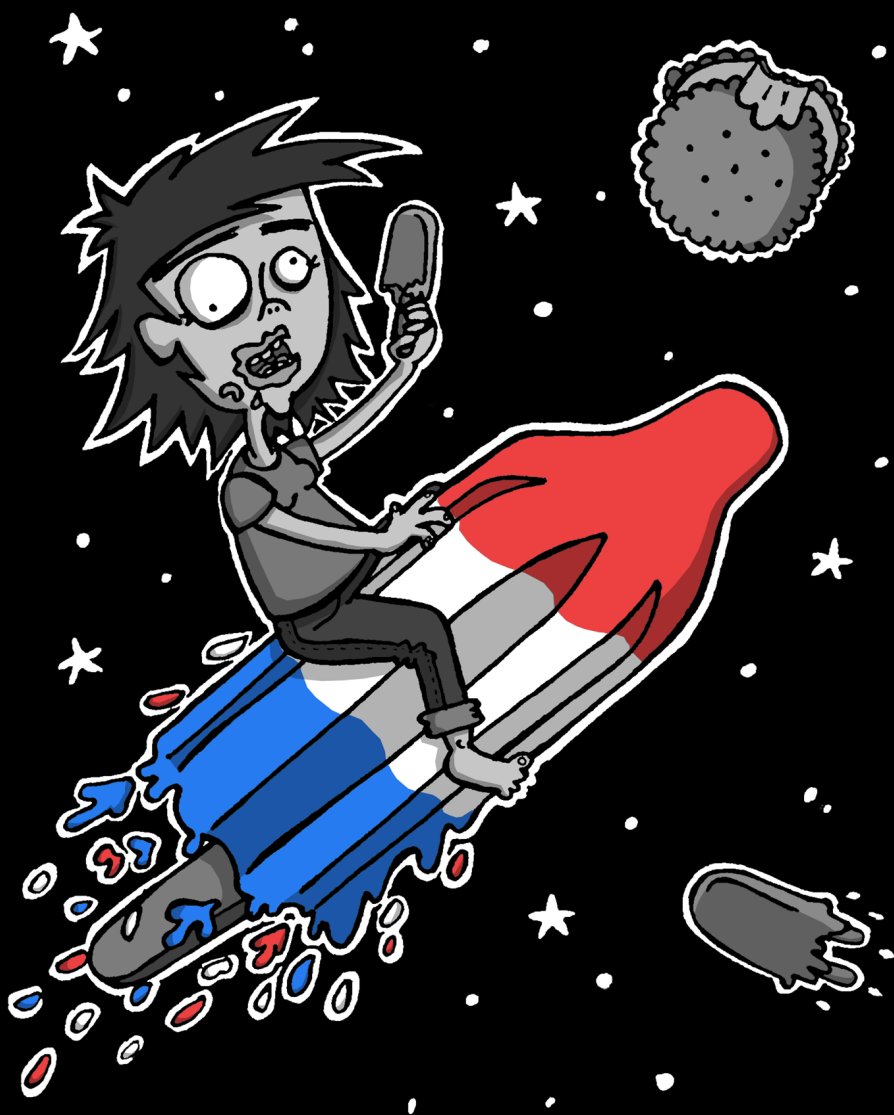


STAR REPRESENT



July 2017
vol. 9 issue 7



*inside: husbandz - he should not have been elected - homecoming -
precogs - todd lives in a film - your most excellent road trip mix tape
hydrogen jukebox - independence day for the lizard king -
record reviews - concert calendar*



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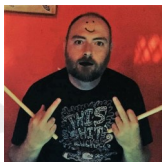
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HUSBANDZ

This month makes 20 years that I have been married. In 1997 I had no idea really what life shared this closely with another human being would be like. I guess I had vague

ideas about living together and doing things together, having steady supplies of sex and snuggles, probably fears of being tied to one person forever, fears of fucking it up, etc. The usual sort of stuff. Mainly, I just didn't know what I was doing but assumed that, like anything else in my life, I'd make it up as I went along. I did a lot of firsts for my immediate family: finishing college, moving away, why not have a successful marriage? My parents sure didn't.

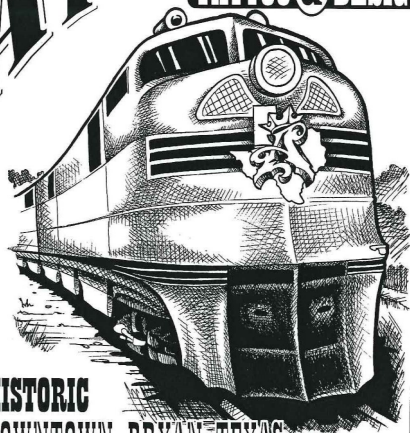
I, of course, did not really account for the sorts of things life throws up against marriage. My wife's depression wasn't diagnosed and medicated until halfway through the marriage. Moving across the country to a place neither one of you has friends in puts a big burden on your friendship, let alone the marriage, and we did that three times. Buying houses and cars is stressful. Having children is a big deal in the best of times, but in our case we lost our first child at term and the aftermath has continued to send waves lapping to shore 17 years later. As you grow older you grow apart in some ways. It's not that you grow tired of each other, it's that you run out of new things to say. That's a comfort, because there is so much back story, decades of inside jokes. Sometimes that is a problem because the other person knows ALL your tricks. Good, bad, in between. My spouse has seen me many times at my best and knows where my strengths lie. She has also seen me at my absolute worst, my lowest. We have shared many wonderful and profound times. We have shared a few deeply disturbing and painful times just as profound. We have tip-toed around each other, walked hand in hand, and also trod right on top of each other, smashing the other's face in the ground.

Our marriage is a continual challenge. It is like everything else in life. It is a myriad of emotions and states within one confine. It is nothing like a love song would tell you it is. Nothing like the movies suggest. There are times that nothing but laziness has kept it together, times that the bond is so strong that nothing short of death would sever it, and then our ghosts would just rise and haunt each other. It is not a marriage that I would hold up to anyone as an example of a successful one, or of a healthy one. I've just kinda muddled through and made my way the best that I can. The money quote from the film *Love Story* is, "Love means never having to say you're sorry". Maybe you don't *have* to, but I have had plenty to be sorry over and I have apologized over and over again. Sometimes the two of us made clear-headed decisions that turned out to be awful for our marriage. Sometimes the drunkenly tossed-out plans have saved the union in its sorest times. We promised each other forever, our children are the tangible proof of that promise. Love is painful, euphoric, soul-crushing, life-saving. My wife has saved my life many times over, and I have pulled her back from the brink just as often. We are radically different, we are often quite distant. She is still the person I most want to talk about things with.

Last year I wrote these words for a song and they are by far the most autobiographical I have ever set to music: "Say girl, I sing you all of my songs. Say girl, you are my audience of one, but you won't hear a single word. So I'll sing a new song, one that goes like 'Say girl'..." I sing them all to her, to us, whether she hears them or not. 20 years. Or from another one, "We toss and turn and we ebb and flow, but we make our way and that's just how it goes. War all the time." - Here's to my war. May it wage 20 more. — KELLY MINNIS

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HOME COMING

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
—T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"

In Robert Frost's poem "The Death of the Hired Man," one of Frost's characters says that "home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in." I used to love that quote, but I suppose that was due in large part to the fact that when I was growing up I had the privilege of a home that was a place of love and safety. I am now well aware that there are many others who did not have such an experience.

However, I am fully convinced that all of us are in search of such a home, even those of us whose childhood memories of home are pleasant ... as adults, we all need the kind of home to which Frost's poem alludes: a place where we know that we will experience love and acceptance when we are in need. People who will share our joys and our sorrows, surrounding us with community regardless of our circumstances. Folks who know the real us, at our most vulnerable, but who love us anyway.

When I left my family of origin to go to college I was lucky enough to find a small university that embodied that kind of community that felt like home in many ways. I lived on campus all four years, my class was 1/10 the size of my high school graduating class. I went to classes with, dined with, studied with, and parted with the same group of people who, after four years, had become family. They were my home; when I had to go to them, they took me in.

Then, I graduated. I had married one of those college friends, so I carried a little bit of that family with me, but life after college did not offer the same sense of family, home, or community that I had experienced in my young life up to that point. And I desperately missed it.

I hadn't grown up with a church home, but I thought that maybe if I found the right church it would feel like home. I won't bore you with all the nitty-gritty details here except to say that I was baptized into the Catholic Church as an adult, joined a Methodist church about 10 years later, eventually became an ordained Methodist pastor, left the ministry to return to Catholicism, and would now consider myself someone who tries to love in a Christ-like manner but who is not convinced that I need a denomination to help me do that.

My point here is not to regale anyone with my religious

exploits, but to simply note that in all of these communities, I failed to find the home and the family I was looking for. Each transition promised to be the one that would be the one where I felt loved and accepted just for being me. But it seemed like every time I'd been made a member of the club, I then learned of unwritten rules and expectations that weren't always in keeping with "the real me."

My longing for community ... for family ... for a home was so compelling that over the years I would say things to my husband things like: "Maybe we should join a bowling league, you know, so that we can have real adult friends;" or, "Would you ever be interested in taking dance lessons? Do you think we could make grown-up friends that way?"

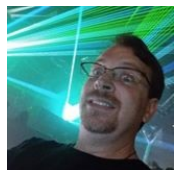
And then it happened! After all of my children had moved out of the house and after I'd stopped looking for churches and groups to try to join, we moved to Downtown Bryan and started hanging out with the Happy Hour Crowd (sometimes referred to as the Senior Citizens Crowd ... which is a definite misnomer since the likes of Jeremy Stark, Joe Black, and Ben Lohrenz are in the group) at Revolution on the regular.

If you've ever seen the old 1964 stop-motion animated film *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*, you may remember that Rudolph ends up on the Island of Misfit Toys where unloved/unwanted (somewhat abnormal) toys wait for Santa to find them homes and children who will love them. Rev's often reminds me of that Island because it is a place where those of us who have felt unloved, unwanted, or somewhat abnormal can take refuge. Where we can let our true selves shine through, quirks and all, because we know that we're surrounded by other quirky folk who love us.

It's tempting to write a scathing diatribe about the irony involved in failing to find unconditional love in the church, but then finding it at a bar. But I think we can all recognize the irony involved and take that wherever we need to go with it in our own minds/worldviews. The more important thing, it seems to me, is that those of us who frequent downtown, either as denizens or customers of the various businesses, have found a home where we are welcome; a place where we can be ourselves, a family who loves us.

We can, as T. S. Eliot says in *Little Gidding*, find what we've been looking for all along ... and realize that we've ended up where it all started ... we've come home.—
PAMALYN ROSE-BEELER

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KNUCKLE BUG

A flying bug landed on my knuckle one evening while wandering around in Moody Gardens in Galveston after hours. The sun was going down, no one else was around except for the occasional yoga-panted jogger and the night shift walkway power washer who preferred working at night because no one bothered him.

I knew it wasn't a "biting" type bug, but I kinda panicked and killed it. Why did I kill that bug that landed on my knuckle? He was probably just about to fly off. There really wasn't a need to kill it. I mean, not like I'm a bug activist or anything. Interestingly, I was just informed recently of a sect in India called "Jainism". They don't eat anything that causes violence, even root vegetables, because the action of harvesting might destroy organisms. Interesting. Some have been known to employ non-Jainists to sweep the ground in front of them as they walk. But that's not me. I don't mind killing stuff.

The little dude was probably like, "Oops. What's this thing I landed on? ... "I better fl....." Fireants? Different story. They should be killed every single time.

Incessant Lapping

On the same wandering as the bug day above, and since my ears can't be closed, I sat and "listened" at a little pier. I didn't have my phone out or music in my ears. I just wanted to sit and hang out. The wife has gotten me interested in meditation lately and I thought this would be a cool time to do it. It was interesting. Focus on breathing. Acknowledge thoughts and move on. Back to focusing on breathing.

I watched a log floating in the water and couldn't help but think about how weird life is and how sometimes we're kinda just floating along, being watched by some weirdo on a pier.

The lapping of water onto a pier sounded primally familiar. Like there was a language in there. A language that we all know, but don't ever think about because it scares us. It's also hard to hear because you have to shut down the stream of static going on in your head, and that takes some time. It's a tapering...especially if you've been scrolling up on your phone or talking to someone.

But the lapping. (and yes, I realize this is probably just me being loopy), but I felt like it was saying something. And I don't mean that I heard it saying something...you know how hearing a pattern sometimes starts sounding like words...maybe that's just me again...whatever.

I felt like it was saying: "Time...is...pa....ssing. Time...is...pa...ssing..."

That kinda freaked me out. Like time was slipping, and this lapping sound was a constant sound... as it had been ever since the pier was built, and before that, on the rocks.

Then I think my brain wanted to comfort me and changed it to something I thought would be clever, and that would take away a little of the stomach sinking, blip in time existence thought I was having.

This time it said, "Same...same...little different...same...same...same."

That made me smile a little and not feel like I just needed to curl up into a ball and not move so as to become a significant or remarkable point in time.

Also it was getting uncomfortable, so I got up and moved on.

Talking Birds

I walked a little further and met up with a couple of macaws in a cage. I didn't know they spoke until they said "Hello". I know they didn't mean "Hello" as in, you know, greeting me. I mean, they probably say that to everyone that passes by just because that's what they think they are supposed to do. I felt like they really just wanted some sort of social interaction. They were probably bored of each other, and some weirdo as walking past during the time of day that no one normally walks around the area.

We went through all the normal paces with, "Hello", and "Pretty Bird", and "I Love You". It was fun, but I could tell they were just working their tried and true tricks. How many people had done this in the past?

So I tried to teach them a new word. I decided on the word, "Rudical", which is my Drum and Bass music production alias. It's a made up word that probably they have never heard before.

We did that for a few minutes, and to my surprise, they were trying. "Rudibleble". "Rldldldld". "Rurirul". They got so close. Then, suddenly, as if not wanting to give me the satisfaction, they started screaming at me.

So I said thanks and goodbye, and I left.

They kinda turned into assholes. — JORGE GOYCO

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PRECOGS

The five patients sat in the waiting room awaiting the procedure to enhance their minds. Improved and prescient, they would be valuable assets to the ones organizing and paying for the procedures.

Beneath the room's low ceiling and partially burned-out, overhead light, Daniel Patterson, Melanie Young, Paul Takomi, and Elek Chal sat at a table talking, while James Balang sat on a collapsing couch in the corner reading a magazine. James was about twenty feet away in the room, but could still very easily hear everything.

"Dreadful, simply dreadful," Paul Takomi said.

"What's that?" Melanie asked.

"The lighting in this room, it depresses the mood," he went on. "We are about to undergo one of the finest medical procedures known to man, yet we have to look through this shit," he said pointing at a dingy fluorescent bulb.

"Calm down, Paul," Daniel Patterson said. "Be patient. We're not going to be in here much longer."

"That's for sure," James said from the corner of the room.

"Hmm?" Daniel asked.

"Nothing."

"What kind of work do you think we'll be doing?" Melanie asked. "Being precogs and all that."

"Currency speculation," said Elek tersely.

"Bullshit," Paul said. "The rich do not want more money. The military is funding this."

"The rich don't want more money," quoted Daniel. "That has to be the dumbest thing I've ever heard a smart person say."

Paul replied, "Selling our abilities for combat advantages is bound to be more lucrative, anyway."

"There's no reason we can't do both," Elek interjected. "Speculation, stock trading, even picking lottery numbers. I'm sure we'll be doing all that, I'm just glad we got picked. We are the future."

"Why don't they just give the operation to themselves?" Melanie asked.

"We can presume a certain amount of risk is involved," Paul said. "They told us that much. Why risk their own

bodies when they could risk ours and reap all the benefits?"

"Now you're sounding cynical," Daniel said. "Why's that?" "I am not," Paul said, avoiding the contraction, "I am simply providing an analysis."

"Shut up, both of you," Elek said. "I don't enjoy listening

"I am not," Paul said, avoiding the contraction, "I am simply providing an analysis."

"Shut up, both of you," Elek said. "I don't enjoy listening

to men bicker like women."

"Doesn't a comment like that degrade women?" Daniel asked.

"Yes, and that's not something I mind," she said. "I find most women, like most people, intolerable."

"Oh, don't say that," Melanie said.

"And I am the cynic?" Paul commented.

Everyone quieted. They passed a few minutes in silence. James continued to read his magazine in the corner, seeming. The light flickered overhead, causing Paul to frown again, but he held his tongue, not wishing to dethrone Elek.

"I have a question," Melanie said. All their eyes, except James's, turned to her.

"Go on," Daniel said.

"If we'll be able to see the future, will we still be able to change the outcome?"

"Of course," Paul said. "We will not be 'seeing' the future, not in the mystical sense, but rather we will be able to predict it in the same way a physicist can predict with what speed a falling rock will strike the ground—he doesn't 'see' what's going to happen; he knows enough about the system to predict what will happen. The operation will be enhancing our intuition about upcoming events to an almost superhuman level, but of course this offers no contradictions as far as our ability to bring about a different outcome. The physicist can alter the speed of the rock if he wishes to."

"It'll be like your mother telling you that the family is going to the beach tomorrow, and you simply decide not to go," Daniel said.

"Did you not read the pamphlet?" Paul asked.

"Um, no," Melanie said, chagrined. Elek made a scowling expression who all but Melanie noticed.

There was another period of silence, followed by the sound of James flipping pages in his magazine. "Say," Melanie said to him. "Why are you sitting over there? That broken couch can't be too comfortable."

They all turned to look at James, waiting on his response. He kept them waiting, finishing his paragraph before acknowledging Melanie's question. "Isn't it obvious?" he asked the group at the table. Bending the corner of the page to mark his place, he put the magazine down and looked up at them.

"What is?" Melanie asked.

"Why I'm the only one sitting on this awful couch and why we have been waiting for so long?"

"No," she said, bemused.

"What do you mean, James?" Daniel asked.

"We've already had the operation," James said in a cold tone. They were all silent as they waited for him to say something else. He didn't.

"Please elaborate on this conjecture," Paul said impatiently.

"This is how they test whether or not it worked," James said. "Because if you could see what I see, you would not be sitting at that table."

"Why not?" Daniel asked.

"They don't need failed subjects walking around, endangering their secrecy. You're no use to them, now."

"What the hell are you talking about?" Elek asked.

"Young man," Paul began, but he was interrupted. At that moment, a syringe protruded from each of their chairs, impaling each of them in the back. It had concealed itself in a hidden compartment. After a few spasms and grunts, the group of four at the table was still and silent, their mouths wide open and saliva drooling out onto the tabletop. There was a lack of dignity in the scene.

James stood up from his seat and went to the door. He didn't bother to touch the knob. The door opened and a man walked in. "We're ready for you, Mr. Balang," he said. "It's disappointing that it only worked on one of you."

"I could have told you that in advance," James said. The man grinned. "I'm sure you could have." — *STARKNESS*

YOUR MOST EXCELLENT ROAD TRIP MIX TAPE



The secret to a good road trip mixtape for the summer is to have plenty of tunes that mix diverse sounds with places to sing along, lots of rhythm, and to not be lyric-dependent. You want the songs to stand up under repeated play, so that the whole car can rock and roar with gusto. Here are five tunes that can form the core of any summer road trip tape.

1.) "Roll On Down the Highway" – Bachman Turner Overdrive. Since you have to have at least one song with "highway" or "road" in the title, this is it. Most of the lyrics are indistinguishable, which is fine since everyone can sing the "let it roll down the highway" easily multiple times. Plus, it's a better tune than the overplayed "Taking Care of Business," and the solos let the passengers play frenzied air guitar.

2.) "Da Da Da I Don't Love You" – Trio. Driving is repetitive, so a tune by this German band in a language that isn't their first is a must to get everyone's shoulders bopping. Be sure to find the long version. Crank it up.

3.) "Stay With Me" – The Del-Lords. This was my go-to rock and roll song with the kids from soccer, baseball, softball, and band in the car: "My, my, my, my, my heart is calling/want you stay with me?" The criminally-ignored Del-Lords have the best version although the Dictators' has a rough charm.

4.) "Roll Me Away" Bob Seger. You have to ignore the obvious with this classic rocker (no "Against the Wind" or "Old Time Rock and Roll" and such), but it's still hard to narrow to one for the road. "Even Now" or "Hollywood Nights" or even "Feel Like a Number" could slot in here. However, this one ensures "my heart is singing" because "next time/Next time, we'll get it right."

5.) "Barbara Ann" – The Beach Boys. Another tough choice from this quintessential American summer-is-forever band since "Fun, Fun, Fun" and "Help Me Rhonda" are also great sing-alongs (yes, "Little Deuce Coupe" would work), but this one is just too much fun to sing at the top of your lungs.

Mixing up artists while keeping up the beat and the singing is key. You can have "New Day Rising" by Husker Du (everybody knows the words) following Bruce Springsteen's "Cadillac Ranch" while tossing in "Heart in your Heartbreak" by The Pains of Being Pure At Heart after Foghat's "Fool for the City."

One last thing – use your cruise control as the tendency to floor it will be irresistible. Be safe. — *MIKE L. DOWNEY*

G-TONE
SPEAKER CABINETS

No. He couldn't. His death in Paris, France, on July 3, 1971 proved just that.

INDEPENDENCE DAY FOR THE LIZARD KING

The "Lizard King" title was not self-appointed. Some drug-addled rock writer gave him that appellation in a bombastic review of one of the Doors' live performances. The fact that Jim could be lauded with such adulation, that he could pull off sociopathic stunts, and still be humored by his bandmates, friends, press, and fans, that he could kill himself with a life of dissipation ... well, all that seeming power shows that he was no king of any sort—nor did he want to be. He wanted the kind of freedom that isn't afforded by kingdoms.

Jim Morrison's embrace of the Lizard-King moniker is itself an admission that he was anything but free, in a country and a time in which "freedom" was in the grip of a socio-political war. We're still fighting it today. And that might've been Jim's point—we aren't free to do shit. And, oddly enough, that oughta be comforting.

He wasn't a king at all. Yeah, he dug the whole lizard milieu and donned skintight leather pants and a slithering, shamanistic stage persona. Jim also had a helluva voice. (One of his biographers noted that Frank Sinatra was utterly pissed-off that Jim had done a riff on the old crooner's vocal theatrics, especially their implicit sexuality. Then again, despite his rep, Frankie-boy *never* did anything "his way." Hell, *Paul Anka* wrote the song!) Yes, Cracker once crooned, "What the world needs now/ Is another Frank Sinatra/ So I can get you in bed." But Cracker might've missed the point—we had that already, or thought we did—in Jim Morrison.

Near the end of his life, in the photo shoots for the Doors' last album with Jim, he insisted on keeping his beard and his bloated beer gut, and on crouching down so that he was *not* the tallest, most prominent figure in the cover photo. For the Doors' two previous releases (a live album and a greatest hits album), the Elektra label had used photo mashups from Jim's less-dissolute, Adonis-like days. Bearded, bloated blues singers who resemble Allen Ginsberg's geriatric period don't sell records like sex-gods do. So, some will tell you that Jim always saw himself as a blues man at heart. Bullshit.

Being a ragged, burping, croaking blues singer was yet another persona, one which the late-period Lizard King in a sense *had* to retreat into. He couldn't do anything else. And that was the point.

Shit, Jim was too acid-hazed and alcohol-laden to have had a master plan. Fuck yeah, the dude was absolutely



I AM THE LIZARD KING,
I CAN DO ANYTHING
—JIM MORRISON

From the song, "Not to Touch the Earth," on the Doors' third album, *Waiting for the Sun*. The song was itself an excerpt from what was to have been a side-long piece, "Celebration of the Lizard," that never made it on the album (though the Doors played it live numerous times).

a brilliant and better-read than a philosophy professor. But, for Jim, the whole thing was about freedom—of kind that we sorely need today.

Morrison said, circa 1969-70, that he wanted to create a song that was utterly joyful (sorta like Nietzsche's famous words, "I would believe in only a god who can dance."). The darkness of the Doors' music and his poetry is intended to make us confront our own darkness, admit to it, and even celebrate it (instead of hiding it behind pious façades)—get it? The *Celebration* of the Lizard? Dying to the self in that way is actually the gateway to a deeper, more authentic existence. The song, "L.A. Woman," captures that joy that he was shooting for, and I'm grateful he captured it before he died, much to the world's benefit.

Jim seemed consumed with living out that dying-to-self. Maybe he had a personality disorder, maybe his trying to live in a repressive society helped drive him there. All the biographies attest that Jim could be a tremendous pill (pun intended). But he could also be extremely vulnerable and sensitive. This latter made it possible for the then-burgeoning music-industry machine to eat up what it saw as his "antics" and, in the process, eat away his soul. (Remember Floyd's "Welcome to the Machine"? Didja know that, near the end of Jim's life, Pink Floyd was one of the acts that he was listening to and in whom he saw great potential?)

He rebelled against that culture/industry machine in his own way (indeed, going rightly apeshit about his other bandmates' selling "Light My Fire" to a Buick ad), but therein fueled that machine. He was and wasn't made for that time. He was indeed the poet/prophet that made the American 1960s culture the indelible icon it was. But he wasn't made for the pressure of its mindless worship of him, the over-culture's retaliation against him, nor the assholes who came to the shows only to get fucked up and witness a spectacle—indeed, the exact opposite of what he calls for in "When The Music's Over":

*Cancel my subscription to the Resurrection
Send my credentials to the House of Detention
I got some friends inside*

*The face in the mirror won't stop
The girl in the window won't drop
A feast of friends
"Alive!" she cried
Waitin' for me
Outside!
... Persian night, babe
See the light, babe
Save us!
Jesus!
Save us!*

*So when the music's over
When the music's over, yeah
When the music's over
Turn out the lights
Turn out the lights
Turn out the lights*

*Well the music is your special friend
Dance on fire as it intends
Music is your only friend
Until the end
Until the end
Until the end!*

Jim Morrison was a Dionysian in an Apollonian world. He knew the West was dying long before the West did. But the death of the West (and Jim's death) are *not* the end of the story. I said above that it ought to comfort us that we're still fighting about what "freedom" means.

Here's the thing—we don't have any freedom about dying; we're gonna do it. But dying—and more importantly, *living*—are two sides of the same coin. We can live a living death—you and I have both seen it, in ourselves and in others. Or, we can be dying to live.

Death is a means of becoming vulnerable and open to the idea that we don't get to rule it all. That, in fact, we rule very little. And the more we scramble to mark the territory of what we control, the smaller our lives become.

I don't know whether Jim Morrison was a hero or a debauch or just a dude who passionately believed in poetry. But he made it clear that life is about *RIISING*:

*Mr. Mojo Risin', Mr. Mojo Risin'
Mr. Mojo Risin', Mr. Mojo Risin'
Got to keep on risin'
Mr. Mojo Risin', Mr. Mojo Risin'
Mojo Risin', gotta Mojo Risin'
Mr. Mojo Risin', gotta keep on risin'
Risin', risin'
Gone risin', risin'
I'm gone risin', risin'
I gotta risin', risin'
Well, risin', risin'
I gotta, wooo, yeah, risin'
Whoa, oh yeah*

—RANDY BEELER

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TODD LIVES IN A FILM: *BABY DRIVER*

I hear the ringing in my ears again and press play on my iPod, the plain white one loaded up with 60s soul. It puts a hop in my step and brightens the otherwise mundane coffee run. When the music is playing I can tune out the tinnitus, move to the beat, and float around the street from sidewalk to sidewalk. Sometimes I even throw in some drum hits with my air sticks, or a trumpet solo when it arrives. Folks around me may think I look silly, but I don't care when the song is right, and it always is because I prepared it to be right precisely for the moment. I only break the groove to walk normally around the beat cops—who knows whether they'd recognize my face even with sunglasses on. Behind the wheel I'm a terror, focused on a singular goal, but here on the street hiding in plain sight I don't have a care. The best part about a great song is its ability to make you forget everything within and around you, become temporarily oblivious to the weight you carry around and shed it down to the concrete, feel perfect for three minutes at a time.

The ringing starts again and I put on another song, sitting at the end of the table while Doc goes over his latest plan for a heist, always having some connection to exploit and never satisfied with having enough. My part is always more or less the same—get us the hell out when it's time to get gone—but I'm attentive nonetheless as he details the instructions with the latest crew of criminals. Sometimes the faces are familiar, other times there's brand new ones. Either way they always turn to me at some point and ask the same unoriginal questions. "What kind of name is Baby?" "Why is he always wearing headphones and sunglasses?" "This is kid is our driver?" "Can he ever stop listening to his little music?" "How come he hardly ever talks?" "Is he even paying attention?" Yes, I am—more attention than any of you. I read their lips while Doc goes over my credentials and they spew insults my way. I fell into driving for Doc on these heists, I didn't choose to be good at it, and I don't want the money. I'd much rather just have the music, listening to records at my pad or making goofy song ideas up when the mood

strikes. I know that I'm not one of these people.

Sometimes when there's nothing playing, memories I've tried to forget or forgot unintentionally come back into frame. Things that happened when I was young—the car crash while sitting in the backseat, my mother singing soul songs, family holidays at home. Things all long gone now. When the ringing is loudest is when I can see them the most clearly, pain coming from both senses. So I always have a few iPods ready and charged up to distract myself from it, ready for me to latch on to them whenever I need them. Despite my appearance I'm not really young anymore—sometimes you have to grow up quicker than you look. I don't mind so much when I'm underestimated, it's not really my thing to answer a confrontation or a serious questioning. I'd rather keep my head down and go about my day, one day after the next day after the next. I suppose it's detached me from common interactions—I'm not a nihilist or anything like that, I just really know what to talk about with a well-meaning barista or pretty waitress, and even if I did I'd most likely have to talk about myself eventually. Better to not get too involved for that reason alone.

I press play on The Damned and roll up the volume to drown out the ringing as the heist begins, waiting at the wheel as I diligently tap my fingers against my chosen weapon. I don't care about what goes on inside the bank, I'm not the one threatening helpless tellers and customers just trying to deposit checks. I'm here when the real criminals come running back outside to desperately flee the scene—because I'm the best around, because I don't have a choice, because I get a cut to repay a debt. Unlike them I don't fire a gun, but I can outrun a bullet, a spike strip, a helicopter, or anything else sent my way. I know I can't do this forever, but I've never been able to picture a different life for me from the present. One day I'll have to drive away from all of them—the law, the heroes, the bystanders, the criminals, the city—and put them in my rearview mirror. All I'd need to take with me is a good soundtrack.—*TODD HANSEN*



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HE SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ELECTED

As someone who pays attention to politics, I have no reservation saying that America needs strong Democrat and Republican Parties. We live in a two-party system and there are very real policy debates that we need to have.

With that said, this Republican Party is failing themselves and failing Americans as a whole at resembling anything close to a major political party.

Let's be honest for a minute. Republican support of Donald Trump is clearly less about Trump and more about former President Obama. It's a guttural reaction. As hard as Republicans may have tried, they have been completely unable to erase our first black president from the history books.

It tears them up inside that a smart, cocky, black man beat them at their own game, twice. He stopped the world economy from crashing. He eased our fears during national tragedies, and whether we liked everything about the ACA or not, he tried his best to give more people access to health care. All with a smile. Not because he was happy with the way it all played out, but because that's what presidents are supposed to do — act presidential.

As president, Obama recognized that he represented all Americans, even the ones who didn't vote for him. He recognized that he was not bigger than the office of the presidency. He knew that he owed the office a high level of respect. More importantly, though, he realized that his children were watching. That is a concept unfathomable to the current occupant of the Oval Office.

President Obama recognized that generations of politicians, teachers, civic leaders, and yes, children, would take their cues from how he behaved as president. Instead of engaging in Twitter battles or attacking the character of his detractors, he gracefully ignored their criticism and stood tall against a party determined to beat him. He acted presidential.

My Republican friends should take note because what they're supporting, either directly or indirectly, isn't just an anti-Obama presidency but an anti-American president. Supporting a president who is uninterested, unprepared, and unwilling to learn from his mistakes isn't just overtly political, it's immoral. At some point, you are the company you keep.

Let me unapologetically digress and say that if Republicans are offended that they're constantly being called racist by Democrats, stop hanging out with racists. It's not difficult. If you consistently find yourself on the side of the racist, if you consistently find yourself

defending racists, if you consistently find yourself making excuses for racists, you are a racist. If that hurts your feelings, you can fuck right off.

There is no tax break in the world that can justify supporting a man who continues to lie to the American people without hesitation. There's no level that unemployment can fall to that should justify the disrespect that this man has shown to all people. Instead of being honest with themselves and with the American people, Republicans have chosen to be complicit and engage in a disgusting level of intellectual dishonesty, and it's dangerous.

Deep down we all know that there is nothing about Donald Trump that is admirable. There is nothing about Donald Trump that is redeemable. He is a con-artist and a fraud. He worships at the altar of greed, lies like it's going out of style, and sees apologizing as a sign of weakness. He is everything that good and decent people are not. He has shown us time and time again who he is, it's about time the country listens.

At some point, the bottom will fall out of this president's poll numbers, taking the rest of the Republican Party with him. Not even this brand of corporate cowards can save this administration. It will be at that point and only at that point that Republicans will admit publicly what plenty of us have known: He never should have been elected. A fact that has been obvious from the moment he emerged from his golden tower. A fact, that when you can stop talking about Hillary, few Republicans deny. When the president falls, don't think that the idiots who are supporting his outrageous plans and objectives are some kind of heroes. No. They didn't have an epiphany. There is a clear difference between political courage and political expediency. The first is how Republicans should have acted during the election and the second is how they actually acted. Like a mathematician, Republicans made a calculation that party was more important than country. They decided that attempting to erase our first black president from the history books was more important than any other pressing issue.

The more I engage with Republicans post-election, the more I realize how badly they are still reeling from their loss to President Obama in 2008. The problem with that is that we're not in a movie, this is real life and these decisions have consequences. Being reactionary has never been successful in the long term. Republicans need to find someone among them that can lead, if they can't us at citizens need to replace them with anyone other than the current group of politicians who can't get over 2008 almost a decade later.—
STARKNESS



YOUR ART CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We are now accepting submissions for a silent auction to benefit the Sexual Assault Resource Center

We are hosting a silent auction and concert on August 26 at Revolution Cafe & Bar to benefit the Sexual Assault Resource Center. Art submitted for auction will be displayed at the Village Cafe & art979gallery in August. It would be preferable to have art submissions in by Monday, July 31. Works of art are not limited to medium; we will accept paintings, drawings, photos, written word, etc. All we ask is that you submit works appropriate for both the event and the venue where they will be hosted. Items will be then be auctioned at Revolution on the day of the event.

MORE INFORMATION

joshua.siegel2@gmail.com | (832)-349-1629
sarcbv.org | thevillagedowntown.com



ABOUT SARC

For 33 years, thousands of people have called our 24-hour hotline for crisis services and we've reached hundreds of thousands through our education, outreach and awareness campaigns. The Brazos Valley continues to support survivors of sexual violence in our own communities whether the trauma occurred days, weeks, or years ago; however we depend on you – now more than ever.

The Sexual Assault Resource Center looks to donors and supporters, like you, to help end sexual violence across the Brazos Valley. In the words of our partners at Peace Over Violence, "it's so important to remember what we stand for, who we stand with and who we stand up for."

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SEASON



SCHEDULE

PIERCE-PAB FAST TRACK FUN

2/12 - HOME - vs. MISSFITS

3/26 - HOME - vs. CONROE

4/23 - HOME - MASHUP

5/13 - AWAY - vs. KERRVILLE

6/25 - HOME - MASHUP

8/5 - AWAY-DOUBLE HEADER

8/27 - HOME - MASHUP

9/24 - HOME - MASHUP

10/1 - AWAY - vs. CONROE

10/29 - HOME - MASHUP

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FIRST WHISTLE BLOWS AT 6:00

* ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

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HYDROGEN JUKEBOX

MESSAGE IN A BOX

Every budding musician goes through their The Police

phase. Mine was 10th grade. I had just started collecting vinyl LP's in earnest. I could not afford the new shiny compact discs that everyone was raving over (in fact, I did not own a CD player until Christmas of my sophomore year) but this was the beginning of the golden era of record buying, as many people "upgraded" their favorite albums by selling off their old vinyl and buying new CD's. This meant records were worthless, and one could buy them by the boxload for pennies on the dollar. It meant that someone such as yours truly could drag a \$20 through the used record section and easily 10-20 LP's would stick to it.

One 1990 afternoon I dragged an Andrew Jackson through the used bins at the Great Escape off West End in Nashville and the entire LP discography for The Police came away with it. I knew The Police's hit songs from having been a child of the '80s who listened to pop radio and watched MTV. I thought their songs were catchy and quirky then. As a teen, just learning how to play drums and be in bands, I was fascinated by the unique musicianship at play in The Police. The use of space, the economy of notes, the upside down rhythms, the use of echo, the "cultural appropriation" of world music...all fairly radical ideas for pop music at the time.

At first, I gravitated towards *Regatta de Blanc*, the band's second LP. Sure, "Message in a Bottle" was on this album, but it was the second side of the LP that really did it for me. "Walking On the Moon" is a masterpiece of how a three-piece band can create an atmosphere around themselves, making a recording that sounds very large without cramming every stripe of a multitrack tape with instruments and overdubs. The ticking of the hi-hat fades in, the bass and guitar call-and-response against each other before settling into a tight reggae skank. "Giant steps are what you take/walking on the moon" and that is exactly what it sounds like the band and the listener is doing together, each rhythm a push off from the surface, the space beneath one's moon boots before the weak gravity brings the boot back down. There are no guitar solos, no rock bombast, only subtle flourishes, like the barely heard Minimoog pedal tone, the deft rattles of drummer Stewart Copeland's hi-hats played into an analog delay, Copeland playing against the effect to create polyrhythms impossible for one drummer to play by oneself.

Then for a bit I was enamored with *Ghost In the Machine*, the trio's 1981 LP. The band began to more fully incorporate synthesizers into their sound, but in a rather unorthodox manner. Instead of playing keyboard synthesizers, bassist/vocalist Sting programmed arpeggios and single note lines to play repeatedly beneath the band. Guitarist Andy Summers used the emerging guitar synthesizer technology from Roland to create washes of sound against the band's instrumentation. Steel drums and piano were featured in their hit "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic", saxophones bleated in harmony on "Demolition Man", "Hungry For You" and "One World (Not Three)". What drew me in was the darker sound from

album opener "Spirits In the Material World" and

the closing three songs of the album. The band had grown from its "punky reggae" origins, becoming more sophisticated.

One day while listening to the car radio I heard a Police song I didn't know at all called "Murder By Numbers". I wondered where that song had come from, a movie soundtrack or something? The next time I was at my favorite used record haunt I looked at every copy of every Police album in the store, cassette, CD, and vinyl. I discovered that "Murder By Numbers" was on the cassette and CD of the band's last album, 1983's *Synchronicity* but was *not* on the vinyl. The sales clerk informed me, "you should track down their 45's because most of them had non-album b-sides". Whoa, wait, bands would put songs on singles that they wouldn't put on albums too? That concept blew my mind away, and I began to search through the 45 boxes. This was way more time consuming than looking at albums. Then it occurred to me that maybe I was missing out on a LOT of good songs by other artists I loved who maybe did the same thing. The Police created my love for the non-LP b-side. There was "Shambelle", the dark instrumental on the b-side of "Spirits In the Material World", the cynicism of "Once Upon a Daydream", the black comedy of "Murder By Numbers".

This also led me to another time-consuming task over the years of taking a band's b-sides and non-album tracks and collecting them in one portable location. A cassette, eventually a minidisc, CD-R or iPod playlist. That way you could listen to them all in one spot. But in the pre-Internet days it was hard to figure out whether or not you'd actually collected everything. I eventually began to warm up to CD reissues because many record labels, to entice people who had not bought the first round of CD's of older material, now included bonus material on the CD's. Live tracks, b-sides, album outtakes, etc. The Police, not to be outdone, did the same by releasing *Message In a Box*, a 4CD set that collected the band's entire official output in one location. When I saw this in the store for the first time in late 1993 I was knocked out. There were so many more songs that I had not managed to find yet. EVERYTHING IN ONE PLACE. Of course, I sprang for it, the first CD boxed set I ever bought. I enjoyed reading the liner notes and looking at the photos. I liked the package designed like a booklet. 45's aren't pressed all that nicely so in most cases the CD was a definite improvement in quality over the vinyl.

After about 20 years of listening to The Police's output as one large album, I began to want to listen to the individual albums as they were originally released again, without extra tracks. One album per disc. By the '10s I could easily do this within iPod playlists. I have also gone backwards to the vinyl LP's again so I can appreciate the original artwork. I also have a number of the old 45's again. But I can definitely appreciate what *Message in a Box* did for the band's catalogue and it is still I think one of the most essential boxed sets ever released. For any band. — KELLY MINNIS

CONCERT CALENDAR

7/1—Cosmic Chaos, Sleepy Dog, Hand Me Down Adventure, Beige Watch @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

7/7—Tenino (7" release party), Omotai, My Twilight Pilot, The Ex-Optimists @ Revolution, Bryan. 9pm

7/8—David Allan Coe @ The Ranch Harley Davidson, College Station. 5:30pm

7/8—Cuntsolving's Birthday w/Mutant Love, Tenino, Beige Watch, Charm Bomb @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

7/9—LUCA, Corusco, Beige Watch, Better Now @ Willis House, College Station 1pm

7/13—Razorcake Magazine presents Unicorn-dog, The Shoobiedoobies, Atarimatt, Beige Watch @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

7/14—Razorcake Magazine presents Mutant Love, Bum Out, Charm Bomb, Ghost Knife, Don't Call Me Shirley @ Revolution, Bryan. 9pm

7/15—Headcrusher, Critical Assembly, Myra Maybelle, Death of a Dream, Khan, Carry the Storm, Under Subsidence @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 6pm

7/15—Daughters of Ara Bellydancing @ Revolution, Bryan. 8pm

7/15—The Ex-Optimists, LUCA, Beige Watch, Corusco @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 8pm

7/20—Jody Seabody & The Whirls @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

7/21—Rock N Roll Damnation, Bois Bois Bois, The Wannabes @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

7/22—Odd Folks, Pizza Planet, The Fox In the Ground @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

7/28—My Brother's Keeper, The Lonely Wheel @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

7/29—Slow Future, The Ex-Optimists @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

8/3—Okey Dokey, Beige Watch, The Blue Grooves @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

8/4—The Shoobiedoobies @ Arsenal Tattoo, Bryan. 6pm

8/4—Atarimatt, great unwashed luminaries, Wasp Und Pear, Gateslinger @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

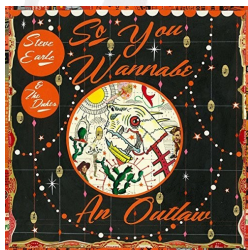
8/5—Dethtruck (cd release), Aphotic Contrivance, ASS @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

8/11—Coattails, Jay Satellite, The Cuckoos @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

8/12—Punk Rock Flea Market @ Revolution, Bryan. 4pm

8/12—Yeeha!, Tine Octopus, DAZE, Unicorn-dog @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

RECORD REVIEWS



Steve Earle & The Dukes
So You Wanna Be an Outlaw

Reviewing Steve Earle is really challenging since the guy has been around so long. I own about half his discography, seen him live in Austin and Dallas, even met him briefly when he was opening for Rosanne Cash back in the

Eighties.

So You Wanna Be an Outlaw boasts by its very title to be a return to the roots rock/Americana/cowpunk/alt-country (pick your label) that Earle practically pioneered with 1986's *Guitar Town* and *Exit O* the following year (his first with the Dukes). The good news is his old fans will not be disappointed. New fans will be the big question.

Almost every tune is notable by tasteful fiddle and steel guitar, and Earle's songwriting is still top-notch, and he crafts tunes for his weary voice well. On the downside, the album hits the well-worn tropes of country music a bit too much: love gone bad, drinking, prison. Also, "Fixing to Die" is a glaring misstep of a hard-rock

pastiche that is out of place on this album.

The title cut is a perky country romp that includes Willie Nelson on vocals that warns would-be outlaws that "it's already been done" and "you can never go home." In the love gone bad category, "This is How it Ends" is a nice mid-tempo duet with Miranda Lambert while "You Broke My Heart" is a Dylanesque lode. "Looking for a Woman" bounces along as the jilted lover proclaims he's "looking for a woman who won't do me like you."

The ballads are fairly strong: "The Girl on the Mountain" is effective while the sad "News from Colorado" is even better. "Goodbye Michangelo" is a fair lament for the late Guy Clark,

but falls well short of Earle's heartbreaking elegy for Townes Van Zandt: "Ft. Worth Blues."

"Sunset Highway" is a seemingly-upbeat tune with piano and edgy guitar that finds Earle contemplating "nothing lasts forever." The same is true of the fiddle-driven country stroll "Walking in LA" where "everybody knows you're down" that includes old-timer Johnny Bush on vocals.

Will Earle continue in the vein that launched him decades ago is the question that remains to be seen, but for now, he is back in the fold. —MIKE L. DOWNEY



RAZORCAKE

MAGAZINE

2 DAY BENEFIT PARTY



JULY 13

JULY 14

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SHOOBIE DOOBIES
BIEGE WATCH
UNICORND OG

MUTANT LOVE
GHOST KNIFE
BUM OUT
CHARM BOMB
DONTCALLME
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