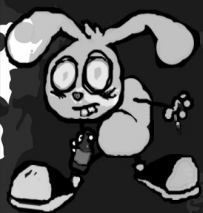
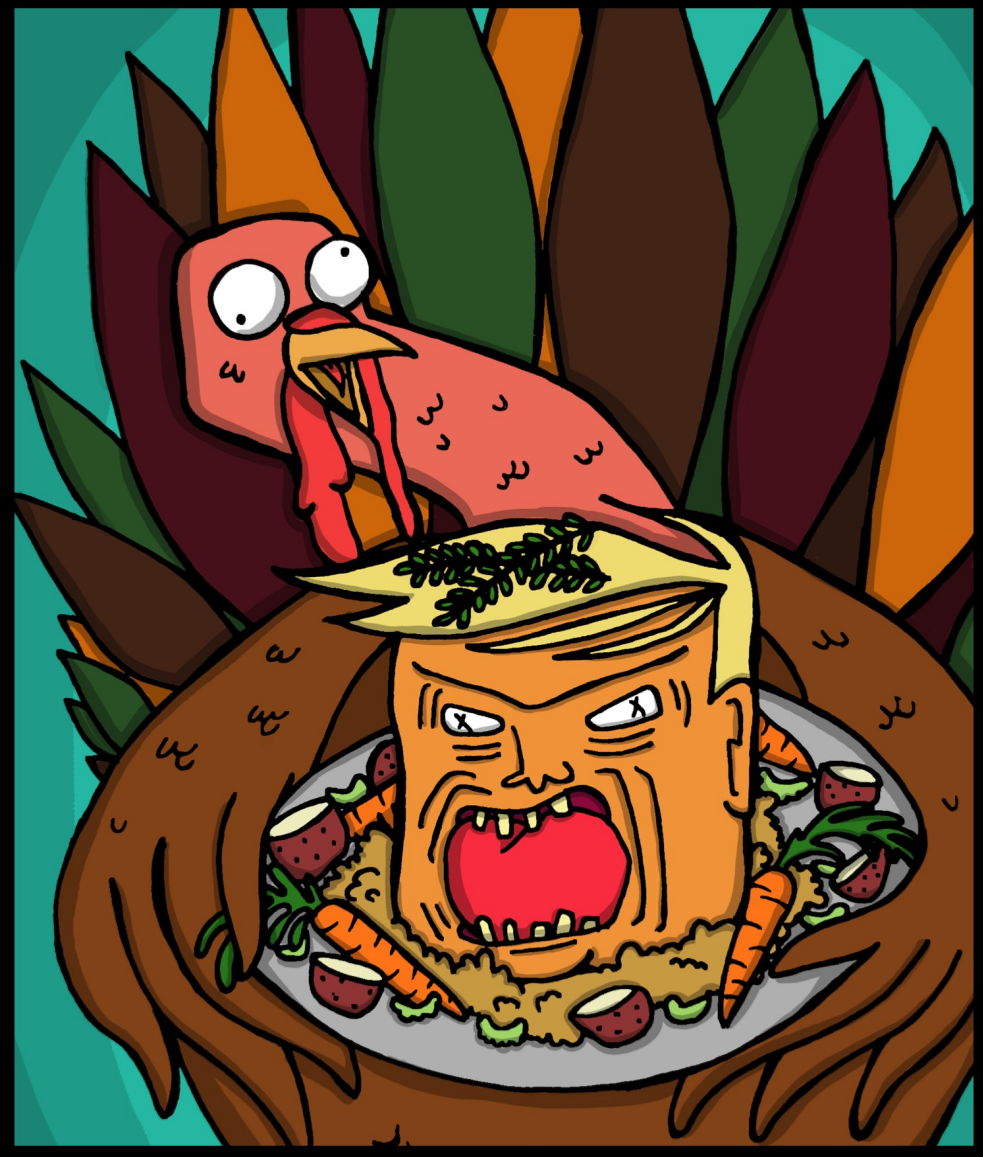


# STARGREPRESENT



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*inside: oh the places you'll go! - jorges guide to the boinkety boink - whiskey glass eye - pivot! pivot! - goddammit kevin spacey - if not now, when? - still (not) drinking - 5 president surrealism - #metoo - tales of excess & outrage - record reviews - concert calendar*



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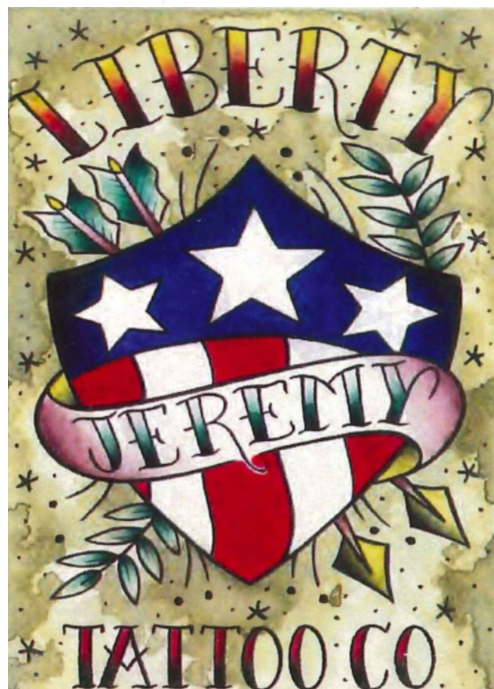
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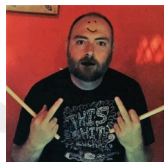
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## PIVOT, PIVOT!!

Have you ever had an argument with that friend, acquaintance, or family member where that person just absolutely cannot lose an argument?

Often times when you get stuck having some manner of discussion with that person at some point, usually when all logic in the argument has failed, this person will take a U-turn and leave nearly all connection to the original points made in an attempt to find any way possible to score a win. Our forefathers knew that secular humanism was the best possible basis of philosophy for which to build our national laws upon. "Oh yeah? Well, all those forefathers were slave owners, pedophiles, secret chemtrail sniffers, and knew that jet fuel couldn't possibly burn that hot." You know, *that* kind of arguer. This person is just practicing the pivot, a move learned from our political and moral leaders in this country.

I think recently of the national discussion of NFL players taking a knee on the sidelines before the game during the playing of the national anthem. The knee has its origins with former San Francisco 49er Colin Kaepernick. During the 2016 season, Kaepernick began sitting during the national anthem in protest of the way African-Americans are treated by law enforcement. He couldn't stand up for the country when the country still has so much work to do to treat all of its citizens equally in the eyes of the law. It took two weeks of sitting for anyone to actually notice, and when it was noticed, all hell broke loose in the media. Former Green Beret and NFL kicker Nate Boyer sought out Kaepernick to talk about this protest. Boyer, an Afghanistan and Iraq veteran, found Kaepernick's protest offensive but wanted to hear him out. The two found some common ground, and Boyer's suggestion that perhaps Kaepernick kneel during the anthem instead of staying seated would still be respectful to those who have served the armed forces but still raise attention to the injustices visited upon many African-Americans at the hands of police.

Of course, politicians can't have hundreds of highly educated, very rich African-Americans protesting during football games. We don't have a police problem. We don't have a race problem. So rather than talk about these issues, rather than letting the protests spark debate and awareness, right wing politicians and media figures instead *pivoted* the issue from being about police brutality to about disrespecting the flag and not supporting our troops. The folks on the right cannot win such an argument, so instead the discussion pivots towards one that they can win.

Protests are not all cake and gravy. Many who speak their mind or demonstrate against something important often times pay a penalty for it. Muhammad Ali's boxing career never fully recovered from his conscientious objection to the Vietnam War, there are still many in this country who refer to Jane Fonda as "Hanoi Jane" and think her a traitor, anyone heard a Dixie Chicks song on the radio in the 10 years? And now Colin Kaepernick is likely to never take another snap under center in the National Football League. That is the price of protest. I stand with all these celebrities, but I have nothing to lose for my point of view. Those in power have everything to lose at the mainstreaming of those points of view and the pivot allowed them to depower the message. The Vietnam War was wrong. The War in Iraq was wrong. Targeting blacks and Latinxs by police for the color of their skin is wrong. It took til 1996 for Ali's reputation to be rehabilitated. It's hard to find someone who doesn't agree the Vietnam War was wrong, and nearly the same for the Iraq War. America hasn't come to a consensus on racial police brutality. It will eventually. Hopefully no one else has to die from the continued pivoting of our leadership. — KELLY MINNIS

# ON THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!

"One Fish," came the whisper.

"Two Fish," I replied.

"Are you My Mother?" came the whisper.

I was confused. Was this my contact?

A large elephant came out of the alley in a tight trench coat which barely covered his trunk and a Fedora which somehow fit over the top of both of his ears. Despite the comical look, it was the killer, known only as Horton, wanted for smashing so many eggs. "Alright pop, I had to be sure you were a cop," said the elephant looking over his shoulder into the night fog. "If the Cat finds out, he will make green eggs and ham out of me."

"Cat, huh?" I said suddenly beginning to understand. "He gonna send Thing 2 after you, would he?" The elephant shuddered. Thing 2 was the maniac of that pair. He liked close killing. I wanted a little fear in the pachyderm. A little fear is better than a .38 when you are dealing with a mad elephant.

"What have you hurt, Horton?" I asked him

"Not what. Who."

"Horton hurt a who?" I asked, not clear on what he was talking about.

"I haven't hurt anyone, I heard someone," he replied.

"Horton heard a who?"

"Exactly," the elephant replied. He jumped a little to a noise in the dark fog.

"What who?" I asked, trying to get to the point of this meeting. I should have been home drinking milk but I was wasting time with peanuts here.

BRYAN 979.822.6747 201 W. 26TH ST.



"The who," he replied and said nothing else. He was letting it sink in. I began to realize which who he was talking about. I could not believe it.

"You're not talking about the who I think you are talking about are you?" The elephant nodded. I went over it in my mind. Cindy Lou had turned state evidence over 30 years ago. After the trial, her and Max went away to witness protection. I had heard a rumor Max was now resting in a box with a Fox in Sox in a graveyard in Connecticut but I thought it was old age. Could it be? Cindy and Max, back to help?

"What do you want Horton?" I asked.

"Immunity," he said. "I want to come in before he gets me."

I chuckled. "With what you've done, you want immunity?"

The elephant looked even more desperate. "Alright cop, no immunity. Just no death penalty. Put me with the Sneetches if you have to! I want to live. After he deals with the Cat he will come after me. I'll tell you everything. I can even give you the skinny on who killed the Lorax. With that you can put him away for long time."

"I thought the Lorax committed suicide."

"No, it was him. It was the--" A knife came through the air. There was a thunk of steel going through elephant hide and Horton stiffened, went silent and fell forward.

I watched the blood leave as his heart shrunk three sizes that day. I pulled my gun and considered the fog. There was a cackle. My blood went cold.

I knew I could, but I shouldn't. That's a way to throw your life away. No one goes after the Grinch alone.—  
**STARKNESS**



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# JORGE'S GUIDE TO THE BOINKETY-BOINK

Just so you know this up-front, I am not a definitive source, and am in no way qualified to write a "definitive" guide...even on the subject of "Boinkety-Boink". But I AM a thinker and a content creator. That's all. If the material becomes a source for some deep thought in the future, then that's different.

Not to sound cocky, but it probably will...you know...become a deep thought in your future. It's all about perceptions throughout your day, your week, or even your year...your life basically.

Everything you've taken in...it's all who you are.

"Content creator" is an easier concept to swallow than "definitive source".

I like to think that I am a content creator. I am 100% sure of it. I can even tell you with no guilt and great confidence, that my ideas are mash-ups of what I perceive, but they are my creation...you know, smashed together, and then I add my own "brand".

For example, I might have been looking on Ebay for an old, rusty metal lunchbox from the 70s earlier today, and I'm also needing to do a graphic that will depict a dude with muscles and something to do with a rodeo. Two seemingly unconnected things. But my brain will connect them. Somehow.

I guess I shouldn't be surprised when I decided I wanted to write a secret "guide", and started thinking about how I was going to begin the whole thing, that I didn't have any idea where it was going to go after I made direct mention of the nostalgic lunchbox and the guy who spends a ton of time at the gym, but also likes to ride bulls.

Also, my dog started barking at something outside as I started to write this, and he knows, (not that he understands us or anything), but he SHOULD know that if he barks a bunch at night, he gets put in a crate on the opposite side of the house than he'd like to be.

And it threw me off this delicate point between the, "Aha!" moment of a genius idea, and my first move...be it a blank page in my sketchbook, a new Google Docs document, or an empty audio file.

What mark do I start with in the sketchbook? Do I title the document first? What sample shall I drop in to begin the song?

In case you are actually following along, usually I start with an eyeball, a title (that oftentimes changes by the time I'm finished) and almost always a kick drum.

It's as if I've learned to not let the idea get in its own way, and just start. I know starting can be paralyzing. I realized I didn't like grinding to a halt, so I changed it. It

was hard at first...you know, because almost anything worth it is hard at first, but I feel pretty confident when I need to break the miniscule and temporary bond that happens (for example) when you have let your coffee cup rest a certain amount of time on a table that has been waxed or painted.

If you try to push it with the least amount of force necessary to make it move, you will notice that it's settled into the paint or wax or whatever it might be. And as you add a tiny amount of force, (surprisingly more than you'd expect, right?) Then it moves.

And it does a mathematical type arc. It speeds up seemingly immediately (but we know it's not immediate...it takes its own allotted amount of time), and then arcs upwards in speed as it moves through time (and also across the table), then gradually comes down as friction and the fact that it surprised you, even though you were only going to push it a very small amount, Slows it down. Then the arc stretches out, slows down and then finally stops.

I've studied a ton of magnified sound waves, that's how I envision this, like a sound wave. It has the rise of the attack, the lengthy sustain, the awkward release, the delay as it slows down and stops. Just like sound.

So, needless to say, the dog distracted me, so I feel like I lost my train of thought in the beginning, remember? With the metal merch laden carrier of mid-day sustenance and the buff cowboy?

I went back and reread the first part of this and I think that the whole point of this writing is that I disagree with the quote, "No idea is original". That was a segue.

Which by the way, Mark Twain is where this quote comes from, "There is no such thing as an original idea." Did he come up with that? I'll do a little research and find out. But in the meantime, knowing it came from a Satirist, and during a time without Google and pocket computers, I might be feeling justified in my disagreement.

I believe the margins on the fringe of the infinite variables that make each human unique, even if miniscule, make it so every idea is ultimately original. Our own perception is our own perception, and it's no one else's. It can't be. Even if you get something explained to you, you can't possibly be having the same thoughts as the one who is explaining it to you.

OK, sure, I'll give you the fact that different people can (and do) have similar end products to their ideas. I feel like that's where life is. That's where prejudices fall away. If we remember that we are all a product of a lifetime of mashed up perceptions, then we would have to conclude that we can't know what they are thinking. We can't know why they said that or are afraid of a "type". Seriously, I'd propose that it's fear of something

different that is the umbrella issue that needs to be kicked out of bed.

"It's different, I don't understand it, I don't like it."

Woah. This suddenly opened up into a way bigger thought temple.

What do I think about people suffering, people hurting other people, chemical imbalance, tolerance, and the like?

Well, I have a whole bunch of thoughts about those things. So do you. And they are connected to a whole bunch of different thoughts that seemingly have no apparent connection. But they can.

I admit, had no idea what I was going to write about when I started this. It's not a guide, although it might be a secret, like once you've seen a picture of how Big Bird is operated by a dude inside the costume. You never thought about it, then you did, and you wondered. And then you see how it's done. Google it.

I guess I feel like I'm not paying enough attention most of the time. But I want to. There's just so much to take in.

Did I connect the metal lunchbox and the musclebound rodeo graphic? If you count that they started this thought process, then yes. Sure did.

PS: Some interesting quotes that came up in my research: "There is no such thing as originality, just authenticity." (Helene Hegemann, 2010)

"Every artist is a cannibal, every poet is a thief." (Bono, 1991)

"To look at something as though we had never seen it before requires great courage." (Henri Matisse, 1998)

"The simple everyday experiences become the doorway to new thoughts and inspirations." (E.A. Bucchianeri)

"I know one thing for sure... I'm giving Morty an "A" in math, and that's my idea. That is an original thought. (Mr. Goldenfold, 2013 - Rick and Morty - S1E2 "Lawnmower Dog")

And here is Mark Twain's full quote (turns out, he agrees with me in a way.) "There is no such thing as a new idea. It is impossible. We simply take a lot of old ideas and put them into a sort of mental kaleidoscope. We give them a turn and they make new and curious combinations. We keep on turning and making new combinations indefinitely; but they are the same old pieces of colored glass that have been in use through all the ages." (Mark Twain, 1924) — JORGE GOYCO

# GODDAMMIT KEVIN SPACEY

In the wake of a deluge of sexual assault accusations against Harvey Weinstein and his subsequent blackballing from all things film, another one of Hollywood's "accepted" and "unspoken" secrets pushed into the foreground this week:

Kevin Spacey is gay.

Of course, those two things don't have anything to do with one another. I'm conflating sexual assault with someone's *sexuality*. My mistake.

But unfortunately in this case, they have everything to do with one another because in a *Buzzfeed* article released late last month, Anthony Rapp told a story of how, while he and Spacey were acting in concurrently-running Broadway productions, Spacey made unwanted sexual advances and, "was trying to seduce" him, at one point using physical means. Rapp told *Buzzfeed* that he believed Spacey to have been drinking at the time of the encounter and that he was eventually able to leave and the confrontation progressed no further. Rapp was 14 and Spacey, 26.

Mere hours after the allegations broke, Spacey responded with a statement saying that he was, "beyond horrified" to hear Rapp's story and that he didn't "remember the encounter." He apologized "for the feelings [Rapp] describes having carried with him," then offered "the sincerest apology for what would have been deeply inappropriate drunken behavior."

Spacey continued: "This story has encouraged me to address other things about my life. I know that there are stories out there about me and that some have been fueled by the fact that I have been so protective of my privacy. As those closest to me know, in my life I have had relationships with both men and women. I have loved and had romantic encounters with men throughout my life, and I choose now to live as a gay man. I want to deal with this honestly and opening and that starts with examining my own behavior."

In two paragraphs, Spacey managed to excuse sexual assault by way of drunkenness, further perpetuate the false narrative that gay men are prone to abusing children, then hide behind his own coming out story.

Spacey has the right and, if they are not valid, duty to combat these allegations. He doesn't have the right to explain away and normalize sexual assault and he certainly doesn't have the right to use the LGBTQ community—people who are already marginalized and denigrated by an unlearned and uncaring society—as his shield and fodder.

You have some goddamn apologies to make, Kevin. — TUCKER

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# IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

*You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think. —Christopher Robin*

Yes, I know that it is not an A. A. Milne quote. It's a *very* adapted paraphrase of a Milne line that ended up being in the Disney movie *Pooh's Grand Adventure*. It's still a great quote though. So great, in fact, that it is tattooed on my left forearm.

I've looked at my arm and I've thought about the quote a lot over the past week because I haven't felt brave or strong or, at times, very smart at all. Quite frankly, since Ryan Coffer's death, I've mostly felt like a huge incredible mess. And, I don't think I'm the only one who's been a bit messy.

All of us who knew and loved Ryan have been grieving, each in our own way, of course, but grieving nonetheless. And I know that the kind of grief that we're experiencing won't end today, or tomorrow, or maybe even by next year because grief takes time.

I really wish that it didn't. What I really wish is that we could experience it and be done with it, in the same way that when you get the flu, you feel like shit for 3-5 days, and then, by day 7 or 8, you're feeling great again and have almost forgotten how intolerably miserable you were on day two.

But in a lot of ways, grieving is exactly like having the flu: you simply have to let it run its course. Unfortunately, the life-span for grief is a whole lot longer than for any flu any of us have had. If I were still in the professional ministry biz, I could give you the whole psychological rundown on grief and its stages and why they occur. But, when you're going through grief, you really don't give a flying fuck about psychology or stages. You just want it to be over with because it hurts and it sucks and it feels like nothing will ever be good again.

When I was a kid and I would get sick, several things would happen. If I was sick enough to go to the doctor, my mom would take me and then when we would stop at the drugstore to pick up my medicine on the way home, she would buy me new crayons and a coloring book so that I could color while I recuperated in bed.

I also knew that I could count on chicken noodle soup, soft-boiled eggs, and hot tea (also 7-Up if it was a tummy issue or hot Jell-O if I had a sore throat). And, here's the thing, my mom was not a particularly great cook, but

try as I might, I have never been able to replicate how good her soft boiled eggs tasted when I was sick.

I knew that before I went to sleep my mom would rub my chest down with Vick's Vapor Rub and pin a flannel cloth to the inside of my pajama top to hold the goop next to my chest (and make her laundry job easier).


That's what I remember about being sick as a kid. Sure, there are some remembrances of throwing up or of having a cough or of my nose running, but for the life of me, I can't recreate in my mind or in my body how awful all of that *felt*. But, I can vividly recreate the memories of coloring, the smell of Vicks, and of how my mom would check to make sure I still had enough 7-Up.

And, I am convinced that years from now what we will remember about this past week is that it hurt a lot. But blessedly, we won't be able to recreate that same feeling of mind-numbing hurt in our hearts. We will still have times when we get sad, when we miss Ryan, when we wish with all our being that we could hear an obnoxious (and probably racist) remark from him, or that he would kiss us on the head as he walked out of the bar, or that he could share pictures of shoes with us. But the hurt won't be able to crush our hearts as it has these last few days.

It won't be able to do that to us then because we will have let the grief run its very long course through our hearts and minds and bodies. And because we will have cared for each other through the hurt just like my mom cared for me when I was sick.

I am not suggesting that a hot bowl of soup or some Vicks vapor rub is going to make it all better, but I am convinced that in the years to come when we remember this week we will remember the hands that held our own, the shoulders that we cried on, the friends who drove us home when we couldn't drive ourselves, the friends who bought us the drinks that got us to the point that we couldn't drive, the friends who called, messaged, and came by to check on us, the friends who got us through one of the most difficult weeks of our lives.

And, when we remember all of those things, we'll also realize that we were braver than we believed, and stronger than we seemed, and smarter than we thought ... because we didn't have to do it all on our own. We had each other ... we had this ragtag bunch that we call family. —PAMALYN ROSE BEELER



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# WHISKEY GLASS EYE

Me: Oh no. Reeaaaally, oh no. Oh God help me. Drunk Detective Starkness, get over here immediately. Where the fuck are we? WHY AM I WAKING UP WITHOUT CLOTHES, NO TOOTHBRUSH, IN A HOTEL ROOM ALONE? This is a question that needs answers, stat!

DDS: Christ, stop yelling, I'm still kinda drunk, too. Calm down. I'm pretty sure we'll figure this out. Just chill, man. Chiiiiiiiill.

Me: Chill?! Fucking chill?! That is your God Damned professional advice? I am in a random hotel room, I thought I had a girlfriend, where is she? Shit, wasn't I with Coffe and Joe last night? You think now is the time for chilling? Dafuq am I supposed to do? I'm gonna look really fucking weird when I start drinking truck whiskey naked in the hotel lobby at 8 AM if you don't come up with some answers, pronto.

DDS: Wait. You brought the truck whiskey up? Okay, well first things first, as your lawyer/detective, I suggest you get up, and put some into those crappy little plastic cups. Maybe we'll remember something.

Me: Not exactly what I was looking for, but solid advice none the same. I'm on it.

*A cup and a couple sips later...*

Me: Ok, DDS, we've had some drink in this hotel room, I still don't know if my girlfriend left me, what the hell happened to everyone, and where the fuck are my clothes? You getting anything yet?

DDS: *hiccup* Huh, what?

Me: Really?

DDS: Oh right, the problem at hand. Um... open the curtains, see where you're at? Maybe that's a clue.

Me: That's actually pretty clear thinking for a drunk mental construct. I'm impressed. Good call. *Opens curtains* Oh, OK, so I do not recognize this city, but my truck is in that parking lot.

DDS: Oh, yeah, Slobberbone. Well that explains the strange neighborhood.

Me: You wanna fucking elaborate on that, dick?

DDS: Sure, gimmie another hit of the brown dragon and maybe I'll remember some more ;)

Me: Shit on a dick. You really are a fucking asshole.

*Sigh* Here.

DDS: *Slurp* Ahhhh, yes it's all coming back to me now. So, the night, or I should say afternoon, started when you, Joe, and Coffe decided to drive to Fort Worth for the Slobberbone show.

Me: I know. I was sober for the drive. I did that myself. Get to the point Drunk Detective Starkness.

DDS: Well, shit if you know it all, leave me alone.

Me: You can't just tell me? Fine, fucker. *Holy mother of fuck. I'll fucking kill you.*

DDS: This is always hilarious. Jesus, you look like shit. Seeing your face just now, in the reflection of this bathroom mirror only makes it funnier. You're still in Fort Worth.

Me: ...I hate you. I hate you with all my heart and whatever liver I have left. So, did I fuck her? She still around?

DDS: Dunno, man, count your condoms.

Me: This is why I keep you around. *checks* Ok, all here. Makes sense. Whiskey dick and all that. But how does this explain the lack of clothes and WHERE THE FUCK AM I AND HOW AM GONNA GET CLOTHES FOR US TO GET YOU AND/OR MYSELF HOME?

DDS: Well, I seem to remember something about gastric distress and Europe, but then your stupid drunk ass said everything was cool and took a bunch of Fireball shots with some Marines during the show. Eventually you left through the back door in an absolute black out, this is the first time you've been to Fort Worth in years, and I'll be honest man, none of this area looks familiar. There is no way to determine how far you walked/drove to get here. Let's just find *some* clothes.

Me: That is absolutely horrible. But I suppose that is life. Wow, Black Out Starkness put his clothes in the closet. Nice.

DDS: Good job man! Proud of him, every once in awhile he doesn't completely ruin everything. Now get dressed and go talk to the front desk to get a toothbrush.

And that, ladies and gents is the long story of how I spent an early morning in a hotel room after a Slobberbone show before going downstairs to find out that Joe really wanted to punch Ryan in the fucking face again. —  
*STARKNESS*

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# STILL (NOT) DRINKING

I've thought a great deal lately about an analogy that helps to illustrate my complicated relationship with beer. What causes a Beer Nerd like myself to leave his beloved behind? Certainly,

beer and I haven't officially split or signed legal papers, but, it's safe to say, we're seeing other people. While beer is off lathering up the World Series, welcoming fall's many pumpkins and spices into her bosom, I am pouring loads of fizzy water and coffee and fizzy water *with* coffee down the hatch in an effort to feel . . . how you say, *complete*. (This is not the analogy, mind you. Just hang with me.)

As you probably know, the various ideas in sentences and paragraphs and even essays are held in balance by transition statements. Transitions are those little words that let us know how everything fits together. An author tosses in a sturdy "however", and the reader knows something between the end of the sentence is different than the beginning. But a less sturdy word, like "but", can also show that the contrasting ideas do not hold as much weight as with a "however". Loads can be communicated, a ton of intellectual and rhetorical weight can be shifted, with a solid use of transition words. Most importantly, these transitions differentiate various ideas, pulling them apart and indicating, as illustrated above, how the reader should approach each new idea. An essay without transitions is a hot mess of concepts bleeding together, no single idea holding more significance than another, so that the job of the reader becomes nearly impossible.

So what do these transition phrases have to do with craft beer? Again, hang with me here.

Like an essay, life is full of transitions. We move from one day to the next. From home to work to home again. From one people group to another. Etc. and etc. You get the picture. This, my friends, is Life—where the transitions never end. Emotionally healthy people have an arsenal of tools at their disposal for handling these transitions. They can walk from situation to situation, read the new moment, and address it appropriately. They are not overly stymied by moving from professional conversations to personal ones or from a rigorous day at work to a potentially still rigorous, though differently so, night at home. Emotionally healthy people possess tools, whether they know it or not, that help them differentiate the various situations and forces of Life.

For people like me who do not possess emotionally healthy tools, Life reads like an essay without transition statements: each and everyday equals one more big hot mess of swirled situations and people and responsibilities that all bleed together and carry the same overwhelming sense of enormity and dread. Living Life without healthy transitions is called living with Anxiety. To live with Anxiety is to carry the constant awareness

that Life is bigger than you. That something terrible is about to happen. That you don't have what it takes just to get to lunchtime. Living with Anxiety means that everything and everyone, even the things and people you dearly love, exhaust you. Anxiety means that the thought of beginning the morning's simple hygiene routine feels as big and daunting as actually beginning the entire work day. Making it out the door and into the car is often a huge feat in itself. Making it back home without hating the world and everyone in it is a totally different story. Without healthy tools to deal with all the damn Life in between leaving the house and returning, you'll be left like me: hiding at home and eliminating as many transition moments as possible.

Or, also like me, you can choose a single transition statement to apply to all of Life. Between work and home, grab a Happy Hour. Arriving to a new conversation, pour a fresh one. Start a new project, celebrate with a brewski. Gotta make that phone call, pop a top. Beer—glorious beer—is a beautiful, sweet and tender downer. It lowers the volume on a cacophony of accusatory voices and takes the shock out of a power keg of nervous energy. Eventually, it can even create a sense of apathy so fine that life no longer feels threatening. But applying one single tool to all of Life's transitions is like writing an essay with the same "however" repeated constantly no matter what's being communicated. In that case, all the ideas still bleed together, all the ideas still carry the same weight, and none of the ideas hold any individual significance yet—which is its own form of Anxiety. Duller under the sauce, Life's transitions do not become easier: they just become nonexistent. The Anxiety doesn't go away. It just builds in new ways, demanding more and more and more of what ultimately does not even work.

I am now, at the time of writing this month's *Still Drinking*, about 40 days into boozelessness. How long will beer and I sleep in separate houses? I'm not sure. I've taken several breaks just like this in the past, but I've never considered Anxiety as my first-name bartender. Previously, I'd step away for a few months but keep that bastard on the payroll, waiting for when I returned for my first pint. Right now, I'm trying to fire the guy. Counseling, anti-anxiety meds and solid sleep are among the new transition tools I'm experimenting with, but even these fail to carry me from morning to night while I'm *Out There*. Again, this is Life—where the transitions never end.

Honestly, I do not foresee ever living without Anxiety. I'm not sure anyone does. We just gain tools and learn how to deal with it. For now, I am looking forward to Life reading a lot less frantically, less like a thrown together panicky rough draft and more like . . . crap, I don't know yet. And, frankly, I refuse to get too worried about it. I've got class in an hour. Let's just deal with one transition first. —KEVIN STILL

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The following contains Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault stories that may be triggering.

"Hey there pretty! Where are you going?" A man yelled at me from across the street. I walked faster to avoid speaking to him. I had just left the movie theater with my parents to walk to the store down the street. I was in fifth grade. My first memory of harassment was being ten years old on a military base and being pursued by a young soldier. It didn't seem to matter to him that I was underage or that I was visually terrified.

I thought it was normal for a long time because no one seemed to say anything. No one seemed to do anything but, I couldn't shake the lump in the back of my throat, the sweating in my palms, the hair standing on the back of my neck and my intuition telling me...this was not okay.

These advances haven't just come from random people on the streets. I quickly came to realize this wasn't going to be an unusual scenario. Now at 30 years old I cannot count the number of times over the past 20 years that I have been approached and harassed. By text messages, aggressive touch and even sexual assault. These are friends, acquaintances, colleagues and sometimes even the people who are supposed to serve and protect. They may try to tell you they are joking, they are drunk, they were just attracted to you and wanted to show you...however these people chose to rationalize their own predatory behavior. THEY ARE WRONG.

I was twenty four years old when I was sexually assaulted by an acquaintance and his two friends. It was one month until I graduated from college. I remember exactly what I had for dinner that night. What I was wearing and every road I took that night on the way to the party. I won't forget it and I won't forget the eyes of the men who tried to hurt me. Looking back on it now the scariest part was the look on their faces that assumed because I was screaming that I liked it. Like it was a sick game I was into. The hunger in their eyes to take something that wasn't theirs because they felt entitled to it. They felt entitled to me. These weren't men hiding in the bushes. These were people who I knew and interacted with on a daily basis. The myth I believed that assault and rape happens to other people by boogiemens hiding in the bushes was shattered that night.

I showered at least 10 times and scrubbed the skin raw on my body. I was numb for three days. I broke when my mother called me. I couldn't even hide the emotion in my voice. She immediately flew to my side. We went to the police department where I was given no choice but to give my detailed statement at the front desk, next to a man who was turning himself in for breaking probation. The female officer I gave my statement to was annoyed with me. She just wanted to get off work. She made me speak louder. I couldn't find the words. My face was red and an entire lobby heard of how I was held down against my will. Nothing ever came of my report. We even filed a complaint about how my case was handled. Nothing came from the complaint either.

The above is just part of my story. I am happy to tell you that I am stronger today than I have ever been in my life. A huge part of that is because I have a strong support system and was put in touch with the correct people and organizations to help me heal.

We hear of these stories on the news and on Facebook. For longest time we thought those situations happen to other people. And say "That can't happen to me." But the world is now opening it's eyes. These stories, these situations, are happening to women and men all around us. We were choosing not to look. Not to do or say anything. My story is no different. My story is not more important than any others. Today I say "Me Too." And to all those who have been harassed and/or assaulted I stand with you. If you are a survivor of harassment or assault and need help please contact The Sexual Assault Resource Center in Brazos Valley. 979-731-1000 or at [www.SARCBV.org](http://www.SARCBV.org) — KIRY JACKSON

=====

I'm pretty sure everyone can tell a story of sexual harassment without thinking all that hard about it. Mine was from a roommate. He was a friend of my middle brother's. They knew each other from the very small, close knit community of drag queens in my home town. It was my Freshman year of college. I had no car. I had been living on my grandparents' farm and catching rides onto campus in the morning with one uncle and home in the afternoons with another. If I needed to be in town (25 miles away) for anything I had to have someone take me. I asked for my family to help me obtain a car but no one would help me. Eventually this friend of my brother's found out about my plight and offered to allow me to rent the loft in his one bedroom apartment in town. I agreed.

I knew this person fairly well. I'd gone to the movies with him and a group of people and he'd been to the places I lived. But always with my brother in tow. At this point my brother lived in another state. I had no reason not to trust this person. I lived in this apartment with him for six months. At first everything was cool. He flirted with me but I didn't think anything of it. As the months progressed, the flirting became much heavier-handed. I'd come home and find him naked in the living room. He would leave his porn out in the restroom or in the VCR. He would make remarks about what clothes I should or shouldn't wear. He would tell any of the women I would come home with or who might call when I wasn't home that I was really gay and that they shouldn't bother with me. By the sixth month he told me that before the end (of what? I didn't know) he wanted me to fuck him. I still shrugged it off. Then one day I came home and he was in drag. The very first time I'd actually seen him dressed this way. For someone who hung out with drag queens and talked a lot of shop I was surprised that I had never seen him dressed up. He told me that he was dressed this way because I liked girls and he wanted me to fuck him as a girl. I refused. He told me I had an hour to remove my things and leave. He was kicking me out. I didn't believe him. I went to my loft and stayed up there the rest of the night. The next day I packed what I had up there and left. I lived out of my car, in a band practice room, or in a friend's living room for the next six weeks, then transferred schools to a college 70 miles from home. I never saw this person again. I realize that I wasn't entirely powerless. I did not feel physically threatened. I knew my roommate would never attempt to force me into having sex with him. He

# ME TOO

was afraid that I would fight him off. I most certainly would have tried. So many others put in the same situation have far less power to defend themselves. The only power he had over

me was to make me homeless.

At my brother's funeral I was told a story by my brother's widower partner. My brother had told him about another family friend, let's call him Jeff. When my mother left my stepdad the first time we lived with one of her friends. On occasion, her young adult son would stay over. I liked him. I thought he was cool. He was into KISS and heavy metal. And Cher, oddly. Anyways, Jeff got into some trouble a few years later with child molestation charges. He had a 16 year old boyfriend and when the parents found out had charges brought up against him. Jeff went away to jail. Until earlier that evening at my brother's viewing, I had not seen him in 20 someodd years. Anyhow, my brother told his partner the story that Jeff had been asked by my mother to "sleep with me" because she wanted to see if I was gay like (my brother)". Jeff never came onto me that I can remember. Had

he and I had merely blocked it out? Whose mother asks another person to fuck their 12 y/o kid? And why had my brother never told me that story? Just another fucked-up story about my fucked-up family. The next day at the funeral all I could do was look across the funeral home at this guy, Jeff, in complete shock. And my mother on the other side of the room. Fucked. Up. I never thought about any of this couched in the term "sexual harassment". I thought it was just more of my family's bullshit. But my roommate attempted to wield the power he had over me as a de facto landlord to get me to have sex with him. It wasn't just that he was a dick. He was also a sexual predator dick.

While it was not hard for me to tap in as a victim, it was harder to confront the latent perpetrator inside. As I think about these events and the media coverage around #MeToo I had begun to think of whether or not I had ever done something to make another woman feel uncomfortable. On the surface I could say no. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that I was lying to myself. I had sex with a girl in college when she was drunk and unable to tell me no. She came to my room specifically to have sex with me, but she kept passing out. I kept reviving her so we could eventually have sex. She eventually had sex with me then passed out again. That was at the very least unethical.

I am sure there are more such stories were I to think harder about it. Point being that everyone has done things that when shown in the harsh light of day they would take back. If for that reason alone it is important for men and women who don't think #MeToo applies to them at all to stop, shut up, LISTEN, and think of how we can all do better. You would be surprised at what you may learn and who you may learn it from if you would listen. — KELLY MINNIS

=====

A little background: during the summer of 1976 (yes, that long ago; yes, when our nation celebrated its

bicentennial), I went from being a flat-chested, little girl and began, as was the still-used expression of the time, to "blossom into young womanhood." Although that may be more information than you wanted, it is necessary background so that you can understand why it was that as I began the fall semester of 6th grade, I sometimes wore a bra, but sometimes, depending on the material of the garment, did not. I was blossoming, but had not yet fully bloomed, as it were.

And so it happened that one day I wore to school what was, at the time, a cute little denim pantsuit jumper that zipped up the front and (this becomes important later in the story) had three little bright yellow beads on the zipper. It was 1976, y'all, don't judge.

We didn't get recess once we got into 6th grade, but we did get a sort of break time after lunch when the cliques that always seem to start to form around that age would gather outside and do the kind of socializing and gossiping that 6th graders do. It was during one of these breaks, when I was hanging out with my group of friends, that Bob (not his real name) randomly reached out and unzipped the aforementioned cute little jumper. After a moment of dumbfounded embarrassment, I zipped it back up as the other boys and girls around me giggled that kind of nervous laughter that happens when no one really knows how to respond.

The bell rang and we all returned to our various home rooms and I asked my teacher if I could please go to the office where I reported Bob's actions to our principal. And, here's the thing, I'm not sure that I would consider this a "real" #metoo story had it not been for the principal's reaction to what I considered to be a serious violation. He asked the following questions: "Were you wearing a bra?" No. "After he unzipped your outfit, what did he do?" Well, nothing really, he just kind of giggled, I guess. "Did he actually touch you in any way?" Yes, he unzipped my zipper. "No, I mean did he touch anywhere inside your top?" No. And then the conversation ended with the principal saying, "well, maybe you shouldn't wear that outfit to school anymore since it can be so easily unzipped."

When school ended for the day and I got on the bus to go home, it was clear that word had spread that I'd gone to the principal and equally clear that I had become *persona non grata*. Everyone was pissed that I had gone to the principal over something that was "really no big deal." No one could understand how I could be the kind of horrible person that would "rat on a friend." No one would sit with me on the bus.

When we got to my bus stop, I knew something was up because my mom was there to pick me up in the car (I normally walked the two blocks to my house). When I got in the car, my mom said, "so, I understand there was a little incident at school today." Yeah, kind of. I explained what had happened and she said that she knew because the principal had called her. (As an aside, I'd like to add here that my mom was, in so very many ways a great mom while I was growing up. She was as much a product of her generation as I am of mine, so I don't hold resentment towards her about the part of the story I'm about to relate. I do, however, consider it a part of this #metoo story).

**CONTINUED ->**

"Well," she said, "the principal and I talked about it and from now on, you need to wear a bra to school. Stay away from Bob at recess. And, I don't think you should wear that jumper to school anymore, but if you're going to, you need to take the beads off the zipper."

Sadly, that was the day that I learned a lot of things that it would take me many years to unlearn: that if something bad happened to me involving a boy, it was my fault because I had done something to cause it. That if something bad happened to me involving a boy, I was the one who had to change my behavior. That if

something bad happened to me involving a boy, my girl friends, those in authority, and my parents were going to make me feel as though I was the one who had done something wrong.

Lamentably, this isn't my only #metoo story, but it is the one that I am willing to share publicly. However, all of mine are incredibly mild compared to what so many women I know have gone through. I have no female friends who do not have their own #metoo stories that they could share. And, unfortunately, it isn't 1976 any more.—PAMALYN ROSE-BEELER

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# TALES OF EXCESS & OUTRAGE (OR JUST PLAIN EXISTENTIAL ENNUI)— ALWAYS WITH A MORAL IN THE END

When I was an undergrad whelp at the University of Dallas (UD), I had the privilege of partaking of UD's Rome Program in the Fall of 1982. UD had been one of the pioneers of travel-abroad study. This was no blow-off, college-pricks-get-their-kicks study-abroad lark. We had our own campus in Rome and had to take some major-ass core-curriculum courses—Philosophy of Being, the Greek tragedies, the Western Theological Tradition. It was all very heady stuff. But that didn't mean we always used our heads. Or did the right thing.

The profs were major-league—not a bunch of voice-cracking, pimple-faced adjuncts with man-buns, trying to fritter away their post-pubesence by avoiding reality, via a European sojourn. We had one prof who had majorly formed the Vatican-II renewal of the Church. Another was a polyglot—the head of the program itself—who taught us Lit and could read all the plays in their original languages.

Still another was Fritz.

To be more specific, Fritz was the now late Dr. Frederick Wilhelmsen (the sorta Harpo Marx lookin' dude in the pic), the only living Thomistic Realist philosopher.

His CV read like a Clancy novel: he had been a mercenary both academically and in the literal sense of the word, like, with armaments in various civil wars abroad. He had Doctorates in Spanish, German, Philosophy, and Politics, as well as a dossier of career stops with the CIA and Interpol. Fritz was a passionate Monarchist and pre-Vatican II Catholic. Although he didn't openly advocate fire-bombing abortion clinics or overthrowing communist regimes, he gave the impression that he'd do it in a New-York minute if St. Peter handed him the fuses.

Now, with this kind of past, you'd think Fritz would have been a bit secretive. But if you addressed him like he was God's librarian (which he kinda was), he'd melt your ears with stories of intrigue and subterfuge, some of which were true. During his lectures, he commanded a presence that would make the Beastie Boys seem a pantomime troupe and George Patton, a bed-shitting



thumb-sucker. Indeed, Fritz would walk into the classroom and give us a non-stop tour de force in which he paced back and forth across the room, literally vacuum-inhaling Lucky Strikes and blasting his foghorn voice.

And he was fucking brilliant. I've never met a more intensely nova-like mind. Ever. But, like any man, he could do wrong.

One fateful night, on one of the Cap Bar couches, Fritz was demonstrating to a few of us scholarly gentlemen the art of giving a fine massage to a woman. The particular young woman in this case didn't exactly volunteer. But, you get enough

brandy in Fritz and his powers of persuasion, along with his ability to throw a half-nelson on a charging rhino, were hard to resist.

His voice normally sounded like a blown muffler on a Harley, and, suffering the effects of the brandy and 30 years of chain-smoking, Fritz was chortling. In the meantime, his hands had wandered down to her waistline. "Now, gentlemen, no back rub is complete without giving attention to the coccyx." His left hand pulled back the waistband of her pants, while the thumb of his right hand snaked under. She was squirming, while Fritz, oblivious to her humiliation, continued to lecture. "Apply too much pressure to the tailbone, gentlemen, and you can cause unnecessary pain. Too little pressure can create a tickle that poses appreciable discomfort to your subject. Any questions at this point?"

I'm ashamed to say none of us intervened. She managed to leap off the couch and was out the door before Wilhelm could expatiate further on the subject. We just laughed. At her expense. But I want to think that some of us laughed because we knew this was wrong and were embarrassed ... but we didn't have the balls to stop it.

The moral of the story is: *Fritz assaulted her. And we abetted him. I loved Fritz, but, despite what humor we can pull from his other antics, he (and we cowardly observers) should have done right by her.*  
#thisoneisserious #hertoo —RANDY BEELER

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# HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRING AND LOVE LIKE (SOME) PROGRESSIVE ROCK

King Crimson—Bass Concert Hall Austin Texas  
10/19/17

For many years, I fully bought into the Punk Rock party line of Progressive Rock. To hear the punk rock class of 1977 tell it, Progressive Rock was the music of boring, pretentious, self-indulgent, nerdy male pothead hippies made by self-indulgent, pompous, decadent, millionaire hippie music majors. Sure, these bands had musical chops aplenty but after the first eight minutes of any Emerson, Lake and Palmer song, even the crappiest punk rock made a whole lot of sense. Long of the short

of it, punk

"happened"

because Pro-

gressive Rock

had too many

notes, too many

pretentions, and

not enough

heart. With

these stupid

hippies van-

quished from the

musical land-

scape, forced to

fly on their

winged Pegasus to Middle Earth never to return, rock

and roll would return to its glorious former past; or so

the story went.

The only problem with this party line is that it didn't go down like that. By 1980's the likes of Asia were filling Enormo domes and Yes had hits on MTV by 1983. As for "punk rock", it quickly became as doctrinaire, humorless, and boring as the old guard they sought to displace. Does it get any more pretentious than a punk band believing that three chords and screaming about the government would bring about the collapse of the government and an anarchist utopia? At least the Progressive Rock crowd could blame their pretentiousness on the drugs. Hearing any seeing any number of self-appointed punk puritans editorialize/squabbling on what did and didn't constitute "punk" was as mind numbing and as boring a trip down the rabbit hole as a typical 15 minute Emerson Lake and Palmer song. Furthermore, after seeing the obligatory stock footage of the Keith Emerson playing a Stonehenge sized stack of keyboards while the narrator says something like "Rock and Roll had lost its way" that seems to be in EVERY punk rock documentary, I was intrigued. Something this many punk rockers hate is worth a bit of my time. I wasn't intrigued enough to give Emerson Lake and Palmer another try (well I did but I still didn't like it) but to give Progressive Rock another listen.

Which brings us to King Crimson. When I brought up cliché use of that ELP footage in every punk documentary to a friend, he suggested I give King Crimson a try. As far as Progressive Rock goes King Crimson is the prog rock band receiving the most praise from people whose musical opinion I trust. I gave two of their albums—*Red* and *In the Court of Crimson King* a listen. They weren't too bad. Plenty of great musicianship and

while the songs are pretty long (it is prog rock after all), it wasn't the hellish trip to the land of ganga, elves, unicorns, fairies and middle earth that I thought it would be. I wasn't quite sold enough on King Crimson to join their fan club but they didn't suck. I found myself thinking "I wonder if they could pull this off live."; knowing I would probably never get to see them.

Lo and Behold, it happened. Bass Concert hall is a venue for *SERIOUS* artists with plenty of ushers to courteously (and not so courteously) show you were your seat was. The venue suited King Crimson perfectly.



Ladies and

Gents, progres-

sive rock is not a

cheap proposition.

Tickets were in the 50-

120 dollar range

but that is to be

expected. There

were two large

signs stating in

bold letters that

there was to be

no photography

until the very

end of the set. I tried to take a photo of said sign for this review but was politely, but firmly, told by an usher that there would be NO PHOTOGRAPHY. I didn't think this rule counted before the show; live and learn. There was no opening band and King Crimson started promptly at 8 pm. There were three drummers. The drummers were in front of the stage while the other 5 musicians were on a raised step above them. Three drummers! Christ, what drum circle hippie crap have I driven to Austin to subject myself to. Behind the drummer on a raised aisle were 5 additional musicians with King Crimson maestro Robert Fripp on stage left.

To my amazement, it worked. King Crimson songs work because while there is plenty of very sophisticated (and honestly quite amazing) musicianship it never comes off as being ostentatious, overblown, or pretentious. Crimson never overstayed their welcome on any part of a song. Just when I was getting bored with a song they would quickly shift to different part of the song. Of course there was a drum solo. You don't have three drummers in your band just to play a straight beat (also known at the 38 Special rule) but it worked; or at least avoided drum circle nonsense. Vocals were used sparingly in the songs which also helped. From what I could make out, the songs with vocals avoided the standard prog rock themes of elves, magick, fairies, middle earth and Alpha Centauri; or the intermittent use of vocals better than other prog rock I've heard. I really should have listed to more than two King Crimson albums before I saw them but I wanted to come in with a fresh pair of ears. They did play "21<sup>st</sup> Century Schizoid Man" (which I guess is the closest thing to a "hit" Crimson had), "Court of the Crimson King", "Starless" and "Fallen Angel". Three and half hours later, with one 20 minute intermission, I was exhausted and completely sold on this band. Long live the King. —RENTED MULE



Ever go to a concert specifically because of who else is gonna be attending the concert? I don't mean because it's someone hot that you're tryna get next to, but that someone hot has awful taste, and you gotta follow that person to something dreadful, like a Log Cabin Republicans meeting or a tri-county AARP Bingo playoff. The adult Minnises bought tickets to attend *Deep From The Heart: The One America Appeal* at Reed Arena last month. Not because either one of us particularly wanted to see the show. Alabama, Lee Greenwood, a bunch of reality TV music stars? Ugh. But...Sam Moore (of Sam and Dave), Lyle Lovett, and Yolanda Adams. Eh, \$50 tickets mother-fuck?!?! Well, it's going for hurricane relief so perhaps it's not a terrible idea and, of course, all five living ex-presidents will be in attendance. Wait, what? Yes, The Ex-Presidents altogether. Damn, we gotta go now because, I mean, *when are you ever gonna be in the same room at the same time with all five living ex-presidents!!!* How many times are you gonna be in the room with any living ex-president! So we had to go.

Presidents are elected royalty. It's really the closest thing we got. We in the Bryan/College Station community are spoiled rotten with ex-presidential sightings. I've lived here a dozen years and have turned down the toilet paper aisle at Wal-Mart only to be turned away by a dude in a suit with an IFB in his ear. Turns out HW likes the kind with the big teddy bear on it and was fetching his own like a boss. As a radio producer I've had the opportunity to speak on the phone with one president (W, though he was a primary candidate at the time and governor of this fine state) and been in the same room with two presidents (both W and then-senator Obama in 2004). I'm sure I will line up to pay my respects to HW when he goes, even if I did spend some time back in 1991 protesting him and his Gulf War. I've never been any closer to Clinton than driving through Hope, AR on tour. No wait, I was on the streets of Seattle covering WTO in 1999 and walked past the hotel he was staying in. Does that count? I'm maybe gonna claim it. I've never been remotely close to Jimmy Carter. But now I can say I've breathed the same rarefied air as all five of them dummies now!! Ain't I special.

When we bought the tickets I was pretty sure that was all that I was buying them for, just to say I was there. That day we showed up to Reed three hours before show time. Mrs. Minnis had been told that doors opened at 4pm and that in order to ensure we'd make it safely through Secret Service security we'd need to be there early. We were there close to 4 and had zero trouble getting in to the building. There were metal detectors and drug/bomb dogs roaming around but it wasn't quite as heavy as I expected it to be. Take it, I'm sure for every obvious security officer I could see there had to be a dozen others I wasn't seeing. There certainly were enough of those outside in fatigues toting automatic rifles.

Once inside, we found our seats and settled in for a long three hours of smartphone solitaire. As we were seated, a white piano was rolled out to the center of stage. A blonde woman walked out to it and began to soundcheck. After about a minute, I turned to my other half and told her that had to be Lady Gaga. Her response was "shut the front door, that can't be her, she's not listed as a

# FIVE PRESIDENT SURREALISM



performer". I, sadly, do not know her music well enough beyond the obvious hits to say definitively one or the other, but as this soundcheck continued I was pretty sure I was right, especially since I saw on videoscreen during her soundcheck that her non-profit Born This Way Foundation was a sponsor of the event. This was certainly a surprise and maybe perhaps worth showing up for. She asked the audience to pretty please not record her soundcheck or take pictures or such since she wanted her appearance to be a surprise. Then why the fuck didn't you soundcheck earlier!!! Everyone around us recorded her and posted it to social media. The Eagle and KBTX reported it. Heh, we posted on Facebook about it.

By showtime we were actually kinda excited to see Lady Gaga. But we had to get through the other parts of the show, which turned out to be a kind of telethon of sorts, emceed by Lee Greenwood after he opened the show with the alternate national anthem, "God Bless the USA". I hate this song. I hated it when it came out, I hated it when I had to sing it at events in high school choir. He really was a fairly capable host though. The country music twinkies were kind of unnecessary. The first, Stephanie Quayle, sang an awful out-of-tune medley of "I Won't Back Down" with "Good Day Sunshine". Dreadful. Robert Earl Keen, well, y'all love this fella in B/CS so I'll be nice. I think I'd have liked to have heard him at the Palace Theater on a hot summer night, but not in this context. The Gatlin siblings (Larry was present but couldn't sing so his sister pinch-hitted for him) were actually pretty fun. I grew up listening to country radio so I was familiar with both the hits they played. Lady Gaga split the concert into two parts. The woman can sing, she was a megastar in an event that really didn't have any others like her, but she also knew she was a megastar and performed as such. Three songs, just her and a piano. The woman could sing, and Reed Arena rang to the rafters with her amazing voice. But...her performance was OVERLONG. OK, we know you can sing. We know that seeing you in a stripped down performance like this is a BIG DEAL. We know that this show is to raise money for some people in this country who have known some real burdens and challenges dealing with the effects of these hurricanes. Many of you, dear reader, have either been affected by the hurricanes

helping folks out. It is not hard for you to tap into the humanism of this event. But Lady Gaga REALLY wanted to remind you of the human suffering. And I don't mean by making you endure three 3:30 pop songs stretched into a 25 minute performance. She would talk to the audience between verses, sometimes in the middle of verses, like she was trying really really hard to lend some gravity to her appearance. You're a pop star, fer chrissakes!!! You will fly out of here tonight to who knows where, but it will for certain not have been flooded with shit-water like half of Houston. Neither would I, for that matter. For me, her continued pitches and *sprechgesang* in the middle of her songs was annoying as fuck. Between her chatter and the liberties she took with melody and song structure (you know that line in that Father John Misty song, "I hate that soulful affectation white firls put on/Why don't you move to the Delta?" NAILED IT), I was Gaga'ed out.

Sam Moore brought the soul and his rendition of "Imagine" had all the natural gravity Gaga kept artificially weighing us down with. Lyle Lovett can write and sing a song, and his quick performance aided by a Houston church choir was classy. Cassadee Pope. Who? I haven't heard her on my quarterly visits to the dentist (that's how I keep up with my country music...the hygienists clean my teeth while I listen to KORA...you choose which is worse) but she was better than the first woman whose pitch is worse than mine. And that was saying something. Yolanda Adams showed people what true soulful affectation was about, and knocked some amazing bits of gospel soul right out the building. I was hoping that we'd see Gaga taking some notes but old girl was already taxiing from Easterwood before her last note finished bouncing off the NCAA banners. The Houston Gospel Choir sang an amazing version of "Lean On Me" with a lead singer whose deep, earthy growl could stir the dead. But Alabama...eh, not so great. They said the producers asked them to sing a Christmas song...and it wasn't even Halloween yet. That was weird. Guitarist Jeff Cook looked like a corpse who'd never seen a guitar before, much less the one strapped around his neck. But the hired guns onstage with them helped keep things going.

Mostly, what was the most fun of the night was watching the five presidents watch the show. Cameras were on them and the video screens would show them clapping, smiling, singing along, *feeling it*. Jimmy Carter claps like a Muppet. Obama likes to jut his chin out when presented with a soul groove. Dubya smirks at everything. Whenever their visages would pop up on the screen people would cheer wildly! Obama and Dubya got the biggest cheers of the night. Even Trump was in on it with a decent presidential taped message.

All in all, it was an odd yet entertaining evening. Worth \$50? Naw, but the money goes to a good cause that ultimately made it worth skipping Punk Rock Prom for. I mean, aren't my grandkids gonna some day be impressed that I hobnobbed with five ex-presidents that one night at Reed Arena? Feck ya they will! — KELLY MINNIS

## NO CROWN, NO COKE: WHISKEY REVIEWS FOR THE DISCERNING DIRTBAG

Evan Williams Single Barrel, 2009 Release  
Who? MIKE JONES! (Heaven Hill Distilleries)  
What? Bourbon (78% corn, 12% malted barley, 10% rye)  
When? Now  
Where? Literally almost anywhere  
Why? Because this is an Evan Williams that won't remind you of college and that's a good thing  
How much? \$35

At 6'3", it took me an extra quarter of a second to bend down to the very bottom shelf and grab a handle of plain-jane Evan Williams during my undergrad. I had \$16 in my pocket and plenty of time to have an internal dialogue about quality versus quantity. This was college, so quantity most often won by a landslide. 2.3 times the amount of booze for about half the cost. It was a no brainer. I *saw* the Evan Williams Single Barrel, but I never gave it a second thought. Partly because I'd been drinking the black label grasped firmly in my right hand for a while and I longed for a time where I could scheme up to something with a little more...notoriety. Or, you know, taste.

It's not the worst thing you could buy, truth be told. It's okay to mix with and, if you have some ice and a little water, kinda bearable on its own. It's good *party whiskey*, but that's about it. The first time someone offered me the single barrel, I turned my nose up at it. I'm happy they pushed the issue and made me give it a try because this is hands-down, one of the best budget bottles to ever be distilled and I always keep a one or two around. Oh, and before you go to town on a dram, hold this thing up to the light and appreciate the amazing color. It looks like John Hammond's piece of amber from Jurassic Park...sans mosquito.

Nose: Really sweet, big on vanilla, but charred oak is definitely the most prominent thing you'll smell. These bottles are NAS, but previous age-stated releases have been anywhere from 7-10 years old and they spend the duration of that in #3 barrels. If you let it sit and/or add a few drops of water, the oak fades and you get a little bit of custard, too.

Taste: It's only 86.6 proof, so the burn is pretty negligible and fades almost immediately. This is one of the many reasons why I like to start new bourbon sippers on this bottle. Spice, wood, caramel, and very subtle orange come through and it feels pretty rich and mouthy considering this bottle is all about the Hamiltons, baby.

Finish: The barrel char does come through here again, but it's much more restrained than it is in the nose. Dry but otherwise well-rounded and still a little spicy. I personally like drinking this with a couple drops of water because it really harnesses the finish and also makes it that much sweeter. This is also a dram I'm not afraid to put on ice as boozy respite to a hot summer's day, although I always suggest tasting a whiskey neat first, then adding a few drops of water, then perhaps ice depending on your mood. There's no wrong way and I swear it's not a bravado thing, either. Ask me for the science lesson next time you see me. (87/100) — TUCKER

# RECORD REVIEWS



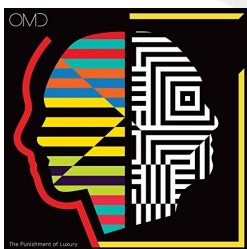
**Beck**  
*Colors*

I don't like "serious" Beck. The first thing I ever heard Beck sing was a song called "MTV Makes Me Wanna Smoke Crack". For him to have become an artist who makes beautiful faded 1970s Polaroid music is grand and the Grammy awards must look awfully nice on the mantle in Hollywood but...I like it when he rhymes "papasita" with "poplocking beats from Korea". I like it when Beck makes music that isn't supposed to be taken as a statement. *Colors*, his new album, isn't exactly that kind of album, but it's also not exactly a statement album either.

On first listen you may be surprised to note that you've heard some of this stuff before. Tons of advertisers have used "Wow!" and "Up All Night" in ad campaigns for the last couple of years. Wait, this is a new album, right? Yes, it is. Singles have been out in front of this album since 2015 though, which is kind of a weird way of doing things these days. It is also in the nature of the album that it all sounds like something you've already heard before. "I'm So Free" sounds like a really lame Weezer single with some awful rapping, even by Beck's standards. "Dear Life" sounds like an odd attempt at introducing millennials to Elliott Smit, right down to the tack piano and slide guitar. "Square One" sounds like a throwaway Pharrell-produced single for Taylor Swift with a handful of sneaky Steely Dan chords thrown in. "No Distraction" is a Beck ripoff of a Bruno Mars ripoff of a The Police song. "Fix Me" even throws in the Millennial Yowl for good measure.

This might sound like I dislike this album for being an uneventful attempt at Beck to reach a new generation. I find the album quite pleasant. I rather like the title track's big, flat drums, tooting pan flute samples, but crushed pitch shifted backing vocals, and it's massive "Colors (in your head)" hook. This is pop music with all the '10s pop music tropes and clichés. But gatdamned if

I haven't listened to this album two dozen times already. The songs are well-written. The production is stellar (Beck and producer/former Beck touring keyboardist Greg Kurstin played everything on the album...Kurstin also has produced work for Adele, Kelly Clarkson, and Sia, among others and is himself a reason I think the album sounds like it does). Kurstin takes a lot of the blame for the mixed reviews of the album. Many take exception to Beck "selling out", making a pop album. I don't see why the hell he shouldn't. He's subverted pop music from the outside for the lion's share of his career. Why not subvert it from the inside? I'd ten times rather listen to Beck rhyming "juitsu" with "shitzu" than some other bullshit on the radio. And the few times I've cruised pop radio I sure haven't found any of the singles from this record on it. Even when Beck vies for commerciality he's still too weird for the kids. Their loss. — **KELLY MINNIS**



**OMD**  
*The Punishment of Luxury*

Listeners likely know the British synth band Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark (OMD) from the soundtrack of the 1986 *Pretty in Pink* movie for the lush pop hit "If You Leave." When I saw the band live a year or so later, the only people close to my age (mid-30s) were the security guards. OMD released about a half dozen albums in the Eighties, influencing myriads of bands worldwide, before the band splintered to leave primary vocalist Andy McCluskey to struggle through the Nineties before giving up.

In 2010, principal OMD songwriters Paul Humphreys and McCluskey, along with instrumentalist Martin Cooper and drummer Malcolm Holmes (and Stuart Kershaw), having reformed the traditional lineup a few years earlier, released their first new material in nearly two decades. This is the third album since their renaissance.

*The Punishment of Luxury* finds the band still in fine form, exploring the same philosophical and artistic concerns while wrapping everything in lush and

often magnificent synthesizer sounds. The album's title is from a symbolist painting of the late 1800s while one experimental cut is named for a 1915 painting about World War I ("La Mitrailleuse").

Musically, this album lacks a killer single like the first two comeback albums — there's no "History of Modern (Part One)," no "Metroland." Only "One More Time" and "Art Eats Art" come close — the former boasts a strong bittersweet vocal with its stirring music while the latter is a fun bouncy tune that consists lyrically of a list of artists and musicians. While "Isotype" echoes Kraftwerk and "Ghost Star" echoes vintage OMD, most of the album is merely good with none of the pop gems like "Enola Gay," "Souvenir," "Joan of Arc," "So in Love," or even "We Love You." While there are a couple of brief experimental tunes a la "Dazzle Ships," there's nothing as adventuresome as even found on "Navigation" like "The Angels Keep Turning" The Wheels of the Universe.

Finally, the good news is OMD is not merely coasting on its greatest hits; it continues to craft new music while recognizing its past. And that's a good thing. — **MIKE L. DOWNEY**



**Exhumed**  
*Death Revenge*

For extreme music, 2017 is a significant year, especially for death metal. Some of death metal's defining bands have proven that, nearly twenty years into the new millennium, they are still forces to be reckoned with. I'm talking bands like Suffocation, Obituary, Immolation, and Cannibal Corpse who also have album releases this year. People like me who love old school death metal are simply giddy over this. Exhumed, however, is not often included with the "greats" of death metal, and that's a shame.

Kicking off their career with an overtly grindcore sound, Exhumed has moved towards a more traditional death metal style, trying something different with each release. With their latest offering titled *Death*

*Revenge*, Exhumed dives back into the rotting recesses of their minds to offer a tale-of-terror concept album.

Before I get to the sound of the album, there's the artwork. I'm of the opinion that the artwork should reflect the sound and

mood of the album. To say the least, this album's artwork is beautiful! The colors of blue-green and bright red and white script on a black background make this artwork appealing. We get Exhumed's signature mascot, Dr. Philthy, in a grizzly scene involving a hacksaw, a severed head, a decomposing corpse, and an eerie graveyard. If that doesn't scream death metal, what does? The style of this art-even the art inside the lyrics sheet and on the disc itself-also screams nostalgia, like horror movie posters from the 80's. Compared to earlier album art from Exhumed, *Death Revenge* goes all out to visually represent the sound.

Now to the music itself. *Death Revenge* maintains many signature elements from previous albums, but this one possesses an old school death metal flare that I'm all too fond of. This is not a "crushing" album like you'd expect from bands like Cannibal Corpse or Bolt Thrower (RIP), but it still rips! Front man, Matt Harvey, seems to be drawing influence from his other side projects, namely his Death (RIP) tribute band, Gruesome. Is this a bad thing? Absolutely not! While I enjoy a good crushing death metal album, sometimes, it's refreshing to encounter a different approach. We still get the guitar work expected from death metal, but in a way that doesn't feel like we're repeatedly hit in the face with an eight pound hammer ("Hammer Smashed Face", anyone?). Matt's vocals are noticeably different, as well. Whereas his vocals on previous albums had been somewhat tortured, yet comical, they are absolutely terrifying in *Death Revenge*. "Dawnright sinister" and "Oh shit, that's scary!" are descriptions that come to mind.

I mentioned nostalgia earlier with the artwork, and I will say that my propensity for wanting the artwork to match the sound was realized. The overall atmosphere of the music makes me feel like I'm watching an old school horror movie. Think *Hammer* horror films with Christopher Lee as Dracula. Scary, but fun with a purposeful amount of cheesiness. While some disliked the instrumental interludes and dark melodies on *Death Revenge*, this is precisely what I like about it. These are the necessary elements to tell the story of the

# CONCERT CALENDAR

**11/2—Hitting Subset, Unicorn dog, Girlband @** Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**11/3—Brazos Valley Roller Derby Meet & Greet w/ DJ Skullbone @** Revolution, Bryan. 6pm

**11/3—Scattered Guts, Dethtruck, ASS @** Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**11/4—Hand Me Down Adventure, LUCA, Bear on Bear, Beige Watch @** Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

**11/5—Drew Holcomb & The Neighbors @** Rudder Theater, College Station. 7:30pm

**11/9—The Mammoths @** TAMU Rudder Plaza, College Station. 12pm

**11/10—Marine Corps Birthday Bash w/The Docs @** West End Elixir, College Station. 7pm  
**11/10—90s Dance Party @** The Village, Bryan. 9pm

**11/10—Boxing Dei Dei, Dayshifters, The Ex-Optimists, Tame...Tame & Quiet @** Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

**11/11—Wellborn Road, Vicious Cycle, Aphotic Contrivance, The Shoobiedoobies @** Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

Burke of Hare murders. For such a dark horror drama, tone is important.

For all its glory, *Death Revenge* does have drawbacks. While I love the instrumental interludes, some were simply drawn out. Did they need to make "The Anatomy Act of 1832"

seven minutes long? Probably not. Another thing is that some songs seem to recycle riffs in one part or another, such as "Unspeakable", "A Funeral Party", and "Incarnadined Hands", which can get repetitive quickly.

The question then is how this album fits in with Exhumed's discography. For me, *Necrocacy* is probably still my favorite, but this album is a different beast. Where I'd give *Necrocacy* a 5.5, I'd say that *Death Revenge* gets an easy 4.5. Despite the long interludes and repetitiveness of some songs, the album offers enough new elements, nostalgia, and nods to old school death metal to make any metalhead happy. —  
CALEB J. MULLINS



**Ian Hunter & The Rant Band**  
*Fingers Crossed*

This is Ian Hunter's 21<sup>st</sup> solo album, but he's still probably best known for his Seventies output of nine albums with Mott the Hoople. At 78, Hunter is still turning out new music as well as playing his old songs for fans — he just finished touring Europe and is doing dates in the U.S. now.

*Fingers Crossed* is solid for the British native although it's not as strong as his last two albums despite the David Bowie tribute "Dandy." "Saturday night and Sunday morning/You turned us into heroes — Can you hear the heroes sing?" Granted, it's a

**11/16—Jordi Baizan, Cygne @** Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**11/18—Cosmic Chaos, YeeHa!, Hand Me Down Adventure, Andrea Young Band @** Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

**11/21—Don't Call Me Shirley, Josh Aaron Willis @** Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**11/24—French & Bloem @** Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**11/25—Thunderosa, The Boleys, The Subtle Madness @** Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**11/30—Raging Peppers, Andrew Little, Poncho Galvan @** Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**12/1—Prof. Fuzz 63, Cornish Game Hen, The Ex-Optimists @** Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**12/2—HYAH!, Wartime Afternoon, Spirals @** Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**12/8—Jay Satellite, Economy Island @** Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**12/9—Punk Rock Flea Market @** Revolution, Bryan. 3pm

good song, so maybe that's This is Ian Hunter's 21<sup>st</sup> solo album, but he's still probably best known for his Seventies output of nine albums with Mott the Hoople. At 78, Hunter is still turning out new music as well as playing his old songs for fans — he just finished touring Europe and is doing dates in the U.S. now.

*Fingers Crossed* is solid for the British native although it's not as strong as his last two albums despite the David Bowie tribute "Dandy." "Saturday night and Sunday morning/You turned us into heroes — Can you hear the heroes sing?" Granted, it's a good song, so maybe that's enough. Of course, I never thought "All the Young Dudes" that Bowie gave to Mott was as killer a tune as many believed.

"Bow Street Runners" is a great rock and roll romp while "White House" is a fun rocker that is not about the D.C. residence. "Ghosts" is a thoughtful examination of how powerful and evocative music can be: "I'm standin' in a roomful of ghosts — turntables spinning round/I'm standin' in a roomful of ghosts — why don't you put the needle

down?" "You Can't Live in the Past" is good advice for everyone, and the observations in "That's When the Trouble Starts" and "Stranded in Reality" are spot-on.

*Fingers Crossed* doesn't have anything as humorously-cutting as the title cut of his album (*When I'm President*) or as epic as the 9/11 tribute "Soul of America" from *Shrunk'n Heads*. Not too surprising, there's nothing as raucous as "Once Bitten, Twice Shy" or "Cleveland Rocks" or even "Walking with a Mountain" and even as bitter-sweet as "I Wish I was Your Mother." Still, Hunter continues to craft effective music and keeps things in perspective. After all, a decade ago, he penned the funny "I Am What I Hated When I was Young."

Keep on rocking. —MIKE L. DOWNEY



# THE EX-OPTIMISTS DAYSHIFTERS BOXING DEI DEI

*\*WITH TAME...TAME AND QUIET*

NOV. 10 - BRYAN, TX\*  
REVOLUTION CAFE & BAR  
9:30 P.M. - \$5

NOV. 11 - HOUSTON, TX  
SATELLITE BAR  
9:00 P.M. - FREE

**LOOK!**

PRACTICAL!  
VISUAL!  
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