom I've shared at least one beer, and I asked them to respond to one of three questions. Here are the questions:

1. What was the best craft beer or cider you remember relishing in 2012?
2. What is one seasonal or hard to find microbrew or even brewery you look forward to enjoying or visiting again in 2013?
3. What is one beer, craft brewery, or beer style you look forward to trying for the first time in 2013?

I had hoped to hear back from at least 30 percent of that mass list, and the lushes pulled through. Below you will find a vast variety of beer options and writings. Some reviews are simple and punctual, getting straight to the beer name and glory; others wind through personal narrative and intensely palatable descriptors. I appreciated both forms of response. You'll also find most craft beer styles represented, from light, crisp ciders to rich, complex coffee porters. This is a small anthology of beer writings, but it's an impressive set. One I'm happy to share.

Quickly, I would like to respond to my own first question above. Surely, I feel the best single beer I tried in 2012 was a **Graham Cracker Porter** at the **Denver Brewing Co.** Everything about this beer worked on all cylinders: the depth, the graham cracker sweetness, the rich cocoa and coffee notes, the deadly dark, lingering mouthfeel. I loved this beer. I may have even kissed the lip of the glass on a few sips. Glorious. But my favorite beer experience from 2012, hands down, was watching my buddy Adam sing a Ben Fold's song to his new bride, my dear friend Elizabeth, at their wedding reception, while grown-ass men wept tears and I held a **Mexican Chocolate Stout** from **Copper Kettle Brewing** in my hands, my other hand on my wife's back, and the room lifted their glasses in unison as Adam plunked down the last notes on "The Luckiest" and there was still so much night ahead. Nothing from the entire year could top that moment. I'm glad Adam is a big enough beer geek to supply a beer list for a reception as rich as the memories the night created. Cheers to the Flater family. And now let the anthology begin.

1. Well, that's boring. **Pumpkinator** obviously. But I feel that's a cop-out at this point, so it's no longer in the running. Thus, first place goes to **512 Pecan Porter**. It was so delicious that I apparently (emphasis on apparently) had about 30 of them at the last Ex-Optimists show in Austin. It fueled an ear-piercingly loud show, rumored to have been "loud" by over two people. It inspired much discussion on the long lost Shirley Temple film *Battleship Mandy Patinkin* (and its sequel, *Gone with the Wind 2: Patinkin Boogaloo*). It led two plucky underdogs on a heartwarming, roller-coaster of a journey to become majestic pool hall champions. And most of all, it allowed me to make a complete ass of myself during a very-unrememberable Kirby Lane excursion. All this, while still being one of the tastiest, easiest drinking beers I've ever sipped. And that, my friends, is what makes a beer special. (I regret nothing) - Wonko the Sane

2. This is the easiest to answer for me. In 2011 it was **Abita's Vanilla Double Dog**. In 2012 it was **Harpoon's El Triunfo**, part of their 100 Barrel Series of limited beers. It is a coffee porter. Wait, haven't we already got one of those from Kona? Sure we do. Or **Lagunita's Espresso Stout**? Uh huh. But Harpoon did it to perfection, which should surprise no one. It tastes like a really good chocolatey porter with a shot of espresso. Unlike most "flavored" beers, the espresso flavor rides with you to the very end strongly and, once it warms up closer to room temperature, it can surprise you at times that you are still drinking beer and not a REALLY good cup of joe. Not to say that the coffee portion is a novelty and overshadows the beer, as you can tell underneath it that El Triunfo hangs its hat on a really good porter that would stand up on its own. I haven't tried any of the other 100 Barrel beers, but if they are anywhere near as good as this I'd say I'm missing out. Runners up: St. Arnold Pumpkinator Stout, Dogfish Head Bitches Brew, 512 Pecan Porter, Pedernales Negro (I like black beers, right?)— Kelly Minnis

# Beer anthology



Becky Almany

3. Well, I would have to say that my favorite brewery tour/beer of the year would have to be **St. Arnold's Santo**. I typically strongly dislike dark beers, but Santo isn't really a dark beer. St. Arnold's describes it as a black Kolsch, which they say doesn't really exist. Apparently, I like beers with black malt. Who would have thought that this girl who HATED beer only a couple of years ago would have gone to a beer tasting? Old dogs=new tricks. It can happen. - Becky Almany

4. **Alaskan Winter Ale**: it's like having a glass of beer and flossing with a pine needle. I know it is brewed with "spruce tips" but I defy any man to make a hard line between spruce and pine. **Alaskan Summer Ale**: In July, in Texas, anything that reminds me of the frozen tundra is welcomed. I drank my weight in this brew this summer and I fully intend to do the same as the mercury rises again in the months to come. - Pepe Guzman

5. Best beer of 2012 was **Victory Brewing's Summer Love**. Hands down. I generally back off craft beers in the Texas summer, trading for lighter drinks that go better ice cold in the heat. However, Summer Love nailed a full flavored and refreshing taste. I recall the label mentioning something about shoving all the tastes of summer into the bottle: swimming pools, fireworks, ballparks. And they did it! The beer actually has a ballpark-esqe waft. Is that grilled onions and brats I smell? Freshly mowed grass? Spent black powder? Chlorine? Wait, I better dial it back... - Cardinal Zen

# lowers ology



many double fistng some brews at St. Arnolds—photo by Travis Almany

6. The brew I look forward to every year, with the visual perceptiveness of a hawk looking for Mrs. Brisby, is **Shiner Cheer**. The pecan and cherry combination is a sweet concoction that the proverbial unicorn in the wasteland of the HEB beer section, scooped up by the first weekend of December. We took precautions the last two years and bought enough to last us into January, hidden behind floorboards and walls. They may take my taxes, but they'll never find where I've hidden the beer. - Dr. Myles Werntz

7. My favorite seasonal beer is **Skinny Dip** by **New Belgium Brewing**. I wait for this beer every summer, like a fat kid waiting for dessert. It's a light, cilantro and lime based ale and its name encourages being naked, what's not to like? - Nikki Pistols

8. This is not definitive (I'm sure I'll think of more), but **Lefthand 400 Pound Monkey** was a memorable one that's widely distributed. I'm as down as anyone for a West-Coast style IPA, but the hops arms-race got out of control some-where along the way, and the 400lb is a refreshing antidote. An English-style IPA, it's still hoppy, but is balanced with smooth malty richness. It's a great IPA for someone that doesn't think they like IPAs or if your palate just needs a break. The historical aspect, hearkening back to the original India ale style, is also a nice aspect. I also tasted the **GUBNA** for the first time in 2012. I know I just said 'enough is enough' on the hops, but it really was spectacular, one of the few imperial IPAs I want to try a second time. It's pungent

with a lot of hops up front, but not too sweet and floral as some IPAs can be. At 10% it comes on strong, but I don't complain about that. 2012 was also the year that the trend of aging in liquor barrels came along - or at least when I first tried it. I saw many, and tried a few, but the best combinations seemed to be stouts and brown ales in bourbon barrels. If I can get my hands on one, I'd love to have a **Founders Kentucky Breakfast Stout**. The Breakfast Stout is hard enough to find, and I'm still looking for my first, as I've heard it's one of the best. - Ben Haguewood

9. The first beer I ever had was a **Beck's** made in Bremen, Germany and delivered to my palate outside of Santa Cruz, CA amidst the sentinel Redwoods in the cool bay-area heat of the summer of 1990 when I was 4-years-old. That first taste of beer is a memory lodged vividly in my mind somewhere between smoking pot for the first time and drinking peyote tea at my first peyote meeting. Maybe it's because I was so damned thirsty, or because I remember arguing with my alcoholic step-father for what seemed like an hour about how I promised not to backwash - even though I had no clue what "backwash" was; either way, I remember it as my first. This year I'm not drinking any alcohol. I'm taking a break. A break from the buzz, the culture, the bars, the late-night runs to Village Foods... Mostly because beer has been a constant fixture in my life since I have literally had the ability to make memories. So the next beer I'm looking forward to is the one I'll drink on January 1st of 2014... maybe it'll be a Beck's, but I'm hoping for something better. - Otha Graham

10. 2012 was not a particularly adventurous year for me in the realm of beers. Having recently gone gluten-free, my beer options and resultant excitement at the thought of cracking open a cold one have been greatly diminished. \*big 'ol crocodile tear\* Most gluten-free beers are lackluster at best - malty and sweet, they really lack that hoppy punch I'd come to love and honestly without the hops, I'd rather just drink wine. (Which there is plenty of out here in CA!) I have, however, come to really love and appreciate ciders. I've yet to get into the realm of craft ciders, apart from a bottle of **Leprechaun Hard Cider**, a Texas brew and quite delicious. I've had the usual suspects, and tend to prefer the drier varieties - **Blackthorn** is a favorite (and it's on tap at Duffy's!), and I'm eager to try **Julian Hard Cider**, made right here in California. My only qualm with ciders so far is they're just so dang easy to drink... - Ben Langford

11. I can choose one genre, but can't choose one beer. Fall is my favorite time of year, so it's only natural that I would be a huge fan of pumpkin beers. Not the thin, mass-produced varieties, but the larger-than-life iterations that come in 22-ounce bombers. Few produce a better pumpkin beer than **Southern Tier's Pumking**. Unless it's **Hoppin' Frog's Double Pumpkin Ale**. I've tasted them both in isolation, and swore that they were each the embodiment of pumpkin perfection. When I finally tasted them side-by-side, I realized that they both do different things well. The Hoppin' Frog is a bit more of a spice assault on the taste buds, and it has some white pepper in there to make it unique. The Pumking, on the other hand, is like velvety smooth banana bread (far less pumpkin pie-like than other pumpkin beers). When the first crisp fall night of the year hits and I find either of these beauties in my glass, I know it's going to be a perfect night. - Jason Scott

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# Secondary Term

## part ii

Not like the bastard in the parking lot yesterday, the one who flagged Alan down at the Mexican restaurant. Alan loved good enchiladas verdes, and La Huerta served the best. He was always careful to save one enchilada, smothered in thick green sauce, for lunch the next day. The only thing better than fresh enchiladas verdes was day old enchiladas verdes after that green sauce marinated and festered and wallowed in itself overnight. Alan had leftovers in the passenger seat. He wanted them refrigerated quickly. He had a fear of meat sitting too long. And then, sure as flies make maggots, a guy with a broken down Crown Victoria flagged him for help.

Alan braked his car, looked around the parking lot, and realized they were alone. Reluctantly, he rolled down the driver side window. A middle-aged man in khaki shorts and a button-down Banana Republic shirt covered in palm trees started towards Alan's car but stopped half way, leaving a six-foot clearance between the two men. "Sir, thank you. Thank you for stopping. You wouldn't believe how shitless people are to help a stranger."

The man, easily twice Alan's age, was sweating more profusely than Alan had ever seen a man sweat. Alan wondered if drugs were involved. Maybe torture by cartel. Alan did not want to get involved, but then he heard himself ask, "What do you need?"

"A jump. Charged enough to get across the street. Even got my own cables."

Alan saw an Auto Zone on the corner. He looked at his leftovers, packed in Styrofoam, meat growing warmer by the minute, bacteria and illness setting in, all that beautiful green sauce gone to hell for a dead battery. Not to mention, Alan knew this "jump-my-battery" routine was a ploy to rob people stone blind. He'd seen it on TV. Fellow puts on a semi-nice shirt, drenches himself in salt water by a car and flags down some big-hearted Samaritan with a pretty brunette wife and two little girls wearing pink Converse All-Stars. The Samaritan jumps out, leaves the car running, and gets smacked in the forehead with a tire iron while feeling good about himself. The wife and girls are taken hostage (tiny pink All-Stars sell like sno-cones in hell on eBay) while the Samaritan is left on the ground, bleeding dry and hating the Bible stories he rode in on. Alan ran all this through his mind while looking at his leftovers, lamenting every second they remained unrefrigerated. Screw it, Alan thought. If this guy gets me, he gets me. In fact, I hope he tries.

Alan pulled his Forerunner beside the Crown Victoria, killed the ignition and jumped out, leaving his car door open. The stranger had his own hood up, one end of the jumper cables attached to his battery and the other end flapping carelessly to the side. Alan wondered if the stranger would knock him down, attach the cables to his nipples, then leave Alan flapping like a shored bluegill while he drove away with Alan's car. Alan relished the thought of it. Something big to distract from my something bigger.

Curiosity kept Alan moving closer to the sweaty-man who smelled like cat piss. His pores excreting ammonia in litter-box arm pits. Alan noticed the stench and still moved closer. What does that to a man? Heroin? Cocaine? Pet hoarding? Alan imagined he'd be reported missing the next day. A moment later cables were attached beneath each hood.

I just bought this damn battery. Ninety-four dollars at the Auto Zone across the street. Think my alternator is out, draining the battery." Alan didn't know what the man was talking about. He knew nothing about cars. He thought this might be street talk for hope-you-like-the-sound-of-this-fancy-sounding-car-chatter-before-you-get-jacked, Jack. "Think you could rev your engine for me, sir?" Alan wanted to say, "What's with the 'sir'?" Or better yet, "You do it. Climb in my car and rev it up. Car's empty. I'm not even sure you hooked them batteries up right. What say I stand plum over them? Just toss my leftovers as you drive away."

But the moment passed. Batteries attached. This man was kind. Grateful. Still, Alan imagined, even wanted, explosions. This sweaty-man covered in glass and upholstery, washing up in puddles between here and the trees where he'd live for days on bugs and forest critters. Isolation his prize for a well committed crime. But that wasn't this guy. And Alan knew it.

Alan climbed in the driver's seat of his Forerunner and keyed the ignition. The sweaty-man gave him a thumbs-up. Alan absorbed the man's smile and thought, He probably likes God.

"You a Boston fan?" the sweaty-man asked, fingering to Alan's Red Sox cap. Instinctively, Alan grabbed the brim and tugged it down. Aubrey bought the cap for him before the twins were born, back when Alan decided all American men should drink Budweiser and watch baseball. Aubrey laughed at him, "Tell me again, why not the Cardinals? Don't they play in Budweiser-land?" He shrugged. "Maybe I like Boston because I like Irish music". She laughed again. "You talk baseball like my sister talks shoes. Matching hobbies to accessories."

Alan stopped thumbing his hat and crossed his arms over his chest. "Hell, I don't keep up with baseball. Didn't even keep up with it when I said I was keeping up with it. It's just an old hat."

The sweaty-man smiled. "1975. I was in Cincinatti. Saw the Reds play the Red Sox in a World Series game."

Without noticing it was not his car, Alan leaned back on the Crown Victoria. "That so?"

"Oh yeah. Went with my brother." The sweaty-man checked the cables, wiped his brow with his shirt. "Great game. Saw Pete Rose play. Will never forget it."

People exited the Mexican restaurant. A family. Father, mother, three kids and a grandmother. Mom walked grandma. The kids jumped and ran circles around the car. They had Styrofoam boxes. The sight of them lit a match in Alan's chest. He looked away and fidgeted with his hat again. He wanted his new friend to keep talking.

"Who won?" Alan asked.

"The game in Cincinatti?"

"No. The Series."

The sweaty-man laughed. "Hell, you really don't know anything about baseball. Reds won. Took the title in the seventh game. I wasn't there, but my brother and me were home listening on the radio and wearing our Reds hats."

"You guys have a big hurrah that night? Get blitzed and dance around the house in red underwear?" Alan felt clever. He could hear kids in the parking lot behind him. Father yelling. Kids yelling. Mother fussing over seating arrangements. Grandmother shuffling through the fuss. One kid saying "No, you suck poop." Father yelling for the kids to get in the car.

The sweaty-man paused, looking at Alan with pity. "Sure, kid. Sure. We kicked back some Schlitz's and celebrated on the porch. Slapped each other with our hats. We were brothers. We were happy."

"Sure," Alan added. "Damn right, you partied. Should of taken money off folks for a game like that."

The sweaty-guy leaned over Alan's hood, rogue salt-water beads dripped from his chin onto the radiator. "Know what else we did that night?"

Alan checked the family getting into their car. Mom closed



# entation

grandma in the driver's passenger door. Kids were inside, still yelling. Still yelled at.

"We burned our Cincinnati hats that night. Burned them in a barrel behind the house."

"Why the hell for?" Alan asked. "Too much Schlitz?"

"My brother and me decided you can't stick with the winner always. You can't have the winning team two years in a row. Glory happens once. And we didn't wanna chance the Reds winning the Series in '76."

The car hummed. Alan heard voices behind him, but did not turn.

"Did they win? The Reds?"

The sweaty-guy laughed. "Let's just say my brother and me did not look like schmucks when the Yankees limped home the next year. Once again, Cincinnati was a loud place for a few days. We even bought new caps for the Series. Then we burned those caps, too."

This was strange talk over dead batteries, Alan thought. Too much like father-son bullshit to pluck out of parking lot air. The sweaty-guy started the Crown Victoria and it roared to resurrection. The man yelped. Alan released the cables from his battery and handed them to his new friend. Feeling awkward, Alan slammed his carhood and heard himself ask, "Your brother and you catch many games after the '75 and '76 Reds' series?"

The sweaty-guy closed his driver's door and leaned out the window. "Sure, we saw plenty," he said. "Went to Kansas City. St. Louis. Milwaukee. Back to Cincinnati a few times. Always dreamed of catching games at Fenway and Wrigley, but never did."

"What's the next game you guys gonna catch?"

The sweaty-guy looked towards Auto-Zone. "Benny passed away ten years back. Brain tumor. It was a long road for the family. He had a wife. Kids. I lived for them as long as I could. I tried to help with school and bills. Took the kids to movies. Even tried to take the kids to a few games, but it never worked. I quit going. Quit taking them after awhile." He looked at Alan and smiled, "Maybe glory really happens just the once."

Alan dropped his eyes, fingered keys in his pocket and realized his car was running. The enchiladas were probably warm by now. He needed to get them in the fridge, so he turned to his driver's door.

"Hey, thanks again for the jump. Sorry I kept you so long. If your family was here, I'd tell them they had a good man." The sweaty-guy put the car in reverse, pulled out of the parking spot, and slipped across the street to the corner.

Alan sat behind the steering wheel and stared through the windshield. The smell of salsa and sour cream filled his car. He watched another family walk out of the restaurant. A man, a woman, and a small girl. The man had one hand on top of the little girl's head and walked slowly with her. She wore flip-flops, and they clapped on her feet like sea lion flippers in a circus show. Glory, Alan thought, happens one goddamn time, and he realized he was not on the side of the road with a tire iron in the side of his skull. He'd not been robbed or beaten. So he reached over to the passenger seat, dug into the Styrofoam and grabbed the leftover enchilada with his bare hands.

"One life, motherfucker," Alan said. "Here's your one chance." Then he crammed the entire enchilada into his mouth.

He vomited out the window on the first swallow.—KEVIN STILL

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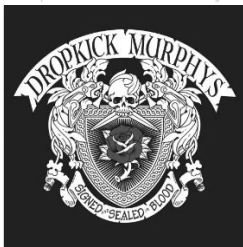
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# Record Reviews



**Dropkick Murphys**  
*Signed and Sealed in Blood*

The Murphys continue to love their bars and their booze in their songs, and who can blame them? It's certainly worked for them as their songs have found their way into movies and popular culture. *Signed and Sealed in Blood* sounds very much like the past 17 years, and again, that's not a bad thing.

The opening cut is the best of the lot - "The Boys are Back" is quintessential Murphys punk with the fist-pumping refrain: "The boys are back/And they're looking for trouble." The album has a handful of political tunes - the anthemic "The Battle Rages On," "Prisoner's Song" as well as an odd Christmas rant about families - "The Season's Upon Us" - and a tune about baseball (of course): "Jimmy Collins' Wake." Another rollicking tune is "Out on the Town" about going out to hear music, which features bagpipes and whistling to complement the crackling guitars. The Murphys mix things up a bit on a couple of tunes: "Don't Tear Us Apart" is a piano-driven rocker while the Pogues-like "Rose Tattoo" features a mandolin. Naturally, the album closes with one more ode for the bars with the slow but defiant sing-along "End of the Night." The Murphys roll on.—**MIKE L. DOWNEY**



**In This Moment**  
*Blood*

I've never considered myself a fan of metalcore, but it's no secret that I love female vocalists. A good solid girl voice covers a multitude of musical sins. And it's this love of girl leads that led me, via Maria Brink, to In This Moment - a band I still have not reconciled to personal preferences. Vocally, Brink delivers solid rock, often scream-o performances, but musically within the band I hear too many Def Tones and Korn & Marilyn Manson rip offs to enjoy them.

earnestly. You can often find me over here in earbuds and turmoil, regretfully listening, even wrestling with a band that probably does not deserve this much airtime.

*Blood*, the fourth album from In This Moment released in August 2012, begins with a two-minute rabbit-hole echoed intro, "Rise With Me", weighing in as the album's second most emotionally powerful musical and vocal track. *Blood*'s first self-titled single "Blood" follows with moderately industrial fuzzes and choppy-quips, chunking Brink's relationally sadistic lyrics with Def Tones' style thick-deli-sliced guitar riffs. Chris Howarth's too short-lived guitar solo is surprisingly melodic and - hell, I might as well say it - prettier than anything I imagined in a track whose video celebrates the most dangerous aspects of Snow White's royal enemy. *Blood*, for this listener, opens with conundrums.

Subsequent tracks flow through a solid formula of fast and slow, industrial and metal, electronic and scream-o, bitter and overly sexualized. The metalcore genre is rehased here, not progressed.

"Burn" and "Scarlet" feel as imposing as fist-bashed crunches of Saltine crackers, while "From The Ashes" feels like a pissed off Paramore reunion. "Beast Within" is the first track since the opening that feels truly intentional and honest, even as the lyrics and vocals reveal a basic party song. So be it. Even Maria Brink has to stop licking her wounds occasionally to have a good time.

"Comache", *Blood*'s most, shall I say, brutal track reminds me of what first drew me to In This Moment: their "Gun Show" single from *A Star-Crossed Wasteland*. "Gun Show", so far my favorite In This Moment track, is a silly, damn near perfect red-neck metal party romp, sounding more like something from the backswamps of Florida than the southern coasts of California. Plus, the video looks like the casting call for a Rob Zombie remake of Herschell Gordon Lewis' *Two Thousand Maniacs*. Tracks like *Blood*'s "Comache" and *A Star-Crossed Wasteland*'s "Gun Show" are extremely rare highlights: energetically caffeinated, blisteringly rhythmic, hopefully brutal. I would play these songs at my birthday party between coffee and cake.

*Blood* revives itself with a finale so vocally large and musically simplistic that the rest of the album feels utterly forgiven. "11:11" (no idea what that reference could be) feels as much warcried as wolf howled and Brink finally brings a fire that the entire album needed ten tracks earlier. "11:11" is the track on *Blood* offering concrete proof that In This Moment could be a bigger and better band, one worth of writing about in a local dirtbag newspaper.—**KEVIN STILL**



**Free Energy**  
*Love Sign*

You have to love a band that's not afraid to heed the adage: "more cowbell" as evidenced on the opening romp - "Electric Fever" - and the equally lively "Backscratcher." Yet, the band really hits its stride without that percussive element on the exuberant "Girls Want Rock" and the thumping "Hey Tonight." Rock and roll is supposed to be fun, and Free Energy keeps it loose throughout this their second album.

However, the band is still finding its bearings as *Love Sign* does suffer from not quite enough rock and a few too many power ballads. "Dance All Night" is the best of the lot. "Hangin'" and "True Love" are superfluous while "Street Survivor" sounds forced. "Hold You Close" is a fair mid-tempo rocker, but "Time Rolls On" doesn't have the power chords to finish out the album.

I bet Free Energy puts on a great live show, but it doesn't look like they'll be hitting the middle of the states anytime soon, just the coasts. Pity.—**MIKE L. DOWNEY**



**Vacation**  
*Shitty City*

Last November erstwhile Houston punk rock bassist Dirty Jeff Smith (Muhammadi/The CEO's) told all his Facebook pals (me included) that Vacation was gonna be in Houston the night before Thanksgiving and that we should all go to the show because they are "the best band we toured with this year". That's high praise, so I complied. What I saw was three dudes firing off pop songs at early Husker Du velocity buried under layers of Big Muff dirt and cymbal wash.

On record, Cincinnati's Vacation comes off not quite as Minneapolis. *Shitty City*, this 4-song EP, sounds a lot like Muhammadi,

but noisier, less punk rock and more no-wave pop, like Sonic Youth if they were from Detroit. "Like Shit" takes an awesome pop hook and lets it devolve into the elephant mating calls of amplifiers raging through guitar pickups through amplifiers through pickups in an endless loop of infinite love. "Crashing Rockets" has a great late '80s college rock hook "I'm just circling your atmosphere/riding this skyway that keeps you here" delivered with manic double-tracked vocals slamming the tape HARD, smearing across it manically with the song trailing out over booster rocket thrusters breaking oxygen particles in the typical NASA low end rumble.

All toll, this EP illustrates the crossover between modern dirtbag punk and indie rock delivered by a band that still knows how to flail manically at their instruments but can keep their shit together enough to stock their songs with enough songwriting smarts and guitar freakouts to keep the crustiest punk and the most intellectual indie rocker satisfied.

—**KELLY MINNIS**



**Snuff**  
*5-4-3-2-1-Perhaps?*

British punk band Snuff hasn't released an album for the past ten years, but they are back in the full-length category with a delirious mix of punk and thrash laden with horns, organ, and frenzied handclaps. It's not that the group members haven't been playing; they just haven't been recording much together.

They've been listening to the scene though, as evidenced by the Green Dayish "Rat Run" with its careening Hammond organ and the MXPX influence (or the other way around?) on "Bones for Company". Mainly, their full-tillt punk like the first two cuts - "In the Stocks" and "From Underneath the Ice" - followed by some great punk guitar on "There Goes the Waltzblack", "Mumbo Jumbo" and "I Blame the Parents" are standard thrash, but "EFI" slows to a normal rock beat to feature a circus organ and a nice trombone. "Mary Poppins" waxes and wanes with intense dynamics, unlike the propulsive "All Good Things" that never lets up the guitar-trombone intensity.

You can check on the tunes on the usual places online.—**MIKE L. DOWNEY**

# concert calendar

**2/1—Larynx, The Conglomerate, Hi-Fi, Taz & Friends** @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

**2/1—Cartesian Rebels** @ Schotzis, College Station. 10pm

**2/2—Gobi, Syne Wav** @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

**2/5—Stone Sour, Papa Roach, Otherwise** @ Hurricane Harrys, College Station. 9pm

**2/7—Sweet Honey In the Rock** @ Rudder Theater, College Station. 7:30pm

**2/7—Shinyribs, Sam Riggs, The Night People** @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

**2/9—Major Major Major, Golden Sombrero, Mike the Engineer, Bounce House** @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

**2/14—Lyle Lovett, Robert Earl Keen** @ Rudder Theater, College Station. 7:30pm

**2/15—Two Tons of Steel, Scooter Brown Band** @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

**2/16—Punk Rock Valentines** with **The Hangouts, Pink Smoke, The Born Liars, Girl Band** @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**2/16—Votary** @ Schotzis, College Station. 10pm

**2/22—Burning Midget, In the Trench, Six Gun Sound, Myra Maybelle** @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

**2/23—Black Pistol Fire, The Docs** @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

**2/28—Caleb, Jillian Edwards, The Lonely Hunter** @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

## tails out-bill fool

Bill Fool is proper punk rock royalty in Houston, as dubious a title as that may seem. Aside from running several great record labels (including the latest called Little T&A Records, home to The Wrong Ones, Hell City Kings and Venomous Maximus among others) and playing guitar in several of the city's finest bands (Hell City Kings, The Born Liars), Bill is a walking fount of punk rock knowledge and Houston's history as a punk rock haven. We've asked Bill to tick off a few of the albums that most influenced him coming up. And then you can catch The Born Liars, who have been mostly on hiatus for a couple of years, back in weeny wiggling hard rocking action at Revolution Café & Bar in downtown Bryan Saturday February 16th with The Hangouts, Pink Smoke and Girl Band.

**Rolling Stones, Sticky Fingers**—It isn't going through puberty, your first drink of booze or getting laid for the first time that makes you a man. It's listening to this record and going "OH MY GOD" that really makes you a man.

**Ozzy Osbourne, Diary of a Madman**—When I first heard this thanks to my aunt in 1982 I knew right then and there that I

would be in a band. The ending solo on the song "Tonight" is something that will never grow old in my mind.

**Turbonegro, Apocalypse Dudes**—1998 and a little over ten years after the release of GNR's *Appetite For Destruction* this came out. I was living on Hawthorne with a few dudes including a 16-year-old John from Muhammadali renting our couch. We all jammed this record to the point of utter destruction. Everything changed after that.

**Dwarves, Blood, Guts & Pussy**—I bought this record the same day I bought Poison Idea's *Feel the Darkness*. While both are simply amazing, it's the Dwarves that seems to always make me go the craziest. Crazy is good. It only lasts a few minutes but most thing that are great should only last a few minutes. I mean, I got shit to do man.

**Ramones, Ramonesmania**—I hate CD's with a passion but the first one I finally broke down and bought was this. It's not easy to find on vinyl as most people jack up the price so owning this on CD is

a must. I love -- I mean L-U-V -- the Ramones and picking just one is next to impossible so having one with every single catchy as fuck hit on it rules. RULLLEEESSS!



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