

979 REPRESENT



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LOUDFEST





979represent is a local magazine for the discerning dirtbag.

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IT'S BRYAN'S TURN

I remember when I first moved to B/CS a dozen years ago driving downtown for the very first time. It was a waste land of bail bondspeople, empty storefronts, no one out on the streets, just a typical Texas town center that rolled up its sidewalks at 5pm on weekdays except for the few secrets tucked away at odd ends of the streets or in alleys.

Fast forward a dozen years later and downtown Bryan is the boomtown. Lots of new restaurants and bars, apartments going in, craft brewers, legit coffeehouses...lots of exposed brick and steel, warmly lit open spaces, good meals, good drinks...a getaway for the adults in the area, the anti-Northgate, built upon the shoulders of the Ceronnes, the Rodriguezes, the Maddens, taken steps further by the new breed of DTB entrepreneur.

First Friday has never been more popular. While it is still mostly a lot of people standing around downtown, there are a lot more people standing around on First Friday than there used to be. More and more of the casual Northgate crowd have made their way north. Three popular Northgate destinations have satellite shops downtown, and one of them (Blackwater Draw) will be closing its Northgate location to focus on its DTB location after College Station rent and taxes ran them out.

Leap back again to a dozen years ago. College Station had all the cool new development, the better schools, the more sophisticated cache. Bryan had dropped the ball and CS picked it up and TAMU Johnny Footballled with it. Come forward a dozen years and you have College Station suffering under gentrification, outrageous property values, quality of living issues, and heated school zoning battles. Developers have run for and, for the most part, infiltrated the city council and school boards. Agg Shacks and gigantic student developments multiply. Rather than deal with potential roadblocks before they became roadblocks the CS councils instead became reactionary while their town sprawled uncontrollably. College Station then Cleveland Johnny Footballled it.

Right now is a golden opportunity for Bryan to capitalize on becoming "the anti-College Station". The housing is more affordable, the lots are bigger, there's old trees. Rents are cheaper and it's easier to rationalize risking new business. There's a hungry clientele looking for something a little less stripmalled and corporate. The elementary schools are actually quite good. If only BSD would get serious about improving the upper grades then Bryan would truly have the opportunity to knockoff College Station and rule the roost again.

But Bryan, please pay attention to your history. Just because all these cool shiny new places are coming downtown, don't price them out. Let downtown continue to grow organically. Learn from the mistakes you made in the '90s and '00s. Learn from the mistakes College Station is making now. Be smart. Plan ahead, but also allow Bryan to be a place that people will want to put their imprint upon. It's your turn now, Bryan. Don't Johnny Football it up again. — *KELLY MINNIS*

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WHEN PEOPLE CAN'T "LIFE"



Prison as a concept (and reality) is extraordinarily strange and interesting. The human who can't do being a human very well, gets taken away from being around people, and in fact, his freedoms as a human are taken away as well. They are put in a place where they can't "life" their life like what most other people can. They had their opportunity to stay within the bounds of living peacefully among the others, but they screwed up.

But maybe the death sentence is not harsh enough? Because we don't know exactly what happens when we die, the death sentence has a possibility of not being a "punishment". That means that caging someone away from their freedoms (at whatever their culture deems freedoms anyway) is the punishment. It's weird, but it's the solution that's been accepted historically and currently.

Think back when life was on the other side of the pendulum swing of "complicated". Some member of the group kept doing something that everyone in the group agreed was the opposite of what they wanted to happen in the group. I would assume the first solution was to banish them from the group, but it probably escalated pretty quickly to killing. I mean, the offender would probably try to get back into the group at some point, which would get pretty annoying. The best case scenario would be for them to go survive in the wilderness to do some soul-searching, then come back changed and different.

The kink in this whole thing is the growth in regards to the amount of people in a society. More people means more rules means someone to monitor and uphold. I like the fact that (at least in my mind), humans tend toward giving second chances. We want to trust and forgive...if it means living in peace. We want peace.

Actually, we NEED peace. Chaos can only lead to destruction. When there is a breakdown of peace, there needs to be a solution. Perfect scenario (sans chemical imbalance) is that everyone has people they are in personal and honest communication and "life" with. "Oh, hey, Bob has been depressed and is drinking like waaaaay too much lately, I'm gonna go hang out with him and see what's going on." Or, "Hey, have you noticed that Crazy Jeremy has been talking about wanting to hurt small animals for fun lately? We should go have a chat with him...see what's up."

I don't see this scenario implemented other than in small fringe-type facets. No, what I see is self-preservation leading to isolation...possibly exacerbated by fear.

Fear is the great motivator. So is peace. So is survival. So is escape. The mystery of after-death has created a short-sighted, selfish existence...possibly even psychosis over the relentless tick of time, and the confoundedness of finding "meaning" to all of this. "Meaning" should mean everyone harmoniously living with others while helping each other survive...you know, until we die. But also do cool stuff and invent stuff and share.

Ultimately, I just don't want to go to prison. And at the moment, it seems fairly easy to not do things that would land me there. Seems like it would really suck.

But what do you do about the dude that breaks every window he comes across? What if he refuses to replace them? What do you do about the asshole that ruins every party he goes to? What if he promises to be better, but then isn't? — JORGE GOYCO

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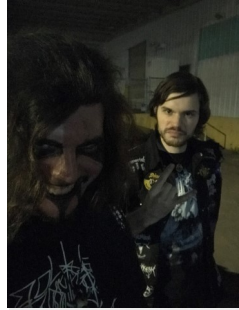
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LOUD!FEST



Aphotic Contrivance has been knocking around Bryan/College Station for quite some time, double-kicking their melodic blackened death metal with twists of prog rock, post-rock, and jazz fusion. But really it's just the the sound of their friendship fed through the speed and aggression of metal music amplified.

Aphotic Contrivance plays the Grand Stafford Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 7:45pm

<http://facebook.com/AphoticContrivance>



If you loved Suicidal Tendencies and D.R.I., then B/C/S thrash metal band **ASS** will scratch that same itch for you. Punk rock at speed metal velocity.

ASS headlines the Grand Stafford Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 11:30pm
<http://facebook.com/assthrashpux>



Bayou Vimana is an old school, smashmouth style hard rock band that puts the emphasis on heavy riffs and pop smarts. Fans of late '80s GNR and Pussycat

will hear something like.

Bayou Vimana play the Outdoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 11:30pm
<http://facebook.com/bayouvimana>

Local garage rock goofs **Beige Watch** make their first LOUDFEST, with their surfy, reverbed fuzz tones, and boozy energy.



Beige Watch plays the Grand Stafford Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 10pm
<http://facebook.com/beigewatch>

Kolton is always the first person to show up at LOUDFEST. This year, he's playing it with **Birth At the Massacre's House**, his one man approach to technical speed and Viking metal.

Birth At the Massacre's House plays the Grand Stafford Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 6:15pm
<http://facebook.com/BAMHGRIND>



San Antonio thrashers **Black Jackal** make old school denim and leather thrash and NWOBM like you drove your parents crazy with in

1982.

Black Jackal plays the Grand Stafford Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 8:30pm
<http://facebook.com/venomandleather>



Austin dark rock trio **Bloody Knives** drapes a funereal shoegaze shroud atop a pounding post-punk nihilism. Gothic, atmospheric, but visceral and heavy at the same time.

Bloody Knives plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 11:30pm
<http://facebook.com/thebloodyknives>

If you've only arrived in TX in the last dozen years you would have missed out on Austin's garage rock roots heyday, when waa-waa pedals roamed freerange, garages rang out with the righteous three-chord psych passed down from local forefathers Sky Saxon and Roky Erickson. The Weird recall those halcyon days, bashing out the deadbeat Nuggets garage punk sound with much aplomb.

The Weird plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 9pm
<http://theweirdaustintexas.bandcamp.com>



Originally formed in TX in the early 90s, **Boy Wonder** was reborn in 2016. Three instruments and three voices playing their distinct version of loud, spacious and intense noise rock.

Boy Wonder plays the Grand Stafford Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 9:15pm
<http://facebook.com/boywonderaustintx/>

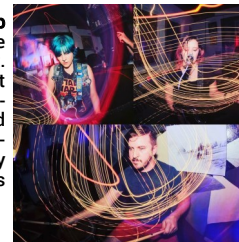


Austin beatmaker and promoter **Butcher Bear** does some fucked up shit to hip-hop and electro all while sweating his cute little bear ass off inside that trademarked bear suit.

Butcher Bear headlines the Outdoor Revolution Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 12am
<http://facebook.com/deadbutcherbear>

BCS trio **Charm Bomb** hates bands with 4 people in them. They just can't. So they stay lean with taut songwriting chops, interweaving guitar lines, and smart songs. And, according to Rockin' Billy, they are the three cutest girls you'll ever meet.

Charm Bomb plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 8pm
<http://facebook.com/charmbombEXPLODE>



It's been since the much beloved Venus Whalers since Atarimatt has fronted his own '90s style heavy punk band. Now, along with Jonny Cerveza and Anthony Vallejo, **Black Catholics** makes they LOUDFEST AND live debut.

Black Catholics headlines the Inside Revolution Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 12:30am

Cosmic Chaos is a charming BCS/Austin group that combines the winsome pop fun of Weezer and the '10s garage punk movement. With fun songs (some in Spanish), Cosmic Chaos makes a good time for everybody.



Cosmic Chaos plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 7pm
<http://facebook.com/ccosmicchaoss>



Austinites **Dayshifters** has that late '80s feeling of punk rock bands that, after feeling constrained by the rampant conservatism that invaded punk rock, began to slow it down a tad, get noisier, rock a little more, and

write great songs.

Dayshifters plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 10pm
<http://facebook.com/dayshiftersatx>

This B/C/S band brings back the late '90s era of RHCP/ Incubus style groove to their metal-infused modern alternative rock.



A Deathbed Promise plays the Grand Stafford Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 7pm
<http://facebook.com/ADeathbedPromise/>



Dallas trio **Vile & Devoid** have that sweet skate rat thrash/punk crossover sound you loved to carve that sweet hidden paved ditch to in 1988 but with a sly penchant for odd time signatures.

Vile & Devoid headlines the Grand Stafford Stage Friday, May 18 @ 11:30pm
<http://facebook.com/Vileanddevoid>

The Docs is one of BCS's most popular bands, bolstered by their modern indie rock sound, fine looks, and polished songwriting.



The Docs plays the Grand Stafford Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 10:45pm
<http://facebook.com/thedocsmusic>



Mad Rant is a band of A&M students who took to heart the adage that anyone could do it, and that's what they did. Distorted acoustic guitars grace songs of romance and adventure.

Mad Rant plays the Grand Stafford Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 9:15pm
<http://facebook.com/madrantband>



Houston's **Doomstress** mixes up a brew of '70s heavy metal, stoner metal, and NWOBM with great playing and a dynamic frontwoman.

Doomstress plays the Grand Stafford Stage Friday, May 18 @ 10pm
<http://facebook.com/DoomstressBand>



Electric Astronaut. The sound of your iPod, stoned AF, shuffling through your favorite 90s power pop and early '00s riff-heavy indie rock.

Electric Astronaut headlines the Grand Stafford Stage Thursday, May 17th @ 11:30pm
<http://facebook.com/electricastronaut/>



Still deafening B/CS audiences with their pop songs played with guitars plugged into amps turned up way too loud to get over a drummer who hits them too hard, hollering to be heard.

The Ex-Optimists headlines the Indoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 1AM
<http://facebook.com/theoptimists/>



From Beyond used to be in Houston. Now they live in Austin and fit in well with burgeoning stoner metal scene. From Beyond brings a little more cosmic dust to their sound from their progressive rock roots.

From Beyond plays the Grand Stafford Stage Friday, May 18th @ 10:45pm
<http://facebook.com/FromBeyondBand>



Dallas's **From Parts Unknown** mixes a very Texan concoction of rockabilly with '90s era anthemic punk rock.

From Parts Unknown plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 10pm
<http://facebook.com/frompartsunknownatx>



Gate Slinger crafts video game music with atmospheric pads, heavy metal guitars, vocoders, and squiggly synthesizer leads.

Gate Slinger plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 8:30pm
<http://jacobappelt.com>



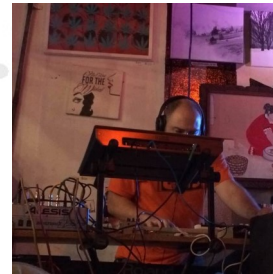
Hot Springs' **Ghost Bones** fit the aesthetic of their hometown completely. They have a David Lynchian air to their gothic, moody indie rock.

Ghost Bones plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 10:30pm
<http://facebook.com/ghostbonesband>

Three gay guys that play all original gay punk songs. This is Memphis trio **The Gloryholes** calling card. They play with stereotypes while rocking the fuck out at the same time.



The Gloryholes plays the Revolution Inside Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 11pm
<http://facebook.com/gloryholes>



great unwashed luminaries has been plying its Berlin School new age bong-smoking electronica for BCS dragon dice rollers for nearly a dozen years now, but this is the outfit's first LOUDFEST performance.

great unwashed luminaries plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 9pm
<http://facebook.com/greatunwashedluminaries>

Thursday, May 17 @ 9pm
<http://facebook.com/greatunwashedluminaries>

Houston's **The Grizzly Band** incorporate the great Texas red dirt singer-songwriter tradition into their heady punk rock sound. Boozy steel guitars collide with power chords and tear-in-the-beer vocals.

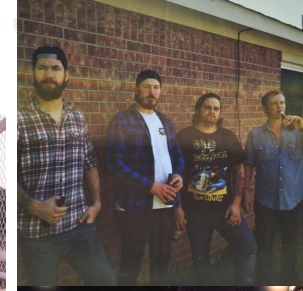


The Grizzly Band plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 8pm
<http://facebook.com/TheGrizzlyBand>

If Steve Malkmus had grown up on the coast instead of inland and started Pavement with the Sublime guys they might have sounded something like BCS crew **HYAH!**



HYAH! plays the Grand Stafford Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 7:45pm
<http://facebook.com/ooohyah>



Khan would be a natural on modern rock radio, combining pop songwriting with metalcore and post-core.

Khan plays The Grand Stafford Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 8:30pm
<http://facebook.com/KhanTX/>



Houston's **Killer Hearts** mixes a cocktail of Sunset Strip metal, garage punk, and scuzzy hard rock that'll fuck you up.

Killer Hearts plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 12am
<http://facebook.com/KillerHeartsOfficial/>

LUCA is College Station's best landlocked early '00s Pacific Northwest band, with intricate guitar interplay, upfront bass guitar, and manic pop songs lately played at a punkish pace.



LUCA plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 8:30pm
<http://facebook.com/thebandluca/>



Mutant Love is a calamitous punk rock band that somehow piles infectious pop songwriting about acid trips and regret into their band falling down the stairwell approach.

Mutant Love headlines the Outdoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 12:30am

<http://facebook.com/mutantlove666/>

Houston's **Only Beast** is a unique band that combines the theatrics and whimsy of gothic rock with '80s hard rock and '90s alternative rock. There's no way NOT to pay attention to them.



Only Beast plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 9:30pm

<http://facebook.com/OnlyBeast>



Marty Durlam has brought some of the most extreme bands to B/CS. From bands that combined animal sacrifice with atonal noise to bands that

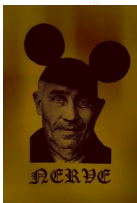
made artful punk rock. **Pink Eye** is his latest, coming on like a Houston version of a 1979 no wave band, art damaged and explosive.

Pink Eye plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19th @ 8:30pm

<http://facebook.com/pinkeyehtx>

Nerve: Hardcore d-beat punk and death metal crossover from some cool Austin dudes.

Nerve plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19th @ 7:30pm
<http://nerve512.bandcamp.com>



Prison Eater features members of better-known Austin stoner metal and gonzo crazy rock bands like Eagle Claw, The Shut-Ups, Transmography, and The Bridge Farmers. What kind of madness these folks get up to? Won't know unless you show up and find out.

Prison Eater plays the Revolution Inside Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 9:30pm



Atarimatt told me in 2012, "Man, I'm booking this crazy band from Austin, **Rubella Muti**, for Loudfest." That was five years ago, and minds were suitably blown by this mostly

instrumental prog-meets thrash metal trio. And they'd back for LOUDFEST XI.

Rubella Muti plays the Grand Stafford Stage Friday, May 18 @ 9:15pm

<http://facebook.com/RubellaMuti/>



Rudical's performances are always an event. This BCS producer creates crazy deep bass dubstep with found sound atmosphere and thematic presentations that borderline in situationalist absurdity. Who knows what Rudical will have in store for LOUDFEST.

Rubella Muti plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 8pm

<http://facebook.com/rudicalmadness>



NOLA by way of Austin swamp metal trio **Sabbath Crow** recall a little trio from La Grange with a more modern heavy metal approach and a touch of psychedelia. Swampcore? Eh, who cares. Sabbath Crow rock.

Sabbath Crow plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 9:30pm

<http://facebook.com/sabbathcrowband>

Soundfinder is one of Austin's biggest promoters of live electronic music. He is also one of the city's leading producers, fracturing beats and melodies with his MPC.



Soundfinder plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 11pm

<http://facebook.com/soundfinder>



Livie and Sophie are teen sisters. Jorge is not a teen. He's their dad. Together they are **The Shoobiedoobies**, an all improvised doom/metal/thrash thing. It's different every time.

The Shoobiedoobies plays the Grand Stafford Stage Sat-

urday, May 19 @ 7pm

<http://facebook.com/TheShoobiedoobies>



Austin has graced us with a number of crazy noisy "experience" style bands over the years. **The Shut-Ups** is no exception. The band sets up in the middle of the room, look like fugitives from Mall Easter Bunny Reform School, and makes an awful racket, often handing

sticks and instruments to the audience to make a fun noise with them. A band to be experienced.

The Shut-Ups headlines the Indoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 1am

<http://facebook.com/theshutupsaustin/>

Loud quiet, soft hard, always dark, always intricate, always rocking. Austin's **SkyAcre** can get way small and then slam you to the back of the room with blunt force, while treading deftly through stop-start arrangements, '70s British metal riffs, and more odd time signatures than a prog band on Turkish hash.



SkyAcre plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 12am

<http://facebook.com/SkyAcre>



Slow Future is Houston's best sludgy '90s alternative rock band. The guitars are big and the songs have a power pop catchiness to them. Their energy is infectious.

Slow Future plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 10:30pm

<http://facebook.com/slowfuture>



San Antonio's **So Unloved** has adapted crossover metal to their tastes, replacing thrash with metalcore to weld together with punk rock attitude.

So Unloved plays the Grand Stafford Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 10pm

<http://facebook.com/>

So-Unloved

Sykotic Tendencies consists of three siblings raised as punk rockers by punk parents in a punk rock household. It was pretty much a forgone conclusion that they would also be punk rockers. This is their first show.



Sykotic Tendencies plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 6pm



Fort Worth's **Tame Tame & Quiet** expertly adapt math rock chops and song structures to fractured indie rock guitar interplay and post-rock dynamics.

Tame Tame & Quiet plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 9pm

<http://facebook.com/TameTameandQuiet>



Houston's **A Sundae Drive** harkens back to the mid '90s for their indie/alt-rock sound, bringing the pop sensibility of Yo La Tengo with a bent towards raucous Sonic Youth-esque noise.

A Sundae Drive headlines the Outdoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 12:30am

<http://facebook.com/asundaedrive/>



Tongue Punch is a party metal band, reminds me of early '90s GNR before they got really stupid.

Tongue Punch plays the Grand Stafford Stage Friday, May 18 @ 7:45pm
<http://facebook.com/TonguePunch.Music>



Unicorndog will supply the best pop punk songs about doing drugs and hanging out with your friends that you will hear all the three day weekend.

Unicorndog headlines the Outdoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 7:30pm
<http://facebook.com/unicorndogTX>



Venomous Maximus plays the Grand Stafford Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 10:45pm
<http://facebook.com/VenomousMaximus>

Venomous Maximus has a long history of fucking shit up in BCS, ripping out their doom/stoner/NWOBHM amalgam at maximum volume at many memorable shows. Let LOUDFEST XI be yet another one of those.

As **Wasp & Pear**, Don turns the mere act of solo electric guitar played loudly into high performance art. Layer upon layer of sound performed in W&P's inimitable way.

Wasp & Pear plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 10pm
<http://facebook.com/Wasp-And-Pear-53218637482>



Houston's **Yaupon** adds a bit of raucous modern Southern rock to their textured indie rock sound. Longtime LOUDFEST goers will recognize lead singer Todd from his previous LF performances with Mike The Engineer and Golden Sombrero.

Wasp & Pear plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 11:30pm
<http://facebook.com/Yauponband>



The dudes from **HYAH!** switch instruments and play about as quiet as one can play rock & roll band instruments. What's louder than LOUDFEST? Fingerringpicking and light tapping.

YeeHa plays the Grand Stafford Stage Thursday, May 17 @ 8:30pm
<http://facebook.com/weareyeeha>

Houston dudes **Jody Seabody & The Whirls** make thrash metal and punk go together like Oreos and milk, even if they completely don't look like a thrash metal band at all.



Jody Seabody & The Whirls plays the Indoor Revolution Stage Friday, May 18 @ 11pm
<http://facebook.com/JodySeabody>



High Desert Queen is a new desert metal/stoner metal supergroup filled with Houston lifers from Supergrave, Hogleg, and Black Math Experiment, among others.

High Desert Queen plays the Outdoor Revolution Stage Saturday, May 19 @ 6:30pm
<http://facebook.com/highdesertqueen>

LOUDFEST HAIKUS

Niki Shea/Cutler2 Salon and Spa

Coolest hair expert
Fun-loving and filled with spunk
Won't ever grow old

Kelly Minnis

Spinner of albums
Nine seven nine producer
An Ex-Optimist

Wonko

Screen printing genius
Kind, generous, and thoughtful
Also loves Katie

Matt Shea/Idiotbox Effects

Atari Matt Shea
A flowing, long-haired Viking
Multiple talents

Jeremy Stark

Moses worshipper
The 12th-man personified
Soon a Starkberry?

Cliff Collard/Arsenal Tattoo

Arsenal Tattoo
Lots of bright, vibrant color
A generous guy

Kylie Alyssa Photography

She's always flashing
Can get the difficult pics
Gots the photo skilz

BVRD

Roller Derby Girls
Freakin' badasses on wheels
Can also be nice

The Beautiful Buddha

Life-coaching expert
Uses the female pronouns
Bethany's new brand

Sinkhole Texas, Inc

Kelly and Michael
Rolling out tunes since oh-eight
Helping lots of bands

Goyco Design

Jorge's paying gig
Logos, websites, and branding
His work is awesome

Oasis Texas Brewing

Providing band beers
Thanks, Jeremy Rogerson
Love us some cold beer

G-Tone Speaker Cabinets

Johnny Law's designs
Cabinets for all the amps
Cool and sleek A F

DNP

Devin Nickole Place
Photographer of LoudFest
Both past and present

979Represent

DTB's best 'zine
Where a lot of awesome folk
Write some monthly stuff

Joe Wegwert/Wegwert Inc.

Always has a smile
Welds like no other
Downs lunchboxes too

jacobbappelt.com

Record producer
Sound design/analog synth
Works from BCS

Blackwater Draw Brewing Co

Downtown's own brew pub
Bearded guys making great beer
Weingart and the Steeles

Foilface the Metalhead (David Lynch)

Erstwhile recorder
Of all things metal/LoudFest
Seen a lot of bands

14.07 Records

Guys from Boy Wonder
Matt's new band's record label
Totally awesome
—PAMALYN ROSE-BEELER

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DRUNK DETECTIVE STARKNESS

So, after a bit of a 72+ hour bender with my buddy, I woke up on Monday morning, absolutely demolished, to a reminder on my phone that reads: "Remember to check **Redacted**'s soon to be ex-wife's Facebook to see if she is out of town so we can go steal back **Redacted**'s dog."

Well, audience, I've woken up to some strange shit in my day, but this one seems a bit unusual, even for us. Blacked Out Me, you wanna get in here and maybe shed some light on this? I know you're still here.

BO Me: Ohhhhhh! Oh!Oh!Oh!Oh! Let me motherfucking tell you about that reminder. I been waiting all night for you to wake up, my dude. This is one of those extremely rare occasions when you are gonna be so happy with me!

Me: Well, that's rare, but conceivable. I'm still scared anytime I have to talk to you, but alright, continue....

BO Me: I promise, you're gonna love this shit. So **Redacted** got into it on the phone with his Ex last night. Now I know we've been preaching nothing but the true power of forgiveness and he's been really cool up till now, but my man, she was out with some dude last night and SHE fucking called HIM, and was like, rubbing it in and shit.

Me: Fucking GROSS. What kind of human would do that to another human? What a fucking terrible waste of a person.

BO Me: I know, right?! So, he gets off the phone and he's raging pretty hard all like, "Brother, you know what, I tried to be peaceful about this and just basically let her take everything, the place, car, joint accounts and just walk away and move on as quick as possible, like you've been telling me, but if she is gonna pull this shit, she ain't keeping my fucking dog. I paid for that dog, and hell, he's named after MY fucking Dad. I gotta get that dog back." So 'natch, you were all like, grabbing your truck keys, just like, "Fuck it, she ain't home now, let's go steal your dog back, man. I'm with you." But then he's all like, "We can't, man, I gave her my keys already." So, of course you were all like, "Who cares, just go out back and grab a pry bar out of the toolbox. Just a little light B&E. We Are Getting This Fucking Dog Back, Right The Fuck Now."

(Cause guys, my buddy ain't got a lot going for him in life at this point in life. He's getting kicked in the dick pretty hard from all sides, divorce, dialysis, fucking gout, it's bad. But what he does have is a friend who loves him and that's just how I'm built. When your brother says we gotta do a thing, my head doesn't really react, my feet just start moving. It's a spinal reaction, straight from the lizard brain. And has it got me in some shit? Well, sure. But I don't hang out with dick heads who go crazy over nothing, so when one of my family says a thing is important enough to go on, we're fucking going.)

DRUNK DETECTIVE STARKNESS GUIDE TO LOUDIFEST

Alright you fucking rubes, Drunk Detective Starkness has made it through a few years of Loud!Fest now and let's level with one another. Does he remember everything? Of course not. Is this a definitive guide on things to do and things not to do? Of course not, but it comes from a good place.

- DO: Drink. Alcohol is fun, and it allows me and you to interact with people in normal-ish ways.
- DO NOT: Act like a piece of shit to fellow patrons or bartenders.
- DO: Smoke drugs. See above note about Alcohol.
- DO NOT: Drive after doing drugs or drinking as referenced above. That is bad, and you'll hurt people.
- DO: Spend money on merch/art and/or drinks for bands. These guys made rad stuff for you, spend money on it.
- DO NOT: Lose all your money making bets about which drummer will surely pass out before their set is done.
- DO: Make sure you have babysitter buddy system if you're going to take a bunch of drugs.
- DO NOT: Lose all your money making bets about which bassist will puke before you. You will puke first, bassists are fucking tough.
- DO: Buy a strange man or woman a drink. It's still cool to do that.
- DO NOT: Buy a strange man or woman all their drinks. That's dumb, a little weird, and creepy as fuck.
- DO: Shout "WOO-HOO" during a random band's break. I will be doing it, and don't want to be left alone.
- DO NOT: Look at yourself in the mirror after your sixth drink. It will shake your confidence and make you want to go home.
- DO: Learn to appreciate your hangover. If it was all good times, every idiot would be doing it.
- DO NOT: Argue your tab at the end of the night. You're drunk. You're coming off like the jackass. Pay for your drinks.
- DO: Go somewhere other than Revolution or The Stafford. All The King's Men for whiskey (and BBQ), The Village for mimosas (and breakfast), Downtown Elixir for fancy cocktails (and brunch), Madden's for wine (and fancy foodstuffs), Rx Pizza for more whiskey (and pizza), or shit, just ask someone what they're doing and tag along.
- DO NOT: Try to act like a badass and avoid earplugs. Do you want tinnitus? No, you don't.
- DO: Pick up Ian Gosling from Mutant Love and make him crowd surf during their set Saturday at 12:30 AM. Let him play on your shoulders. It's cool.
- DO NOT: Trash Rev's courtyard, rape alley, or the streets of DTB. Clean your shit up, puke in dumpsters, and throw your cigarette butts away.
- DO: Tip your fucking bartenders.
- DO NOT: Fucking bite people.
- DO: Enjoy Loud!Fest and buy Matt, Niki, Kelly, and Wonkokatie a God's damned well-earned drink.

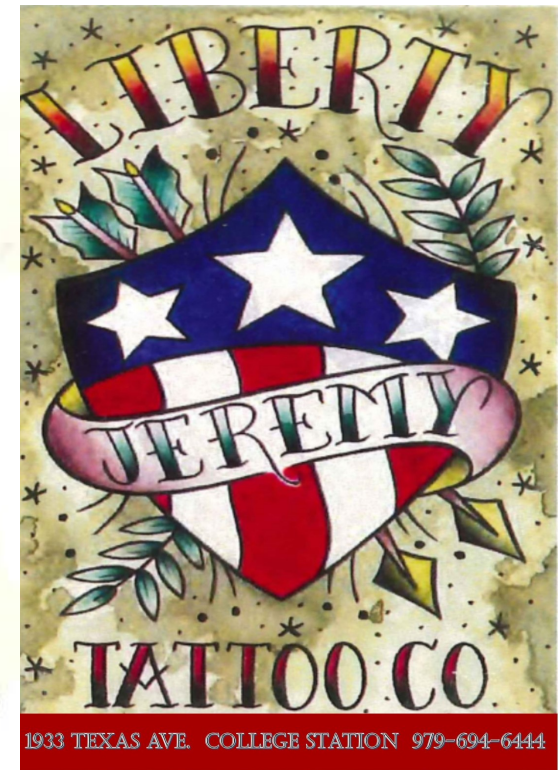
BO Me: So, we're sitting there, I'm waiting on him to get in the truck, while I'm thinking, "Fucking great, more drunken criminal behavior. There is a very high percentage chance that I'm waking up in jail tomorrow," when my head-gears start turning, and I'm all like, "**Redacted**", the ex has family out of town that she visits, like, all the time, right?" and he's all, "Ya." and I'm all, "And she's really into Facebook, right?" and he's all, "Ya, but what the fuck does that have to with anything?" and I'm all, "Wait for it, just one more question. Is there anyway she would have thought to take your name off the list of contacts at your dog's kennel?" And he's all, "Nope. No way, man, I'm still on one of the bank accounts. Plus, I don't think my vet even keeps a list of contacts. I just tell them the dog's name and they just kinda know who I am."

So, I'm all like, "**Redacted**", here is what we are doing-rather than breaking into your ex's house and risking jail time, I am simply gonna wake up every morning and log into your Facebook. You really don't need to be looking at your ex's Facebook right now, so I'll take the bad meme and dumb politics hit for the team on this one and check her status. As soon as she posts something about going out of state, we wait a little while, then drive over to the kennel you guys use, and we simply walk in and say, "Hi, trip ended early, can we pay up and take the dog home." They know you as the dog's dad, so all we have to do is pay the bill and BAM! We have your dog back and we didn't even have to drunkenly break into a house. And what the fuck is your Ex gonna do about that? Once we have him, she'd have to break into my place to get him back and I seriously doubt she has anybody crazy enough in her life to be all like, "Dog stealing mission, let's roll!" And "**Redacted**" was all like, "You Brilliant, Beautiful, Bastard! That's fucking genius! How the fuck did you just come up with that? We've both been drinking for some number of blacked out days. And while I'm over here seriously trynna remember how to operate a pry-bar, you're coming up with a perfect dog-napping master plan?" And I'm all like, "What can I say, brother. This is what I do."

Me: BO Me, you beautiful son of a bitch! I know you're pro at making long walks home, restocking fridges, and making sure we have at least one cigarette in the morning, but coming up with that plan? That's some Lex Luther shit, right there. Where the fuck did that come from? Swear to God, if there was any way you could manifest physically, I would hug my sex into you right now.

BO Me: What can I say, friend-o, when you're staring down the strong possibility of detoxing in a jail cell with felony charges, that tends to motivate a man to new heights.

And, the soon to be Ex left town a few days later, notice courtesy of the book of faces. Thank God, it was a weird reminder to wake up to. That day we stole the dog back just like BO Me planned, and went and got tanked with this little pug back at my place. A few weeks later **Redacted** moved out and got his own place so his daughter could have a decent place to come visit him and the courts don't get involved in my shit. Anyway, last, I talked to them, he and the dog are out in San Antonio living the good life and that's really the most important thing.



FRIDAYS 7-9 pm

Paolo's Italian Kitchen
(next to the Hilton on University)



LOUD!FEST

2018 | BRYAN TX | MAY 17 - 19 | REV + STAFFORD

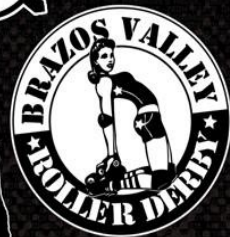
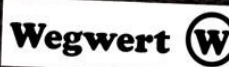
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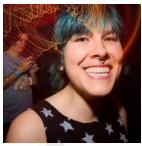
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SALACIOUS VEGAN CRUMBS

Thursday, May 17, 5:05 PM. You're leaving the longest day of the year at work, drawn out by your anticipation of the best weekend of the year. Your phone is buzzing with messages from friends you only get to see in May, eager to eat, drink, and be loud with you. Two hours later, you're out of your button-down (or is it button-up?) and loafers, and hitting downtown—it's time for LOUD! FEAST! It's the first night, and you're trying to start off the weekend responsibly and save money to buy merch from all of the bands. You sheepishly walk into **Subway** to get a cheap veggie sandwich, and catch the eye of a downtown friend outside. You burp—er, uh, breathe a sigh or relief—and hustle out to meet your friend on his way to **Rx Pizza**. You're in luck! A split pizza, half with no cheese, means you eat on the cheap AND get to have real flavors!

Later than evening, only two measly beers and one band in, you're dragging from the workday. A quick walk over to **Harvest** during a lull in your band schedule turns out to be a great idea—coffee to perk you up AND you've discovered they have vegan chocolate pudding! It's been years since you had a dessert you didn't have to make yourself, and the lavishness of it all nearly makes you miss your favorite Thursday night band!

As the night draws to a close, you notice a rumble in your tummy. You hit up the downtown **Taco Bell** on your way home for your #1 late night snack—a bean burrito, no cheese, add potatoes and jalapenos. Each bite gives you a tiny tinge of anger that they haven't added this glorious creation to their menu yet (and named it after you).

It's Friday morning, and you're feeling pretty good. Thursday was fairly tame in the booze department for you, and you don't need a big brunch to soak up a hangover—but that won't stop you from meeting up with friends at **The Village** for a ridiculous spread of rosemary potatoes, toast and homemade jam, fruit, oatmeal, hummus, and mimosas. LOUD!FEAST is a holiday, and if you can't drink before noon during the holidays, when the hell can you drink? Just like last time, fie their lack of vegan desserts on the way out.

The day is spent lazily drifting around downtown with half of your favorite local band, making fun of the people taking engagement photos in the alley everyone pees in.

There are some great bands playing at the Stafford that night, and you don't want to stray too far. Right next door, **The Proudest Monkey** (and worst name) turns out to be a portobello gold mine! You pass up tacos and taco salad for a greasy portobello burger and yucca fries, and leave with sauce running down your elbows. Your LOUD!FEAST musk has begun to settle in.

The night is boozy, and after all the bands have finished, you end up at this swanky, 1960s house stuffing your drunk face with homemade Chex Mix, and eating cookies out of a Death Star. A smattering of the bands you saw that night are swilling booze and sharing stories of Loud!Fests past. You wish you had been there.

In the morning, you wake up at the same house, cheeks

imprinted with the pattern from the tweed couch someone had the presence of mind to place you on, to the smell of fresh homemade cinnamon rolls and kolaches. Joy, then disappointment rolls over you—you remember the cookies from the night before. The sauce had gotten the best of you, there was no way those were vegan-friendly. And no way these cinnamon rolls or kolaches were, either. Settling for some coffee, you timidly ask the hostess if there's any vegan friendly coffee creamer. She doesn't hesitate to pour you some Bailey's almond milk Irish "cream", and you light up. She knows. She's one of us. It's a vegan brunch bonanza! It's LOUD! FEAST!

After an hour of eating kolaches and telling everyone in the house (twice) that you hadn't had one in years, you say your goodbyes and offer profuse thanks to the compassionate hostess, and go sleep off your hangover at your own house.

After oversleeping during your nap, you skip a shower, chomp on a mint, and head back downtown for the last night of LOUD!FEAST. By now you're broke, but having a great time—you sit in with a stranger at the door at Rev to earn some volunteer beers, and by the end of your shift checking IDs and chatting up the local cat ladies, you've worked up a hunger. Your volunteer stranger-turned-friend treats you to dinner at The Village, where you split an hummus plate and introduce them to the wonder of the meatless meatloaf.

Full of protein and fiber to keep you fueled through the most energetic night of LOUD!FEAST, you head back to Rev, never without a beer (or two) in your pants. Is that a guitar on fire, or are you just that drunk? Yes!

Your roommate has decided you're too drunk to drive home, and steers you to her car. She insists on stopping by the downtown **Whataburger**, on the way home, so you do it up drunk vegan style with a Whataburger on Texas toast, no cheese, sub hash browns for the patty. The wait is long, and wanting to make sure you get an adequate amount of ketchup, you wait until roomie is distracted playing Candy Crush. You sneak out of the car and run inside to steal handfuls of ketchup from the condiment station, carefully avoiding the WBPd. You knew you wore that vest with the secret inside pockets for a reason!!

The next morning, you wake up to a bed full of Whataburger ketchups, licked clean. You check under the pillow—Jackpot! A pristine packet! You feel around in your mouth just in case, but really wouldn't mind trading a tooth for a packet of that tomato elixir anyway. After your initial joy of finding that sweet morsel, you realize LOUD!FEAST 2018 is over. Everyone is leaving town, bands are headed to their next gig, and you have friends to say goodbye to.

You spend a leisurely social early afternoon at Rx Pizza for a farewell brunch over chilaquiles pizza and citrus salad (no cheese please), sipping a boozy coffee drink. Is it supposed to pick you up, or bring you down? Who knows—the biological process of LOUD!FEAST has begun, and nothing can stop your eyelids from succumbing to gravity.—KATIE KILLER

ASK CREEPY HORSE



Creepy horse here and today we will talk about shutting the god damned fuck up. I myself have never been someone that keeps quiet and I can definitely ramble on but in the last year I've learned something very valuable. People talk entirely too fucking much. Case in point, I think folks nowadays have Facebook brain. The habit of posting every little drop of your day has entered the brain's function of communication in general and we are now dealt with a constant stream of folks flapping their damn gums about every fucking thought that courses through their noggin.

Again, have I not been guilty of oversharing and posting about my every thought? Damn right and now I see it for what it is. Fucking obnoxious and no one fucking cares. I've come to a point where I truly despise social media. It's garbage. It's gas station junk food for the brain. I see less and less intellectual curiosity, folks have gone from wonder and the idea of knowledge is power to everything I need to know I already know and if not I can find it skewed in my point of view somewhere on the Internet. No one can be wrong or incorrect and if they were they are too busy taking selfies to notice or care. But that's a different story.

I think we've become conditioned to over share. I am in school and I have people around me talking non stop, all day long and there's no substance there. After a full year, 40 hours a week, I don't really know them and they don't know me. I know all about how they spend the weekend tailgating with folks I'll definitely never know with names like Lance, Taylor and Randy and all the shots they had. I know that that new song by Cardi B, whoever the fuck that is, is their new jam. I know every Monday how drunk they got over the weekend. I sure as fuck know their inherited political and religious beliefs. Nothing they really came into on their own, just the rhetoric of their family to back up why they should believe this way. Don't ask too much or they become bewildered and state they are being attacked.

52 weeks of this. I've heard the funions version of conversation sprinkled with moments of truth and integrity like Luca. I know the gluttonous, highly refined processed versions of folks without ever having once known a deeper more insightful true self. I don't think some of them have even the ability themselves for their own personal insight.

Folks seem to talk like Fox News. Filler and opinion but not really any facets of truth or fact, knowledge or curiosity. People talk just to talk and in that sense I am a god damned crown wearing Dave Gahan with my fold up chair pleading to enjoy the silence.

When I work with clients in school, I'll be shampooing them and making conversation. Some can't do it. They are so used to blabbing on and on they cannot have a reasonable person to person communication. They'll even become so engaged with their phones you will be talking to them and they simply cannot hear you over the intense focus they have on scrolling through people's heart filtered snap chat videos filmed inside their cars. Okay Sally, when your hair melts off because you couldn't focus long enough to give me a thorough hair

history I imagine you'll grand stand in Instagram videos about how we couldn't get your black box dyed hair to platinum in one hour because you didn't hear us the eight times we told you such.

I also get a lot of folks that don't even greet you, say hi, hello, fuck you but will laugh at your makeup or make a rude fucking comment about your hair. What the fuck is that? For three weeks I watched this happen day in and day out. For three weeks I'd see people come in and not a good morning or how was your weekend, but damn girl, you look like shit! Did you just wake up? Do you even style your hair? Not always me, I mean in general. Shit, at least a good morning, how was your weekend, you get fucked this morning cause that bed head gurl Would be better than some of the cross conversations I hear. Just a simple greeting without a damn shitty judgmental statement. Then they get pissed if you take offense. "Get out your feelings!" Is the new defense. I'll get out of "my feelings" when you decide to evolve, work on your vocabulary and get a sense of fucking empathy beyond your own damn self.

I have a co student that was molested by her uncle almost nightly for nearly five years, up until about a year before she started school with us. She's 19. A few months ago she suffered a second trimester miscarriage at school and had to continue to attend school as that miscarriage continued because she couldn't miss too many days. From that and the doubles she works to put herself through school she suffered a bleeding ulcer and was hospitalized for a week. She dropped three of her five classes as she just couldn't deal with the stress. And you know what? Folks that didn't know shit about what she was going through or what had happened were going up to her and criticizing her for dropping those classes. Telling her she was stupid and needed to "get out of her feelings" thinking she dropped the classes because of the instructor or other reasons they must've conjured. They had no idea the personal hell she's lived and didn't even bother to find out or know more. Even when she'd try to explain they were far too busy not fucking listening at all. They were all up in her business when not one iota of it was any of theirs.

Folks don't listen, we all seem to kind of talk over one another, we don't make eye contact anymore and we sure as hell are lacking in communication. I've tried to make changes myself. If I can stomach it, I do try to listen to each and every person that I have conversations with. I try to think how I can engage more, how I can genuinely show my interest in what is important to them. I once read an article about how Dita Von Teese can be almost polarizing in the focus she shows to whomever she is conversing with. She believes in giving them her full attention and how important it makes one feel when you have made them the focus of your attention by listening to them without interruption or talking over them.

I'm nowhere near perfect and chances are high I will talk over you, but I will do my best to listen and really hear you out. Now go out and spread the gospel and shut the fuck up. — CREEPY HORSE

R.I.P. NEWSPAPERS

Something that you need to know and understand is the fact that newspapers are really, really important to American journalism. This is a point that needs to be made to us people of the 30ish and under crowd nowadays, because reading an actual newspaper or finding one in the driveway every morning is just not something that happens anymore. These are experiences that have legitimately gone by the wayside for much of the American populace. Much of America gets their news from 'the internet' writ large, and do not have a clear or meaningful mental differentiation between the website of a newspaper (www.newyorktimes.com) and another news providing site (www.vox.com). The same is true for TV networks. CNN isn't just a TV station, but also one of the many places on the internet that offers news to the public at large.

It is not difficult to grasp that the business model of newspapers is terrible. Physical newspapers have shrinking and aging audiences. A newspaper's website is competing with internet-only entities with almost no overhead. Their overhead is low, because most of what they are doing is just *re-reporting things from actual newspapers*. The same is true of TV news networks and their online entities.

The problem is also easy to grasp. The vast majority of actual reporting is done by newspapers. Look through various online news aggregators and pay attention within their articles. They will almost always inevitably link to or reference a story 'originally' or 'first reported it' a major newspaper. Slate and Vox aren't out there hiring and sending reporters to the city hall beat. They may have someone who attends the WH Press conference or is watching DC, but when things are happening at state and local levels, newspapers are still the ones who are initially reporting.

It's a fucked off inverted pyramid. Newspapers cut more and more staff (whether due to legitimate economic necessity or takeover by venture capitalists who 'see the bloat') there is less and less reporting. And that is not a good thing. Especially when the 'media outlets' that we actually see (and are growing at an alarming rate) are just re-reporting the work done by other journalists.

Ryan Kelly won the Pulitzer Prize for breaking news photography in 2018. It was a moving action shot of a car hitting protestors in Charlottesville. Fun fact about that photo – it was taken on his last day of work for the *Charlottesville Daily Progress*. You know what he did the week after taking the best photo in news for the year? He started running the fucking twitter and social media accounts for a brewery. Why did Ryan Kelly do that? Because it had higher pay and he viewed it as a more stable career. It's not Ryan's fault that he made that choice. It is a really sad commentary on American society though that our system better rewards tweeting ads for a beer company than producing iconic photo journalism.

Ryan Kelly is not alone. Anecdotally, our own Josh Siegel, formerly of the Bryan/College Station Eagle, moved on to managing social media for a TAMU research department. Every journalist (not freelancer) that I've met or talked to sweats out having a paycheck every month. Staff cuts and ominous meetings with new editors and ombudsman are not even a shock. When a better opportunity arises, people will switch careers. Eventually, people in these types of situations quit doing their jobs (in this case, real journalism) and look for something new and more lucrative. In this case, most journalists are moving into (read this without judgement) much more frivolous work. Kids grow up wanting to be like April O'Neill or Clark Kent, not some Brand Ambassador for a skincare company, but eventually a homie's gotta eat. And I get it. I'd take the beer tweets job in a second.

What it comes down to though is that this is totally unsustainable. Almost all mass media depends on newspaper reporting as primary source material, and with our current models, we're going to lose all independent and free press, the government won't fund independent press, people won't fund independent press, companies won't fund independent press, and so sooner rather than later newspapers and local TV affiliates will stop employing all actual reporters and our news sources will collapse. We'll be stuck in a world with Wendy's twitter account and Ranker facebook ads telling us everything we 'need' to know. – STARKNESS



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DINOSAURS

The dinosaurs were rumbling.

They plodded into the conference room for the daily budget meeting. The king dinosaur, the Tyrannosaurus, inquired to the lesser dinosaurs about the previous day's work. The lesser dinosaurs' feedback was all sorts of horrible sounds and suggestions. These dinosaurs were a dying breed, a dying species — most of them close to actually dying.

Rob hated these daily sports budget meetings at the paper. They were ruled by old men whose ideas had not been fresh in decades. They took shortcuts. They did not understand their audience anymore. These lizards paraded around like they were still important and hip. They had just discovered fire and still got their news off the wire. They were out of touch.

When he first started at the paper, Rob was excited. He was still in college, but already getting a start on his career. He was excited about being surrounded by the best of the best — people who he imagined would sit around debating exciting new ideas and the best way to present news in an exciting way.

Nope. Wrong building, Rob.

The meeting adjourned and the dinosaurs plodded back to their battle stations.

Rob sat next to a dinosaur named Lester Zedd. Lester received his prehistoric degree from Baylor, and he made everyone aware by regularly wearing a hole-y gray Baylor t-shirt and green, swishy Baylor track pants. His glasses, mustache and facial structure made him look like the Great Mouse Detective.

Eons and Epochs ago, Lester had been the head dinosaur of an entire sports section. Now, because of the economy, Lester was reduced to being slightly above Rob, who didn't even have his degree yet. Rob logged into his dinosaur computer — let's be serious it was a

Dell from 2000. He began filling boxes with sports information that would appear in the next day's paper.

Rob enjoyed this part of his job. He was given a certain amount of space for each information box or story — be it standings, stats, the Outdoors Report or an actual gosh-darn story — and it was his job to make the words fit and edit out what wasn't necessary.

Lester the Dinosaur looked over at him, and squinted through his glasses. It made for a horrible face that made his mustache look like it was smiling. "Make sure you get those winter sports in — the women's downhill happened today. Also horse racing and boxing."

Sure.

Rob had no problem doing the task that he was told to do. However it was just more evidence in the mounting case that these old men were out of touch with reality. The paper had writers who wanted more space to write and actually tell stories, yet people like Lester the Dinosaur were taking that space and wasting most of it on information that no one would read.

Boxing and horse racing have not been important sports to Americans in decades, maybe 40 years.

It was discouraging to Rob. Did great publications still exist? These surroundings — his dinosaur co-workers, the dinosaur computers and half-empty building — only made him want to work harder to escape the Cretaceous Period and flourish in the modern age at a great publication of today.

"Rob, when you get done with that ..."

The phone rang. Lester the Dinosaur was interrupted.

"Sports, this is Lester." — JOSHUA SIEGEL

The logo for G-TONE SPEAKER CABINETS features the brand name in a bold, teal, sans-serif font. The text is set against a white background that is framed by a thick, teal border. The border is composed of a dense, repeating pattern of small, stylized speaker icons, creating a textured, grid-like effect. The overall design is clean and modern, emphasizing the company's specialization in audio equipment.The advertisement for FredTech is presented in a bold, black-and-white style. At the top, the name "FREDTECH" is written in large, white, block letters on a black background. Below this, the services "GUITAR REPAIR", "MAINTENANCE", and "SET-UPS" are listed in smaller, white, block letters, also on a black background. The phone number "979-450-3719" is prominently displayed in large, white, block letters. At the bottom, the email address "FredTechBCS@gmail.com" is provided in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The entire advertisement is set against a dark background, making the white text stand out sharply.

**FIND 979REPRESENT ONLINE AT
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WE HAVE MET NOBODY & HE IS MUNTZ

Last month, I told you what badasses y'all are for the love you've given me as I confirm my gender. Trans folk usually get treated horribly. I am a lucky, privileged bitch.

But into every sunny day a little Nelson Muntz falls. Whether you're Black or White or LGBT+ or Muslim or a Stamp Collector, some assholes feel justified in identifying you as a threat and kicking the shit out of you. People like Mike Pence, Adolf Hitler, Betsy DeVos, Dana Loesch, and other Nelson Muntz-a-be's.

As a kid, I was bullied by Nelsons. As mayor of a Texas town, I was voted against by them, then harassed by them after I was elected. When I was a minister, Nelson was in my congregation. When I was a teacher, Nelsons were always the most self-righteous parents.

You've met Nelson Muntz, too. Nelson has groped you. Threatened your career because he had power over you. Eaten the sandwich you'd saved in the fridge. Deported your loved ones. Shouted "God hates fags!" at your Veteran loved-one's funeral. Burned crosses in your yard.

What happens when Nelson is a loved one? As a Trans woman, I now meet Nelson in the form of my adult youngest son.

But it hits even closer to home.

You and I are Nelsons every time our fear justifies kicking the shit out of someone we perceive to be a threat. Mind you – when *we* do it, we don't *feel* like we're Nelson Muntz but like solid-gold statues of God Almighty.

I'm scratching my head over the cruel irony of this conundrum the way I used to scratch my head over the Genesis lyrics at the start of this article ... until I thought of "Nobody" in the lyrics as an actual person. Who is "Nobody"? Why must "Nobody" know my name? What is it "Nobody" understands?

"Nobody" is our Nelson selves. When we're Nelson, we



*I am the one who guided you this far—
All you know and all you feel.
Nobody must know my name,
For Nobody would understand.
And you kill what you fear,
And you fear what you don't understand.
"Duke's Travels"—Genesis*

kill what we fear. And we fear what we don't understand. And we don't understand ... ourselves.

How can we confront Nelson without *being* Nelson? Here's the two-step program I'm using on my own son's Nelsoning of me (and on my temptation to Nelson him back).

Step #1—My son had emailed a list of ultimatums that Pam and I would have to live up to before he and his family would even think of being with us. Here's how I responded:

"You list demands as to how you think we should live before you'll again be part of our lives. You may construe that as love, I realize. But it's a sad, fear-based attempt at coercion and tyranny. And it's really and truly impotent bullying. I don't write this because your bullying

is working; I write this because you're making a decision that you'll one day bitterly regret. I love my Son; I want what's best for him. Even when he disagrees with me on what that is.

"The door always remains open, even if you're afraid. We love you. We're grieving because we genuinely like and love you and miss you.

"I won't bow to your demands to be something I'm not and can't be and that trying to be caused a lifetime of hurt, pain, and self-deception. Guess what? I get to be me, no matter what you or anybody else thinks. I'm happy because I no longer have to justify myself to myself — because, in the end, I was a more coercive, bullying tyrant to myself than you could ever be. I'll miss you dearly, Son, but your current rejection of me is a tea party compared to what I did to myself for decades. #BringIt"

Step #2—Every day, I say Step #1 to every part of myself that has bullied me and others since I was born.

I bring it. It comes. And when I look up, nobody is there except Bethany.

And she is lovely.

So are you. — BETHANY BEELER

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STILL HIJACKING

Kevin recently had his insides turned all upside down and right side up and stuffed back inside of him like so many rolls of giant bubble wrap spilling out an Amazon Prime box. Drinking the oat bubbly has him all wrong with Intestinal Jesus for the time-being so he's asked me to hijack his column for this month until my pitiful beer writing philosophy shocks him back outta semi-retirement.

The Scotch Ale is a bit of a neglected style in America. It seems, with current beer trends toward the hop/sour bomb, there's no room for a beer that has the complexity of malt, hop, and gravity that a good Scotch Ale delivers. I've rather enjoyed examples from **Belhaven** and the dearly departed **Grants Brewery** in Yakima, WA, whose Scotch Ale was the perfect blending of perhaps too many fresh Cascade Hops (and by fresh I mean the hops were harvested within walking distance of Bert Grant's brewery) and a strong, smoky maltiness. It is a tall order to match. But it is the time of year when breweries give a thought towards trying out the style.

Last weekend I had the chance to compare/contrast three examples from TX breweries. The first, **Daisy Chain Wee Heavy** brewed by Houston Australian ex-pats at **Platypus Brewing**, was a truly traditional fare. It pours as muddy brown as the ship channel, smoky with a bit of char to cleanse the finish from the syrupy underlayer of malt. It was a fine example of a classic Scotch Ale, but not really anything more. Next I tipped back a pint of **Pecan Pie** from Houston's **Buffalo Bayou Brewery**. For starters, Buffalo Bayou makes a fine coterie of beers, especially on the darker end of things. Many of their beers are rich, fused with vanilla, espresso, Vietnamese coffee, caramel, red velvet cake, and other dessert type flavors. Pecan Pie, the brewers note, is not your standard Scotch Ale. This is quite true. For starters, it is chewier, sweeter, leaves behind much of the hop notes and doubles-down on the syrup. The higher 9.3 ABV certainly adds some of that whisky weight to it. I found it quite enjoyable but I found it to be a drink I would have much rather enjoyed at home on the couch or the porch than a night out at the bar.

On one such night on the couch I popped the top on my third example, **Kilt Switch** from **903 Brewers** in Sherman. I bought a single without really looking it up. It says kilt on it and it's a Scotch Ale. Why the hell not, eh. Imagine my surprise when the first pull at the can kicked back at me. It had strong chocolate hints, the treacle malt sweetness, and a major alcohol whallop. I had to pick up the phone and have a quick look. Yeah, a hair shy of 13% ABV. Boy howdy. 903 says it's more of a big brother to a traditional Scotch ale and I'd say that's accurate. Fans of big winter beers like barleywines and quadrupels would be pleasantly surprised to crack this one open, as it rings a lot of the same notes. While it was a surprisingly robust beer, I was impressed with how easy it drank. I really wanted another one right away. It was easily the best of the three.

You can find Pecan Pie and Kilt Switch locally but Daisy Chain Wee Heavy is draft-only in the Houston market. I highly recommend tying on a Kilt Switch and enjoying a rewatch of *So I Married an Axe Murderer*. — **KELLY MINNIS**

WHY MUSIC MATTERS



About two years ago, LoudFest was my light in a dark hospital room.

I was sitting in intensive care by my wife's bed. In an induced coma hours after a surgery that went awry, my wife had lost so much blood doctors didn't know how much brain function she'd have when they tried to wake her. Her heart had stopped at least once.

It was news about the upcoming LOUDFEST on my phone that gave me hope. Something about the music that I recalled hearing and hoped to hear got me through those long hours. The best news—my wife was able to go to LOUDFEST with me that year and afterwards.

The value of music in life is something I've been pondering for decades. Does music rank as a basic necessity like food, family, housing, friends, career, love?

I'm not alone in this questioning. Magnus Mills' 2017 novel, *The Forensic Records Society*, deals with many of the same fundamental questions about music. Mills' book is about two music fans who decide to form an odd record listening group. The records society characters, mainly the narrator and his friend James, are devoted to seven-inch records that they want to listen to without comment, just to enjoy the songs as they are.

However, such a simple-sounding plan undergoes subtle comic twists and turns in Mill's short novel (set in England and the pub culture as well). The music these characters collect—and listen to—is their lives, for better or worse, a point both celebrated and gently probed.

Musician Dave Alvin wrote *Any Rough Times are Now Behind You* in 1995, a collection of story poems covering his life from 1979 to 1995. Alvin hits on everything from the changing landscape in California to relationships to hard living, but most importantly, it delves into the power of music, of songs.

As a still-working musician for four decades, Alvin writes about the frustrations of playing music as well as the joys. It all comes down to the songs, a revelation he focuses on toward the end of his last poem. "Believing songs/ can still get you out of bed in the morning/when you feel no reason to do so. Believing songs/can still heal loneliness and a broken heart."

Songs, music, got me through two divorces and the deaths a year apart of both my parents. However, music also buoyed me in the giddy early days of my two children's lives, and it is still something that we can share as they continue their adult lives.

I am still surprised by new music, how it can salve the worst of times and boost the best of times. It's as necessary as Wi-Fi and often more reliable. Music matters in this often-puzzling world of disappointments, tragedies, and even triumphs. Rock on. — **MIKE L. DOWNEY**

DIRECT HIT VS LESS THAN JAKE VS FACE TO FACE



I had to savor the Irony of paying over 25 dollars to see a punk show at Proof Rooftop Lounge in Houston whereas many of the hair metal bands playing there recently have free shows. Twenty years ago, it would have been the hair metal bands charging 25 dollars whereas the punk bands would have for free; or next to free. How times change.

Honestly, I went to this show to see Face to Face. I very strongly dislike Less than Jake; more on that in a bit. My plan was to see Face to Face who were going on third and then leave before I was subjected to Less than Fake. No such luck. As the saying goes, the best last plans of mice and men often go awry. I arrived to the slowest pat down search/ticket collection I have seen in 30 + years of going to concerts. Icebergs move faster than the Proof doormen were moving people through that night. This is all the more perplexing as with prior shows at Proof it has always been smooth going getting in at the metal shows. Chalk it up to the power of Hair Metal I guess.

I missed the opening band Jukebox Romantics. When we finally got inside we were subjected to Direct Hit. Direct Hit is the quintessence of faceless Warped Tour mediocrity. They effortlessly hit all the points of a faceless Warped Tour band: 1) Nasal vocal delivery that sounds as if the vocalist hasn't reached puberty? Check 2) Kiddie sing along poor man Blink 182 choruses? Check. 3) Piccolo tinny snare drum sound that sounds like a toy snare drum? Check 4) "Witty" stage banter between songs (also known as "NOFX syndrome"? Check .

In case you are wondering what "witty" stage banter from one of THESE bands sounds like wonder no more. Here is a sample. First, the vocalist/guitarist declares his faux modesty for being on the bill with "all these great bands" and goes on and on *ad nauseam* while the guitarist tunes because tuning on stage is so PUNK ROCK MAN! Then he tells a really bad joke involving touring or drinking or both. Example: "I got so drunk last night I pissed in my dog's mouth". Then the other member of the band replies with something equally

"witty" such as "Yeah, well I pissed in your mom's mouth last night". They must have been up all night thinking up gems like that. Thankfully, Direct Hit was done rather quickly. Direct Hit is as bland a commodity as the sneakers hawked by the Warped Tour. After Direct Hit I made a less than wonderful observation. Less than Jake's stage banner was on top of Face to Face's banner. This meant that they were playing **BEFORE** Face to Face. As there are no in and out's at Proof we had to see Less Than Jake if we wanted to see Face to Face. Perhaps they had improved since the first - and only Warped Tour - I accidentally saw them play. No such luck. Less than Jake is the whitest, most soulless "Ska"/Pop Punk" band in the history of music. Blink 182 sounds like James Brown in comparison.

I was perplexed as to why Less than Jake didn't headline. Then, as I went to the indoor bar in a futile effort to drown my musical misery away it hit me. If Face to Face played third, every old, grumpy, curmudgeonly punk rock asshole like me would have left and not stayed for Less Than Jake meaning they would have lost the 30% of their audience there just for Face to Face. Less than Jake may suck, but they aren't stupid. After their set, I almost missed Direct Hit. At least they would quit in a few years, go to suburbia and bore their kids and wife with stories about that time they toured with Less than Jake. Less than Jake, unfortunately, are terminal like Herpes.

Face to Face are a punk band from the early 1990's who managed to hang on long enough to get a bit of a push from the Warped Tour/"Punk Revival" thing (and even got signed to a major label for album or two) that happened after grunge had its day. Face to Face are an earnest and sincere punk band similar to other punk bands of the early 1990's such as Pegboy or Naked Raygun who played punk rock because it was fun and the right thing to do Face to Face plays tuneful pop punk, before that phrase almost became a bad word with just enough tempo changes to keep things interesting. Face to Face are hardly musical pioneers but you don't need to be if you play it right. Their new album *Protection* offers more of the same but is still pretty good.



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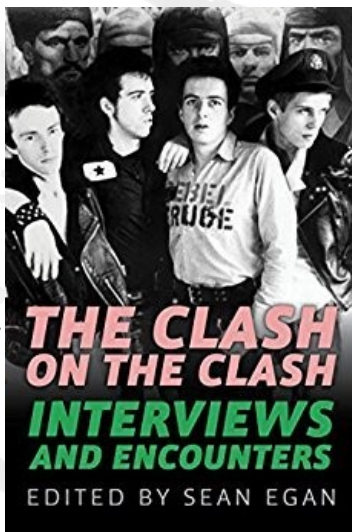
STILL READING

If you're reading this LOUDFEST edition of *979Represent*, I can safely infer two things about you. One, there is nothing I can tell you about The Clash that you don't already know. But, two, you're probably game to learn more from a reliable source. If inference number two dings a bingo with you, we're both in luck because I have two bits of just that for your recommendation pleasure.

First and for the book nerds, *The Clash on The Clash: Interviews and Encounters* is as much a disparately fragmented autobiography (of sorts) about a band strapped to Icarus wings as it is an impressive case-study in the manic self-implosion of rock-n-roll. In other words, I learned lots and it's bananas. Editor Sean Egan—who has also written extensively and edited anthologies about The Who, David Bowie, The Jam, Fleetwood Mac, and The Rolling Stones—curated 26 pieces spanning 30 years of Clash journalism. Egan also offers a note contextualizing each piece alongside the Clash's music and the climate both inside the band and in the culture at large. Egan's notes explain the tone for each piece as well, helping readers understand why Joe is particularly sniffy here and why Mick is so uncharacteristically giddy there. These introductions, like David Foster Wallace's footnotes, are as telling as the interviews and critiques themselves.

But the narrative scope Egan is able to introduce in *The Clash on The Clash*, which runs just shy of 350 pages, is what I found most impressive. The book opens with three "current" pieces—individual interviews with Joe Strummer (in 2000) and Mick Jones (in 2007) and the insufferable Keith Levene, an original member of The Clash and Public Image Ltd. Egan immediately follows these more aged and matured voices with a 1976 piece from *Sniffin' Glue* titled "The Very Angry Clash", and the juxtaposition is reeling. In the span of a mere page, we go from humbled post-Clash hindsight to the same guys 30 years prior, full of piss and venom, sharing a couch in North London and declaring their readiness to change the world, to turn up the volume over all these boring televisions, to liberate rock-n-roll for the people. Hot damn! It's enough to make you wanna believe again! From there the Egan's book charts each album—titles that revealed new chapters and new collective identities for The Clash—before ending right where we began: engaging again with individual interviews with Joe in 2000, Paul in 2004 and Topper in 2008 discussing, once more in humbled hindsight, what went wrong. As you can imagine, each set of eyes reflects on a different home-movie.

My second recommendation is for the film-geeks who can currently find on HULU the 2007 biopic *Joe*



Strummer: The Future is Unwritten by Julien Temple (who also directed 1993's *The Great Rock-n-Roll Swindle* mockumentary about the Sex Pistols). *The Future is Unwritten* is a strange film. Temple allows the entire two-hours to be narrated by unnamed people—some recognizable musicians and celebrities—sitting around various campfires delving into subjectively intimate details about Joe Strummer's life. That's weird because it all feels a bit happenstance-ical and flighty. And, sure, while the bulk of Temple's film deals with Joe's years in The Clash—and we hear from a tipsy Topper by a fire and Mick in different suits nowhere near a fire—the film also focuses on Joe's family, Joe's pre-Clash "Woody" Guthrie years, and

Joe's post-Clash lost and meandering and eventually Mescalero years. Overall, it's a drastically sad film about a man who—even at the top of his game—was never satisfied with his relationships, his artistry, or his ability to successfully navigate any of it. However, Temple also reveals Joe Strummer to be a deeply passionate lover of humanity—so much so that his hope to connect with *everyone* churned and channeled into political rage, interpersonal band turmoil, failed relationships, and self-hatred. To say I recognized much of my own social anxiety and self-angst in Strummer is an understatement, but it also seemed to be the shared consensus of many adoring fans—interviewed here—as to why they loved Strummer so deeply in return.

If you're still reading this far it's only because you love The Clash, so I recommend both titles briefly mentioned here. I walked away from these documents a bigger fan of The Clash, seeing these men as idealist-prophets who wanted, more than anything, to break the walls between rock-n-roll and the people. That's a legendary message, and one we're still benefiting from today. To bridge the distance between the audience and the stage—to be willing to be globbed on so approximately—meant that rock-n-roll did not even need a stage. It only needed willing participants and a reason to riot. The Clash bridged that gap until it swallowed them. And so be it. The story of The Clash—the *re-a*/story of The Clash as told from their humbled voices in hindsight—is better than any myth they ever tried to create along the way. But that's why their story is so dadgum inspiring. We're all bound to implode on some self-designed hill of false righteousness a thousand times before our days are done. It's inevitable. If along the way we do anything—big or small—that challenges the way another person reads larger potentials into their own story then, by God, it's a win that outweighs all else. — KEVIN STILL



RECORD REVIEWS

THE CHICK COREA + STEVE GADD BAND



CHINESE BUTTERFLY

Chick Corea/Steve Gadd Band
Chinese Butterfly

Well howaboutit!? A new jazz fusion record to listen to! And one made by two cats who have a very LONG history of making great records. Chick Corea is a jazz legend, making his name with Miles Davis while building a very impressive career as a band leader, playing straight-ahead, post-bop, abstract impressionism, latin jazz, crazy rocking fusion, solo performances, and many styles in-between. Steve Gadd is a musician's drummer. His playing with Steely Dan and Paul Simon is some of the most seminal rock drumming of all time. That said, Gadd spent a lot of the '70s making records with Corea, and *Chinese Butterfly* is a throwback to those '70s era Chick solo records that would pop up between Return To Forever albums.

For starters, this is not challenging listening whatsoever. It's not exactly *smooth* jazz, but it is not the hard-charging rock fusion of RTF or the more impressionist muted style of Chick's Circle trio records. This is completely in the style of his solo albums like *Friends and My Spanish Heart*, and the first self-titled Return To Forever with Flora Purim. Consequently, Steve Gadd played on all of these albums. The music flows along on a cool Latin breeze. Chick pounds away at a Fender Rhodes and occasionally solos on his MiniMoog (a nice gesture to timbres of that era). The band behind him really doesn't push him that hard and aren't all that distinct. Chick definitely is the star here. Gadd also doesn't really spar that much with Chick. This is not the sort of all-out trading 8's solo-fest that the recent Return To Forever reunion turned into. This is subtle, ensemble interplay. The highlights for me on this double CD are all on the second disc. The cover of "Return To Forever" featuring Philip Bailey from Earth Wind & Fire singing the parts Flora Purim originally sang is nearly indistinguishable from the original, except that it's recorded much better. On "Wake-Up Call" Chick runs the Fender Rhodes through a ring

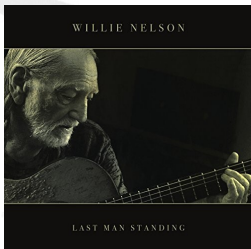
modulator, creating some interesting chord voicings. And the last track, "Gadd-zooks", shows Chick and Steve finally jabbing hard at each other.

It's odd to hear this kind of record and not recognize it as a pure throwback. If one were to "lovingly play" this on vinyl for 20 years then hand it to me I could be completely fooled into believing I've found some long-lost obscure record Chick and Steve made in the '70s on some forgotten European label. It's certainly a fun, sunny little record. —KELLY MINNIS



Billie Eilish
Don't Smile At Me

This girl. She's 15. Amazing voice. Amazing brother/producer/composer Finneas O'Connell. So, we homeschool our kids. I was "teaching" a music appreciation class where everyone was tasked to bring a song we would all listen to and talk about afterwards. My 15 year old brought "Six Feet Under" by Billie Eilish. Freaking amazing. We were floored. This girl got crazy views/listens from just this one track. She and her brother got busy writing. Really good stuff. Jazzy, bluesey, electronic, groovy, moving, breath of fresh air. Some of it sounds like "radio play", sure, which is not my preference, but it's also easy to put close to your heart. She was recently on The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon, and dang, the performance is incredible. I will be really surprised if she doesn't blow up. Looks like she's been picked up by Interscope Records, which means distribution, but also potentially more "radio play" and less "heart-song". We will see. But seriously, this EP is art. "I'm so sorry, now you know/Sorry I'm the one that told you so/Sorry, sorry, I'm sorry, sorry/Sike" It's relatable, it's esoteric, it's sophisticated, it's party music. Listen to the song called "Copycat". If you dig that, the rest is just as cool. —JORGE GOYCO



Willie Nelson
Last Man Standing



Black Catholics
7"

So, what can an 85-year-old singer say to today's generation? It turns out quite a bit. Nelson may be a legend and an icon, but this guy is still writing great songs while people half his age are playing the oldies circuit.

Take "Me and You." It's a bouncy tune about being out of step with the times "more of them than us." Who hasn't been there? There's the punk-short "Don't Tell Noah: "You gotta lead or follow or get out of the way." How about the jaunty "I Got Nothin'" with the classic line "I gave you a ring/You gave me the finger"? The mid-tempo "She Made My Day" is about a great time with a woman "but it ruined my life/Stupid is as stupid does."

Sure, Nelson does have some tunes about mortality—he's seen his share of friends die. However, being able to write a soon-to-be-classic about dealing with the death of a loved one is sheer genius: "It's not something you get over/It's something you get through." The deft wisdom in "Something You Get Through" is something else entirely.

Nelson always has dealt in wry humor, and *Last Man Standing* is no different. Who else has a song about "Bad Breath," mainly because "bad breath is better than no breath at all." Even the title cut about death has a comic side: "I don't want to be the last man standing/Yeah, maybe I do." Only on the heart-ache album closer, "Very Far to Crawl", does Nelson stray outside of his oeuvre, or maybe it's just not that good a song.

Most of the record features sprightly songs, even a classic Western swing in "Ready to Roar." With all the despair out there, Nelson finds the cheer—another classic from an American treasure. —MIKE L. DOWNEY

It is amazing that a local band can just kind of show up with an amazing recording in hand before they've even played a show, but this is what Black Catholics have done. Featuring Matt Shea of Hangouts/ASS/Atarimatt renown with Johnny Warneck (ASS) and Anthony Vallejo (From Beyond) onboard, the trio harken back to the mid '90s gonzo alternative metal of the Northwest backwoods injected with a gothic darkness.

It is no surprise that both sides of this single would bear a distinct KÄRP and Melvins influence, as Matt's previous band as a frontperson Venus Whalers also covered similar sonic territory. But the tight black pants gothic milieu is new. "Psychic Vampires" has an L.A. gothic vibe like that of 45 Grave or Christian Death more so than classic English goth, combined with a bit of the early '00s post-punk throwback of Bloc Party, just heavier and darker, like metal Ikara Colt. Gothic without relying on goth clichés. On "Habitual Ritual" Matt screams "Take from me/Get to me!" between flurries of Vallejo's 16th notes and ad-oidal downstroking. If this is what Black Catholics has to offer as their first shot I can't wait to hear what comes next. —KELLY MINNIS



Breaking Benjamin
Ember

As weird as it may sound, Breaking Benjamin (BB from here on out) was the band that got me into extreme music. Unlike most other post-grunge, alternative rock bands, BB's

CONCERT CALENDAR

5/1—North By North, Wartime Afternoon, Electric Astronaut @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/4—Feverbones @ Revolution, Bryan. 6pm
5/4—Jake Dexter, Cool Moon, Daniel Gonzalez @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 7pm
5/4—Mockingbird Brother, Slow Future, Bernie Pink, Unicornog @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

5/5—Listener, LUCA, Odd Folks, Corusco @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 8pm
5/5—Summer Fires, The Docs, Beige Watch @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/6—Red Wasp Film Festival @ Queen Theater, Bryan. 3pm

5/10—Friendship Commanders, Charm Bomb, The Ex-Optimists @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/11—Magic Girl & Skullbone, Fruit Machines, Colton French @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/12—Hindsight, Lies of an Alibi, Wellborn Road, Aphotic Contrivance, Signal Rising @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 7pm
5/12—J. Goodin, Don't Call Me Shirley @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

music has a dark cloud that lingers over their sound and lyrics. Unlike most bands of the genre who sing about sex, drugs, and rock n' roll, BB often touches on topics like death, loss, sorrow, and revenge: topics worthy of any doom metal band. After a five-year hiatus BB returned triumphantly in 2015 with the release of *Dark Before Dawn*, the highest grossing record they've ever produced. Starved fans were pleased to hear that the band kept true to their sound and produced a record that was, in many ways, superior to previous releases. Now, three years later, BB has returned with another release titled *Ember*.

So how does *Ember* hold up? Quite well, actually. Like previous albums, *Ember* is a product of BB's tried and true formula, making it a consistent entry for their discography. That overwhelming sense of darkness and inner struggle is present throughout the entire album, distinguishing BB's signature approach to rock. Songs like "Psycho", "Dark of You", "Down", "Torn in Two", and "Blood" are definitely tunes that long-time fans will appreciate.

That said, *Ember* is not perfect. "Red Cold River" (ironically, the first single off this record) is mediocre at best. It's not a

song I find myself hitting replay for. "Feed the Wolf" and "Tournaquet", on the other hand, have a great construction and build-up, but the choruses fail to deliver that rising, transcendent punch that I love to hear from BB; I *like* those two songs, but I don't *love* them. One of the things BB has done well in the past is closing each album with a memorable song. For me, "Close Your Eyes" came close, but didn't quite deliver the needed closure. There are moments where the song feels like it will do so, but then it doesn't. In terms of consistency and dedication to the sound that made them great, BB has achieved that yet again. Is *Ember* a step above the greatness that was *Dark Before Dawn*, or older albums like *Phobia*? Nope. This album is certainly one step back for BB, but not in terms of consistency and execution, more so in terms of song-writing and arrangement. That being said, since possessing this album for a week, it has been constantly replaying through my headphones and stereo. It's not a bad album at all, and it definitely has songs that get me singing along and pumping my fist. For me, this album is very good, but not excellent. For that, I give *Ember* a 4.1:5.—CALEB MULLINS

5/15—Keith Michael Kallina @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/17-19—LOUDFEST XI @ Downtown Bryan. 6pm

5/24—Stellar Roots @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/25—Carter, Boxing Dei Dei, Dark Horse, Darwin Finches @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

5/26—Ms. Leslie's Pirate Party @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/29—Cosmic Chaos, Beige Watch, Mad Rant, YeeHa @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

5/31—Keith Michael Kallina @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

6/1—Doc Mojoe, Grifters & Shills, Giblet Head @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

6/2—LUCA, Cool Moon @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

6/7—Dezorah, Charm Bomb @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

6/8—The Killer Hearts, Wild Savages, Chuck Sabbath @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm



Charm Bomb
It's Just a Formality

Judging from their CD cover, this local pop-punk trio's name plays off "yarn bomb," the street art of wrapping knitted yarn on public objects. The good news is Charm Bomb's sound easily wraps around your brain.

The seven guitar-driven tunes jump out the speakers, all hooks and attitude — in your ear and gone. They go fast, all less than three minutes, whether the chant of "fire walk with me" in "Twin Peaks" or the honest confusion of "Come Here" that calls "Cos I love you/And I hate you/Cos I need you."

The raw gems are powered by the guitars of "Kit Kat" Kirby (Jackson) and Katie "Ketchup" (Keller) with drums

by Timmy "Tater Tots" (Horn). Kirby handles vocals. "Ketchup" also plays bass, a role she serves in BCS' The Ex-Optimists as well.

At first listen, the tunes seem akin to The Donnas' aggressiveness, but it's really more the assertiveness of a Chrissie Hynde. The near-sneer of "Don't Wanna" that boasts "I don't wanna/Be what you like" is matched by the powerful "Hit the Road." The album's best tune builds to a rocking climax as the lyrics lash the departing: "Pack up all your memories/Hit the road." In another song, there's the realization the singer's better off since he was "Always Mean," which features more great guitar. The poppy "Disguise" and the crackling "Murder Hue" round the terrific tunes. And there's more — a hidden track, a sly cover of the Misfits "Where Eagles Dare."

Check out Charm Bomb — it's more than a formality.—MIKE L. DOWNEY

RAISE YOUR VOICE

A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and tie, wearing sunglasses, is speaking into a microphone. He is standing on a large, weathered stone wall that appears to be part of an ancient or historical structure. The background is a bright, hazy sky. The overall tone is one of activism and public speaking.

A FRIENDSHIP COMMANDERS TOUR ROCK + VOTER REGISTRATION

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05/06 // NORMAN OK
05/08 // HOUSTON TX
05/09 // SAN ANTONIO TX
05/10 // BRYAN TX
05/11 // KANSAS CITY MO

05/12 // LAWRENCE KS
05/13 // CHICAGO IL
05/16 // MORGANTOWN WV
05/18 // CHATTANOOGA TN
05/19 // DECATUR GA
05/24 // EVANSVILLE IN
05/25 // LOUISVILLE KY

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